

DUEL REALITY

written by

Gerasimos Rozis & Todd Robinson

mrozis@gmail.com
cyphers.bridge@gmail.com

FADE IN:

EXT. MARTIN'S VIRTUAL REALITY WORLD #1 - DAY

A vast, featureless and flat land, bright and deserted, dominated by dust and sand. Lots of sand. As far as the eye can see.

A pair of small, brown and skinny legs stand in the golden sand. A pair of worn out shoes dangles in her hand.

Toes flex, scrunch, digging into the hot, coarse powder.

A YOUNG GIRL (5) in a sun dress takes a hesitant step. The sand gently shifts beneath her. One more step, then another. With every motion forward there is some backward and down.

The girl stops, her green eyes gaze at the horizon. Stillness. She lifts a hand, opens her palm. She caresses an acorn with her thumb, then tosses into the sand.

The sand swallows the acorn and gives birth. An oak tree grows rapidly to it's fullness, tire swing hanging from its lowest branch.

The girl gazes past the tree. The sand spins like a whirlpool. Grains morph into wooden planks, windows, and doors. The parts connect. A wooden porch extends the full length of a two story beach house.

Head tilts to the side, the girl reaches out and grasps the staircase. Once raw and dark, its color changes to white. Water seeps up from the ground. Her tiny feet sink into the cool, wet sand.

She looks down. Water splashes onto her heels. Golden sand sinks beneath an oceans rise. Swiftly, the ocean surrounds the house, the once vast land shrinks to an island.

The sun becomes cloaked with dark clouds pregnant with rain, infesting the sky like a plague.

Gentle waves roll up on shore, ankle deep to the girl.

The water beneath the clouds bubbles like boiling water. Steam shoots up into the air. From within the turbulent waters, a gigantic creature, a WATER WRAITH launches upward like a submarine's ICBM, pierces the sky with a blade of ice clutched in its hand, then dives back down.

The girl's face, stoic and calm.

The Wraith holds its arms straight out to the sides. Massive waves form along the horizon. They grow larger, rolling closer to shore. Waves crash. A THUNDEROUS ROAR echoes. The wind HOWLS in a fit of rage.

A shiny katana materializes before the girl's feet. She kneels, grabs the sword, her fist chokes the blade's grip. She rises in a defensive posture.

The colossal wave speeds in from the deep. The water wraith lurks within, its sword glitters in its hands.

The tide rolls in and attacks the house. The house slides away, dragged out to the sea, pulled to a watery grave. The mighty oak trembles, but stands firm.

The oak tree's roots crawl out from the sand. The girl steps onto the twisting roots.

Higher and higher the roots rise, lifting the girl into the sky. They form into the shape of a dragon's head with giant acorns for eyes. The girl stands upon the dragon's snout within the shade of the oak giant.

The eyes crack, revealing a crimson glow. Tears of lava burst out into a waterfall of red and gold.

Her eyes lock on the wraith, she extends her blade beneath the molten river. Steel ignites in furious flame. She brings her flaming katana forward, eyes it, feels its strength, her face full of righteous anger.

Clouds burst, ice and rain bombard the girl. The rain soaks her to the bone. The ice slices through her dress, leaving it in tatters. Wet hair clings to her face.

Her eyes pulse emerald green, she lowers her flaming sword and shuts her eyes.

The monstrous wave crests and crashes down. The Wraith leans out from the surge, its mouth opens wide. The water wraith devours the girl.

The fierce waters crash over the Oaken dragon. The Wraith stands upon its snout.

The Wraith raises its blade. Lightning strikes the mighty Oak. Thunder CRASHES and rolls into the distance. Its echo fades into oblivion.

An otherworldly SCREAM. The Wraith shudders.

A fiery sword tears from within the Wraith from stomach to head. The young girl explodes upwards into the dark skies.

The water calms its wrath and recedes, watery blue gives way to golden sands. The girl lands on the sandy beach in front of the house.

Deafening SILENCE quiets the settled ocean.

The girl stares at the pristine beach house. She smiles. Satisfied... Happy... Relieved. She looks down and scrunches her toes in the sand.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - LAB ONE - NIGHT

The soft, rhythmic HUM of a floor-to-ceiling computer mainframe with non stop green and red blinking lights. Desks infested with too many monitors filled with a master coder's design plague screen after screen.

Virtual reality headsets attached to a MAN and a WOMAN clad in white lab robes, heads in constant motion. Both of them hammer away at their keyboards, hands unaffected by the virtual state of their minds.

Meet MARTIN BARNS (20s), a green-eyed bloke with a youthful feminine visage, his mid-back length hair tied in a ponytail plus iron maiden t-shirt underneath his robe suggest this is your typical reclusive and shy metal-head geek.

Next to him sits HELEN MANDS (30s), cool as ice, pretty-but trying hard not to be, ivory skinned with stunning blue eyes. She's an impulsive thrill seeker and every man's wet dream. However, she's not just another beauty queen, you can easily spot the demons that hide deep in her eyes.

Martin rips the headset off his face. His eyes grow big, he trails off, confused.

MARTIN

Jesus Christ.

Drenched in sweat, Martin stares at his screen. He sweeps away his sweat, tastes it.

MARTIN

Salt.

Martin turns, eyes Helen, who's still in her VR state. He moves to another screen, punches a few buttons.

More lines of weird code. Some of them highlighted. Flashing.

Martin's fingers pause, shaking.

Martin pinches his wrist, then slaps his cheeks. An identity crisis or a reality check?

MARTIN
(mumbles)
Remember you fool!

Martin rolls his chair away from the desk. Stops. He leans forward, gazes at his feet.

With his palms Martin brushes off the sand that's stuck on his feet, sand flakes off down to the floor, lands on the thin brown carpet.

HELEN (O.S.)
What the hell are you doing?

Martin eyes Helen.

MARTIN
Brushing off...

Martin looks down. Not a single grain of sand anywhere to be seen. Surreal huh?

Martin puts his shoes on; the exact same shoes as the girl's inside the virtual reality state.

Helen's VR headset rests in her hands. Curious, she turns and types in a few commands.

HELEN
If your brain is back with us, can
you tell me what exactly this is?

Martin approaches Helen who points to the monitor, highlights a huge chunk of code.

HELEN
That!

Martin's tone and manner change, focused and thoughtful gazes at the screen. He's back to reality alright.

MARTIN
Oh, that's a Kobayashi Maru. Mine.

HELEN
A Koba-- what?

MARTIN
Wait a second!

Martin sits behind his desk, furiously types in... A jumble of numbers and weird data fills up the screens, he tries hard to make sense of what he's looking at.

MARTIN

Why did I use it for my father's house?

Helen looks at the monitors. Admiration in her eyes.

HELEN

What's your last memory? From your father's house?

Martin wears his silliest grin.

MARTIN

Huh, I remember everything, I guess?

HELEN

OK, and when was the last time you went there?

MARTIN

A month ago? On vacation!

Helen looks so excited. Marvels.

HELEN

And when was the last time we had sex?

Martin hesitates, holding his breath.

MARTIN

Me and you?

Martin scratches his head, eyes flitting.

MARTIN

I'm sorry, uh...

Helen interrupts Martin with a laugh.

HELEN

Relax, I'm just messing with you. Run a full diagnostics check. Back up everything. And send me your simulation profile. I wanna try this myself!

Martin nods in affirmation.

EXT. COLOMBIA - JUNGLE - DAY

Gunfire and explosions disrupt a dense, lush rain forest. A group of ten GREEN BERETS, heavily armed, race through a narrow trail dodging trees and bullets for safety. Dominated by despair, bathed in blood.

Squad leader ROBERT ABRAHAM (40s), an adrenaline junkie and a born warrior, leads the retreat, SCREAMS his guts out.

ROBERT

Fall back! Fall the fuck back now!

Robert eyes his arm, a river of red pours down his dark skin.

Multiple bullets SIZZLE through the air, hand grenades bounce and explode, the jungle takes the brunt of the attack.

A hundred GUERRILLA SOLDIERS, clad in mismatched uniforms and black face masks pursue Robert's men, chaotically scattered and enraged.

Hampered by gunfire and exhaustion, Robert's men come face to face with certain death.

Robert takes cover behind a huge tree trunk. He gazes at the ground and sees a land mine.

ROBERT

Get back to the chopper, now!

GREEN BERET #1

We've been ordered to hold position, Major..

ROBERT

We're facing an ambush in a fucking jungle rigged with traps! Go go go! That's a fucking order!

Robert's eyes dart left and right between his fallen men and those still alive. His face filled with anger and despair.

In the blistering heat, Robert checks his ammunition with sweaty, trembling, blood splattered hands.

GREEN BERET #1 takes a shot to the neck, goes down, chokes on his own blood.

ROBERT

(screaming)

Stay on the path!

Not too far away, GREEN BERET #2 fires back. An explosion lifts him off his feet and throws him against a tree, flesh and blood spraying out his chest.

Robert takes a deep breath. He checks for any survivors. He struggles to spot a single one still alive.

Robert moves away from the tree's safety, turns, kneels down, and settles in. Enraged, he shoots at anything that moves, dropping body after body.

For every body that falls, another two take its place.

Robert locks his finger to the gun's trigger, a sign that he has accepted his fate. His last stand.

A bullet slams into his shoulder, one more joins his belly.

Robert collapses to his knees. Breathing strained, pain fades to numbness. His blinking eyes the last functional organ. Unconsciousness creeps closer.

Robert's head leans to the side, eyes attempting to focus.

A pair of enemy legs closes the distance, slow and measured. The barrel of a gun swings in perfect cadence.

From five feet away, ENEMY #1 stops with a devil's smirk below hateful eyes. His finger taps the trigger.

Time rolls in slow motion, Robert awaits for death's embrace.

Something moves at the far end of Robert's fading line of vision. An undefined figure of...

A MAN-SIZED CREATURE, mid-back length red hair tied in a thick ponytail blinks in and out of existence like a demon.

Moving blazing fast...

Leaps from tree to tree, running horizontally like a parkour wall runner...

Its body lean and strong. Its movements fluid, poetic. A reed defying both wind and gravity. A shiny katana flashes in its hands like a graceful extension of its body.

A step to the left, a lunge to the right, the stranger dances its way among bullets that miss their mark, its body bending at impossible angles.

It chops down the enemies one by one. Body parts fly from his blade in a savage death that makes no sense.

Once on the hunt, the guerrillas flee for the lives as more carved bodies crash lifeless to the ground.

Enemy #1 raises his gun and aims at Robert, unaware of the carnage behind him.

Enemy #1 takes the shot. BANG!

Time slows. Robert sees the bullet leave the barrel of ENEMY #1's gun. His eyes blur. The creature leaps past ENEMY #1 and spins. Robert's vision fades.

The demon swings his blade. A backhand uppercut that begins next to Robert's head and is aimed towards the shooter. The demon slices the bullet in two, each half redirects past each side of Robert's face.

The demon creature slides to a stop, sword held high.

Robert's eyes drift to the demon's legs. Leather black boots with a silver tag labeled "RM" pinned to the side burns itself into Robert's last memory.

The demon surges forward, Enemy #1 meets his maker, his head separates from his body.

Robert tries hard to keep his eyes open.

The demon shoots a devilish look at Robert; glowing green eyes flash once, above a huge scar on the demon's cheek.

With his last breath, Robert hisses a few incomprehensible words. His eyes close, consciousness lost.

EXT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - DAY

A large sign next to a front gate guard shack reads *Reynolds Medical Clinic*. An impressive looking building surrounded by a massive steel barred fence. More heavily armed GUARDS in body armor than is customary for a simple clinic.

In a stale parade lacking variety and choice, lots of DARK SUITS and LAB COATS pour in and out of the main entrance.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - FIRST FLOOR - DAY

Glass and marble dominate the opulent entry room, with silver framed RM logo's all around.

Three young NURSE AIDS stand at their post along a platform with parallel walking bars.

Build of a former athlete, a buzz cut YOUNG GUY (25), sad as death itself, prepares for his long walk on the hand rail.

Two cables that connect to each one of his legs lead to the NURSE's (30s) laptop on a high-tech rolling cart.

The Young Guy's biceps work overtime gripping the rails, supporting his weight on unstable legs.

NURSE

One step at a time. You can do this!

The Young Guy tries hard to move his leg. Half a step.

He frowns, not in pain, but in despair.

NURSE

It's not your body that fails to do this, it's your mind. Shut your eyes, clear your thoughts, make it happen.

The Nurse's peaceful voice resonates.

The Young Guy shuts his eyes, tries again. A successful full step forward.

NURSE

One more.

The Nurse's eyes dart back and forth between her laptop and the Young Guy's legs. She types in a few commands.

NURSE

Come on, you can do it!

Another step. A huge smile bursts from the Guy's face.

NURSE

Now, what about two in a row? No pauses in between.

TO THE LAPTOP SCREEN

A couple of robotic leg figures, various numbers and acronyms infest the image. Lights blinking.

Numbers change slightly every now and then.

BACK TO SCENE

Two full steps without pause. A tear escapes the Young Guy's eye. Hope.

NURSE

Let's finish this.

The Young Guy nods in affirmation. He walks toward the end of the platform, ten feet away and closing. First two steps, the Young Guy waddles left and right, a lot. The Nurse punches a couple of buttons.

Next two steps, less waddling. The Nurse performs a few more adjustments. Last three steps look flawless.

Nurse aid #1 rolls a wheelchair towards the Young Guy.

The Young Guy sits.

NURSE

Two more days, and you're going home.

The Young Guy is out of words. He grabs the nurse's hand...

YOUNG GUY

Thank you!

NURSE

Don't thank me.

Nurse points to one of the many RM logos displayed in overkill on the walls.

NURSE

Thank him!

Nurse aid #1 drives the wheelchair away.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - TOP FLOOR - NIGHT

A single white leather chair behind a massive shiny desk made of purple-heart wood, another two chairs at the front. Floor to ceiling stained windows deny the view of the outside world. An extravagant chandelier floats beneath an arched ceiling. Elegance, quality, intimidation.

Two paintings grace the wall; Munch's *The Scream* and Michelangelo's *Creation of Adam*. The office is a true temple of work for the most eccentric of billionaires.

JOHN REYNOLDS (50s), an authoritative figure with a horseshoe mustache, impeccably dressed, stands before God and Adam. His smooth skinned, emotionless face gazes at his Michelangelo. His arm moves, matching God's, fingers connect with Adam's.

The elevator doors leading directly to Reynolds' private office open wide. Reynolds turns.

GENERAL MATTHEWS (60s), a black bear of a man with a few too many stars and ribbons dominating his uniform, walks inside.

GENERAL MATTHEWS

John!

Reynolds face remains flat.

REYNOLDS

My friend, what a surprise!

GENERAL MATTHEWS

I have more important things to do for my country than debating with your secretary over an appointment.

Reynolds' arrogance vanishes.

REYNOLDS

We're on the same side General.
Please, have a seat.

Both men sit down.

REYNOLDS

So, what can I do for you?

GENERAL MATTHEWS

You already know.

REYNOLDS

Indeed. But my response to your request remains unchanged. We cannot proceed to that kind of mental therapy. Not just yet. We need further testing.

The General retrieves a single paper from his suit.

GENERAL MATTHEWS

Maybe this will change your mind.

Paper changes hands. Curious, Reynolds reads it.

GENERAL MATTHEWS

Yesterday, a fifty million fund was authorized. Three names came up. One is yours.

Reynolds looks highly interested in this.

REYNOLDS

And in return?

GENERAL MATTHEWS

Same as always. I send you the names.

Uncertainty grips Reynolds. He pokes a button on his desk.

REYNOLDS

Get me Adam.

SECRETARY (V.O.)

Right away, sir.

Reynolds and Matthews trade serious looks. An intense stare down, this looks like an ego contest.

Reynolds turns, bestows his gaze at the Michelangelo.

REYNOLDS

I'm telling you though, just because load-bearing artificial implants work with bones and nerves, it doesn't mean they will cooperate with the brain too. Are you sure you want to play God?

GENERAL MATTHEWS

That's your job. Mine is to retain my men's hopes that there is one.

ADAM ROSE (40s), a handsome genius in a silk suit under his lab robe strolls in. Relaxed and confident, he's an absolute realist and this is why Reynolds respects him so much.

ADAM

General!

Adam stands at attention.

REYNOLDS

Where are we with mrp-two?

Adam shoots a curious look at Matthews, his tone is absolute.

Adam is hesitant to go on.

REYNOLDS

Speak freely, there are no secrets between us.

ADAM

So far we have managed to overload the prefrontal cortex with visual data, so dense and unique that the amygdala never triggers the brain's alarm system. We have also successfully re-coded the targeted traumatic experience, uploaded it to the hippo, and overwritten it.

Reynolds shoots a smirk.

REYNOLDS

A state of the art illusional inception.

GENERAL MATTHEWS

Which means?

ADAM

Through osseointegration we have achieved immaculate mechanical stability, while occeoperception, feelings and senses, are crystal clear. The brain cooperates brilliantly with the implants. Moving further in though, well, all I can say is that animal testing looks promising.

REYNOLDS

You said you need more time.

ADAM

A monkey's brain requires a few millions lines of coding and complex algorithms. It takes us approximately fifteen days for a single memory installation. A human's on the other hand...

REYNOLDS

Let's just say it's not the same. Furthermore, human testing, is prohibited.

Matthews shakes head in disbelief.

GENERAL MATTHEWS

Prohibited, or the money just isn't good enough?

REYNOLDS

General, no one questions your patriotism, nor the sincerity of your motives. You need to understand, money is not the issue here.

Matthews remains coldly unaffected by Reynolds' words. He just don't buy it.

REYNOLDS

Working with legs and arms is easy. But working with brain, it's like building a skyscraper with plastic shovels and sand scoops.

A look of disbelief washes over Matthews's face. Turns angry.

ADAM

We need more time.

GENERAL MATTHEWS

When I ask my men to go to war, they don't ask for time to think about my orders. When they get shot on the battlefield, they don't think of the time they will lose away their wives and kids. When they return wounded and butchered, they don't question the time they lost. So do not talk to me about time. Because it's my duty to give it back to them.

Adam dares to engage.

ADAM

But General...

Reynolds shut Adam down with a shake of his head.

REYNOLDS

Fair enough. I can start the tests on some of your men, if you officially authorize it.

Hope fills Matthews' face.

GENERAL MATTHEWS

You'll have the papers signed and sent first thing in the morning.

Matthews stands up, strides away with purpose.

Reynolds waits for the General to disappear.

REYNOLDS

This is a fifty million paycheck. I need to know exactly where we stand.

ADAM

Hippocampus is a huge mystery. Messing around with Pandora's box may cost us.

REYNOLDS

That's why we have an entire law department.

Adam feels uncomfortable.

REYNOLDS

So mrp-two won't work?

ADAM

Sure it will, no doubt about that. Transcranial magnetic simulation works like a charm on animals, I've checked all the x-rays myself, neuro-imaging analysis shows nothing to worry about.

REYNOLDS

But?

ADAM

A man, however, is no mouse, nor a monkey. Causing short-circuits in the brain... They will forget alright, but not without side affects. Delusions, hallucinations, obsessions, insanity?

Reynolds takes his time, considers of this.

ADAM

Something will go wrong, I assure you. And someone must take the blame.

REYNOLDS
Can't walk away. We need him.

Adam looks aware of this.

ADAM
Do you need me in charge of it?

REYNOLDS
I don't care.

Adam smiles like a man who just reclaimed his faith.

ADAM
(decisive)
I'll pass it to Helen then.

Reynolds nods in grim approval.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - THIRD FLOOR - CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

A long table with one square end and one rounded end. In front of every chair, there is a pad of paper, a pencil and an empty binder.

Reynolds sits at the head of the table. Leonardo Da Vinci's *The Last Supper* painting decorates the wall behind him.

Next to him sit Adam and three other OLD SCIENTISTS (60s), sharply dressed, their faces suggest that they're into decision making and risk assessment business.

A whispering joyful chat takes place.

One more OLD SUIT (50s) enters the room. This guy is the real deal when it comes to number crunching. He sits down.

REYNOLDS
So, what's so serious that requires my presence?

ADAM
Helen.

Helen rushes in, Martin follows her short, a pack of papers under his arms.

HELEN
Hello everyone.

Helen turns to Martin.

HELEN

Just give one to everyone please.

Martin hands out a folder to everyone around the table.

HELEN

Gentlemen, my department has successfully overwritten a memory using a VR module.

Shocked faces.

Reynolds, Adam and the others open up the folders in front of them and start reviewing in awkward silence.

Helen stands tall, proud, she wears her widest smile. Martin watches stoically at the back.

HELEN

With more neurons than stars in our galaxy and despite the massive advances in related science, the vast majority of our brain's functions still remains unknown. How is information coded in neural activity? How are memories stored and received? What does the baseline activity in the brain represent? How does the brain simulate the future? How is time represented in the brain? What are emotions? Intelligence? Consciousness?

Reynolds is the first to rest his file on the table. He looks intrigued by Helen's speech.

HELEN

Well, I'm not here to answer any of those questions, but what I can tell you for sure, is that using my bio-feedback algorithm we identified the source of a single memory, isolated it, recorded it and finally replaced it with another one, very similar, yet so different.

ADAM

What kind of memory?

HELEN

A nightmare.

A huge BUZZ rocks the table.

HELEN
It's all in there.

Old scientist #1 rifles through the file.

OLD SCIENTIST #1
You recreated the memory. Virtual replication.

OLD SCIENTIST #2
This is a standard eye movement desensitization and reprocessing simulation. We've already run a thousand sets of algorithms. All test subjects failed to forget. What did you change?

Old scientist #1 looks stunned.

OLD SCIENTIST #1
Page seven.

The three Scientists turn to page seven.

HELEN
You failed because you were forcing a memory deletion instead of a replacement. We succeeded because we simply tricked the brain.

Adam turns to page seven. Reynolds eyes Adam.

ADAM
Who wrote this?

Helen shoots an appreciation look at Martin.

REYNOLDS
Who's the junior?

HELEN
My programmer.

Adam gazes at Martin.

ADAM
Most impressive.

MARTIN
Thank you, sir.

Reynolds grabs his file, slides it over the table towards Helen. Face dead serious...

REYNOLDS
What do you need?

HELEN
A candidate.

Reynolds wears an expression of ultimate success.

REYNOLDS
Potential liability?

OLD SUIT
Three to seven million.

REYNOLDS
Leave us.

Adam is the only one staying back. The rest clear the room.

REYNOLDS
In less than a year she managed
what you guys didn't during the
last four.

Adam shakes his head. Can't really tell if he's happy or not.

REYNOLDS
Speak.

ADAM
Numbers look good. X-rays too.

REYNOLDS
Isn't this what we were after all
along?

Adam leans back, daydreams. He can't latch on to the fact that Helen solved the puzzle first. He needs something else.

ADAM
All this time we were trying to
delete a memory. That was the first
step alright. But all of a sudden,
we successfully installed a new
one. That's three to four steps
forward.

REYNOLDS
And?

ADAM

Let's initiate our sixth-sense program.

Reynolds is skeptical.

ADAM

Matthews would gladly pay a fortune for it. New skills, unmatched combat intuition, greater experience? I'm talking about smarter and better soldiers! One hundred per cent risk free! There lies the true treasure, boss.

REYNOLDS

When can you start?

ADAM

As soon as Helen launches her project, I can start too.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - LAB ONE - NIGHT

Martin prepares to leave, packs his stuff. Helen works on the code, focused and unaware.

MARTIN

Anything else before I go?

HELEN

You did great today. Go get some rest, you earned it.

MARTIN

Need a cup of coffee?

HELEN

I'll be fine, thank you.

Martin exits the lab. At the door, HELEN'S BODYGUARD (30s) stops him, hands him a sealed envelope.

Martin passes it to Helen. Martin turns, paces away.

Helen checks for the envelope's content, it's a card with a name on it; *Major Robert Abraham*.

The lab's door shuts with a THUD.

Helen's hand dives deep in her bra, pulls out a flash drive. She plugs it in.

Fingers hover above the keyboard's enter key. Helen wears an expression of sheer determination. CLICK.

ON COMPUTER SCREEN

Multiple progress bars.

Loading... Recompiling...

1%... 2%...

BACK TO SCENE

Helen leans back in her chair, shuts her eyes.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - LAB TWO - NIGHT

Ten work stations around a circle, computers and VR goggles ready to satisfy all of their masters' wishes. All ten of them are occupied, Adam sits in the middle, his nine bright ASSISTANTS around him.

Cables litter the floor, anxiety fills the air.

ADAM

Initiate startup sequence.

Adam puts on his goggles, the nine assistants wear their own.

INT. ADAM'S VIRTUAL REALITY WORLD - NIGHT

Cannibalized electronic equipment, cables, broken computer parts litter the floor of a corner office with tinted windows. The only light in there is the glow of the monitor.

Sweating like a pig, Adam pounds his computer keyboard. The ROARING HUM of an air condition unit fights a losing battle.

The screen flashes repeatedly; *compilation error*.

Adam puts his hands behind his head.

ADAM

Come on! Why?

Adam's eyes look so tired.

REYNOLDS (O.S.)

You said it would work.

Adam turns, stares at a five years younger version of Reynolds who sits stoic in his cheap suit at the back.

ADAM

I need more time.

REYNOLDS

I invested everything in this. And if time expires, I'll lose everything.

Adam shakes his head, disheartened.

REYNOLDS

In three weeks, we have to be ready. The General expects an operational chip. And I expect nothing less from you.

ADAM

The link refuses to work. It's not the processor, it's something else. Probably the nerves, can't really tell.

REYNOLDS

I don't care what it is. Just make it work. My empire is at stake.

A KNOCK on the door.

Everything around Adam dissolves into thin air, his office briskly transforms into RM's conference room.

ADAM

Come.

The nine scientists walk inside, take their seats around the table. Adam stands by the window, gazes at the view outside.

ADAM

Speak.

SCIENTIST #1

Prefrontal cortex puts on the brakes and brings us back to reality alright. Identification, isolation, regulation, it's all in there. However, in case the brakes fail to stop, can we just fake a stop by installing a new fail safe mechanism? A new memory?

SCIENTIST #2

We can overload the amygdala with so much data that it will never sense the incoming danger. It will never trigger.

ADAM

Enlighten me.

SCIENTIST #1

For example, a soldier is afraid of bullets, or blood just because it relates those to death. We turn steel into paper in his brain, and red to blue, so his mind never makes the connection.

ADAM

How?

SCIENTIST #3

Through multiple and repetitive simulations.

SCIENTIST #4

Compiling such a database is just a matter of a few days.

The top of the table turns to a monitor, programming code rolling like crazy, multiple windows pop up; lists of weapons, aerial photos of battlefields, military vehicles...

ADAM

What about side effects?

Deafening silence. The scientists cast furtive glances at each other, each refusing to speak first.

ADAM

Well?

Scientist #1 steps up.

SCIENTIST #1

Skills and talents will be engraved into the brain using forced-choice visual patterns. However, we can't tell for sure how sufficient, stable, or permanent the results will be.

SCIENTIST #2

But here comes her trick.

ADAM

Her trick?

SCIENTIST #2

Helen's workaround.

SCIENTIST #1

Instead of deleting the nasty part of the memory, the part that caused fear or distress, she planted an even greater fear within the same memory, but also a counterattack mechanism.

SCIENTIST #2

The brain discarded the lower threat and focused in the greater one, but having already a defense setup installed, the phobia turned to a victorious memory.

SCIENTIST #4

She also changed the age, so the brain never correlates the old memory with the new one. It can't understand or handle the inversion, so it just throws it away.

SCIENTIST #5

Plus a younger's brain learning curve...

SCIENTIST #4

Faster, easier, better.

Adam looks persuaded.

ADAM

Proceed.

The scientists stand up, ready to leave.

ADAM

And keep an eye on her. Discreetly. A female nobody won't steal my glory again.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - LAB ONE - DAY

Helen opens her eyes, she gently removes the flash drive and stuffs it back in her bra. She looks hesitant, indecisive.

Her gaze drops to the photo on her desk, a younger photo of herself as a five year old wearing a sundress, smiling next to her father at their beach house.

ON COMPUTER SCREEN

A double click on *new folder*.

A hundred files rest within, all named *Martin* followed by a *number*, and the session status; *failed*.

Mouse rolls down to the last file; *Martin_0185_successful*.

A CLICK and a progress loading bar.

BACK TO SCENE

Helen rubs her hands together.

HELEN

Let's see what you got.

With a gentle and precise move, she disconnects the Ethernet cable from the computer. Helen types in a few commands, and slips on the VR headset.

INT. HELEN'S VIRTUAL REALITY WORLD - DAY

A huge mahogany table with an analogue clock on top, four arrogant OLD EXECUTIVES seated around it having a whispering chat and Adam standing next to the window at the far corner of the room, utterly anxious, daydreams, gazing outside.

Helen walks inside.

EXECUTIVE #1

Miss Mands?

Helen stands at attention scanning the room, she quickly understands that Adam is the one calling the shots.

HELEN

Yes sir.

Executive #2 darts a look at his papers, launches a smirk.

EXECUTIVE #2

Relax girl, you're not in the army anymore.

EXECUTIVE #1

Let's cut to the chase. Tell us something about yourself.

EXECUTIVE #3

Impress us with your greatest accomplishment thus far.

Confident as hell, Helen drops a bomb.

HELEN

I've climbed the highest mountains on every continent, including Everest. And I did it in shorts and a t-shirt.

The Executives look skeptical.

EXECUTIVE #1

Really? And how much time did it take you?

Helen does not hesitate for a single moment.

HELEN

Thirty seconds to go up, a single second to get back down.

Executive #2 looks puzzled.

EXECUTIVE #2

And how's that even possible?

HELEN

I jumped.

Deafening silence. Helen permits herself a smile.

EXECUTIVE #3

In case you think we're into jokes, you need to know that you already lost the first of your four available minutes. And we're not impressed.

EXECUTIVE #2

Nor laughing.

HELEN

Conquering Everest is not a joke gentlemen, nor a feat to be frowned upon. Truly.

A slight move of Adam's neck, Helen notices, she knows that she has his attention.

EXECUTIVE #3

Anyway, you know what we're looking for, so why should we hire you?

Helen takes a deep breath. Confident as hell...

HELEN

Gentlemen. Look at yourselves. You're alpha males. Hard working, handsome, rich, famous, powerful, most women would kill to be on your side.

Eyes grow big, chins rise, chests puffing. The four executives enjoy this.

HELEN

So why work harder, or even more? The obvious answer would be...

(beat)

More money, more sex, more fame and glory. Right?

EXECUTIVE #1

Isn't this what you're looking for too?

HELEN

Sex mostly, but I'm not here to talk about you or me but for Reynolds Med. A five billion company doesn't seek its sixth billion, more women or glory. Does it?

Adam looks curious; he turns, fixes his eyes on Helen.

Executive #4 notices Adam's reaction.

EXECUTIVE #4

What do we look for then?

HELEN

Control.

EXECUTIVE #1

What?

ADAM

Proceed.

Helen locks her eyes on Adam.

HELEN

Unlike traditional socket prosthesis that basically just slot over the stump of a limb, your system is neuromusculoskeletal. That means it interfaces directly with the nerves and muscles of the stump, so users can control it with their own minds in a realistic way. However, you have failed at the feel sensory feedback because your code simply doesn't work.

EXECUTIVE #3

What makes you say that?

HELEN

If it worked, you wouldn't be looking for an expert in eye movement desensitization and reprocessing with a PHD in computer programming.

The executives are stunned.

EXECUTIVE #1

Let me get this straight. Are you telling us, that your code establishes a direct link to the brain and it's able to sustain a feeling?

HELEN

Exactly.

EXECUTIVE #2

Lady, three floors down, there are thirty brilliant experts with a few hundred millions worth of equipment, seeking for answers to the brain's most well-hidden secrets, but you, you just...

Helen's fist dives deep in her pocket, a flash drive comes out. She interrupts Executive #2 abruptly.

HELEN

A piece of my work.

The four executives trade looks of disbelief. Adam however sounds absolute.

ADAM

Show me.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - LAB THREE - DAY

A bright underground room filled with massive sized floor-to-ceiling mainframes. At the middle, three operating chairs, VR full face helmets attached to them.

Martin works on his computer, his eyes dart back and forth between the monitor and a paper file next to it, looks completely focused, just a few CLICKS every now and then, suggest that his job is almost done.

Hands behind her back, Helen stands by the door, expectant of someone... or something. The claustrophobic endless corridor ahead of her is empty.

Outside the door, Helen's Bodyguard follows every move of hers. Helen pays no attention to him.

HELEN

Everything is in order?

MARTIN

Yes. Everything loaded, ready to rock and roll!

HELEN

Perfect.

Escorted by two BRUNETTE NURSES (30s), Robert and two other YOUNG SOLDIERS stroll up to Helen's lab.

Roberts stops before Helen, the other two soldiers move on.

One of the nurses makes the introductions.

BRUNETTE NURSE

Major Abraham, this is Helen Mands.

Helen offers her hand, Robert extends his; they shake hands. Helen notices Robert's fist.

HELEN

How does it feel?

Robert lifts his titanium palm, brings it close to his face.

ROBERT

Much better than no hand at all.

HELEN

Perfect.

(to the nurse)

Thank you.

Helen leads Robert inside, the door shuts behind them. LOCKS.

HELEN

This is Martin, he will be your handler.

Robert and Martin trade hello nods. Helen points to the middle operating chair.

HELEN

Please.

Robert looks reluctant to sit down. He eyes the helmet, grins in curiosity.

HELEN

(serene voice)

There is nothing to worry about. You can pause the simulation at will, anytime you feel uncomfortable. We don't use any kind of sedation or hypnosis anymore.

Robert silently agrees. Martin helps him put the helmet on.

HELEN

Before we start, I'm obliged to inform you that we went through your file, and recreated the Colombia incident. That means you're going to relive it once again, but this time, it will be slightly different, plus it will last much less. Do you consent to the changes?

A smirk looms beneath the closed visor of Robert's helmet.

ROBERT

What kind of changes?

HELEN

If we let you know about them prior to the simulation, they won't be past memories anymore!

ROBERT

Will I forget of my friends' faces?

A moment of silence. Helen darts a look at Martin who responds to her with an affirmation nod.

HELEN

Well, the information stored into our memory system is encoded in three ways, visual, acoustic and semantic. When the session ends, your efforts to associate and connect neurologically all or any pieces of the puzzle...

ROBERT

Miss Mands, I'm not an educated man. I'm just a soldier, who's trained and taught that all questions have binary answers. A yes or no would suffice.

HELEN

Unfortunately, yes.

Robert stretches his fingers, rubs his palms together.

HELEN

Do you consent?

Helen anticipates stoically Robert's answer.

ROBERT

Yes ma'am.

Helen eyes Martin.

MARTIN

Initiating simulation.

FADE TO BLACK.

AUTOMATIC RIFFLES. EXPLOSIONS. SCREAMS. Similar sound effects to those during the Colombia incident, but this time it sounds like it happens in fast forward mode.

FADE IN:

ON COMPUTER SCREEN

So close it has no boundaries.

Racing columns of black numbers and unreadable code, data slashes across the screen faster than the eye can read.

A number turns red. And then a whole line. And another one.

In a blink of an eye, it's one too many reds among blacks.

MARTIN (O.S.)
Oh no! No, no, no!

HELEN (O.S.)
What?

BACK TO SCENE

Martin furiously punches buttons.

Helen storms to the adjacent computer, sits down like a sack of wet cement. Looks desperate.

HELEN
It doesn't make any sense.

Robert's body spasms uncontrollably.

ROBERT (O.S.)
(frustrated)
Who are you demon?

Helen is stunned.

HELEN
Kill it!

MARTIN
Fifteen seconds more to go.

HELEN
Now!

Martin bolts to the wall, yanks a cable off the mainframe. The entire system shuts down.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - LAB TWO - DAY

A LATINO gym freak (30s) and DON (30s), a black bear of a man with a high and tight haircut, US Army written all over his face, sit relaxed in their operating chairs, VR session is underway. Two young GEEKS make adjustments to their computers' code, Adam has his eyes locked on the monitors.

Training session #1 flashes repeatedly on screens.

EXT. TRAINING CAMP #1 - YOUNG SOLDIERS' VIRTUAL WORLD - NIGHT

A huge field dominated by green and brown, various motorized relics such as cars, tanks and helicopters litter the grounds, trees huge as giants rise to the sky.

The two guys, prone positioned and camouflaged amidst the relics, they wear night vision goggles.

Twenty HOSTILES approach silently.

The Latino trades looks with Don; Hand signals and brisk nods suggest it's time to attack.

The two guys CLICK off the safeties in tandem.

Two SUPRESSED GUNSHOTS. Two bodies drop.

From peace to hell in the blink of an eye, the hostiles fire back in panic, shooting in all directions.

BANG BANG! Another two bullets fire away in tandem.

Hostiles launch grenades, one of them explodes near the Latino's body, that lifts him up, blows him ten feet away.

Don gazes at the butchered body of the Latino. He stands up, enraged, gun in full auto fire...

A bullet smashes through his skull.

A serene voice coming from the sky...

ADAM (V.O.)
Reload alternative parameters.

A blinding flash light cuts open the darkness.

Light slowly fades away. Silence. Stillness. Darkness.

The sound of BREATHING.

The two guys alive and breathing, bellies down, adjust their scopes. They trade serious looks, like nothing happened. Don signals the Latino to change spot.

The Latino loads his rifle on his back, crawls a few feet away. Arms working overtime, his muddy fingers come to a sudden stop. A familiar CLICK draws his attention. The Latino stares at the tripwire trapped in his fingers. He turns, glowers at the Claymore attached to it.

BOOM!

ADAM (V.O.)
Reload.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - TOP FLOOR - DAY

Reynolds relaxes deep in his throne, daydreams while flipping a golden coin on his fingers.

He stops, coin rests on his desk, he picks up the phone.

REYNOLDS

Matthews.

SECRETARY (V.O.)

Right away sir.

Reynolds stares at his Michelangelo. Marvels.

GENERAL MATTHEWS (V.O.)

John, what can I do for you?

REYNOLDS

Whatever we agreed on General.
Nothing less, nothing more.

GENERAL MATTHEWS (V.O.)

You mean, training was successful?

REYNOLDS

Just as promised. Your two boys are
now faster, stronger, smarter, more
effective.

GENERAL MATTHEWS (V.O.)

And?

REYNOLDS

Without a single scratch too.

GENERAL MATTHEWS (V.O.)

Send me the reports.

REYNOLDS

Already did. Your move General.

Reynolds hangs up. Rises, prances around the office.

INT. MARTIN'S VIRTUAL REALITY WORLD #2 - DAY

Massive blackboards covered with high level math equations
peppered with underlined notes in C programming language, a
ten years younger version of Martin stands in the middle.

His eyes dart left and right, scan everything. With every motion of his head, more and more equations are highlighted, with every blink of his eyes, additional code lines are added. Martin looks on the boards with concern, pauses.

He grins in determination, muscles flex, Martin wills himself into action. He snaps his fingers; most of the data on the boards fade away.

He stares at one of the boards, a hand sweeping gesture wipes off everything from it.

He rubs his hands together, fingers stretched out. Another brisk move of his palms kills two more boards. A grim expression crosses his exhausted face.

There are two blackboards with data still on them; They combine, become one.

Martin locks his sights on the word 'undefined'.

HELEN (O.S.)

Well?

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - LAB ONE - DAY

Martin removes his goggles, grabs a paper file, flips through the pages looking for something.

HELEN

Did you find it?

Martin freezes.

MARTIN

Obviously.

HELEN

Huh?

MARTIN

His report was inaccurate. There was someone else out there.

Helen turns angry.

HELEN

He lied to us?

Martin is confused.

MARTIN

It seems so. But why?

HELEN

I don't know, but I'll ask him
myself.

Helen storms out of the lab. Furious.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - WAITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A picture of an exotic beach sprawls on each wall, each depicting a beautiful scenery; rolling waves on idyllic sand reveal that the walls are actually huge TV panels.

Just two chairs rest in there, one of them is occupied; Robert admires the unique surrounding visuals.

Helen walks inside, sits next to Robert, a file binder rests in her hands.

HELEN

Are you feeling alright?

ROBERT

Besides still remembering
everything?

HELEN

I'm sorry but we had to abort the
session due to several false
parameters.

ROBERT

False parameters? What are you
talking about?

HELEN

I'll cut to the chase, Robert. The
first time we met, I was completely
honest with you. However, I cannot
treat you right unless you're
completely honest with me too.

Robert looks genuinely surprised.

ROBERT

Honest?

Helen sounds so serious.

HELEN

Don't play games with me, Major. We recreated the scene exactly like your report mentioned, but our software threw us so many errors that it didn't make much sense to continue the session.

Helen pauses for a moment, gazes at Robert who doesn't seem to get it.

HELEN

Someone else was there, too, wasn't it? Another individual.

ROBERT

I reported everyth...

Helen's tone and manner become so aggressive.

HELEN

One more guy, that you deliberately left out your report.

ROBERT

It's all in there...

HELEN

Why did you hide him from us? Who was it?

Robert loses it.

ROBERT

The fucking demon. I told them everything but they laughed at me. It's all in there, read the fucking report. Again!

Helen is stunned.

HELEN

Demon? What demon?

Robert explodes upwards, clenches his fists, a jolt of adrenaline flows through his veins. Helen feels threatened, springs up, takes a step backwards.

Robert detects Helen's discomfort, he swiftly extinguishes his anger.

ROBERT

I'm sorry ma'am. But I, I can't do this anymore. I'm sorry.

Helen is speechless. Robert strides away.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - LAB ONE - NIGHT

Martin's fingers work the mouse and keyboard like a maestro to his opera, while his eyes comb the monitors in search of an answer to the jungle of algorithms that pose like the greatest of riddles.

A highlighted segment of a line steals his focus. A mouse CLICK. He whips his eyes to the next screen. Stops. Puzzled.

MARTIN

Are you sure he said demon?

Helen sits next to Martin, goes through Robert's report.

HELEN

Dead certain. But there is no such thing in here.

MARTIN

Yeah.

HELEN

Well, he's a certified lunatic alright.

MARTIN

Which actually makes me wonder.

HELEN

Huh?

MARTIN

The report is signed by Dr Miller.

HELEN

Which means?

MARTIN

It should have been someone from the Southern Command.

Helen checks the signature at the end of the file.

HELEN

Dr Miller. MD, Phd, Colonel.

Helen looks stunned, catches her breath.

HELEN

Inscom... Virginia?

The Latino launches his fist upwards in full force, cracks the chamber's glass. Eyes explode open, excruciating pain displayed in full force on his face. Deep ragged breaths wheeze LOUD and long.

Don shoots an authoritative look at the Latino.

DON
Cowboy the fuck up! This is just a
test!

The Latino relaxes his breathing, rubs his eyes. Hard.

DON
Get your shit together soldier, and
suck it up. This is what we're
trained for.

Don's eyes dart around the room, then back to the Latino. He sees an empty chamber.

DON
(screams)
Nurse! Nurse!

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - TOP FLOOR - DAY

Reynolds reading a magazine, wears his widest smile.

Elevator doors open wide, revealing Helen in pant suit and her bodyguard. Helen alone, paces inside.

HELEN
Sir.

REYNOLDS
Have a seat.

Helen sits down. Reynolds stands up, moves next to his Munch's painting. Chin rises in awe, even excitement.

With the serenest of voices...

REYNOLDS
One evening I was walking along a
path, the city was on one side and
the fjord below. I felt tired and
ill. I stopped and looked out over
the fjord. The sun was setting, and
the clouds turning blood red.

I sensed a scream passing through nature; it seemed to me that I heard the scream. It was this exact picture, clouds as actual blood.

Helen gazes at Reynolds, struggles to understand anything.

REYNOLDS

Eighteen ninety two was undoubtedly a great year.

Helen glares at *the creation of Adam* painting.

HELEN

(cocky)

Not as great as fifteen twelve.

Reynolds turns, permits himself a smile.

REYNOLDS

And that's exactly what I admire in you.

HELEN

What's that?

REYNOLDS

You understand *The Scream* better than anyone else around here.

Reynolds returns to his desk.

REYNOLDS

Having said that, what do you want?

HELEN

Major Abraham left. I need someone else to move on with the tests.

REYNOLDS

You didn't have to come all the way up here for that.

HELEN

I want full control, don't want Adam looking over my shoulder.

REYNOLDS

He's the project's supervisor.

HELEN

Not if you say otherwise.

Reynolds considers this for a moment. He grabs two file folders from his desk drawer, slides them over to Helen.

REYNOLDS

Handle these guys first, get me a better module, and you'll be in charge.

HELEN

Appreciate this, sir.

Helen grabs the files, struts to the elevator.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - LAB THREE - NIGHT

Martin sits on his throne, stares at his empty screens.

A cursor beating steadily in all monitors waits patiently to move further down. A few keystrokes give life to the first screen; racing lines of code shimmer across the screen.

His eyes whip to the second screen. Overlapping images of battles and weapons. Martin focuses on the third monitor. A handwritten report. He reads it, silently.

He rolls to the side, toggles a switch. The HUM of a machine, energy transfers to the operating chairs at the back.

Resting in the chairs VR headsets turn on. Colorful lights nuke the room. Martin returns to his monitors.

MARTIN

Hey sexy. I know you.

Eyes bulge, Martin fires up another computer, a hulking printer is attached to it.

Martin thumbs a button.

Light emitting from the goggles illuminates harder and faster than the human eye can handle.

MARTIN

(angry)

You fucking bitch!

The printer spits out page after page.

Martin, utterly frustrated, rolls to the printer, snatches the printed papers, storms away.

The VR headsets go off, all but one that keeps on shooting colorful light. Monitors follow, turn off; all but one that drops a progress bar with the word *backup* visible over it.

Bar reaches one hundred per cent, computer shuts down.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - ADAM'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Adam sits behind his desk, eyes locked on the computer.

A KNOCK on the door breaks Adam's focus. An expression of guilt leads to a brisk move of his hand, monitor turns off.

ADAM

Enter.

Door opens wide, Martin rushes in, carrying a pile of papers.

MARTIN

You piece of shit. You stole my code.

Caught by surprise, Adam's mouth falls open.

ADAM

One, it's the company's property, not yours. Two, since when do I need permission from you to do anything?

Martin recognizes the rhetorical question with a scorn.

MARTIN

I knew you were an idiot, but now I'm convinced that your moral compass is fucked up too.

ADAM

Mind your language junior.

MARTIN

What are you trying to achieve with this? We're here to cure those men, not to make them even worse! You just don't plant new memories into adult minds. This is beyond stupidity! It's a crime!

Adam remains apathetic.

ADAM

You do your job, I do mine.

Martin retrieves a paper from his pile.

MARTIN

Does Reynolds know about this? Or Matthews?

ADAM

Those names are above your pay grade sport.

MARTIN

Sport? Let me show them what you're really doing to those men, and then we can talk about pay grades.

Adam looks unconcerned, leans back deep in his chair. Martin is shocked by Adam's apathetic stance.

MARTIN

For your sake, I hope it was just those two guys.

Adam shoots Martin a devilish look. Martin freezes.

Martin turns, eyes one of the operating chairs. Scintillating light emits from the VR helmet, looks active, although no one sits there.

ADAM (O.S.)

It's three actually.

Martin's expression turns to one of comprehension, then despair. Martin lowers his head, a bead of sweat slides down his cheek. He shuts his eyes.

Darkness.

The instrumental version of an anthemic power metal song ROCKS our ears.

MONTAGE - VARIOUS

- A blade on flames dives in pitch black water, a yellow-golden line slashes across the screen. Fire braves water.

- Multiple ripples disturb the peace of a lake, a shiny steel Atlantean sword with carved letters on it rises out of the water.

- An old long-sword lies in the cobwebbed hands of a marble statue. Energy radiates from the ancient blade.

- A palm slides a katana out of its scabbard slowly, almost ceremonially. A silver stamp appears on its cross-guard. A swordsmith examines the quality of the blade, checking for deviations and the neatness of the ripples.
- Martin sits in the seiza position like a samurai warrior. His eyes focus on a blade drawn from its scabbard.
- Martin brings the blade close to his face, forehead leans forward meeting the cold steel. Looks like Martin prays.
- Clad in a medieval helmet partially revealing a chain mail armor, Martin kisses his bastard sword's fuller.
- On top of a snow capped mountain, Martin swings clumsily against his MASTER (50s) using a pirate's sword. Master parries every blow thrown with ease.
- Martin dances through a forest, his falchion flashes in attacks both high and low. Master blocks a lethal blow.
- On the edge of a waterfall, Martin and Master side by side perform artful swordplay in perfect unison.
- Sunset. A lake house. Martin in a samurai outfit works on his kata skills. His motion is slick, nimble.
- Dawn. Martin's claymore raises high. It descends slowly until arms and sword come to a standstill over a perfect straight line with his gaze.
- A glade full of lilies in the middle of a jungle. Martin and a giant panther trade killing stares. Martin surges forward, panther leaps at him.
- A massive sized battlefield; it's Martin against a horde of masked men. Stillness; a stare down for the ages. Martin's grip chokes his saber's handle.
- Eyes full of confidence. Martin enters the Colosseum. Pauses, lowers his head, salutes muscled opponents who march against him.
- Surrounded by corpses, Martin's blood sprayed katana chops an enemy in half. Blood drips on to the snow.
- Martin and his Master inside an old structure, cross blades, sparks fly from the collision.
- On the beach, Martin presses the action. Master takes a few steps backwards, struggles to keep up against his apprentice.

- On the dragon stone in the middle of a raging sea, Martin sword plays in lightning speed. His blade slashes the incoming waves like paper.

- On top of a castle, Martin and Master lock weapons. Martin's body muscles Master all the way back, until it stops against the stone wall before the endless bluff.

- Clad as a Spartan warrior Martin finds himself surrounded by a legion of enemies. He doesn't look impressed. He attacks relentlessly. No sign of fear or anxiety in his eyes.

- Master performs an impossible body spin, finds himself behind Martin; Master's blade rises, comes down on Martin's neck whose blade explodes upwards and blocks the blow. Master twirls his sword, the tip of his blade feels Martin's cheek.

- In the Colosseum. On the balls of their feet, Martin and Master engage an insanely fast exchange of attacks.

- In the red pine woods. Flying back and forth swords CLANGING, trees dance to the rhythm of steel.

- Next to the lake house. Stepping back and forth, both hands on grips, this looks like a fight to death.

- Next to the water, bodies leaning in crazy angles parrying everything. The two warriors pause, trade exhausted looks.

A gentle gust of wind blows across the lake, tousling their hair. Scarlet leaves fall from the trees. Martin and Master take silent steps backwards, increasing their distance. Clouds infest the sky. Raindrops come come down crashing upon their blades.

Martin's dead eyes gaze at his Master's blade. Confident, decisive, an expert and lethal assassin. Both men in high guard anticipate one last attack.

A lightning bolt CRACKS the horizon.

Martin attacks in full force. Blades meet in the middle, the Master's sword cracks in two.

Master permits himself a smile, kneels before Martin.

MASTER

Until we meet again.

- Martin stabs the sky. Screams in rage.

- Martin's katana feasts on flames.

- Martin stuffs his sword into the sand. Flames snuff out.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - LAB ONE - NIGHT

Helen removes her VR goggles; gasping, she wears the face of a woman after an intense orgasm.

HELEN

Didn't know you love swords *that*
much!

Fingers abusing the keyboard, Helen leers at the monitors.

ON COMPUTER SCREENS

Overlapping images of pixelated faces from the VR session rock the first screen; although blurred and unclear, the stranger's long hair matches Martin's.

Some of the images transfer to the second monitor. One on top of the other, a loading bar appears, filling fast.

A new window pops up. A piece of code flashes repeatedly. Images disappear.

The third screen launches a message. Compilation complete.
Execute?

A keystroke CLICKS.

The invisible digital hand of a painter drawing a face, weird algorithms fly in the picture transforming into colors, programming code gives place to multiple lines.

A young face slowly takes shape.

BACK TO SCENE

Helen frowns. She turns curious, confused.

HELEN

(mumbles)
Why that young?

A computer BEEP. Helen is shocked. Fear in her eyes. She moves away the computer.

HELEN

What the hell?

Helen gazes in awe at the image of a child on the screen. It's her, the girl from the picture on her desk, but green eyes instead of blue. She darts looks between the monitor and the picture with her father.

Helen storms away, comes face to face with her bodyguard standing by the door.

HELEN
Where is Martin?

Helen's bodyguard looks sincerely puzzled.

HELEN'S BODYGUARD
Martin who?

HELEN
The programmer, Martin Barns.

Helen's bodyguard shrugs, shakes his head.

HELEN
Young dude, ponytail? The one who works for me? In this office?

HELEN'S BODYGUARD
Miss Mands, you work alone.

HELEN
Come again?

HELEN'S BODYGUARD
Are you feeling OK? Do you want me to call someone?

HELEN
Yes, I want you to call Martin!

HELEN'S BODYGUARD
I'm sorry, I don't understand...

HELEN
Fuck it, I'll find him myself.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Clad in military uniforms, YOUNG MEN march in, metal detectors BUZZING continuously, BEAUTIFUL NURSES AIDS escort the guys further inside.

Walking down the stairs, Helen beelines for the LOBBY MANAGER (40s), a bear of a man in a black suit, who stands next to a computer, eyes scanning everything around there.

The Lobby Manager eyes Helen, head tilts forward like saluting her.

LOBBY MANAGER
Miss Mands. What can I do for you.

HELEN
Patrick, right?

LOBBY MANAGER
That's correct.

HELEN
I need you to do something for me.

Serious and formal, the Lobby Manager waits...

HELEN
Can you tell me if Martin Barns
came in today for work?

LOBBY MANAGER
(mumbles)
Martin Barns... I'm not familiar
with that name.

Helen grins in disbelief. Eyes his computer.

HELEN
Can you check please?

LOBBY MANAGER
Of course.

The Lobby Manager moves behind the computer, while the
lobby's BUZZ draws Helen's attention.

HELEN
What's this all about?

The Lobby Manager works his computer.

LOBBY MANAGER
They're assigned to Mr Rose.

HELEN
Really?

LOBBY MANAGER
Here it is Miss Mands. Have a look.

Helen moves next to the Lobby Manager.

LOBBY MANAGER
Baldwin, Banks, Bartlett. No Barns.

Helen looks puzzled.

HELEN

Who has access to labs one and three?

The Lobby Manager checks his papers, shows is to Helen.

LOBBY MANAGER

Mr Reynolds, Mr Rose and you.

Helen drifts into confusion.

LOBBY MANAGER

Are you OK?

Helen's vacant eyes turn away from the Lobby Manager.

HELEN

Of course.

Helen sprints away.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - LAB FOUR - DAY

Ten operating chairs, all of them occupied by YOUNG MEN.

ADAM

Place your headsets, gentlemen.

The young men do not hesitate. Headsets are on.

ADAM

And let's make you better.

Adam moves to his computer, punches a button.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - LAB ONE - NIGHT

Helen saunters around the lab, lost in thought.

She darts a look at the operating chair, then at her desk. Eyes whip left and right, looking for a clue.

She jumps in her chair, her fingers light the keyboard on fire. Helen searches for something specific. It's just empty folders after empty folders.

HELEN

(frustrated)

What the fuck ?

A throng of files roll down her screen.

HELEN

Where is everything?

Helen bolts upright with a jolt, eyes the VR equipment. She presses her palms against her head, grimaces in pain.

MONTAGE OF THE TEN YOUNG MEN - VARIOUS

- Clad in navy seal suits and breathing heavily, the young men rush from the still waters of an ocean.
- Buff bodies run on the empty beach, the seals endure the massive weight of a giant log, faces burn in exhaustion.
- A midnight run in a cold rain, a boat turned upside down bounces on the heads of the men.
- Into the storm surge, men struggle to keep their inflatable raft on a steady course.
- Hands behind their backs, through pain and despair, the men slither through mud, under a blanket of barbed wire.
- On the tropic coast, men look too cold, too sandy, too sore, too wet to go on. One of them stumbles towards a shiny brass bell, RINGS it.

ADAM (V.O.)

Next.

- A Black-hawk hovers over the riverbed. Men swim for dear life down below. A cave ladder deploys, flaps hard back and forth in the rotor wash.
- The first two men climb up the ladder one-handed, almost falling as the helicopter shakes.
- Shots fired from the distance. Bullets seek the pilot. Glass CRACKS.
- The chopper turns sideways, DOOR GUNNER returns fire, a high-pitched WHINE followed by huge bullets turns solid rock into gravel.
- More bullets whiz in from all sides, they target the men on the ladder.
- Bullets shred the bodies of the two men ascending the ladder, grips fail, corpses plunge down to the sea.
- A seemingly lifeless body tangles on the ladder. A soldier scrambles down to help him.

- Three more manage to reach the safety of the cabin.

ADAM (V.O.)

Load new parameters. Run it again.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - THIRD FLOOR - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

A passionate and very formal Adam stands by the window. Reynolds, Helen and the four scientists listen carefully at his presentation alongside Matthews and DR MILLER (40s), a no-nonsense type of brown skinned gal with a haunted face, and an expert in military psychology.

ADAM

Since the early days of the civil war, no country has ever coped with greater casualties than the United States itself. From eighteen sixty five to sixty nine, we registered a stunning five hundred and twenty deaths per day. A few years later, with world wars one and two, that number moved down a bit, body count was three hundred.

(beat)

Korea. Vietnam. Iraq. Afghanistan. These are American souls we're talking about. Fathers. Brothers. Sons.

Matthews anxiously bites his lips.

ADAM

Some will say *it's just war*, but that would probably be the guy who never touched a weapon. Never spilled a drop of blood for his country. Never saw his friend gasping for air when bullets were flying past his face.

Matthews silently agrees. Reynolds looks satisfied by Adam's speech so far.

ADAM

But it's not just war. It's also casualties during training. And to be honest, according to some, this is far worse than dying on the battlefield. Think about this for a moment, where is the honor in that?

Matthews lowers his head, clenches his fist. Adam's words hit a nerve or two.

ADAM

And this is exactly where we step in and offer you an alternative. One that saves lives. The lives of your men, the lives of our brothers and sons.

HELEN

(mumbles)

Sisters and daughters.

Adam briefly glances at Helen.

ADAM

Reynolds Med is not here just to treat those who survived and came back, but also to lower their chances getting hurt while in action.

Matthews looks impressed, Dr Miller not so much.

GENERAL MATTHEWS

You can make them better, I saw the reports myself.

ADAM

Exactly. Through various training simulations within a controlled environment, through multiple combat situations and scenarios, we make them better, faster, stronger, smarter. We are not only able to mimic the fatigue and stress, but also bullets and death. And this is the way we make sure that the participants will perform and react under any stressful situation with the wisest of decisions, due to the experience gained.

Mathews darts a look at Dr Miller who protests silently.

GENERAL MATTHEWS

Some of my people suggest that these simulations may trigger mental disorder issues.

Adam sounds pretty confident.

ADAM

General, in order to build perfect soldiers, we have to create stressful conditions for these guys, and the best way to do it, is through pain, to help us decide whether an individual is of the caliber of what the army needs.

(beat)

And yes, it's true. Our project project relentlessly pounds body and mind until every nerve is raw, every emotion exposed. Seconds seem like hours, minutes seem like days. But isn't this similar to what you're doing also at the moment?

Reynolds steps in.

REYNOLDS

Helen, what do you think?

Adam is shocked, chokes his frustration, sits down.

Helen turns to Matthews.

HELEN

In real life, when it comes to an expertly trained unit, the individual skills of our boys and girls can be a decisive factor. But a single soul cannot win a fight on talent alone. Teamwork is our army's greatest weapon, sir.

Matthews looks intrigued. Helen stands up.

HELEN

Yes, training can be harsh most of the time. You're hungry, cold, tired. Sand is rubbing skin of you all over the place, you spit blood, you pray, you suffer. However, in Reynolds Med, you can't die.

GENERAL MATTHEWS

Carry on.

HELEN

In combat, fear is the greatest enemy, cause fear can be paralyzing. Men die from panic, indecision, or carelessness.

And all that has not much to do with insufficient training, but eliminating the feeling that fear causes. Once you've seen everything, nothing new can scare you.

ADAM

Eliminating fear?

Helen disregards Adam's words. Her eyes fixed at the General.

HELEN

Every time one of your men dies General, you can chalk it up to fate and simply pass a flag to the family of that soldier. Problem is, that you'll never know if it was the lack of skill or bad luck that cost his life.

GENERAL MATTHEWS

What that supposed to mean?

HELEN

Not everyone enlisting is a born killing machine, sir, nor has the fundamentals to become the best, you need to understand that. My project trains them, selects the best, makes them even better, and more importantly, without messing with their mental stability throughout, as your men remain in control, fully alert and wide-awake during the VR sessions.

Dr Miller steps in.

DR MILLER

Our elite forces have various selection methods and processes for that exact purpose miss Mands.

HELEN

No offense Doctor, but that's exactly why you keep coming up with so many dead. Just because a gym freak and a mentally determined guy wants to serve in these elite forces, it doesn't make him a lethal soldier.

Matthews leans back in his chair, thoughtful.

ADAM

Anyway, my project achieves this through repetitive simulation sessions.

GENERAL MATTHEWS

But that's exactly what makes my experts worry about.

HELEN

And they have a good reason to be. Repetition is wrong. You just don't know when the brain will decide to remember and those memories kick in. Which means that you'll need further treatment sessions for every single memory that decides to surface.

REYNOLDS

How exactly do we achieve that?

HELEN

A new session every round. Think of it as an elimination series training sequence. A last man standing game. Weapons and combat simulations all the way through. All types of enemies, humans, animals, landscapes. Everything. Martin finished...

ADAM

Martin? Who's Martin?

Helen looks disoriented.

HELEN

Martin... is the name of my project. My code.

GENERAL MATTHEWS

That's enough.

Matthews eyes Dr Miller who shoots an OK look.

GENERAL MATTHEWS

I like her idea more. Proceed.

REYNOLDS

Done.

Matthews rises, heads for the exit. Everyone else follows him. The general pauses for a moment.

GENERAL MATTHEWS
How many candidates do you need?

Helen sounds absolute.

HELEN
I can train and select the very
best among your first sixty four.

Matthews looks satisfied. Reynolds grabs Adam's wrist just before he moves away the table.

REYNOLDS
(whispers)
Get your best in there, prove her
wrong.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - LAB ONE - NIGHT

Dim lights cast a soft glow, only one monitor is on.

VR headset covers Helen's face, her left hand works the keyboard while her right hovers over her head conducting, like a wizard casting a spell.

The screen reacts to her commands, screenshots of programming code overlaps various images and the other way around; crazy math algorithms pop up, then disappear in a hurry.

The baffling occasional noises of cacophonous cannonades of THUNDERS, people SCREAMING, monsters HOWLING, sound surreal while Helen HUMS softly a heavy metal tune over them.

ON COMPUTER SCREEN

An array of land photos; desert, beach, forest, tundra.

Pictures of mythical monsters; from dragons and bears to giant reptiles and ugly fish.

Sketches of deserted battlegrounds follow, as a sports league bracket-like diagram pops up, random names filling it up.

BACK TO SCENE

Helen's right palm dances; punching invisible buttons, killing unnecessary computer windows...

ON COMPUTER SCREEN

The brackets' diagram is almost filled.

Images in the background cease movement. Stillness.

BACK TO SCENE

With the goggles still on, her head leans downwards, Helen opens the drawer, looking for something.

She retrieves a flash drive and without any hesitation she plugs it in.

ON COMPUTER SCREEN

She performs a copy-paste, but the message *write protected* pops up. She opens the flash drive, a folder exists within.

BACK TO SCENE

Helen removes the goggles.

She hits the enter key, turns curious.

HELEN

Who the hell is Kobayashi maru?

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - LAB TWO - NIGHT

Adam and Don stare at each other, faces so determined.

ADAM

I need a man who fears nothing,
feels nothing, regrets nothing.

Don keeps his eyes on Adam in sheer determination.

ADAM

I need someone who will confront
and pass all tests, without
protesting, worrying, or
disapproving.

Don moves to the operating chair, sits down.

ADAM

I need the best, for whatever is
about to come.

Don puts on the VR headset, willingly.

DON

Hit it.

Adam moves to his computer.

ADAM

Make me proud, soldier.

Adam thumbs a button.

Don's face grimaces in distress, body shakes in discomfort. Teeth grinding. Jugular veins pumping.

The pain threshold looks close...

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - FOURTH FLOOR - DAY

Elevator doors open wide. A broody YOUNG MARINE (25) stands near a smiling, elegant YOUNG SECRETARY.

YOUNG SECRETARY

Room twelve.

The Young Secretary points to the far end of the marble corridor stretching ahead, multiple doors fixed to both sides stand wide open.

The Young Marine steps out of the elevator and pauses, the Young Secretary thumbs a button, doors shut with a soft THUD.

The uplifting operatic VOICE of a heavy metal female singer ensues, a huge floor-to-ceiling screen at the far end of the corridor is its source.

No, this is not Floor Jansen performing this, just some pale face anime powerhouse character, clad in leather that looks like her; digital art at its finest.

Let He moves on, peeks inside the first room; TEN YOUNG PEOPLE, both males and females, utterly silent and serious, sit comfortably on leather couches.

Outside the room, Martin's gaze locks at the tablet fixed next to the door's number; a list with ten name initials alongside a pack of some random numbers.

He goes on, room after room, the exact same view. RANDOM PEOPLE waiting, tablets outside the rooms with similar data.

Room number twelve, the tablet CLICKS, draws his attention. One of the lines flashes repeatedly, the rest fade away.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - FOURTH FLOOR - ROOM 12 -
CONTINUOUS

Nine ADULTS inside the room, Robert, Helen and Don among them. Don chews his gum like a cow, eyeballing Helen's sculpted calves who sits next to him, looks lost in thought. The moment the Young Marine steps inside, music dies.

There is just one couch empty next to Robert, the Young Marine strolls to it, sits down. He trades looks with everyone else, permits himself a smile.

YOUNG MARINE

Hi.

Not a single response.

Helen checks her wristwatch, takes a deep breath. She's about to drift off just like most in there, however with a brisk move of her fingers pinches herself hard, pain drags her back to wakefulness.

The Young Marine grimaces, it's not Helen's looks, but the West Point ring hanging on her silver necklace that tickles his brain.

With a Casanova's attitude, Don engages.

DON

Deep breaths sugar, deep breaths.

Helen looks disturbed, stands up, darts looks left and right, her attitude suggests she's looking for another seat.

The Young Marine bolts upright with a jolt, offers his own.

YOUNG MARINE

Please.

HELEN

Thank you.

The Young Marine and Helen trade seats. Don shoots the Young Marine a hate stare.

DON

See you inside sport.

The Young Marine smirks.

ROBERT

(to Don)

Testosterone won't help you in there, you know.

Caught by surprise from Robert's engagement, Don shifts in his seat.

Helen turns to Robert.

HELEN

Helen.

ROBERT

Robert.

EXT. FANTASY PIT - DAY

A large muddy pit in the middle of a featureless valley. Around it...

Sixty or so half naked teenagers, BOYS and GIRLS, none more than twenty years old, enraged faces, bodies covered in dirt, SCREAM and CHANT in unison; their language is foreign, words are utterly incomprehensible.

The teenagers stare at the emptiness in the middle of the dark brown colored pit.

M2 (V.O.)

The very first stages were pretty scary, but we were prepared for this.

Mud. Cool and peaceful, soothing. Tiny ripples mar the surface, something swims underneath.

A BOY #1 (16) steps closer to the pit. He holds a knife out of front of him, tightens his grip.

He jumps into the pit, lands ankle deep. His face beams confidence. Knees bent, hands raised, ready to fight.

The teenagers CHEER for Boy #1 with shouts of encouragement.

In the middle of the pit, two huge dark, reptilian eyes rise just above the surface.

Boy #1 dives deep into the mud, the monster plunges deep into the mud too.

The mud's peace is greatly disturbed; the flesh of the two battling entities take turns in and out of the mud forcing multiple chunks of that sticky water-and-earth mix to skyrocket left and right.

The mud slaps the spectators across their faces and bodies. No one cares, they keep on CHEERING.

The battle gets more and more violent. On top of the murky brown chaos, blood pools at the surface.

The pit eases its wrath.

The children anticipate the winner, a different kind of victory CHANT follows.

Boy's #1 lifeless bloodied body flows to the top, deformed, spit out like a like a chewed up marshmallow. Silence reeks.

From the bottom of hell, a crocodile explodes to the sky, dives back down, locking the boy's body between its teeth. They both disappear.

Shock. Anger. Revenge. All displaced on the teenagers faces.

M2 (V.O.)

We were not aware of fear or sympathy.

GIRL #1 (17), confident and determined, moves forward holding a handle, she stands ready.

CHANTING resumes.

M2 (V.O.)

The child next to you was the real enemy after all, not the monsters.

Girl #1 steps into the danger zone.

INT./EXT. WALTER REED MILITARY MEDICAL CENTER - DAY

The silhouette of a woman next to the window, living in her own world, gazes at the yard; SOLDIERS lost in thought, some of them handicapped, DOCTORS in white robes alongside them.

INT. WALTER REED MILITARY MEDICAL CENTER - MILLER'S OFFICE - DAY

Doctor Miller loses her yard view, gets back to her desk. She opens the drawer, pulls out a prescription pill bottle, dumps a few pills in her hand, pauses for a moment.

She shoots a look on the wall, multiple psychology diplomas and awards infest half of her office.

Pills rush in her mouth, she knocks them back without benefit of a drink.

A KNOCK on the door, Dr Miller swiftly stuffs her pill bottle into her pocket.

DR MILLER

Yes?

SOLDIER #1 storms inside, thick yellow envelope in his arms, stands at attention.

SOLDIER #1

A package for you Doctor.

Dr Miller grabs the envelope with a brisk move.

DR MILLER

At last!

The soldier's face remains flat without expression.

SOLDIER #1

Have a good day Doctor. And stay safe.

Dr Miller eyes the envelope. It takes her a moment or two to open it, she looks utterly worried.

The soldier exits the doctor's office, she watches him walk away as he shuts the door behind him.

Dr Miller unseals the envelope, pulls out a stack of papers stapled together, stoically reads them.

First page makes her eyes bulge. Something steals her focus, she eyes the window, daydreams; if there is any music or noise, it's in her head.

Back to her reading. Dr Miller turns the page, mumbles.

DR MILLER

This can't be right.

Dr Miller rubs her forehead, goes through the next page.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - SLEEPING CHAMBER - DAY

The vast majority of the capsules are occupied, VR helmets cover the faces within. Clad in identical outfits and black military boots with the *RM* silver tag pinned to the side, suggests some kind of connection between them.

M2 (V.O.)

Nightmares weren't my greatest concern.

It was the constant decreasing in
our numbers as the game progressed.

Drenched in sweat, Helen gets out of bed, shoots looks to the
rest of the beds, only half of them are occupied.

M2 (V.O.)

My mind and heart were with those
who failed and left, but also with
one who stayed.

Martin eyes Helen, who stares at him lovingly. Whispering...

MARTIN

Feeling ready?

HELEN

Think so.

MARTIN

You don't need to worry. I have
faith in you.

Helen eyes Don.

HELEN

Will be tough. D7 is pretty strong.

MARTIN

He's arrogant and stupid. Just take
your time if you face him, and
don't rush in to attack first.

HELEN

It doesn't really matter. Even if I
win them all, I'll have to fight
you at the very end.

MARTIN

You really think I'll get to the
finals?

Martin stares at Robert, who sleeps next to him.

MARTIN

What about R5?

Helen sounds absolute.

HELEN

He's good, but you're better.
Sooner or later, the two of us will
meet in battle.

MARTIN

Don't worry, I'll show mercy.

HELEN

No you won't.

Don's eyes are wide shut, but his ears pay full attention to the chatting duel.

DON

You're both gonna lose.

Martin and Helen trade worried looks.

ROBERT

Dream on, Sport!

EXT. VIRGINIA - LAKE HOUSE - DAY

The abandoned lake house stands alone in the middle of nowhere. If ever there was a path leading to its entrance, it's gone, buried beneath the mud.

In the close distance a military jeep struggles to move over the rough terrain.

The jeep gets next to the house, stops.

Dr Miller gets out, black briefcase in hand, examines the house thoroughly.

It looks abandoned, haunted; its CREAKING noises blast the doctor's ears, he's spooked. He looks hesitant to even take a step forward.

Dr Miller chokes back his reluctance, goes through the door.

INT. VIRGINIA - LAKE HOUSE - DAY

Dust lay over every surface like a snow drift, the only occupants seem to be the spiders working on their webs.

Dr Miller passes by cracked windows and moldy walls, however it's the carved wooden surfaces on the latter that steals her focus; carvings of ghosts and monsters.

Dr Miller is terrified, her body shivers.

Dr Miller trudges on, walks through narrow doorways, peering through the cracked slats. She spots a few too many telephone line cables leading to a room behind a closed door.

Dr Miller KNOCKS twice.

The door opens wide, blinding light emits from within. She cannot see anything inside that room, covers her eyes.

HELEN (O.S.)
You're far from home, doctor.

Caught by surprise, Dr Miller stammers.

DR MILLER
Helen Mands?

The powerful light turns dim in a blink of an eye, revealing a room full of computers and cables, a hacker's paradise.

Clothed in a military uniform, Helen glances over her shoulder at Dr Miller.

HELEN
What I asked for, you got it?

DR MILLER
Yes. And in return?

HELEN
The missing page.

Helen turns, shoots a devilish look at the doctor.

DR MILLER
I need to know the truth.

Helen eyes the briefcase, points at it.

Dr Miller quickly opens her briefcase, trembling hands and clumsy movements betray her anxiety.

Dr Miller retrieves a file binder, drops it on Helen's desk.

Helen gets a book from the drawer. She opens it, an extra hidden page lies within.

The page changes hands, Dr Miller reads it.

Dr Miller breaths heavily, spooked. She looks for a chair, sits down next to Helen.

HELEN
Considering that you met some crazy
bitches in your career, what does
your expertise say about me?

Dr Miller keeps her eyes on the page. Mumbles.

DR MILLER

I don't really know what to say.

Helen brings her face up close next to the doctor's.

HELEN

Don't need to say anything, but you
can do something about it.

Dr Miller looks confused, hands the ripped page back to
Helen, walks away.

HELEN

If I were you, I would go after
anyone who survived.

Dr Miller pauses.

DR MILLER

Army?

HELEN (O.S.)

Fort Benning.

Helen gets back to her computer, gazes at the columns of code
on the screens.

DR MILLER

How will I contact you in case I...

HELEN

My number is in your pocket.

Fist dives in her pocket, Dr Miller feels a piece of paper
within. Surprised...

DR MILLER

How?

HELEN

My hands are faster than your eyes
doctor.

Dr Miller fails to believe this. Was it magic or just speed?

HELEN

We'll keep in touch.

Dr Miller disappears in a hurry.

EXT. FANTASY ARENA - DAY

A canopied stadium-sized arena, illuminated by a million gems fixed on its crystal dome.

M2 (V.O.)

A new challenge every single time,
completely different and more
demanding than the one before.

The teenagers we saw around the pit earlier sit stoic at the far side of the arena; same faces, identical ages, not all of them though, some are missing.

M2 (V.O.)

We were growing in strength,
endurance, agility, day by day.

Some kind of a samurai WARRIOR (40) appears out of thin air, closes the distance at the seated teenagers.

M2 (V.O.)

Somehow, it felt like we were
getting stronger while draining the
power of those that were thrown out
of the system.

A war CHANT begins. The teenagers SING in unison.

The Warrior pauses, gazes at the boys and girls looking for the bravest among them.

Fear, danger, uncertainty bloom on the teenagers faces.

A pale Chinese BOY #3 (15), stands up hesitantly, beelines for the Warrior with growing concern.

The Warrior briskly draws a dagger from his back, darts it forward, target is Boy #3.

M2 (V.O.)

All kinds of martial arts in our
possession.

Boy #3 caught by surprise, rolls to the side, barely survives the blade impaling his body.

Eyes blinking rapidly, Boy #3 bolts upright, his defensive stance is on, anticipates the Warrior's next move.

The Warrior's voice is so calm.

WARRIOR

You're slow. Defeat is inevitable.

A sword forms into the Warrior's fist.

Boy #3 looks for a weapon to confront his enemy's sword.

CHILD #3
(frustrated)
Fight me fairly!

WARRIOR
There is no fairness in this
business.

The Warrior eyes his sword.

WARRIOR
However...

The Warrior throws away his blade.

WARRIOR
Let's see what you've got.

The Warrior surges forward at the speed of a bullet, launches a thunderous punch...

Boy #3 stares at the punch traveling the distance towards his face, tries hard to avoid it, leans his body to the side. He succeeds, however he loses his balance.

The Warrior neatly sidesteps, attacks again using his elbow.

Elbow lands on target, crunches the child's cheek.

Boy #3 staggers to his feet, through his blurred vision he sees the enemy, throws a counter punch.

The Warrior swiftly stops the child's fist with his own, an uppercut to the armpit of the poor boy is enough to dislocate his arm. Boy #3 SCREAMS in pain.

The Warrior kicks the child's knee, bones CRACK, the boy falls to the ground like a dead stick.

The Warrior gazes at the rest of the teenagers, his face is angry, merciless.

M2 (V.O.)
Although the killing scenes were
unbearable a few too many times, we
had to keep moving on.

The Warrior brutally stomps on the child's head, smashes it. He turns to his spectators, utterly apathetic..

ANCIENT WARRIOR
Who's next?

INT. FORT BENNING GEORGIA - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

A tiny white room with a linear steel table; the black sea-through glass instead of a wall and the cameras all around suggest that some kind of an interrogation or an evaluation is underway.

Robert sits alone, stoically anticipates the arrival of... Dr Miller who joins in.

DR MILLER
Major, my name is Doctor Miller.

ROBERT
Doctor?

DR MILLER
Psychology.

Robert grins; feels uncomfortable already. Dr Miller sits.

DR MILLER
You know why I'm here, right?

ROBERT
Yes ma'am.

Dr Miller slams a paper file on the table.

DR MILLER
I read your report.

ROBERT
You're the seventh set of eyes that read it. All six before you, asked me the exact same questions.

DR MILLER
To be honest, I wouldn't be here if I wasn't slightly curious. A hundred hostiles against seven of you.

ROBERT
Didn't count them one by one, but they were more or less that many.

DR MILLER
Did you order the retreat?

ROBERT
That's affirmative.

DR MILLER
Why?

ROBERT
We were outnumbered and outgunned.
There was no chance we could hold
them back.

DR MILLER
Your orders were crystal clear.
Hold position.

ROBERT
We were under radio silence. We
couldn't radio in the incoming
threat.

Dr Miller insists.

DR MILLER
You were ordered to hold your
ground.

ROBERT
The one who gave the order wasn't
there. And my men were not
expendable doctor.

DR MILLER
Still, an order is an order.

Roberts loses it.

ROBERT
Fuck you. You weren't there, I was.
And I was responsible for getting
my men out of there, alive.

DR MILLER
But you didn't. You failed.

ROBERT
Have you ever seen a friend
bleeding to death next to you?

DR MILLER
No.

ROBERT
Have you ever lost six friends in
less than thirty seconds?

DR MILLER

No.

ROBERT

Then go jerk off instead of judging
my motives.

Cool as a cucumber, Dr Miller gets a pen out of her pocket,
takes notes.

DR MILLER

So, all your friends died, but you
survived. Eighty three bodies were
identified around your position.

Dr Miller flips through the pages.

DR MILLER

You didn't kill them all, but
someone else did.

Robert daydreams.

ROBERT

As I said over and over again, I
can't tell for sure. He was one
guy, I think.

DR MILLER

You think?

ROBERT

Yes.

DR MILLER

A guy with a scar on his face?

ROBERT

That's what I remember.

ROBERT

Glowing eyes and a ponytail.

ROBERT

Exactly.

DR MILLER

And he was carrying a sword?

A clumsy pause.

ROBERT

I'm not sure anymore.

DR MILLER
You're not sure?

ROBERT
Yes, I'm not fucking sure. He was moving very fast. He cut a bullet in two for fuck's sake, even now, I can't fucking believe it.

DR MILLER
He cut a bullet in two using his imaginary sword?

ROBERT
Damn right he did!

Robert turns, eyes the black sea-through glass.

ROBERT
You all saw the bodies, what do you think?

Dr Miller shuts the paper file, rises to her feet.

DR MILLER
Who was your commanding officer?

ROBERT (O.S.)
General Matthews.

INT. VIRGINIA - LAKE HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

A wood framed bed, small desk with a laptop on it furnish the darkened room. A cooler sits beside the desk. Dozens of black and white drawings of children with frightened faces and scary monsters adorn the wall.

Helen rushes in, shuts the door, locks. Dozens of empty beer bottles litter the floor.

Arms flail like straw in a hurricane, clothes fly off, crash to the floor. Only underwear remains.

Helen sits at the desk, grabs a beer from the cooler, cracks the bottle's cap with her thumb, takes a swig.

She fires up the laptop, programming code dominates the screen. In another window, overlapping pictures of soldiers, all of them labeled *deceased*.

Another swig of beer, Helen rises to her feet.

She stands still, slowly turns, looks around like processing her next move. Her eye catches the bed.

Helen sets the beer down, moves to the bed, lies gently on the bed sheets. Her moves are slow and precise, almost ceremonial; body first, legs and arms follow, head is the last to feel the softness of the pillow.

Hands on belly, Helen gazes at the images on the wall. She shuts her eyes.

FADE TO BLACK

Furious SCREAMS and CHEERS.

M2 (V.O.)
 They told us, this is just a game.
 I treated it as a test.
 Unfortunately, it was neither.

FADE IN:

EXT. FANTASY - GROUP BATTLEFIELDS - DAY

Several soccer-sized fields like small arenas all lined up in the middle of a featureless land.

On each side of these rectangular arenas, random teenagers carrying all sorts of swords, stand stoic, waiting for a signal to start the fight.

M2 (V.O.)
 Then the group combat stage came
 and everything changed.

Fairness is absent in this round of the game; seven against three, five against four, two against six...

Arena number four; it's six against eight. Among the six, M2/YOUNG MARTIN (18) stands alongside...

D7/YOUNG DON (19), the largest of the four, the size of his long sword matches his huge ego and his gassy mood, he tries hard to be one step ahead of the others.

Just a step behind, stands the dagger bearer R5/YOUNG Robert (17) next to the blue-eyed H1/YOUNG HELEN (17) who's holding a silver bow, west point ring on her necklace.

All of them dart looks to their opponents at the opposite side, adrenaline sky rises.

But for M2, none of this exists. His full attention is focused on H1 who eyes her teammates, looks concerned.

H1
Eight out of ten. They did good.

R5
Better than us.

M2 acknowledges.

M2
We need to work as a team.

D7 looks anxious to engage.

D7
Fuck teams.

R5
You can't win this alone you
retard.

R5 takes a step back.

The sound of DRUMS.

Fists choke the swords' handles, young warriors modifying their battle stance. Blades come forward, eager, hopeful.

A horn BLARES.

A chaos of dust, all sides rush to the middle of their arenas, attacking whoever comes first.

Swords CLANG, blood spills, pain and CRIES take over.

Arena number four; triangular formation, M2's team tactics looks like a plan for survival. They don't rush in to attack.

D7 on the apex of the triangle taking the point, R5 and H1 defend the sides, M2 and the rest slightly behind at the base of the triangle.

In some of the arenas the battle is already over; winning teams gaze at their butchered opponents. Casualties mean nothing to them, those still breathing go to the next round.

Arena number four; The enemies attempt to surround Martin's group. The first of enemies goes down in a swamp of blood. CHILD #4 next to Martin breaks formation, storms ahead; two blades penetrate his body. It's now five against seven.

D7 surges forward, his swings look so overpowered when compared to the two undersized enemies before him who step backwards, luring him away his teammates.

H1
(to D7)
Stay back!

ENEMY #1 flanks R5's side, who performs some artful parrying moves, escapes danger for a moment. ENEMY #2 shoulder checks R5, the latter falls to the ground.

Enemy #1 goes for the kill, R5 launches his blade upwards, stabs Enemy #1 to the heart.

Enemy #2 takes advantage of the moment, attacks the fallen R5 from the back. R5 can't see the incoming threat...

H1 grabs R5's from the arm, pulls him away. Enemy #2 swings again, rips R5's leg.

H1 draws her dagger, launches it away, steel lands on Enemy's #2 neck.

H1 and R5 trades looks, R5 looks in pain, unable to get back up. There is no appreciation on R5's face, just despair.

One more goes down from M2's team, it's four against five.

Every other fight is over, this is the only arena with some action in process.

H1 drags R5 to the far corner, like protecting him. M2 eyes the duo...

M2
(to D7)
Come back, cover me!

D7 doesn't care. He keeps fighting one on one.

D7
Fuck you, pig.

The three enemies move towards H1 and R5, the two appear to be sitting ducks.

M2 gets rid of his opponent, jumps between H1 and the three incoming enemies.

M2
(to H1)
Help him up.

M2 goes after the impossible. One against three. Constantly on the defensive, parries and blocks every single swing...

There is no time left for attacking back...

Drenched in sweat, running on fumes, M2 manages to survive for the moment. Incoming hits become more violent...

R5 is hurt, however he's on his feet.

They both stare at M2's hopeless land stand...

R5

Leave me.

H1 looks lost in thought; she cannot decide what to do.

H1

I, I cannot!

D7 gets finishes his opponent, stabs the sky with his blade, attacks all three from behind, tables turn!

ENEMY #3 turns to face D7. M2, relieved from the pressure, surges forward, kills one. D7 kills another.

It's four against one. ENEMY #4 back steps to his corner, M2 goes after him...

D7 doesn't follow though, he beelines for H1 and R5.

M2 and Enemy #4 engage, D7 attacks R5! H1 steps in...

H1

He can make it!

D7

One less for me pretty eyes.

D7 goes for the kill, H1 kicks R5 hard, launches her fim away, to safety!

H1

You have to go through me first.

D7

Bring it!

Enemy #4 looks pretty skilled, or M2 is just too tired to kill him. M2 drops to his knees, unhurt, yet exhausted.

Enemy #4 raises sword, M2 raises his; blades meet in the middle, M2's flies away his hands. Enemy #4 goes for the kill, M2 rolls like a ballerina, survives.

Enemy #4 shocked by D7's target goes after H1 too!

M2 eyes H1's face, sees despair. M2 springs up, like a wrestler jumps on Enemy #4.

D7 kicks H1 to the stomach who drops to her knees.

M2 jumps on Enemy #4, they land to the ground, rolling towards R5.

The only one still standing up is D7 who launches a devilish smile. Time to end this! D7 storms towards M2, raises his sword... The fallen R5 draws his dagger...

M2 and Enemy #4 wrestle next to R5... R5 stabs Enemy #4 to the heart.

D7's sword descends, lands on M2's face, M2 rolls to the side, barely evades the blow. The tip of D7's blade meets M2's skin right on the cheek.

D7 swings again... The sound of the HORN!

All blades magically disappear! The end of the fights.

D7
(to M2)
Told you I'll see you inside.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - SLEEPING CHAMBER - DAY

Around twenty capsules occupied, rest are empty; Robert, Don, Martin and Helen slowly wake up.

Robert removes his helmet, checks his leg. No sign of any damage, he exhales in relief.

Helen in full consciousness, eyes Don in disgust.

Don's capsule opens up, he stands up, beelines for the exit as if nothing happened.

Martin feels his cheek; his fingers drown in blood. A scar! A nurse approaches him, eyes wide in shock.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - COMPUTER CONTROL #1 - DAY

An auditorium-like office dominated by computers and GEEKS, multiple screens dedicated to each user.

Something is wrong, faces utterly frustrated, they punch buttons like crazy...

One of the doors opens wide.

Reynolds followed by four SENIOR ANALYSTS stride right for the office all the way to the other side of the room.

Heads snap, necks crack; unaccustomed to seeing the big boss in person.

Reynolds enters Adam's lab.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - LAB TWO - CONTINUOUS

Clad in a green polo shirt and high concern, Adam goes back and forth between the screens.

Adam notices Reynolds, pauses.

REYNOLDS
My system has no glitches.

Adam gets back to work avoiding eye contact.

ADAM
No sir, it doesn't.

REYNOLDS
Your message suggested otherwise.

ADAM
It's hard to explain this.

SENIOR ANALYST #1
Specimen M2 was injured inside the simulation, how did the injury transfer out of it?

Adam looks unwilling to go on, lowers head.

Reynolds shoots a *shut up* look at Senior analyst #1.

REYNOLDS
Try me.

Adam chooses his next words carefully, like his own life depends on it.

ADAM
We experienced a temporary disruption in the system. A transient fault that corrected itself actually.

Adam points to one of his screens; a huge chunk of weird computer code. A part of it is highlighted.

REYNOLDS
A glitch, like a bug?

SENIOR ANALYST #2
A bug is diff..

REYNOLDS
Shut it.

Adam eyes Reynolds.

ADAM
A bug is a genuine functionality issue. It refers to some error in the code. We can find it, and fix it. A glitch suggests something more mysterious and unknowable inflicted by some surprise inputs or stuff outside the realm of code...

Reynolds interrupts Adam abruptly.

REYNOLDS
In English.

Adam types in a few commands, some images deploy on screen.

ADAM
This is the group combat stage.
Team against team.

Another set of keyboard commands.

ADAM
There are seventeen rules of engagement, weapons, battleground limits, time, formation...

Adam points to rule number seven.

ADAM
Result.

REYNOLDS
And?

ADAM
The fight ends when one team is unable to go on, meaning all of its members are dead.

Weapons disappear, users are unable to move, and they're kicked out of the system in a few seconds after the final fatality. The session shutdowns.

Reynolds doesn't get it.

REYNOLDS

Get to the point.

ADAM

The teams are programmed to fight each other, however specimen D7 decided to go against his team mates.

SENIOR ANALYST #2

Decided? You're talking about free will?

Adam looks lost in thought.

ADAM

No, they're incapable of making such choices.

REYNOLDS

Then what?

ADAM

I can't really tell sir. Users are labeled as friendlies or foes. Yet, D7 went after some friendlies, just before the last one of his enemies die. This has never happened before...

Adam eyes the ceiling, reeks of desperation and guilt.

ADAM

However, nowhere in our code is there anything preventing this.

SENIOR ANALYST #3

Friendly means that...

ADAM

It means that someone fights alongside you, nothing prevents you from attacking him though.

REYNOLDS

What?

SENIOR ANALYST #1
So D7 exploited our code?

ADAM
Theoretically, a non existing part
of it, more or less.

Reynolds's tone and manner are absolute.

REYNOLDS
(to the senior analysts)
Get out.

The senior analysts exit Adam's office.

REYNOLDS
What's D7's tournament projection?

ADAM
Top three.

REYNOLDS
What version is he running?

ADAM
Twenty four point seven.

Reynolds looks concerned.

REYNOLDS
You know what I want from you,
right?

Reynolds takes a deep breath.

ADAM
Yes sir. I'll fix this. It won't
happen again.

Adam's stares at Reynolds stomping away, smirks in disgust.

EXT. FANTASY COLOSSEUM - DAY

A near replica of the Roman Colosseum, a gladiator pit.

Just twelve teenagers stand in the center, their eyes dart
left and right anticipating their opponent, among them M2,
H1, D7 and R5.

A huge brown haired animal that looks like a massive capybara
charges them.

Various sorts of blades appear to the ground next to the eight children.

M2 (V.O.)
Ancient weapons. We mastered all.

Each one of them chooses a weapon; D7 chooses the long-sword, H1 the dagger, M2 the katana, R5 the spear. Their defensive stance is on, they hold their ground.

The capybara slows down at the sight of the twelve, like the animal has second thoughts about the attack.

MASTER (V.O.)
Do not draw a sword to kill a fly.

M2 and H1 lower their weapons, D7 eyes the two, does the same. The rest of the children do not follow suit, keep their weapons up, nor R5 who steps forward.

R5
Fight me!

The capybara dissolves into thin air.

R5
Show yourself!

A THUNDEROUS noise coming from the sky.

A fire-drake dives down on the children like an eagle locked on its pray.

Steel bars arise around R5 forming four walls of a cage.

R5 looks scared and uncertain. Lost in thought, he darts looks at M2 and H1. Dead scared, arms drop, like the weight of the spear is just too much to bear.

The dragon approaches fast, a thunderous ROAR follows, R5 accepts his defeat, shuts his eyes for a single moment.

MASTER (V.O.)
The best do not think. They act!

R5 opens his eyes, hope and determination overrun his spirit, looks determined to win this.

With all of his power, he stabs the sky, enraged, SCREAMS back to the dragon.

R5 bends his knees, leaps hard, launches high into the air.

The dragon's mouth opens wide, a fireball conjures. Time passes slower and slower. R5 sneers in rage.

The fireball launches away..

TO THE TEENAGERS

Few of the teenagers CHEER, others mumble.

TEASING SHOT - PROBABLE OUTCOME #1

M2 finds himself in R5's shoes surging against the dragon. His katana turns into an icy blade.

M2 blocks fire with ice.

TEASING SHOT - PROBABLE OUTCOME #2

H1 is now against the dragon. Same spot as R5. She leans to the side, avoids the incoming fire.

TO THE TEENAGERS

D7 shuts his eyes.

D7
(emotionless)
Just die.

TO R5

R5 shoots an angry look at the dragon.

He slips sideways, body dodges the fire, the tip of his spear surges for the dragon's neck.

Time back to normal, with a brisk move of his weapon, R5 pierces the dragon's throat in one movement.

Dragon crashes dead to the ground, R5 lands next to its head.

TO D7

D7 looks utterly disappointed.

D7
Lucky mofo.

INT. VIRGINIA - LAKE HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Helen on bed, sound asleep.

Her laptop works relentlessly; flashing pictures of marines and rolling lines of code one after the other. Laptop BEEPS. Everything stops.

Robert's picture pinned to the top, a blinking tag to the bottom says *Discharged*.

Helen's eyes snap open, she leans her head to the side stares at the laptop.

She slowly gets out of bed, eyes widening in surprise. She approaches the laptop. Another window pops up, it's an email from Dr Miller. She opens the email, reads it.

HELEN
New Orleans!

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Lots of people eat their lunch, whispering chats take place here and there. Adam sits on his own, at a table in the middle of the room, so does Helen at a corner table.

Martin strolls up to Helen.

MARTIN
Still here.

HELEN
You too.

MARTIN
I got lucky I guess.

HELEN
Always been so modest?

A smile escapes Martin's lips.

HELEN
So why did you leave?

Martin thinks of a good answer, he finds none.

MARTIN
Not really sure.

Helen's eyes play over.

HELEN

Perhaps you were after something.

Martin stops eating.

MARTIN

What about you?

HELEN

What about me?

MARTIN

Why did you join this?

HELEN

They thought I was too crazy and I needed a fix.

Martin is stunned.

MARTIN

To tell you the truth, I saw that coming.

Helen wears her silliest grin.

HELEN

How so?

MARTIN

You're smart, beautiful, skilled enough to go through the third stage, you could have chosen anything else. Yet, here you are.

Martin blushes.

HELEN

Honestly?

MARTIN

Yeah. Honestly.

Helen stares at her plate.

HELEN

Would you ever cross a line just for one more day with someone you lost, no matter the cost?

Helen's eyes rise.

HELEN

Ever felt that way?

Adam walks by Helen. Leans to her ear.

ADAM
 (whispers)
 Too many sessions have driven you
 crazy, love.

Helen gazes at the chair that Martin was sitting a few moments ago. It's empty, Martin wasn't real.

INT. NEW ORLEANS - BAR - NIGHT

The filthy bar is tens of conversations told in loud voices, all of them competing with the metal music dominating the atmosphere. Paint chips hang loose from the walls.

COLLEGE DROPOUTS, young wannabe-GANGSTERS, LADIES tolerant to smoke and body odor, swing their bodies to the rhythm of the shiny jukebox.

At the far end of the bar, Robert enjoys his drink; his long tangled hair and mutton chops beard says nothing about his military past, his US army boots however suggest otherwise.

Clothed in a lawyer's black suit and genuine confidence, Helen enters the bar.

Helen pauses, scans through the smoke with clear purpose. So out of place, she draws the patrons' attention. She cruises to the bar, so slowly, like she desires even more attention.

Robert's eye catches Helen, stays in his comfort zone nevertheless. A swig of scotch is his next move.

Helen pauses next to Robert, orders a drink.

HELEN
 Beer. Frozen.

The ugly BARTENDER (50s) acknowledges, his eyes take full stock of Helen's beauty.

Helen gets a fifty dollar bill out of her pocket, slides it over the bar.

Helen sounds so serious.

HELEN
 Make it fast, keep the change.

The bartender stuffs the cash in his pocket, moves to the fridge behind the bar.

With delicate care, he places the beer before Helen.

BARTENDER

On the house.

Helen turns to Robert, she wastes no time.

HELEN

You're a hard man to find, Major.

Robert remains speechless.

HELEN

Far from home, too.

Robert shoots a thousand-yard stare at Helen, another swig of scotch follows. He drops a few bucks on the counter, places his empty glass on top.

Robert turns, he's ready to leave but Helen briskly grabs his arm, her powerful grip forces a surprised Robert to reconsider his exit.

Robert trades looks with Helen, a rare moment without words.

GANGSTER #1 (40s), an albino gun-carrying womanizer, strongly build, finds the perfect moment to engage.

GANGSTER #1

I love the ass of a lawyer.

Helen launches a fake smile, releases her grip from Robert's arm. She gazes at the gangster.

HELEN

The real question is, do you also love pain?

Gangster #1 licks his lips, intrigued.

GANGSTER #1

Do you?

HELEN

No man's made me scream so far, if that's what you're asking.

Helen turns, grabs her drink.

GANGSTER #1

Well, get rid of the nigger and try me instead.

Robert's eyes bulge, he hates the n-word.

Robert and Gangster #1 stare at each other, face to face, both unfazed and dangerous, not sure what happens next.

A group of THREE MASSIVE GUYS (40s), gangster's buddies, come closer, puffing chests and egos, their stance does all the talking; *we got your back*.

Helen tastes her beer, loves it. Bottle rests gently on the bar counter. She turns, her palm meets Robert's shoulder.

HELEN

Give me a second please.

Helen's fist explodes forward, smashes the Gangster's face, body collapses to the dirty floor a couple meters away.

The insanely powerful blow stuns Robert way more than the rest of the bar's patrons.

One by one the Gangster's friends attack Helen. Before Robert even blinks, Helen lunges forward, takes on everyone at blazing speed.

She attacks with overpowered killing punches to her opponents' heads, bodies, legs...

Robert gazes at her moves; Helen's body leans in crazy angles, moves insanely fast for a human, dodges everything thrown at her, kicks ass and takes names.

Robert's brain tingles; Helen's agility rings a bell or two.

Helen knocks everyone out cold, badly hurt. She shows no mercy even for the fallen ones; additional violent blows follow, breaks legs and bones.

A knife-wielding hand lashes out, hesitant at first, GANGSTER #2 goes after Helen, who stretches her body backwards like the most flexible of ballerinas, evades the blow.

Gangster #2 attacks again, Helen launches a punch against the knife; the two of them close the distance.

Knife meets the fist, the silver blade breaks in two.

A powerful roundhouse kick follows, Helen launches Gangster #2 over the counter.

No one else looks willing to engage. Helen fixes her hair. Not a single drop of sweat or anxiety.

Back to the bar already, Helen eyes Robert who gazes at her palm. A single drop of blood grows rapidly.

ROBERT
Your hand!

Helen pays no attention to her hand.

HELEN
I know. Skin bleeds easier than
steel.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - COMPUTER CONTROL #1 - NIGHT

Ten GEEKS work overnight, lights in Adam's office are on.

Adam comes out of his office holding a tablet, shoots looks
left and right. Back to his tablet...

ADAM
Jodie, Finn, Parker.

The fingers of three geeks, faces unclear, freeze.

Adam works his tablet's screen.

ADAM
Chapter eight, sector six point
two, lines five thousand and eight
to nine thousand. Double check
everything.

ON ADAM'S TABLET SCREEN

Screen resets. Whatever existed a moment ago, it's gone.

A huge chunk of code rolls down the screen. A few too many
highlighted lines.

One of them reads *beach - stage 6*.

BACK TO SCENE

ADAM
Report to me first thing in the
morning.

INT. FANTASY BOXING RINGS - DAY

Four boxing rings with two fighters each, instead of ropes
two layers of razor wire block the way out.

M2, D7, R5 and H1 facing four other teenagers.

The sound of a DRUM. Fist fight.

M2 (V.O.)
Thirty seconds per round.

Kicks and punches are thrown left and right, some are blocked, a few others land successfully.

IN D7'S RING

D7 doesn't hold back, attacks in full force. D7 knocks his opponent down pretty easily, however he steps back, waits for the poor boy to stand back up. D7 surges forward, lands a few more hits, rag dolls him.

Rinse and repeat. D7 toys with him and he enjoys it.

IN R5'S RING

R5 against a massive girl. R5 receives a few too many vicious blows to his body, he doesn't go down nevertheless. R5 retaliates, backs his opponent up with a shoulder push.

R5 looks worried, darts a look at D7's ring. Distracted for a moment R5 gets kicked hard to the knee, a foot stomp follows, crashing his leg. R5 goes down. A fist comes down his face, R5 rolls to the middle of the ring.

Another drum BEAT. Two daggers appear to the middle of the ring out of thin air.

R5's opponent utterly frustrated dives for one of the daggers. R5 grabs one first, shoves it in his enemy's neck.

IN M2'S RING

This is no fist fight anymore, each holding a dagger.

Blocking or parrying everything, both of them seem equal in dexterity and skill. They attack once, and then back off.

None of them looks willing to go out in full throttle. They just go one exchanging cautious stabs to the air.

IN D7'S RING

D7 grabs a dagger, steps on the other one trapping it.

His opponent is down at the far corner, conquered by fear, he watches D7 kick the dagger out of the ring.

D7 approaches slowly, leans forward, stabs his SCREAMING for mercy opponent twice on both thighs.

D7 throws his dagger away, moves to the center of the ring, like waiting for the next round to begin.

IN H1'S RING

Ignoring the daggers on the ground, H1 is pinned in the corner by her enemy, barbed wire shreds H1's back.

H1 screams, wraps a leg behind her enemy and lunges forward, tripping her enemy and landing atop.

H1 mounts her opponent, lands massive blows with her fists. Blood pours out of her opponent's nose, mouth and eyes, H1 stops, her face full of disgust.

One more drum BEAT. A pair of swords appears at the middle.

H1 stands, strolls for the swords, grabs both. With a brisk move, she throws them out of the ring.

IN R5'S RING

R5 stands alone, victorious, no blood or fallen opponent in the ring. He darts looks at the other three rings.

IN M2'S RING

The sword fight is a glorious display of skill and speed. Continuous blows like there is no tomorrow.

Sweat crashes to the clean floor; not a single drop of blood anywhere to be found. M2 and his opponent's agility is off the charts. It looks like they keep going on forever...

IN H1'S RING

H1 looks more interested in M2's encounter.

A drum BEAT.

All blades are gone, two pistols materialize in the middle of the ring. H1 goes after the gun.

IN D7'S RING

D7's opponent pinned down in his corner bleeding like a pig, gazes at the impaled sword's grip resting against his stomach. D7 closes the distance, two guns rise.

A shot CRACKS the poor boy's skull.

D7 throws one gun away. One more shot from the second gun to the heart. D7 flashes a wicked grin.

Everything but him disappears.

IN M2'S RING

M2 and his opponent wrestle standing, each holding a gun.
BANG BANG!

Wrestling stops. The two warriors trade looks. Can't tell who's hurt and who's not.

IN H1'S RING

H1 watches M2 with frantic hope. Hand shaking. She mumbles.

H1
Please God... help me.

IN M2'S RING

Blood drips from both combatants. The enemy mounts M2, has two weak hands around M2's throat.

M2's enemy grimaces in pain. He slinks away, empty hands sliding away from M2's neck. Two bullet wounds to the stomach.

M2's opponent rolls over to the ground, breaths heavily. M2 fights to keep his eyes open. He staggers to his feet...

IN H1'S RING

H1 raises gun, a single bullet visible in the chamber.

BANG! Head-shot. Everything disappears.

Her eyes whip back to M2.

IN M2'S RING

M2 has his sights locked on his dying opponent. M2 looks ready to collapse too. His legs weak, his body so heavy.

The sound of DRUMS.

INT. ATLANTA - COFFEE SHOP - DAY

The interior of the cafe is warm and cheery with bright lights and colorful walls. It's early, coffee machines warming up, the young BARISTA (30s) checks the supplies, does some cleaning.

Just a few CUSTOMERS keeping to themselves. Helen and Robert enter, find an empty table, sit down.

ROBERT

Who is that guy of yours?

HELEN

You'll see.

The door swings open, Dr Miller and a blast of cold wind rush inside; Dr Miller spots Helen.

HELEN

Doctor!

Dr Miller folds her leather briefcase on her chest, a frightened look on her face.

She beelines for Helen, stares at Robert sitting next to her, trying hard to figure out who he is.

Dr Miller stops next to Helen, eyes Robert who responds with an angry stare.

ROBERT

You?

Robert is about to explode.

HELEN

Calm down, she's here to help.

Robert eases his wrath.

DR MILLER

(to Robert)

I'm sorry, I didn't know.

Helen gestures for Dr Miller to sit down. Dr Miller sits, briefcase choking under her arms.

ROBERT
How can she help us?

HELEN
I promised you answers, let's start with the facts.

Helen turns to the doctor, gazes at the briefcase. Dr Miller hesitantly opens it, a huge file reveals within.

HELEN
During the last four years, more than five hundred soldiers participated in RM's sixth sense experiment. Most of them were expertly trained soldiers, marines, navy seals, green berets, some of the best men and women our country could provide.

Dr Miller searches for a paper in his file.

HELEN
And this is just the US army list.

Dr Miller hands Robert a list of names.

HELEN
After the completion of their engagement in the project, one hundred and two soldiers were assigned in various black ops, twenty seven of them to my knowledge. Although they were the best of the best, indisputably, none of them came back alive.

Robert keeps his eyes on the list.

DR MILLER
Well almost none, as one survived to be precise.

HELEN
Don't forget to mention that all of them shared one thing in common. No families, no kids, no nothing.

Robert looks frustrated.

ROBERT
Some of these names, I know them.

HELEN
Sure you do.

Dr Miller reveals another paper.

DR MILLER
Before they participate in RM's
PTSD sessions, I personally dealt
with nineteen of them.

Robert shoots a scary look at Dr Miller.

DR MILLER
Thing is, that none of them were
suffering from any kind of combat
stress.

HELEN
However...

DR MILLER
Under General Matthews' orders,
they still joined the project.

Another set of papers changes hands. Robert goes through them
thoroughly. Looks so serious.

DR MILLER
This is one of my papers, a long
time ago.

ROBERT
What's that?

DR MILLER
Proof that although their system
appeared to work flawlessly, all
test subjects developed severe
mental instability during battle.

Helen leans back, rubs her head. An awkward moment.

DR MILLER
That happened to you too, didn't
it?

Dr Miller and Robert fall silent, stare at Helen who looks in
pain, or just discomfort.

HELEN

You need to understand this, they said they will treat you, make you better. But instead all of you failed and in order to cover it up they sent you back to the meat grinder.

Robert is in shock, drifts into deep thought.

ROBERT

You said that just one made it back alive. You meant me?

DR MILLER

Yes.

HELEN

And now you know why Martin saved you, don't you?

ROBERT

The demon? He was real?

Helen eyes Dr Miller, her tone and manner absolute.

HELEN

When is the registration date for the next group?

EXT. FANTASY RIVER - DAY

A river flows at a languid pace, fed from a massive waterfall. Despite its size, it sounds more like a stately home garden than a powerful display of nature.

D7, R5, H1 and M2, move towards the waterfall, their utterly worried faces do not suit their lax pace.

Across the river, a colorful wall made of a northern lights-like complex, rises up to the sky, expands rapidly like a magic barrier the closer the teenagers get.

M2 eyes H1, permits himself a sympathetic smile. H1 responds with a shivering voice.

H1

All I ever craved was the truth. But now, it's much more complicated.

M2

Hey, relax. You'll be fine!

With a gentle move, H1 removes her necklace, hands it to M2. H1's gaze looks insanely tantalizing.

H1
Just for once, this is all I need.

M2 cradles the necklace into his palm.

H1
Do not forget of me.

M2 looks so confused, shakes his head...

H1 crosses the river, D7 and R5 go through the magic wall, disappear to the other side.

M2 eyes the ring tangled on the necklace, shuts his eyes. He wears his silliest grin. Mumbles.

M2
Fuck it.

M2 surges forward, the necklace chokes in his fist.

EXT. FANTASY BEACH - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The northern lights wall stands atop a sandy beach.

TO THE SEA

On top of an identical dragon stone Master fights against a water wraith using his flaming sword. Master looks like having some fun with the wraith.

ON THE BEACH

M2 steps through the colorful wall from the other side.

TO THE SEA

The Wraith dodges Master's sword, disengages, and flies towards Martin. Master leaps after it.

ON THE BEACH

Caught by surprise and fear, M2 gazes at the incoming threat, frozen in time and place.

Wraith raises its sword, ready to bring it down on Martin, but the Master crashes down, his flaming sword slicing through the Wraith's neck, landing on one knee.

MASTER

What's your name boy?

Stunned, M2 eyes the wraith's headless body.

M2

M2.

Master rises to his feet, bows to Martin.

M2

What was that?

Master points to the sea, the sky, then the dragon stone.

MASTER

Anxiety, fear, death.

M2

(mumbles)

Where are we? Where are the others?

Master rests his flaming sword, stabs it to the ground. Flames snuff out.

MASTER

You're one of the last four. And this is where you must prove your worth.

M2's clenched fist draws Master's attention.

MASTER

Where did you get that?

M2

It's a gift.

Master marvels, shoots a smirk.

MASTER

One of the competitors.

A single nod by M2 follows.

MASTER

How improbable.

Master turns to the east, gazes at the far end of the beach.

TO THE EAST

Barely distinguishable, D7 confronts a wraith, struggling to his feet, defends himself expertly nevertheless, under the supervision of another Master.

TO MASTER AND M2

M2 whips his gaze at the west.

TO THE WEST

H1 fights off an identical wraith to D7's while down on her knees. The faint figure of a Master intervening, brings an end to the confrontation.

MASTER (V.O.)
So, what's her name?

TO MASTER AND M2

M2
H1.

Master tries hard to hide his surprise. Fails miserably.

MASTER
One of the four? Really?

M2 turns serious, there is not a single forgiving feature in his steel-face and dead eyes.

M2
Do not mock me.

Master chokes back his frustration.

MASTER
You don't have a future with H1.
One of you will eventually die,
thrown out of the system and you'll
never see each other again. That's
the only rule at the end, there can
be only one.

M2
I know.

MASTER
Your feelings for her are your
greatest weakness.

Even if the two of you meet at the very end, you'll lose either the victory or your heart.

There is a clumsy pause in Master's voice, as if a past memory of his came back to mind, but he sets his jaw, says nothing.

MASTER

For your sake, I hope someone else gets her before you do.

M2

D7 or R5.

MASTER

Or the monsters.

M2 stares at the dragon stones.

M2

Not if I beat them all.

MASTER

Right.

M2

Will you teach me how to beat them?

MASTER

That's why I'm here.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - COMPUTER CONTROL #2 - NIGHT

Four computers surrounded by stainless steel, a chamber the size of a small bank vault. This is not the average geek's paradise, this is a safe room.

FINN (30s), an average looking bloke wearing shades and at night, drinks his coffee, eyes his screen. Relaxed and calm, this looks like another day at the office.

ON FINN'S SCREEN

A window pops up.

Several lines of code move to the the top.

BACK TO SCENE

Finn rests his glass on the desk. Frowns. Scratches his head. He tries hard to understand the highlighted text.

Finn moves to the computer next to his own. A check.

FINN

An update?

Finn writes something on a post-it note. He rests it on the screen. Another swig of coffee follows.

EXT. FANTASY BEACH - DAY

M2 and Master, side by side, perform an artful swordplay against the wind. Their movement is identical and gracious. The Master's sword stands alone just a few feet behind the two, they're using wooden sticks instead of steel.

Master pauses. M2 stops too.

MASTER

Wraiths are the most powerful weapons of this world and your greatest enemy. They're carriers of death which you cannot fight with anger or rage. You will just make them stronger.

Master restarts the drill. A couple of swings follow, M2 copies them.

MASTER

They are copies of all the beasts inside you, your flaws, weaknesses, doubts and fears. But also, they play on your own terms. The brain is your personal playground, and you set the rules to beat them.

A new pause. Master grimaces sarcastically.

MASTER

All four of you will try to pass the test, however the beast can't die if more than one stands against it.

Master attacks the emptiness ahead of him with much greater enthusiasm and passion than before.

MASTER

The other three must fall, before
you have a chance at killing it.

M2 gets it.

The moment Master restarts his fencing drill, a raging SCREAM
blasts the beach. For a moment, M2's eyes leave his master,
stare at the far end of the beach.

Master notices.

MASTER

(furious)

Don't worry about them! Focus!

M2 gets back to his training procedure.

MASTER

Let nothing distract you.

The last sunbeams for the day, night is close.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - COMPUTER CONTROL #2 - DAY

The massive vault door opens. JODIE (30s) and PARKER (30s),
have a whispering chat, they move inside.

JODIE

Morning.

Finn rubs his eyes, looks tired.

PARKER

(sarcastic)

Night shift worth the extras!

Finn's middle finger rises.

FINN

That's three in a row, bitch.

Jodie shoots a kiss to Finn.

JODIE

Go take a shower, we got this.

Finn paces away. The post-it note draws Parker's attention.

PARKER

Updates?

Finn grimaces.

FINN

Have fun.

Finn gets out of the room, the vault door shuts with a THUD.

Jodie checks her emails. No new ones. Turns curious.

JODIE

Strange.

PARKER

Huh?

JODIE

Adam didn't email me anything.

Parker looks unconcerned. Time for some sarcasm.

PARKER

Are you logged in?

JODIE

Really?

Parker sits down. Grabs the yellow note, eyes it.

PARKER

Just a few lines. I'll debug it.

Jodie sounds absolute.

JODIE

No!

Parker trades looks with Jodie, her tone surprises him.

JODIE

The beach stage is already in progress.

PARKER

So?

Jodie grabs the phone, makes the call.

JODIE

(hesitant)

Sir, this is Jodie. Sorry to bother you, sir, but, hmm, I got no email from you regarding yesterday's update and the beach stage is currently in progress.

ADAM (V.O.)
What update?

EXT. FANTASY BEACH - DAY

M2 stands stoic next to the water, stares at the dragon stones. Master closes up on him.

MASTER
What do you think? Are you ready?

Caught by surprise, M2 turns. Eyes the shiny blade that his Master carries.

M2
What exactly am I supposed to do?

MASTER
Join the water, defend yourself against any illusions, get to the dragon stone, climb all the way up to the top, light up your blade, kill whatever dares to challenge you. Simple as that.

Sounds easy, M2 looks ready, points to the Master's blade.

M2
Can I have one too?

MASTER
(eyes his blade)
Only the worthy..

Hesitant at first, Master shakes head in affirmation.

MASTER
Of course.

With a swift move, Master draws his blade, flings the sand; a second identical sword flies high up in the air, lands into M2's hands, his grip is strong.

Couple of swings are just enough for M2 to show off his dexterity to his master. M2 flashes his eyebrows, Master responds with a serious look.

M2
Sorry, master.

MASTER
Spare me the apologies. Now, watch and learn.

Master eyes the sea, sprints towards the water.

The moment Master meets the water, sea waves rise as great mountains, anger in the form of water, turbulent, unforgiving. Bolts of lightning strike at the Master.

He jumps right and left, slashes the water every now and then, deftly escapes the lightning strikes. With every swing of his sword the waves launch away, clearing his path towards the dragon stone.

He gets to the dragon stone. Like a free-climbing champion he gets to the top in a few moments, stabs the rock several times on his way up.

At the top, Master stretches his body, flexes muscles. He swings his blade, dips it into the lava, lights it up. He takes an offensive position, waits for his enemy to appear.

A medium sized wave goes after him, transforms into a man-sized Wraith. The Wraith attacks, Master blocks the strike, retaliates, chops the wraith's head off.

The water calms its wrath; so does the wind and the sky. Master turns to M2, who watches him stunned.

MASTER

Your turn!

TO THE SHORE

M2 looks so hesitant. It's not just the wraith...

MASTER (V.O.)

The others are moving already. What are you waiting for?

M2's eyes dart left and right, he can't see D7 or H1 nor R5, but the ocean at both sides of the beach BULGES.

M2

(to himself)

Let's do this.

M2 storms to the water, the raging waves and lightning reappear. The attacks seem more powerful than before, M2 focuses on avoiding those first.

Like being hit by a powerful punch to the chest, a huge wave blasts his body back to the shore.

TO THE DRAGON STONE

Master chokes back his frustration.

TO THE SHORE

M2 gets up, tries again. Rushes to the sea.

He parries the bolts, blocks a wave, a couple of swings follow, but that's not enough to survive the attacks. The sea sends him back to the shore.

M2 gathers himself, attacks once again. He manages to move a little further into the ocean, but the result is the same; a wave knocks him back unconscious, laid out on the beach.

TO THE DRAGON STONE

Master shakes head, disheartened.

TO THE SHORE

M2 comes back to his senses, utterly frustrated, shoots a look at his Master.

MASTER (V.O.)

Clear your mind, give up your fear,
be the master of your anger.

M2 looks exhausted, fresh cuts to his body and healed scars on his face pound his determination.

M2 attacks one last time, his moves are way slower this time around. The very first lightning bolt that lands on his blade wipes out the last of his energy.

A second lightning bolt follows, blasts M2 back to the beach. He tries hard to keep his eyes on, fails miserably; he's out of his senses.

Master lands next to M2's fully scarred body.

MASTER

To challenge the boss, you have to
go through its minions first. And
that's the end of the lesson.

EXT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - STREET - DAY

A block away from the main gate, Helen and Robert stare at the busy entrance, both are motionless; lots of soldiers go in, through checks and armed guards.

ROBERT
What chances do I have?

HELEN
To survive insanity?

ROBERT
Yeah.

HELEN
I can't make any promises to be honest. You just have to trust me.

ROBERT
After all I've seen and heard, it's hard to trust anyone.

HELEN
I know. Faith however, is what we both are left with.

ROBERT
(curious)
You know, you never told me how you gained access to their system.

HELEN
I joined in.

Robert grimaces in disbelief.

ROBERT
And how did you get out?

HELEN
I never said I did.

ROBERT
Huh?

HELEN
All it matters now, is that once I activate the virus, you need to remember.

ROBERT
Remember what?

HELEN
It's time. Go.

Robert utterly baffled, paces towards the gates. He darts a look at Helen who watches him apprehensive.

HELEN
I got your back.

EXT. FANTASY BEACH - DAY

M2 performs an artful sword play against the wind. Master supervises everything.

The Master's palm opens wide, this is one of his magic tricks no doubt! R5 appears out of thin air in front of M2. R5 looks so eager to fight..

M2 takes a step backwards.

MASTER
Some warriors look fierce, but are mild. Some seem timid, but are vicious. Look beyond appearances. Position yourself for the advantage.

R5 wastes no time, raises his bow, an arrow flies away the moment it loads, M2 masterfully parries it, his sword stays down. Is it fear or just confusion?

Another arrow loading in R5's bow..

MASTER
Competition must not trouble you boy. It should just make you better.

The arrow explodes away, M2 leans to the side, with a brisk move of his sword cuts the flying arrow in two.

M2 turns angry. He storms forward, leaps towards R5, blade swings upwards like a blacksmith's hammer, descends towards its anvil...

Master shuts his fist, R5 disappears.

M2's blade pounds into the sand.

MASTER
Told you, it is useless to face revenge with anger.

Another trick from the Master, D7's hulky figure carrying a longsword, ready to confront M2. M2 eyes D7's huge blade, eyes grow big.

MASTER

A true warrior never worries about his fear.

M2 trades looks with Master.

M2

(shouts)

Who said I'm afraid?

M2 surges forward. M2's katana sweeps back so does D7's. Blades slash, they meet in the middle... CLANG!

D7 overpowers M2, the katana slips off M2's hands, lands a few many meters away..

MASTER

A warrior must take care that his spirit is never broken.

M2 doesn't seem to care. He attacks D7 with his fists. It's now fists against a longsword, the moment they meet...

D7's figure dissolves into dust.

MASTER

When your temper rises, lower your fists. When your fists rise, lower your temper.

M2 looks lost in thought, yet he looks so angry. One last magic trick. H1, weaponless, eyes M2.

M2 relaxes his muscles, from his clenched fists to his face. Master shakes head utterly disheartened.

MASTER

Weapons change, warriors don't.

M2 trades looks with Master. M2 looks unwilling to fight. Master draws his sword, stabs H1 in to his heart.

MASTER

She will show you no mercy, fool.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - COMPUTER CONTROL #2 - DAY

Jodie, Finn and Parker utterly frustrated work their computers like madmen. The vault door opens slowly, Adam storms inside.

ADAM
What update?

No one looks eager to engage first.

ADAM
(angry)
Speak!

JODIE
We found a new piece of code within
the beach segment.

PARKER
We're checking it as we speak sir.

Finn drops the bomb.

FINN
It's a virus sir, we've been
hacked.

Adam looks genuinely shocked.

ADAM
But it's a closed system.

JODIE
Meaning we've been hacked from the
inside.

PARKER
Source is one of the last four.

Adam takes his moment.

ADAM
Who?

The three geeks trade suspicious looks.

JODIE
M2.

ADAM
Are you absolutely sure?

Finn moves to another screen.

FINN
Check this out sir.

ON SCREEN

Lines of unreadable code. One section highlighted.

BACK TO SCENE

FINN
Check the time. It started the
moment M2 walked through the wall.

Adam acknowledges.

ADAM
What does it do?

PARKER
Nothing.

Adam wears his silliest grimace.

ADAM
Nothing?

FINN
Yes, nothing.

PARKER
It just looks for system info.

JODIE
No register or extract commands, no
write dump, just read and save.

ADAM
What does it read? What data is it
after?

Finn trades looks with Parker and Jodie.

FINN
We can't tell for sure at the
moment.

PARKER
We need more time.

JODIE

The code is so strange, so unreal.
It goes back and forth like being
written by an amateur, or a genius.

FINN

Like he knew we would track
it alright, but it would...

PARKER

This is definitely not one
man's job.

ADAM

You got six hours to solve this
riddle. The stage has to finish
before the new recruits join in.

EXT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - STREET - DAY

Helen gets a photo out of her pocket, eyes it. It's her and
Martin, hugging, on some beach, long time ago.

Photo rests back to her pocket, Helen beelines for the gates.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. VIRGINIA - FORT BELVOIR - NIGHT

Helen strides into GENERAL JONES' (60s) office.

GENERAL JONES

Have a seat, Lieutenant.

Helen shuts the door, sits down.

GENERAL JONES

You know this may end up as a one
way trip, right?

HELEN

Yes, sir.

Jones takes his time. A grimace of approval.

GENERAL JONES

Okay. I'll get you in. But the
moment you discover anything you'll
let me know. Under no circumstances
do you engage on your own.
Understood?

HELEN

Absolutely, General.

Jones grabs a West Point ring from his desk drawer.

GENERAL JONES

My boys made this for Martin. Just
a few more edits have been made.
And rest assured, once you activate
it, we'll know.

Helen leans forward, takes the ring.

GENERAL JONES

And don't do anything stupid girl.
Both you and Martin are just as
important to me.

HELEN

He was more to me than just
important, sir.

END FLASHBACK.

EXT. FANTASY BEACH - DAY

M2 gazes at the endless ocean around the dragon stone. The
heavy clouds, the stormy air, the flowing lava on the rocks,
all fail miserably to catch his attention.

MASTER (V.O.)

It's time.

To the east and west, as far as the eye can see, the beach
bends... Extends out into the blue.

TO THE SEA

The beach reaches around and connects into a giant circle,
all four dragon stones now visible to one another.

A whirlpool forms in the center of it all. It grows larger,
reaching the edges of the four dragon stones. The stones are
drawn straight in until they meet.

Stone to stone it melts, molds, the four become one massive
dragon stone reaching to the heavens.

The sound of a DRUM.

TO THE BEACH

Blades appear in front of them, R5 and D7 grab them, race
into the water. M2 and H1 stare at each other, frozen.

M2 notices H1's sad face. Curious, he feels the ring dangling on his necklace. He grimaces like he saw a ghost.

M2
(mumbles)
Helen?

Although so far away, H1 reads his lips. Shoots a huge smile.

H1 grabs her sword, rushes to the sea.

M2's fingers near his face, touches his lips.

MASTER (V.O.)
Run!

M2 bolts to the sea.

TO THE SEA

Lightning bolts and huge waves rock the four warriors. All four of them advance towards the dragon stone.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - COMPUTER CONTROL #2 -
CONTINUOUS

Finn and Parker work on the code, Jodie eyes her screen, seems frustrated.

JODIE
There it is! Again!

Finn and Parker turn, dart looks at Jodie's screen.

FINN
Wait, that's not the same.

PARKER
Wow, what's that?

JODIE
Someone is changing the battle parameters.

Jodie works on her computer. A screen flashes, all three look amazed, even terrified. Finn picks up the phone, tensed.

FINN
Sir, I need you down here, now!

EXT. FANTASY BEACH - DAY

Through bolts and waves, D7 and R5 get to the dragon stone, climb up.

H1 struggles to cope with the waves, while M2 defeats them pretty easily, but his focus is on H1. He doesn't seem willing to move forward any further.

D7 and R5 get to the top of the stone. Blades come forward, ready to face whatever shows up.

H1 receives some vicious hits, getting anywhere close to the stone looks impossible.

M2 pauses. Everything around him freezes; water, lighting bolts, the wind, everything. His eyes whip back and forth between D7 and R5, and then H1.

He sprints towards H1. She notices.

H1

No!

H1 lowers her weapon, a wave tall as a mountain rises before her. Her face turns so peaceful, while M2's so determined.

D7 darts a look at H1.

D7

Die you bitch.

The wave comes down goes after her, M2's katana intervenes, blocks it. H1 stares at M2 lovingly.

M2

Let's do this! Together!

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - COMPUTER CONTROL #2 -
CONTINUOUS

An outraged Adam lunges in the room.

ADAM

What is he after?

FINN

The memory backup database!

ADAM

Impossible!

JODIE
He already reset it.

PARKER
And now he reloads everything on a
new target.

PARKER
R5! He's resetting.

Adam pushes Jodie away the computer, furiously punches
buttons. A command shell pops up.

ADAM
Send D7 after him.

Finn, Parker and Jodie trade suspicious looks.

ADAM
(absolute)
Do it!

EXT. FANTASY BEACH - DAY

D7 and R5 stoically wait for the enemy to appear, but nothing
happens. R5 has his sights locked on M2 and H1. He rubs his
eyes, pain rocks his brain.

R5
Hey, I know you!

H1 (O.S.)
And I know you.

D7 turns towards R5 and attacks. D7 nearly pushes R5 off the
stone, but R5 holds his ground. D7's, improved agility, looks
jumps back and forth, rains down blows on R5, who blocks or
parries every cut and thrust.

M2 and H1 rise to the top of the stone.

H1
What are you going to do?

M2
Kill them all.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - SLEEPING CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Adam runs to the far end of the hall. A capsule stands alone
at the corner.

He stops, gazes at the guy sleeping inside; although his helmet doesn't reveal his identity, the scar on his face suggests it's Martin.

Adam brings the chamber's control tablet forward.

EXT. FANTASY BEACH - DAY

On top of the stone, H1 eyes the necklace around M2's neck.

H1

We don't have much time, he will
try to shut you down.

M2

I just hope you haven't messed with
my code too much!

H1 permits herself a smile.

D7 delivers a nearly lethal blow at R5 who collapses to the ground. D7 looks down at the helpless and fading R5, takes a step backwards.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - SLEEPING CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Adam launches a fist down on the keyboard. Obviously something doesn't work.

Adam's eyes whip to the side, trudges towards the adjacent chambers, looking inside them, carefully.

He moves to another, and then the one next to it. Three more, and he stops. Eyes bulge, his heart pumping like crazy.

ADAM

What? No fucking way!

Inside the chamber, he identifies Helen.

Adam's fingers land on the chamber's keyboard, a single CLICK. His worst fears to come to life, a message flashes repeatedly on screen. *Access denied.*

EXT. FANTASY BEACH - DAY

D7 shoves his blade in R5's leg, R5 screams in pain. D7 takes his time, enjoys R5's suffering.

M2 and H1 reach the top, stare at D7 over R5. M2 and H1 both attack D7 at the same time.

D7 masterfully blocks everything as R5 crawls to the edge of the stone.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - SLEEPING CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Adam moves to the mainframe panel, toggles various switches. Looks like a system shutdown initiates. ALARM goes off.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Everything looks in extreme motion. Lock-down in progress.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - TOP FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Reynolds stares at his paintings, apathetic. Elevator door opens, guards storm inside.

EXT. FANTASY BEACH - DAY

D7 overpowers both H1 and M2, backing them off with every swing of his. A sneaky blow by D7 forces H1's blade to fly away, disappear down the ocean. H1 rolls away, sprints to R5.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - SLEEPING CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

One by one the headsets inside the capsules shutdown. Capsules unlock and open. Soldiers slowly come back to their senses. Adam runs to Martin's chamber.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - COMPUTER CONTROL #2 - CONTINUOUS

Finn, Parker and Jodie move away their computers in distress. Eyes dart back and forth between their monitors that flash *disconnected* and the alarm blinking light.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

An anxious Reynolds eyes his shaking palms between his guards who double-check their weapons, like preparing for combat.

EXT. FANTASY BEACH - DAY

It's now M2 against D7. H1 nears R5 who struggles to stop the blood pouring out his body.

H1
I'm sorry.

R5 shoots H1 a peaceful smile.

R5
Can you save the others?

H1
Yes.

R5
All of them?

H1
That's a promise.

R5 braves pain and exhaustion and stands up to his feet. His first two steps look odd and unstable, but his third and fourth manage to control his weight. He increases his pace, moves towards D7 who has his back turned on him.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - SLEEPING CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Soldiers coming out of their chambers stagger to their feet, disoriented. Those who are already out trade confused looks. Adam shoots looks at the capsules that the soldiers within didn't wake up. Multiple flatlines beeping on their consoles.

EXT. FANTASY BEACH - CONTINUOUS

D7 swings, the tip of his blade meets M2's flesh. Although the blow is non fatal, it forces M2 to leap backwards. R5 sprints towards D7, opens his arms. D7 turns swiftly, stabs him in the heart.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - SLEEPING CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Blood spurts out of Robert's mouth. His body shakes.

EXT. FANTASY BEACH - CONTINUOUS

R5 hugs D7 with all of his remaining strength, propels him backwards, forces him off the stone. They both go down the raging ocean.

A raging SCREAM, a wraith emerges in the distance.

M2
Come to me!

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - COMPUTER CONTROL #2 -
CONTINUOUS

Escorted by two guards, Reynolds rushes in.

REYNOLDS
Status?

JODIE
We're locked out sir.

REYNOLDS
How much time for the restart?

FINN
Not enough.

REYNOLDS
Where is Adam?

Finn, Jodie and Parker trade confused looks. No one answers.

REYNOLDS
Where is he?

Reynolds scowls in frustration, exits the room.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - SLEEPING CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Soldiers shoot death stares at Adam who rushes away.

EXT. FANTASY BEACH - CONTINUOUS

The wraith attacks M2 and H1. M2 delivers some powerful
blows, but it appears that the enemy takes no damage at all.

H1 rolls right and left, parries everything.

MASTER (V.O.)
You need fire.

H1 checks around for any fire source, she sees nothing.

EXT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - STREET - CONTINUOUS

Military trucks and jeeps approach the gates coming from all
directions. Guards raise their weapons.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - LAB ONE - CONTINUOUS

Adam opens the door, storms inside. Computer working overtime, cables attached to it leads to a virtual reality helmet on the desk that looks active.

Adam is shocked. He types in a few commands, a message pops up; *H1*. Adam scowls in rage.

ADAM

You can't outsmart me, bitch!

EXT. FANTASY BEACH - CONTINUOUS

M2 keeps on fighting against the enraged wraith who leaps high up in the sky.

H1's eyes are locked on M2 who looks exhausted.

H1

(silently)

My time is up.

M2 whips his gaze at H1. Screams in despair.

M2

No!

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - LAB ONE - CONTINUOUS

Adam grabs the helmet, yanks its cable out of the computer. Sprints away.

EXT. FANTASY BEACH - CONTINUOUS

H1 smiles. Her lips form an '*I love you*'. She moves to the edge, collapses. Her lifeless body flies down the ocean.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - SLEEPING CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Helen's control panel BEEPS. A flat line rolls.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Reynolds appears at the lobby. Multiple guards block the exit. A vivid chat takes place between Reynolds and the Lobby Manager. Reynolds looks furious.

EXT. FANTASY BEACH - CONTINUOUS

Lava erupts from the peak of the dragon stone. Liquid fire.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

EXT. VIRGINIA - LAKE HOUSE - DAY

Martin and Helen share a rare moment without words. They hug and kiss under the blinding sun.

INT. VIRGINIA - FORT BELVOIR - DAY

General Jones hands a file to Martin. Dr Miller sits in the corner watches them silently.

GENERAL JONES

I cannot go after a general without solid proof.

Martin nods head in affirmation.

GENERAL JONES

This is gonna be a one way trip in hell son. One that you won't be able to discuss with anyone else.

MARTIN

I understand, sir.

GENERAL JONES

Even with your wife.

MARTIN

Yes General.

DR MILLER

And if anything goes wrong, I'll take care of her.

EXT. VIRGINIA - LAKE HOUSE - DAY

Lips detach.

HELEN

How long will it take?

MARTIN

With Jones you never know.

Helen lowers her eyes, sad.

HELEN

Yeah.

MARTIN

Don't worry, it's not like I'm going to war.

HELEN

That's not what worries me.

MARTIN

I know. But no matter what happens, we can always heal the scars and change the stars when I return. As we always do.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - LAB TWO - DAY

Adam strolls in his lab, sits at his computer. He furiously thumbs buttons...

ON COMPUTER SCREEN

Administration access required.

Password typed in, access granted.

A control panel pops up, its interface matches a computer game's. Various words surround a monster's image; *strength, dexterity, constitution, intelligence, stamina, spirit...*

A series of inter-lapping windows, leads to a single command; *control override*. A CLICK leads to another window. *Switch to manual*. Two buttons appear; YES, NO.

BACK TO SCREEN

ADAM

Fuck yeah.

Adam puts on a VR headset.

EXT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - STREET - CONTINUOUS

ARMY surrounds the building. Reynolds's men hold their ground, worried, outnumbered.

General Jones walks to the gates, Dr Miller besides him. The general flashes a paper. The guards stand down, the gates open. GUNSHOTS coming from inside make the soldiers flinch.

EXT. FANTASY BEACH - CONTINUOUS

The wraith descends in slow motion. Its mouth opens, lips moving, a screaming human voice emanates from within...

ADAM (V.O.)
This is my world!

Martin dips his blade into the fire. Steel ignites. Eyes follow the wraith's blade trajectory. Martin launches upwards, swords meet in the middle.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - SLEEPING CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Martin's eyes flicker open. His fist breaks the glass. He jumps out of his capsule, lands on his knees. Wide-eyed he trades looks with the rest of the awoken soldiers.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

The army storms inside the lobby. Fully equipped marines clear the path for Jones. No one dares to challenge them. Split in several teams they move further inside, scanning and securing room by room.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - THROUGH CORRIDORS - CONTINUOUS

Martin goes through a small army of security guards, moving blazing fast, punching faces and kicking chests. Bullets SIZZLE right and left, heavy firepower is unable to stop him.

Bodies fly around the corridors, drop like flies unconscious.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - LAB TWO - CONTINUOUS

Raging light emits from Adam's headset, who exhales in despair. Drool drips from his unresponsive mouth, head sags.

Reynolds rushes in, signals at his two guards to stay put and lock the door.

Reynolds gets next to Adam who looks lost in thought, frozen.

REYNOLDS
What the fuck just happened?

No response from Adam.

REYNOLDS
Answer me!

Adam gazes at Reynolds, apathetic. For a single moment, his head bobs abruptly, hands fidget.

The sound of the guards CRASHING to the floor outside the lab makes Reynolds' eyes bulge. Dead scared.

REYNOLDS
Wake up you son of a bitch!

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - SLEEPING CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Dr Miller with a group of soldiers are next to Helen's capsule. Dr Miller retrieves a flash drive from Helen's bra, stuffs it her pocket.

The soldiers lift her body up, carry it away. He notices several jagged scars on her back

DR MILLER
Let's move.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - OUTSIDE LAB TWO - CONTINUOUS

Martin looks ready to break down the door. At the far end of the corridor, General Jones orders his men to stand down. Jones and Martin trade determined looks.

MARTIN
You got it?

GENERAL JONES
Both.

MARTIN
What about Matthews?

GENERAL JONES
I'll handle him.

Martin turns to the door, he kicks it to oblivion.

INT. ATLANTA - REYNOLDS MED - LAB TWO - CONTINUOUS

Drenched in sweat and fear, Reynolds stares at Martin.

REYNOLDS
Wait, I can explain...

Martin leaps on him, loads him in an operating chair.

REYNOLDS
What are you doing?

Martin punches Reynolds in the faces knocks him out. Martin puts the VR headset on Reynolds' face.

Martin rocks the keyboard, furiously punching buttons. A software loads. Various parameters edits take place. On one of the screens a message appears; *Stage one, the pit.*

Martin moves to another computer.

ON COMPUTER SCREEN

Training sequence.

Various parameters roll down... Come to a stop.

Sequence loop: 1 time(s). Number 1 turns infinite.

Initiate?

BACK TO SCENE

Martin CLICKS the enter key.

EXT. VIRGINIA - LAKE HOUSE - NIGHT

The lake house looks in perfect shape under the full moon. Martin sits on the porch with his laptop.

Dr Miller exits the house, strolls up to Martin, black briefcase in her hands.

MARTIN
How is she?

Dr Miller responds with a nod and comforting smile.

MARTIN
Thank you.

Helen appears by the door, eyes Martin, his face doesn't look familiar to her.

Keeping her happy face on, Dr Miller sneaks a flash disc in her palm, offers Martin a handshake.

DR MILLER

A gift.

Martin accepts the handshake, Dr Miller disappears.

HELEN

Hi.

MARTIN

Hello.

Helen's eyes dart left and right, examines the surroundings. Moonlight glows strong.

HELEN

This place, feels like...

MARTIN

(smiling)

Home.

Helen looks confused, like a million thoughts bomb her brain.

HELEN

But, I don't remember anything.

MARTIN

That is why I'm here. To help you.

Helen sits next to Martin.

HELEN

What happened?

MARTIN

It's a long story. But I can show you.

Martin plugs two sets of VR goggles into his laptop. He offers one to Helen.

MARTIN

Would you do it with me?

Helen eyes Martin's scar on his cheek. Cracks a smile.

HELEN

Heal the scars and change the
stars?

FADE TO BLACK.

A symphony of WHIZZING noises, like hundreds of old-type
flash cameras snapping photos non-stop.

FADE IN:

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

The pitch dark endless sky; stars, satellites, distant
planets, all flicker simultaneously, as if someone turns on
and off their lights.

Moving far and beyond, a divine source of energy, an
undefined device emitting colorful and blinding light,
reveals a constellation of stars with the shape of a spooky
human face, identical to Munch's Scream.

FADE OUT.