

Topside

An Original Script
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FADE IN

EXT. TOPSIDE (2275 AD) - MORNING

A birds-eye view of a blasted landscape. Here and there are destroyed remnants of cities. Elsewhere are the struggling beginnings of plant life, a few small squares suggesting primitive farming. A small village passes by, vaguely Native American, teepees and thatched roof huts centered around a large firepit.

The ground rushes up, and a figure on horseback comes into view. AIDAN rides, short, red hair flying about her face, grinning. The horse gallops across the valley, approaching a grove of stunted, twisted trees.

The rider pulls the horse up at the trees, dismounts, rubs the horse down quickly. She whispers soothing words while she pulls her gear off the horse's back. She is young, in her mid-twenties, tall, athletic. She is a Runner, a courier that rides between shelters.

With the horse taken care of, she ties the reins and begins to walk into the woods. At a certain tree, she stops and pulls out bulky, white clothing. She begins to put it on. The heavy, leaded garments, or LEADS, cover her from head to toe.

INT. PACIFIC COAST NORTHWEST (PCNW) - 3 SHELTER'S ENTRANCE - MORNING

Aidan enters a run-down cabin, goes to the back, and slides her card. A hidden, heavy metal door swings open, and Aidan descends. As she descends the seemingly endless stairs, the light dims to a dull yellow.

INT. SHELTER - DECON ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Aidan reaches the bottom, slides her card through another door, and enters a small checkpoint. A GUARD stands duty. She hands him her ID card and strips out of her leads, revealing lightweight cotton pants and tank top underneath.

She hauls her leads to a small locker. A Geiger on the side begins beeping. Aidan mutters a curse. The guard looks up as he slides her card.

Aidan sighs, throws the leads irritably in a cement locker marked "contaminated suits." The Guard watches impassively.

He gestures to the RAD band, a 1/2 inch wide metal strip affixed to the skin of Aidan's upper arm. There are numbers running along the bottom portion, and the top portion changes colors according to the amount of harmful RADS she has absorbed. White is perfect, yellow normal, red means the amount of radiation a person has absorbed is fatal. Aidan's is a light orange.

(CONTINUED)

He hands her a face mask, which Aidan grabs irritably. The guard raises his eyebrows but doesn't comment.

He presses a key and a door opens across from him. Grimacing, Aidan puts on the mask with the ease of long practice. She enters the decon chamber and stand in the middle. It is made completely of cement, with shower jets in parallel lines on the walls and ceiling. Shivering, Aidan strips out of everything but the face mask, throwing her clothes in a small chute.

As soon as she finishes, the jets start to emit steam. Aidan stands in the middle of them and scrubs.

INT.SHELTER - HALLWAY OUTSIDE COMMON ROOM - LATER

There are no windows, the light is harsh, unchanging. There is no place for a shadow to hide, every corner scathingly illuminated. The walls are institutional gray, the floor is a green tile that stays dingy no matter how many times it's washed. Every couple 100 yards is a heavy leaded door with a numerical lock. Next to each door is a Geiger Counter that displays the radiation level on the other side of the door. The counter clacks calmly, 10-20 clicks a minute.

Aidan comes to the door, dressed in a loose tunic and pants. She slides an ID card through the reader.

The Geiger Counter beeps, glows softly yellow.

The door slides open, and Aidan walks through.

INT. SHELTER - MAIN DINING HALL - SAME DAY

The dining hall is a cavernous room filled with utility tables and long benches. On one wall is a large, scrolling digital display that reads: Background Radiation: Normal; Radon Readings: Within Normal Limits; Outside Radiation: Medium, Lengthy Exposure Is Fatal. There are hand printed signs on wall that say: "Check your Geiger Band!" Or "Better to be safe than sorry: If your Geiger Band is orange, get out in a hurry!."

On the other side is a cafeteria buffet line, with windows to the kitchen. In the kitchen a few are people preparing breakfast.

The hall is mostly empty, with only a few people standing around in gray clothing, some bringing breakfast out while others are cleaning tables.

The cook takes a large pan of hot cereal, passes it through to a worker, who places it on the line. The cereal is gooey, not appetizing.

TAPS begins to blare through the loudspeakers.

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The door at the other end of the dining hall slides open, after the Geiger chimes safety.

INT.SHELTER - HALLWAY OUTSIDE DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The hallway stretches out, doors lining each side. Each hallway is sealed off with bulkheads, and at each bulkhead door there is a Geiger Counter that must check radiation on both sides before opening. On each door, in large red lettering, is stenciled: "RESTRICTED ACCESS. RUNNERS ONLY." Or "GENERAL POPULATION NOT PERMITTED PAST THIS POINT." Or "PLEASE HAVE ID BADGE WITH YOU AT ALL TIMES."

Aidan continues to walk through door after door. Each hallway is identical, gray upon gray. Hallways that intersect it are also long stretches of gray, plain steel and concrete.

Occasionally, posters are hung that say: "You have a duty," or "With special gifts comes great responsibility."

INT.SHELTER - CONTROL ROOM - SAME DAY

The room is dark, with a rack of tv monitors on one side showing various corridors within the shelter. In the center, sitting down, is KINCAID. She is regal, imposing, in her late forties, maybe older. She has the calm, composed look of a secure monarch, comfortable in her power. By her side is a ebony cane, topped with a silver handle, intricately carved. She is dressed in a cotton smock and pants, similar to Aidan's own. Her hair is pulled tightly back, away from her face, and she is immaculately pressed and poised.

She looks up as the door beeps. She touches something on her desk, and the door opens.

Aidan enters. She is comfortable here, despite her rumpled appearance. She pulls a small data disc out of her pouch. She reaches a spot directly in front of Kincaid and stops, salutes. This is routine.

Moving forward, Aidan hands Kincaid the data chip. Steps back immediately after Kincaid takes it, her nervousness exposed in her quick uncontrolled movements, barely suppressing her excitement.

Kincaid gives her a sharp look, but her computer bleeps and she is distracted by the information flowing across her screen.

She stares at her screen, one eyebrow lifting slightly as she reads. After a moment, she looks at Aidan, who grins back.

KINCAID

Say one word of this, to anyone,
Aidan, and you'll be kept underground
for the rest of the year.

(CONTINUED)

Aidan's smile fades, leaving a look of uncertainty behind. The two woman stare at each other for a second, until Kincaid notices Aidan's orange band.

KINCAID (CONT'D)

Orange. Grounded until Medical clears you. Report to MedLab after Morning Declaration.

Swallowing her resentment, Aidan nods.

KINCAID (CONT'D)

Dismissed.

AIDAN

Ma'am.

Turning on her heel, her whole body radiating disappointment and frustration, Aidan leaves.

INT.SHELTER - HALLWAY OUTSIDE AIDAN'S ROOM - SAME DAY

Aidan's room, seen through the doorway, is small, cramped. Narrow, military issue furniture fills every inch, bunk beds against one wall, a single cot against the other. Metal footlockers rest beneath each. A single, bare bulb swings from the ceiling.

EVIE, a petite young woman with long, dark brown hair, wakes up quickly. She blinks, and looks around her, disoriented. Her bed is surrounded by medical textbooks, and she has to move a large tome entitled "The Human Body: Recent Works in Bio-Genetics and Disease Control" off her chest just to sit up.

She swings her legs over the edge, stretches, looks at the empty lower bunk across from her, brow creasing with concern. The bed is neatly made, not slept in. Evie gets out of the single cot, heading towards a small door in the back of the room. The PA crackles to life.

PA

Attention, all Runners. A reminder that any fraternization with the general population is expressly forbidden. Anyone caught in the Gen. Pop. Area will be severely punished.

Evie opens the door, mouthing the announcement mockingly. The opened door reveals a tiny bathroom, complete with toilet, sink and shower.

(CONTINUED)

EVIE
 (as the announcement
 ends, face up to the
 PA speaker)
 We know, we know, you tell us often
 enough. Christ.

Aidan enters the room just as Evie closes the bathroom door.

AIDAN
 Good morning!

EVIE (O.S.)
 (through the bathroom
 door)
 Shae?

Aidan jumps on the top bunk, collapsing backwards. Her eyes close. Over the soft murmur of the shower running, Aidan and Evie talk, comfortable with each other, old friends.

AIDAN
 No, Aidan. Where's Shae?

EVIE (O.S.)
 I don't know. She was here last night.

AIDAN
 Better hope she doesn't miss
 Declaration. Kincaid's on a warpath.

EVIE (O.S.)
 What?

AIDAN
 Nevermind!

Aidan sighs, pushes herself off the bed, goes to the mirror inside the small closet, checking her band in the mirror.

Evie comes out of the shower, drying her hair. She watches Aidan with amusement.

EVIE
 Orange. What did you do? Swim naked
 in the ocean?

AIDAN
 No.

Evie moves to her footlocker, pulls out clothes, dresses.

AIDAN (CONT'D)
 Kincaid grounded me. Gave me crèche
 duty.

(CONTINUED)

EVIE

Damn. She'll want to send me out on a Run. Damn.

AIDAN

You volunteer at the MedLab. You don't work there. You're a Runner, Evie. Born and bred.

EVIE

More like bred, then born.

AIDAN

(teasingly)

Ah, the woes of a test-tube baby.

EVIE

Don't forget genetically enhanced. Can't go five feet now without a poster or a sign reminding us of that.

AIDAN

Enhanced is up for debate.

Aidan grins at her, and Evie laughs, shaking her head in good-natured disbelief. Moving to her own footlocker, Aidan strips. Evie checks her own patch, which is a bright, clear yellow, almost white.

AIDAN (CONT'D)

Don't gloat.

As Aidan moves to the shower, Evie makes her bed. The shower turns on, and Aidan groans.

AIDAN (CONT'D)

Christ, that's cold!

Ignoring Aidan's complaints, Evie walks over to the empty bunk. Taped to the underside of the bunk above it are drawings of a lovely young woman, hair framing a expressive face with a wide, trusting smile. Underneath the picture is written "Shae, A picture of you. As requested." It is signed DAVEN, as is a landscape in watercolors. A dried flower, encased in plastic, also hangs there.

Carefully, Evie moves the flower to hide a piece of paper that says: "Congratulations! You, Shae Kenzie, and your proposed mate, Daven Mackler, have been approved ... a lack of any major recessive combinations predict your children will be healthy, happy ... Best wishes on your upcoming marriage."

INT.SHELTER - MEETING HALL - LATER

The meeting hall is one of the largest rooms in the shelter. The light is low, and slightly cold. There are no seats. Right now it is filled with talkative, barely awake young people, all Runners, all dressed in layers of neutral colored cotton.

Evie and Aidan enter, pausing by a large statue of two men bending down to help a crying child stand up. Carved into the pedestal are the words: "What we have done for ourselves alone dies with us; what we have done for others and the world remains and is immortal." Dr. Mackenzie Vance and Dr. Hartland Mackler, 2196-2254.

AIDAN
Doesn't this bother you?

EVIE
No.

AIDAN
Doesn't it seem a little vulgar?

Evie sighs, attempts to pull Aidan into the Meeting Hall completely.

EVIE
It did, once.

AIDAN
Not anymore?

Aidan starts walking, and Evie chuckles.

EVIE
Not since you started commenting on it every time we come in here.

AIDAN
It's vaguely offensive.

EVIE
Aidan, they saved the shelter.

They have reached the fringe of the crowd, and stop. Chatter continues around them.

AIDAN
They tampered with our DNA.

EVIE
One of 'em's you're father.

AIDAN
Shush.

(CONTINUED)

Evie rolls her eyes, looks impatiently at the dais, then at her watch.

EVIE
I'm starving.

AIDAN
You're always starving.

EVIE
Shush.

She says it playfully, mimicking Aidan, and the two grin at each other.

EVIE (CONT'D)
So, what did the Council want?

Aidan looks away, uncomfortable. Evie watches her.

AIDAN
Nothing much. Food distro, etc.

EVIE
Thrilling.

Aidan shrugs, starts looking around the crowd, occasionally waving to someone.

RUNNER 1
The Nomads are worse, you know.

Aidan snorts as she overhears this. The other Runners turn towards her. There is a relaxed, friendly give and take to conversation.

RUNNER 2
What?

AIDAN
Nothing.

RUNNER 1
Anyway, I heard that the Nomads are getting much more aggressive ...

RUNNER 3 walks up to the them as Runner 1 speaks, gets absorbed into the conversation.

AIDAN
I be aggressive, too, if it was my home being threatened.

RUNNER 3
They're all mutated freaks anyway.

(CONTINUED)

AIDAN

That is the silliest -

She is drowned out by Runner 1.

RUNNER 1

Anyway, I heard that the Council is going to allow all Shelters to go topside.

At this Aidan, looks down at her feet. Evie looks at Aidan speculatively.

RUNNER 3

About time, too. Have you seen the fruit that comes up from PCSW-1? Oranges as big as my fist.

RUNNER 2

We need horses for that kind of trade.

RUNNER 1

And only the Nomads have horses.

Aidan, tired of the conversation, turns back to Evie, who is staring anxiously at the door.

AIDAN

No Shae?

EVIE

No. It's just weird.

AIDAN

No one says weird. You've been reading too much.

EVIE

She was in bed last night.

AIDAN

So she got up early and went off somewhere.

EVIE

She wasn't feeling well, either.

Turning to face Evie, Aidan barely contains her impatience.

AIDAN

Look, she's a big girl, OK? Leave it.

Evie looks away, upset. They stand in uncomfortable silence for a second before the lights dim and tinny music is pumped into the room. The small stage at the front of the room lights up, and Kincaid enters. The room immediately quiets.

(CONTINUED)

KINCAID

Good morning.

ALL

Good morning.

KINCAID

Please recite the Declaration with me.

ALL

I declare my loyalty to Shelter and all its people. I declare that my privileges as a Runner are for the use of the Shelter and its peoples. I declare that I will never shirk in my duty to my Shelter.

KINCAID

Thank you.

AIDAN

Well, I feel patriotic.

EVIE

Shush.

INT.SHELTER - AIDAN'S ROOM - LATER

Evie is packing her bag, getting ready to go on her Run. She is running late and is muttering to herself. Aidan is watching, bemused, from Shae's bunk.

Evie can feel Aidan starring at her.

EVIE

You could help.

AIDAN

What do you want me to do?

EVIE

You could ..

She looks around, shakes her head. Grinning, Aidan throws a pillow at her. It glances off Evie's head, knocks one of Evie's many braids loose.

EVIE (CONT'D)

Ow! That hurt!

The pillow dislodges the dried flower and Shae's marriage approval. Both fall to the bed, but Aidan doesn't see them right away.

Evie, turning to glare at Aidan, sees Shae's letter. Her face changes , and she looks up quickly, but not before Aidan

(CONTINUED)

turns her head to look at what Evie was staring at. Spying the letter, and before Evie can stop her, Aidan picks it up, her face slowly tightens. When she finishes reading, she balls the paper up viciously.

AIDAN

I never thought the Council would approve them.

EVIE

Apparently there was a large enough genetic spread -

AIDAN

When were you going to tell me?

EVIE

Aidan, Daven made me swear not to. He's my twin. How could I say no?

AIDAN

Right. Who was going to tell me, then?

EVIE

They were, when Daven got back.

AIDAN

And when would that be?

Aidan stands, trying to hide her pain in quick, random movement. Evie ducks out of the way, warily.

EVIE

I don't know. Soon.

Aidan stops pacing, stares at Shae's bunk, still crumpling the letter.

AIDAN

How long have you known?

Looking away, Evie doesn't answer.

AIDAN (CONT'D)

How long?

EVIE

A few weeks, maybe.

Evie moves forward to comfort, bringing her hand up, but Aidan steps away.

AIDAN

Christ.

(CONTINUED)

EVIE

I am so sorry, Aidan.

Aidan's head snaps back as if she was slapped, and her face is unreadable.

AIDAN

It's fine.

After a moment, Aidan lets out a long shaky breath.

AIDAN (CONT'D)

Shae and Daven.

EVIE

Yeah.

AIDAN

And they have can have kids?

EVIE

Well, with a little help from the lab - but yes.

Aidan shakes her head in disbelief, gives Evie a sad smile.

AIDAN

Idiots. Both of them.

EVIE

Aidan, they waited a long time. You and Daven - it's been almost a year.

AIDAN

You should go. You'll be late if you stay any longer.

Evie hesitates, then looks at her watch. She starts.

EVIE

Oh, crap. Right.

She starts to gather up her stuff frantically, trying to keep one eye on Aidan.

EVIE (CONT'D)

Aidan, are you all right?

Aidan stares off into space, not hearing.

EVIE (CONT'D)

Aidan!

AIDAN

Yeah?

(CONTINUED)

EVIE

Are you going to stop mutilating
Shae's letter?

Perplexed, Aidan glances down at her hand. She colors slightly when she's sees the wreck she has made of the letter.

AIDAN

I didn't even realize.

Evie gives her a sympathetic smile.

EVIE

I'm sure Daven has copies.

Aidan looks momentarily lost at the mention of Daven, then regroups, walks to the bed, smoothing the letter slowly. Evie watches, torn.

AIDAN

Go, Evie.

Aidan seems terribly tired, exhausted by the news. In the doorway, Evie shifts back and forth, uneasy about leaving. Aidan looks up, sees Evie still standing there, waiting. She forces a smile.

AIDAN (CONT'D)

Go.

EVIE

Right. Bye.

Evie leaves the room, slinging her bag over her shoulder. Aidan smooths the letter one last time, than carefully puts it back in its place, along with the dried flower, which has lost some petals. As she places the letter back, she fights with her tears, never quite crying.

Moving with extreme care, as if she had broken a bone, Aidan moves to her footlocker, and removes another letter. It looks identical to Shae's, with the Council seal on the top.

INSERT

Words on letter: "Dear Ms. Aidan Vance and Mr. Daven Mackler, We regret to inform you ... while marriage is acceptable ... due to a number of shared recessive traits ... children would not be possible ..."

BACK TO SCENE

Aidan stares at the letter, not crying. She slowly sinks to her knees, rests her head on the footlocker. Her shoulders shake, but no sound is heard.

INT. SHELTER - CRÈCHE - LATER

The crèche is filled with children from newborns to 9 year-olds. Some of the older ones are playing in groups with toys, others are on computer terminals. There is a comforting sense of home.

On the walls are posters, with a figure of a man, running Topside, carrying a letter. Underneath it reads "A responsibility ... and a privilege."

Aidan enters, warily. She sidesteps one child and narrowly avoids another. A middle-aged woman comes up to her, smiling, and hands Aidan a baby she was holding. Aidan juggles the child for a second, bewildered, then stands stock still with the baby, afraid to move and drop the child.

CRÈCHE MOTHER

Aidan, right? Kincaid told me to expect you.

Other children appear out of nowhere and begin to crawl on her and up her legs.

CRÈCHE MOTHER (CONT'D)

Oh, look. They love you.

Aidan smiles through clenched teeth.

CRÈCHE MOTHER (CONT'D)

Isn't that sweet?

INT. SHELTER - CRÈCHE - LATER

It is now nap time in the crèche. Aidan is putting away toys while the crèche mother gently tucks in the bigger kids. As they finish their tasks, they meet at the desk.

CRÈCHE MOTHER

You were a crèche baby, weren't you?

AIDAN

I'm a Runner. From the first generation.

She is defensive. The crèche mother nods, smiling.

CRÈCHE MOTHER

General population, myself. Only time I get to be around the Runners, they can barely walk.

Her smile broadens. Aidan looks uncomfortable.

CRÈCHE MOTHER (CONT'D)

Ironic, isn't it?

(CONTINUED)

Aidan looks around, a little spooked. A long pause stretches out, almost uncomfortable. Aidan moves away to the cribs, looks at the name tags. Their surnames are the same, that of the doctors who created the first crèche. They repeat over and over: Vance, Mackenzie, Mackler, Kenzie, Hartland, Hart.

AIDAN

One of these could be mine.

The crèche mother nods as Aidan watches a child nibble on his thumb. She looks horrified but fascinated.

AIDAN (CONT'D)

They harvest eggs, you know, before the first run. Save the gene pool.

She stops, stares at a crib. The crèche mother sits, begins to knit, as Aidan explores the room.

AIDAN (CONT'D)

Being Topside so much, there's no way I can naturally conceive.

CRÈCHE MOTHER

You could always request reproduction.

AIDAN

There's no one to request that with.

Defensively, Aidan stares down at one of the children. There is a battle being fought inside her, and there is longing and disgust and remorse all mixed together on her face. She leans closer to one with the last name of Vance, stares at it speculatively, then shudders, disturbed that the sleeping baby could be her child.

INT. SHELTER - AIDAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Aidan is doing push-ups on the floor of her room. Wearing only a sports bra and skin-tight shorts, she is dripping with sweat, pushing her body furiously. The door CHIMES, but she ignores it. The door CHIMES again, and she stops, grabs a towel.

AIDAN

Who?

COMPUTER PA

ID: Daven Mackler

Aidan jumps up, wipes her face, brushes her hands over her hair. Then she stops, takes a deep breath, steels herself.

AIDAN

Open door.

(CONTINUED)

The door opens, revealing a tall, lanky young man in his late twenties. He leans into the room, an easy smile on his face. If he is uncomfortable, it doesn't show. Aidan works the towel nervously in her hands.

DAVEN
Hey, look at you.

AIDAN
Look at you.

She smiles, and they stare at each other. Aidan looks away first, moves further into the room.

DAVEN
Can I come in?

AIDAN
Oh, yeah, sure.

Daven takes a step inside, and the door whooshes shut behind him. There is a tense silence as they stare at each other. Aidan is still breathing hard from her workout, and she belatedly becomes aware of the fact that she is half-undressed. Trying not to blush, she grabs a short tunic off the bed and pulls it over her head. Daven smirks without malice.

AIDAN (CONT'D)
(pulling shirt over
head)
Shae isn't here.

DAVEN
I can see that.

He grins at her, all easy charm. Aidan looks even more uncomfortable.

DAVEN (CONT'D)
Where is she?

AIDAN
Who?

DAVEN
Shae.

AIDAN
I don't know. I haven't seen her.

Daven's eyes scan the room, rest on a extra pair of leads hanging from a hook. He moves towards them, and Aidan, attempting to avoid him, gets too close. The stand an inch away from each other. His breath moves her hair. Aidan lifts her face up, perhaps for a kiss. This breaks the spell, and Daven moves quickly away, picking up the edge of Shae's leads.

(CONTINUED)

DAVEN

She wouldn't go Topside without these.

Aidan looks at the leads, sighs in exasperation, then shrugs. Going to Evie's bunk, she sits down. Daven moves towards the door. Pausing, he seems about to say something important. Aidan stands up and walk into the bathroom, leaving Daven staring at an empty room.

DAVEN (CONT'D)

(calling after her)

OK. Could you tell her I came looking for her?

AIDAN (O.S.)

As soon as I see her.

She comes out of the bathroom, wiping her face with a towel. She is icy calm again, with no sign of her earlier turmoil. He reacts with anger, an old pattern they both easily fall into. He shakes his head, looking at Aidan with narrowed eyes.

DAVEN

Christ, you are a piece of work.

AIDAN

What's that supposed to mean?

DAVEN

It's been almost a year. I thought we were past this.

AIDAN

Is this the part where you say we're friends now? Everything forgiven and forgotten?

DAVEN

You are really something.

Aidan becomes very serious, very vulnerable.

AIDAN

No, Daven. We were really something. You threw that away.

Daven draws back, new understanding and compassion in his eyes.

DAVEN

You know.

AIDAN

I found the letter.

(CONTINUED)

DAVEN

Good. I wanted to tell you right
away.

Aidan nods, looks away. Daven moves towards her, stops, afraid
to touch her.

AIDAN

Do you love her?

Pulling back, Daven bites his lip, decides something. Aidan,
defenseless, waits for his answer.

DAVEN

I care for her. I want to have
children.

AIDAN

Her children, or anybody's?

DAVEN

My children. With someone I respect.

Aidan shrinks in on herself, and Daven realizes what he has
said. He tries to touch her, but Aidan pulls away.

DAVEN (CONT'D)

Aidan, I didn't mean it like that.

Chocking back her anger, her hurt, Aidan tries to smile.

AIDAN

I know you didn't. I'll tell Shae to
get in touch as soon as she gets in.

DAVEN

Aidan, if you'd just -

He approaches, attempts to comfort her, but Aidan moves,
brushing his arm away violently. Daven backs away, frustrated.

AIDAN

You need to go.

There is a hard, cold silence. Aidan has completely withdrawn,
and she is, again, icy.

DAVEN

Fine.

He turns and leaves. Aidan stares after him for a moment,
then stomps to the shower.

INT.SHELTER - KINCAID'S OFFICE - LATER

Kincaid's office is small. An ancient computer is on the
desk, old and well used. A map of California is on a wall

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behind her, with a bright red pin where PCNW-3 is, the faded writing next to it declares PCNW-3 to be near Salinas and Monterey, and blue one on San Francisco.

On the opposite wall is another map, this one of the shelter. It goes down for many levels. Levels that have been closed off are marked.

On the desk is a photo of a middle-age man and a smiling young girl.

Kincaid sits behind her desk, scrolling through computer files labeled "Vance, Shae E." Kincaid changes Shae's status from 'Active, Runner' to 'Inactive, Regress.' As she finishes, the door chimes.

KINCAID

Identify.

COMPUTER PA

ID: Mackler, Daven.

Kincaid sighs, saddened by something, then straightens items on her desk, turning the computer screen off.

KINCAID

Open door.

The door opens, and Daven enters, indignant.

Kincaid pulls a piece of paper of her desk, hands it to Daven. He reads it, sits down.

DAVEN

I don't believe it.

KINCAID

She wanted in-vitro fertilization, natural birth. I can't allow that here, with our ... special circumstances. I'm sorry.

With true regret and even compassion, Kincaid looks at Daven.

DAVEN

We were engaged.

Leaning back, Kincaid nods, still sympathetic.

Standing, Daven moves closer to Kincaid, around the desk. He is as close to pleading as he will ever be. Kincaid slowly stands up, meeting Daven's gaze calmly. Daven stares at Kincaid with a hint of resigned humor.

KINCAID

You should go, Daven. You have duties.

(CONTINUED)

DAVEN

Right. Duties.

He sneers this last word, then turns on his heel and storms out. Kincaid stares after him for a moment before returning to her work.

INT.SHELTER - GYMNASIUM - AFTERNOON

Aidan is working out on a large mat in the center of the room. The mat is empty, except for her, but there are others on machines around the room, and a large class of young adolescents are cross-training at the opposite end.

Aidan has worked up a sweat, moving quickly through a series of intense moves that are a derivative of tae kwan do and karate shadow-boxing. Her eyes are half-closed, and she is imagining somebody at the receiving end of her blows.

Someone stands in front of her, blocks a punch. The impact startles Aidan. She rears back, stares at the interloper, then smiles, still disconcerted.

AIDAN

You're back. Welcome home.

She laughs sarcastically as she says this, turns and begins the routine in the opposite direction. Evie moves to stand in front of her, arms on hips. She is irate.

EVIE

You're working out.

Aidan stops, arms at sides, spoiling for a fight. Evie almost backs down, used to losing arguments with Aidan, but stops. Aidan, with a disdainful smile, give a mocking salute.

AIDAN

Since I can't leave yet, this is all there is to do.

EVIE

Daven says you've been avoiding him.

AIDAN

I think I have cause, don't you?

Aidan walks to the punch bag, begins a series of hard, angry punches. Evie walks up to the side of the bag, watches for a moment.

EVIE

Shae hasn't transferred anywhere, Aidan. You know it, I know, Daven knows it.

(CONTINUED)

AIDAN

All I know is, Kincaid said back off. I backed off. Shae didn't want to be Daven's brood mare.

Evie has no reply, just waits, hurt and anger on her face. Aidan stops punching, rests against the bag, face away from Evie's.

EVIE

No, she didn't. She wouldn't. She loved Daven.

AIDAN

Shae choose to leave. She's at SE-3 -

EVIE

SW-2, Aidan.

AIDAN

Whatever.

Evie notices other people staring, lowers her voice.

EVIE

There are at least three other Runners missing from our shelter. All from our Crèche.

Aidan attempts to walk around Evie, unwrapping the support bandages from her hands. Evie blocks her. Aidan looks up, no longer nonchalant.

AIDAN

Christ, what has gotten into you?

EVIE

For once in you self-absorbed life, you will listen to me.

Aidan, shocked, sputters in protest but Evie's face - grim, determined, stops her.

EVIE (CONT'D)

Three Runners. Kent Hartman, Frannie Mackler and Charlie Kenzie.

AIDAN

People leave, Evie.

EVIE

Not like this. Whatever happened to them, it could happen to us.

(CONTINUED)

AIDAN

Nothing happened to them. They got tired of this backwater hole in the ground and moved away.

Aidan pulls herself out of Evie's grasp, stares at her haughtily.

EVIE

Daven saw papers, charts, on Kincaid's desk. He thinks she's done something.

AIDAN

Please. Evie, come on. Enough already.

Evie watches Aidan walk away for a second, wavering. She gathers her strength, then, shouts after her. Her voice echoes in the vaulted, high ceilinged gym.

EVIE

She's your sister, Aidan.

Aidan stops, turns around. Her hair is in her face and for just a second, she looks like a caged animal.

She walks back to Evie in long, angry strides. Evie stares at her, starts to move backwards but stops herself, holding her ground.

AIDAN

Don't give me that. You don't know that. The only people who know anything for sure are you and Daven.

She circles Evie, furious. Her hands clench spasmodically. Evie, frightened, closes her eyes.

EVIE

We shared a crèche. We're family.

AIDAN

Spare me.

Aidan is now face to face with Evie. Aidan is taller, and Evie has to look up. Aidan sees something in Evie's eyes that almost changes her mind. Whatever it is, it's not enough. Aidan pulls herself straighter, steps away from Evie. Evie turns, follows, but Aidan holds up her hands, stopping her. Shaking her head, Aidan almost runs out of the room.

INT.SHELTER - KINCAID'S LABORATORY - LATER

Kincaid stands in the middle of the room, waiting. She rubs her forehead and stares at a hardcopy she has in her hand. She is standing in front of a long, high table that is covered

(CONTINUED)

in scientific equipment, working on something. Occasionally she scribbles notes to herself.

She tries something new, goes to the computer, types in data. The computer thinks for a moment, chirps. What it says is not what Kincaid wants to hear.

She pulls her notepad over, writes something down.

INSERT

Words on paper: "subjects still sterile" "no discernable change in status."

BACK TO SCENE

Kincaid rests her head on her arms, despondent.

Behind her, a door slides open, and a man comes in. He is dressed in sterile suit. Kincaid turns immediately to greet him, imperious now, all weakness hidden.

KINCAID

Well?

SCIENTIST

The mutation is full blown.

KINCAID

How? She was from the first crèche. Her genes should be clean.

SCIENTIST

That is what the research would tell us, ma'am.

KINCAID

And the genetic make-up? Is there a flaw in their code?

SCIENTIST

Ma'am, according to the records, two share paternal DNA, and one of those and the other share maternal DNA.

KINCAID

So the whole first crèche, they could all have this mutation.

SCIENTIST

A dormant mutation, triggered by something. We don't know what yet.

KINCAID

How is it related to the Gen. Pop.'S mutation? Is there a relation?

(CONTINUED)

SCIENTIST

Gen. Pop. Is active, ma'am. The slightest bit of radiation and they go into immediate radiation sickness.

Kincaid rubs her eyebrows, annoyed. She manages to keep her temper under control, but barely.

KINCAID

How is this different?

SCIENTIST

It's not only caused by radiation, ma'am. There's another trigger.

KINCAID

Do you know what this trigger is?

SCIENTIST

We're trying, ma'am. Mackler's and Vance's work - so much was destroyed by Dr. Vance -

KINCAID

No more excuses. There is only so much time.

He shrinks at Kincaid's glare. Walking to her chair and sitting, she holds her hand out for his data chip. He hands it to her, nervously backing away as soon as she inserts it, reads the data. As she reads, her hand clamps down on the chair's arm, tighter and tighter.

KINCAID (CONT'D)

I used all their lab reports. This should have worked. This should have cured it.

SCIENTIST

It didn't.

KINCAID

I know that it didn't!

There is silence for a moment.

KINCAID (CONT'D)

Go away.

SCIENTIST

Yes, ma'am.

The scientist leaves, almost running.

Kincaid sits for a minute, then brings up a report on her screen.

INSERT:

The face of a middle-aged man. Under the photo is the caption "Dr. Mackenzie Vance."

BACK TO SCENE

Kincaid stares at it for a minute.

KINCAID

What did you do with it, old man?
Where's the secret?

She leans closer, her face twisted and deformed and she hisses at the screen.

KINCAID (CONT'D)

I'll find it, and I'll fix this mess
you've gotten us into to.

She leans back, deflated. Now she speaks in a whisper, almost a prayer.

KINCAID (CONT'D)

Paint my father a butcher, will you?
Take his redemption to your grave?

She leans in again, stares at the photo with a scary intensity.

KINCAID (CONT'D)

He'll be a hero. I'll make him a
hero. And you'll help me.

INT. SHELTER - KINCAID'S OFFICE - LATER

Aidan paces the narrow confines of Kincaid's office, waiting for her to arrive. Occasionally she stops to study the map, but she is active, nervous.

Kincaid comes in, perfunctory. She nods a greeting at Aidan and crosses to her chair.

AIDAN

Send me back up.

Kincaid pauses, alert but not surprised. The two woman stare at each other, then with a slight inclination of her head, Kincaid moves to her desk, inviting Aidan to sit.

Aidan's rad band is a dark yellow. Kincaid takes this in, watches Aidan closely.

KINCAID

Why?

(CONTINUED)

AIDAN

Send me up or rumors about the
Council's decision might spring up.

Kincaid leans back, smiling. She seems pleased by this, like Aidan has just made a superb chess move. Kincaid takes a minute, then, still smiling, nods.

EXT. TOPSIDE - SACRED GROVE - EVENING

Aidan enters a small, circular grove of trees. They are almost normal looking. She finds a spot, and begins removing her leads immediately. As she takes them off, we see that "Shae" has been written on the collar of the leads in an elaborate, curly script. Aidan sees that, tries to scrub it off with spit and her shirt, to no avail. She hides them in a hollow tree, and sits down to wait.

EXT. TOPSIDE - SACRED GROVE - MOMENTS LATER

KAI approaches, silently. He sees Aidan, and circles through the trees, watching her. He is tall, dark-skinned, with long, ink-black hair. He is dressed in leather breeches, no shirt. He has a bow and quiver with arrows strapped to his back.

Aidan's breathing is deep and slow, and she is asleep.

Kai approaches, cautiously. When he gets within two feet, Aidan grabs his ankle, flips him backward. The two wrestle, rolling around on the ground.

Kai is on top, their faces inches from each other. The laughter abruptly ends. Their eyes lock, and their breathing quickens. Kai begins to lean down, moves a hand to frame Aidan's face. Aidan almost lets him kiss her, then panics, pushing him off, hiding her fear behind a shaky laugh and an attempt to return to the lightheartedness of a few moments before.

AIDAN

Enough! I give.

Kai gets to his feet quickly, offers her his hand. Any disappointment is hidden. When he speaks English, it is with an accent that is vaguely Spanish.

KAI

My friend Aidan. I greet you.

Aidan takes his hand, stands.

AIDAN

Hi to you too.

KAI

I bring Day-see today.

(CONTINUED)

Aidan, already leaving the clearing, turns back.

AIDAN

Oh, Kai, she's a beautiful horse.

Kai nods, and they continue walking.

KAI

I will ride with you to the bridge.

AIDAN

All the way?

KAI

The Elders wish to know what is there,
why you go so often. Why you need
Day-see.

Aidan stops, worried.

AIDAN

Why are they so concerned?

Kai holds out his hands, palm up. He doesn't know. Aidan relaxes slightly.

AIDAN (CONT'D)

They aren't planning a war - a fight?

KAI

No fighting, Aidan, only when *abaixo*
come to us.

Kai moves in front of Aidan, leading the way. Aidan has no choice but to follow.

They get to the horses, tied to a tree by a stream. Kai points to the water.

KAI (CONT'D)

Water good, here.

AIDAN

You mean it's clean?

She moves forward, pulling out a small Geiger from her pack. She runs it over the water, but its clack remains constant.

Kai looks over her shoulder.

KAI

Clean.

Aidan, delighted, bends down and drinks. She lifts her head up, close to tears.

(CONTINUED)

KAI (CONT'D)

OK?

AIDAN

Yes, yes. I've never tasted water so cold. So sweet.

Smiling, Kai pulls her away from the stream.

AIDAN (CONT'D)

Does it have a name?

KAI

A name?

AIDAN

What do you call it?

KAI

The stream.

Aidan smiles, shakes her head.

AIDAN

Can I name it?

KAI

Day-see?

AIDAN

No!

She laughs, shrugs.

AIDAN (CONT'D)

Well, kind of. A different name. Can I?

Kai shrugs.

AIDAN (CONT'D)

Shae. Shae Creek.

KAI

Say -

AIDAN

Shae. She's - She's nobody. Someone I knew.

Aidan stares at the stream a minute, then turns back to the horses. She grabs the reins of a the smaller horse. AS Kai mounts, she waits, patting the horse on its neck.

AIDAN (CONT'D)

I wish you were mine, little lady. I wish every Runner had a horse.

(CONTINUED)

KAI
Tranquillo, vamonos.

Aidan grins, and mounts. The two gently guide their horses out of the thicket and into an open plain.

Once on the grassland, Kai gives Aidan a devilish look, and leans forward on his horse.

AIDAN
Oh no, no, you don't.

KAI
We race!

AIDAN
No, Kai -

Kai has already pulled ahead, Swearing, Aidan urges her horse forward. She is not as skilled a rider as Kai, but she manages.

They race across the plain, and as Kai crosses a small line of bushes a full head in front of Aidan, he raises his hands above his head in triumph.

INT.SHELTER - AIDAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

The room is dark. Evie is asleep on her bunk. The door opens, and SHAE enters. She is slumped, walking as if she has a hunchback. Evie sits up, rubs her eyes.

She hears Shae's breathing in the dark, then suddenly, Shae grabs Evie's arm. Evie SHRIEKS, presses her back up to the wall. Shae moves closer, strokes Evie's hair.

SHAE
Evie, quiet. Good Evie, quiet Evie -

Shae continues to mutter as she turns away, towards her bunk. Evie gets out of bed, follows her.

EVIE
(Reaching out to touch
her)
Shae?

Before Evie can do anything, Shae bares her teeth, knocks Evie out of the way with surprising strength. Colliding with the wall knocks the breath out of Evie, and she slides to the floor, dazed.

Shae, grunting, goes to her bunk and begins to tear it apart. She is frantically looking for something. She finds it, but it is hidden in the shadows. Evie, dazed, attempts to stand up just as Shae leaps for the door. She jumps almost to the

(CONTINUED)

ceiling, bounds off one wall, and leaves the room. The door closes behind her.

Evie, shocked, horrified, slinks down to the floor, quietly sobbing.

EXT. RUINS OF GOLDEN GATE - EVENING

Aidan and Kai halt their mounts. Aidan dismounts, followed by Kai. They stare at the Golden Gate bridge, part of it still standing, part a wreck of dangling and twisted metal. The sun sets behind it.

KAI

I will wait with the horses.

AIDAN

Kai, it could be dangerous -

KAI

I will wait.

Taken aback, Aidan gets defensive. Kai accepts her change of mood with equanimity.

AIDAN

Fine. Just be careful.

KAI

You too.

Aidan turns, pulls out another stash of leads hidden under the shrubbery. Pulling them on, she glances back in the direction Kai went, but can't see him. For a moment she stares after him, her desire to go with him clear on her face.

Breathing deeply, Aidan heads off towards the Council's Headquarters.

INT. SHELTER - COMMON ROOM - LATER

Evie and Daven sit very close together in a small section consisting of two chairs and a small table. Next to each other, there is a small resemblance, but they are not identical. Spread on the table are old blueprints. They are poring over them intently, occasionally looking around them to make sure nobody is listening.

Daven is preoccupied, while Evie is almost bouncing off her chair.

Irritated, Daven flips down his pencil and looks at Evie. There are circles under his eyes and the stress shows in his face. Stilled by his glare, Evie looks away, bites her lip.

Daven attempts to go back to the maps. After a moment, he sighs, puts the pencil down again, and shoves Evie gently.

(CONTINUED)

DAVEN

Hey.

Evie smiles, shoves back.

EVIE

Hey.

The smile at each other, briefly, then Daven goes back to the maps. After a moment, Daven, still working, mutters something, then sighs, shoulders sagging. Evie rubs his shouldars. She reaches over, grabs a map, pulls it to her.

EVIE (CONT'D)

She has to be down there. It's the only place she could be hiding.

Reaching over, she grabs his hand, holding tightly.

DAVEN

Have you seen the size of these maps?
She could be anywhere.

EVIE

We'll find her.

INT. COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS - DINING HALL - LATER

Aidan, dressed again in casual cotton trousers and a tunic, is sitting at a long table, eating an orange. She is savoring every bite. The Council's Shelter is the opposite of Aidan's shelter. It is brightly lit, there are no restriction signs on the doors, the Geiger's are on but the doors are open at all times. The room is half full of people talking to each other, chatting.

If Aidan notices the discrepancy, she gives no sign.

MASON's shadow appears, blocking her light. He is a tall, good-looking man, with a hint of arrogance to his smile. Aidan looks up.

AIDAN

Do I know you?

MASON

No. Can I sit here?

He smiles, an engaging one, so Aidan nods. He puts down his tray and sits.

MASON (CONT'D)

So, when you brought back Council's
"go Topside and be fruitful" message,
were you crucified or canonized?

(CONTINUED)

AIDAN

Neither. And how did you know I was here last time?

MASON

I saw you. You're kind of hard to miss, you know.

Aidan looks away, uncomfortable. Mason puts his hands up in a "I'm harmless" way.

MASON (CONT'D)

Sorry. Mason, from SouthWest - 2. Completely harmless.

He reaches out his hand, and Aidan shakes it.

AIDAN

Aidan, Pacific Coast, NorthWest - 3.

MASON

Pleasure.

Aidan looks at him for a minute, contemplating.

MASON (CONT'D)

What? All those rumors you heard, they aren't true.

Aidan shakes her head.

AIDAN

No, its just - I think my sister transferred there, about three weeks ago.

MASON

I doubt it was my Shelter. We've been at max pop. for almost two years now.

AIDAN

Really?

Mason laughs, loudly.

MASON

Yeah, really. There hasn't been a marriage or a new-born babe in 18 months, and none planned in the upcoming future, either.

Aidan stares at Mason, horrified.

MASON (CONT'D)

Now, it's not that bad -

(CONTINUED)

Aidan stands and runs off, leaving Mason mid-sentence.

MASON (CONT'D)

Hey - aren't you gonna finish you
orange?

When Aidan doesn't reply, Mason shrugs, sits down, and eats it himself.

INT. ANTECHAMBER TO COUNCIL CHAIR'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

A secretary sits at a beat-up desk that just about fills the space. She is working half-heartedly on some paperwork when Aidan comes running up the hallway.

SECRETARY

ID Badge?

AIDAN

I need to see the Chair.

SECRETARY

ID Badge?

Exasperated, Aidan pulls hers out and slaps it into the secretary's hand, than waits impatiently while the secretary pulls up Aidan's information.

SECRETARY (CONT'D)

What is this concerning?

AIDAN

I really need to speak with the Chair.

SECRETARY

He's out. Would you like leave a
message?

Aidan stares out her, chewing her lip. The secretary stares back, unperturbed. Aidan plants her hands on the secretary's desk and leans in so her face is inches away from the secretary's.

AIDAN

I need to see him now.

SECRETARY

He's. Not. Here.

AIDAN

Fine. Who is?

SECRETARY

What is this concerning?

Aidan pulls back, admits defeat, looks at the secretary with grudging admiration.

(CONTINUED)

AIDAN
Shelter to Shelter transfers.

The secretary laughs.

SECRETARY
Good luck! There hasn't been a
transfer approved in ages.

Aidan goes very still.

AIDAN
What do you mean, ages?

SECRETARY
At least two years. I mean, there's
a list I can put you on, but it's a
lost cause - hey!

Aidan has grabbed her badge off the desk and is running back down the hallway.

INT. SHELTER - LOWER CAVERNS - SAME DAY

Evie's flashlight casts a dim light about Evie and Daven as they explore the long-unused lower caverns. Both are armed with knives sheathed at their waists. They carry small packs across their backs.

Silent, they walk along. Occasionally Daven stops to check the map.

A scream rips through the catacombs, making Daven twitch and Evie jump. It is long, anguished. Almost inhuman. It is followed by the sound of scuffling feet, ahead of them.

Daven stands, paralyzed, as the scream dwindles. Evie flashes the light around wildly, creating strange shadows on the wall.

Daven grabs the light, points it in the direction of the scream. A dark form passes it front of it, further down.

DAVEN
Come on!

Daven takes off, and Evie follows, striving to keep up with him. Repeatedly, Daven points the flashlight ahead, tracking the dark figure as they gain on her.

They turn a corner, and enter a large, round chamber with an opening directly across from the entrance. In the middle of the room stands Shae. She is growling, deep in her throat, and has dropped into a crouch, swinging from side to side.

(CONTINUED)

Daven holds Evie back, and watches Shae. Disgust, loathing, and an aching loss flash across his face. Shae chitters at him, then tilts her head back and screams again.

EVIE

Look at her band.

Daven looks, recoils. Shae's band is a dark, blood red.

DAVEN

How the hell did that happen?

Evie starts to answer, but Shae howls again.

Shae hits the floor and the wall with the palms of her hands, then launches herself at Evie. With a savage swipe, Shae knocks Evie to the ground. Evie hits her head and is knocked unconscious.

Shae, not pausing, attacks Daven.

Her leap knocks them both the floor, and as Daven struggles to get her off, they roll around the chamber.

Managing to break away, Daven scrambles to a far wall. Shae follows, and they circle each other. Daven holds one hand out, pleading, but Shae attacks again.

This time they stay on their feet. Shae lifts Daven up and hurls him against the wall. A bone CRUNCHES. Daven, gasping in pain, manages to roll out of the way as Shae charges again.

DAVEN (CONT'D)

Shae! Shae, it's me.

Shae growls, swipes at him with a clawed hand. There is no recognition on her face. Shae herself is barely recognizable.

On the floor, Evie's eyes flutter. She lets out a small groan, tries to get up. Blood trickles from her forehead.

Shae swipes at Daven again, and he doesn't dodge fast enough. A long nail, almost a claw, cuts his side. He grunts in pain, but grabs Shae's hand as she tries to hit him again. Holding that one arm up, above her head, Daven stares into her eyes.

DAVEN (CONT'D)

Shae, it's me.

Shae lets out an inarticulate shriek and wrests herself out of Daven's grasp.

Evie shakes her head, comes to her knees, falters.

Behind her, Daven and Shae circle, Daven limping and holding his side. Shae assails him, yowling. Daven struggles with her as Evie comes to her feet.

(CONTINUED)

Without thinking, Evie grabs the heavy flashlight and runs up behind Shae, hitting her over the head with it. Shae collapses, unconscious.

Evie stares down at her, horrified, then slowly looks up at Daven.

EVIE
Did I kill her?

EXT. RUINS OF GOLDEN GATE - SAME TIME

A frantic Aidan crashes through the underbrush. She is panting, tearing off her leads as she runs.

AIDAN
Kai! Kai!

She screams his name up to the sky, then collapses onto her knees. She stays that way for a moment, then gathers herself up. Standing, she turns the direction that Kai left in and waits.

A horse's NICKER is heard and Kai enters the clearing.

KAI
Aidan,-

Aidan stops, stare at Kai with an anguished expression.

AIDAN
I have to get home.

KAI
The village?

AIDAN
The shelter.

Kai's disappointment is momentary, and he hides it well. With a crisp nod, he goes to the horses. They mount, and as soon as they are clear of the underbrush, Aidan whips her horse into a gallop.

INT. SHELTER - LOWER CAVERNS - SHAE'S CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Daven and Evie are tying up Shae. She is bound hand and foot, still unconscious, Evie is wiping at tears. Daven is quiet and intense, deep in mourning.

EVIE
Why can't I stay here?

DAVEN
If she attacks you, Evie, what would you do?

(CONTINUED)

EVIE

It's wrong, it feels wrong, tying her up and leaving her here.

DAVEN

We're only going to get supplies. We'll be back before she wakes up.

Evie falls silent for a moment, stroking Shae's matted hair. Daven stands up, paces. Evie puts Shae's head in her lap, attempts to comb out Shae's hair with her fingers.

EVIE

What do we do now?

DAVEN

We find out how this happened. Her band -- She should be dead.

EVIE

She should be glowing.

DAVEN

The Geiger hasn't so much as hiccuped around her.

Daven throws his arms up, walks away towards a archway opposite the entry to the halls. He sees something, enters the room.

DAVEN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Evie! Evie, come here!

His voice has a high, strained sound to it.

Evie runs into the chamber and stops dead.

EVIE

Oh, my God.

Scattered about the floor are papers, clothing, food. It is a pigsty. In one corner a pile of rags makes a bed. A body lies on it. Daven moves to it, checks its pulse.

DAVEN

Dead.

Daven shakes his head, stands. Evie moves over, looks at the corpse, sees something. She kneels down, lifts the arm, shows Daven a bracelet.

DAVEN (CONT'D)

Frannie. I remember when she got that. Was she killed?

EVIE

Looks like natural causes.

(CONTINUED)

Evie's attention is drawn to a small book by her feet. She reaches down, picks it up.

DAVEN
What? What is it?

EVIE
It's Shae's journal.

She hands it to him, tears in her eyes. Silent, Daven takes it, opens it.

What he reads disgusts him. He closes it with a snap.

EVIE (CONT'D)
What? What does it say?

DAVEN
Kincaid.

He strides out of the room. Evie watches him, then runs after.

EVIE
What are you going to do?

Daven turns around, looks down at Shae, unconscious on the floor, bound. His resolve firms.

DAVEN
I need you to get proof.

EVIE
Of what. Daven --

He leaves the chamber. Evie follows.

EVIE (CONT'D)
Proof of what?

He tosses her the book.

DAVEN
Proof of what it says in there.

INT. SHELTER - LOWER CAVERNS - SHAE'S CHAMBER - MOMENTS LATER

Shae lies on her side, tied. Evie's voice fades in the distance. Grunting, she attempts to work her way loose.

KENT HARTMAN enters, slowly. He is much sicker than Shae, much more deformed. He has been ill much longer than she has. He sees Shae, and with great effort, speaks. His RAD band is black.

KENT
I ... help ...

(CONTINUED)

Shae jerks, tries to move away. Kent moves closer, bends down. He is shaking. Slowly, he unties her hands. Shae sits up, staring at him. Slowly, she recognizes him. It is hard for her to talk, to remember words.

SHAE

Kent?

Kent's whole body trembles, and he scurries back from her. Shae watches him. He trembles, even more violently, then shrieks. He lunges towards Shae, stops himself. After a moment, he runs off.

Shae bends over and begins to untie her feet, grunting as she does so.

INT. SHELTER - AIDAN'S ROOM - LATER

Daven sits on Evie's bed, holding a bandage to his forehead. He is shirtless. Shae's journal sits on the bed beside him. He strokes the cover, once, a look of irrevocable loss on his face.

Evie comes out of the bathroom with another wet cloth, watches him for a second. She leans against the doorway, her strength gone for a moment.

Daven looks up, sees her, attempts a smile. Evie goes to him, removes the old bandage from Daven's forehead, replaces it. Her hands tremble. Daven grabs one, holds it steady.

Evie sucks in a deep, pained breath. The touch releases them from their imposed calm, and the pain breaks through simultaneously. Daven grasps Evie, pulls her close, she grabs his shoulders. They cling to each other, silent tears streaming down Evie's face.

EXT. OPEN PLAIN - AFTERNOON

Kai and Aidan gallop across the plain. The horse's sides heave at the effort.

INSERT

Aidan's RAD band, orange and getting darker.

BACK TO SCENE

Aidan falters, begins to list to one side. Slowly, she falls off. Kai rears his horse back, jumps off, runs to her side.

Aidan lies on the ground, gasping for air. She is pale, feverish. Kai kneels beside her, afraid to touch her. He runs his hands around her, frantic.

Running to his horse, he grabs a blanket from a saddle, wraps it around her, then picks her up in his arms and puts her in

(CONTINUED)

the saddle. Groggy, half-awake, Aidan manages to hold on long enough for Kai to mount behind her. Wrapping his arms around her, grabbing the reins, he urges his horse into a fast gallop, heading in a different direction than the shelter.

SERIES OF SHOTS

A. Aidan and Kai, riding into the mountains. Aidan almost falls off. Kai dismounts, pulls her down, holds her hair back from her face as she vomits, then helps her back up.

B. Kai leads the horse up an almost non-existent path on a mountain, with Aidan lying on the saddle. Kai halts, looks around to find a direction, then continues.

C. Kai and Aidan halt in front of a ramshackle cabin. An old man with crazy white hair stands on the porch, armed with a slingshot.

EXT. VANCE'S CABIN - MORNING

Kai helps Aidan dismount. VANCE does not lower his slingshot, but he doesn't shoot it, either.

KAI

Please. She needs you.

VANCE

She needs a doctor.

KAI

You are a doctor.

Vance smiles, coughs, spits.

VANCE

Not for years, boy.

Kai bristles at being called a boy, and Aidan, blurry, looks up. The face that glares down at her is hard, craggy, the eyes defiant. She knows who he is.

AIDAN

Please - please.

She moves to the porch, leans against it, almost falling. Vance's face tightens.

AIDAN (CONT'D)

My name is Vance. Aidan Vance. You have to help -

She falls fully, unconscious. Vance stares down at her, face expressionless, weighing his decision. He snorts, laughing at something without humor, lowers the slingshot and turns towards the door.

(CONTINUED)

VANCE

You better come inside, then.

INT. SHELTER - AIDAN'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Evie lies, sleeping, on her bed. She tosses, murmurs, moans. The door dings, and Evie sits up, frightened and wide awake.

EVIE

Who?

COMPUTER PA

Macklin, Daven

Evie relaxes.

EVIE

Open.

Walking in urgently, Daven is sitting on the foot of the bed before Evie can get up. He takes her hands, holds them tightly.

DAVEN

Shae's gone.

Evie gasps, then checks herself.

DAVEN (CONT'D)

The ropes were torn apart. By someone else.

EVIE

Kent, maybe, or Charlie? They're still missing.

DAVEN

Charlie isn't.

EVIE

Oh, no. I liked Charlie. You're sure?

DAVEN

He was in a worse state than Frannie. Buried further back.

EVIE

Oh my God.

DAVEN

There were ... marks, on the walls. Leading further down.

EVIE

Was there any - Were there - was there a fight?

(CONTINUED)

Daven shakes his head.

DAVEN

We have to figure out how this happened to her, Evie. How to save her. What Kincaid did to her.

Frightened, shaking, Evie only nods.

INT. VANCE'S CABIN - CONTINUOUS

The cabin is cramped, filled with old machinery and jerry-rigged machines.

VANCE

Lay the girl on the couch, boy, and tell me why you came here.

Kai lies Aidan down, gently, finds a blanket, checks to make sure it is clean, than covers her with it. Vance watches, perched on a stool. His face is hard but he watches Kai with compassion.

KAI

The Elders say you are a man who knows ... things.

Vance snorts at this. Kai gets even more uncomfortable.

VANCE

Fah, the Elders. Why are you here?

Meeting Vance's hard gaze unflinchingly, Kai speaks with a quiet force that is new to him.

KAI

For you to save her.

Vance sits still for a moment. Finally, he nods.

INT. SHELTER - MEDLAB - AFTERNOON

Evie enters the MedLab. She attempts indifference with mixed results. A doctor, working at a computer, looks up and smiles.

DOCTOR

Evie. Good to see you. Not your assigned day, is it?

Evie hesitates, and the doctor catches it.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

You are here to help? You're not sick?

EVIE

No, no. I feel fine.

(CONTINUED)

She smiles. The doctor studies her, then shrugs.

DOCTOR

Good. With this new flu that's going around, more than half the staff is out.

Evie moves into the lab, picks up a piles of charts and paperwork.

EVIE

Want me to wade through the paperwork?

DOCTOR

Please.

She turns back to her computer as Evie collects the many piles.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Sue does that, I've never been any good at being organized, and she's been out for days ...

INT. SHELTER - MEDLAB - LATER

The doctor leans away from the computer, glances at Evie, who is patiently filing hardcopy.

DOCTOR

I'm taking a break. Want anything?

Evie looks up, shakes her head.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

You sure?

EVIE

Yes, thanks.

Doctor shrugs, leaves the room. As soon as the door closes, Evie moves to the refrigerated storage, removing vials of blood and DNA samples from the back. She takes one of everything, then looks around for a cooler. She finds one below the fridge. She grabs it, puts the vials in.

Rushing back to where she was standing, she pushes the cooler under her table just as the door opens and the doctor comes back in. The Doctor, catching just a bit of Evie's movement, looks around suspiciously, but sees nothing out of place.

INT. SHELTER - TEACHING SCIENCE LAB - LATER

Evie and Daven sit at a microscope. After a moment, Evie sits up, pushes her hair out of her face, and exhales loudly. Daven takes her place, looking through the microscope himself.

(CONTINUED)

DAVEN
This is our blood?

 EVIE
Yes.

 DAVEN
What am I looking at?

 EVIE
Normal, human blood.

 DAVEN
So?

Hands shaking, Evie places another slide on the palette.
Daven leans in to look, sucks in his breath.

INSERT

Blood on slide, seen through the microscope. It is filled
with deformed, rapidly reproducing blood cells.

BACK TO SCENE

Daven jerks his head back, looks at Evie for an explanation.

 EVIE
Kent's blood. I got it from MedLab.
There's DNA samples here, showing
the same thing.

 DAVEN
What?

 EVIE
Mutations. Cancer cells, mutated DNA
strands, lost T-Cells.

Daven stares at Evie, not understanding. Evie gets up, begins
to pace. She is deciding something, and after a moment, she
stops and with a new ruthlessness, marches back to the
microscope, changes slides again. Daven looks at it, pulls
back immediately.

 DAVEN
Who's is that?

 EVIE
It's a sample from the general
population.

She places another one on the palette, Daven looks.

 EVIE (CONT'D)
A different person.

(CONTINUED)

Daven looks up, realization in his eyes.

DAVEN
The mutations the same.

EVIE
It's not scientifically probable
that the exact same mutation happens
twice.

DAVEN
What is it? What does it do?

Evie stares at him a moment before answering.

EVIE
In the gen. pop., it's a weakened
DNA strand. In us, a dormant mutation
cell, waiting for something, maybe a
high enough dose of radiation, to
erupt -

She changes the slides back to Kent's.

EVIE (CONT'D)
- into this.

DAVEN
Shae's looks like this?

Looking away, Evie moves things around on the table. Daven covers her hand with his own, drawing her eyes to his.

EVIE
I couldn't find Shae's samples. My
guess is - yes. It's the same.

INT. VANCE'S CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Aidan sits straight up in bed, panting. The room is dim, unfamiliar to her. Grunting, she gets out off bed. Across the room, light spills out from a halfway closed door. Soft VOICES can be heard. Slowly, leaning on the furniture, Aidan makes her way across the room. She pauses at the doorway, listening.

Aidan peers through the crack in the doorway, sees Vance and Kai seated around an ancient oak table, the top of which is covered with salvaged laboratory equipment.

VANCE
At first they called it Mackenzie's
folly, than Mackler's curse.

The old man pauses, takes a sip of something from a jug, offer it to Kai, who also drinks.

(CONTINUED)

VANCE (CONT'D)

We were trying to give evolution a push, and it pushed back.

He chuckles, spits on the floor.

Aidan leans away from the door, sweat standing out on her brow. She breaths heavily, almost falls over. After a moment, she leans back to the door.

KAI

What you did - it is not easily forgiven.

VANCE

Mackler's burning in hell, and I put him there. I 'spect to see him waiting for me when I die.

Aidan leans closer, straining to hear.

KAI

What you did to her - it will save her?

VANCE

I don't know. I've only used it on myself, and a few of your kind -

At that, Aidan topples over, catches herself on the door, falls into the room as the door opens inward. On the floor, she looks up at the two man staring, open-mouthed, at her.

AIDAN

Hi.

INT. VANCE'S CABIN - LAB - MOMENTS LATER

Aidan sits, drinking something steaming from a tin cup. Kai hovers, anxious, while Vance watches her face.

VANCE

You're color's back. You look good.

AIDAN

So do you, for a dead man.

Vance stiffens, then chuckles in wry appreciation.

VANCE

I suppose I do, at that.

Gazing intently at Vance, Aidan puts down her cup.

AIDAN

We have a statue of you, in our meeting hall.

(CONTINUED)

VANCE
Can't imagine why.

AIDAN
You saved our Shelter.

Vance begins to laugh. It is a wild, dark sound, tinged with hysteria. Aidan leans away from him, and Kai moves to stand, protectively, in front of her. After a moment, the laughter trails off into something close to a sob.

VANCE
Savior. Oh. Irony's a killer.

There is no reply from either Kai or Aidan. Both watch the old man, apprehensive. Vance chuckles again, this time sanely, shakes his head. Pouring himself another drink, he stands, walks to the window that looks out at the dark landscape.

VANCE (CONT'D)
Mackler and I were the first to go
Topside from our Shelter. I never
wanted to go back down.

Turning from the window, he meets Aidan's gaze. Aidan nods in understanding.

AIDAN
What happened?

VANCE
We met the Nomads, that day. Humans
who lived above ground, tall and
strong -

Trailing off, Vance stares at Kai.

VANCE (CONT'D)
It was Mackler who said it, but I'd
thought it. A way for us to move up.
A chance for life Topside.

Kai straightens, his face a mask, and spits on his floor.

VANCE (CONT'D)
I deserve that, I suppose.

Sitting on a stool, he is old for the first time. Aidan looks from one man to the other.

AIDAN
Tell me.

VANCE
You're a child of the first crèche,
aren't you?

(CONTINUED)

Bemused, Aidan nods. Vance touches her hair.

VANCE (CONT'D)

I remember the hair. You were, oh, six or seven when I left.

AIDAN

Kincaid said you'd died.

VANCE

I did, in a way.

He gets up, moves to a pot bubbling over a makeshift bunsen burner. He lifts it up, pores some into his cup, than Aidan's. Kai refuses.

VANCE (CONT'D)

How old were you, you're first trip Topside?

Aidan tilts her head, smiles at the memory.

AIDAN

Sixteen. It was my birthday. A ...
 (she struggles for
 the right word)
 ... friend, I suppose, took me up.
 He was older, had permission.

Vance chuckles.

AIDAN (CONT'D)

It was wonderful. Beautiful. I never wanted to go back down.

VANCE

That's what we thought we were doing, you see. Liberating our entire shelter. They would never have to go back down.

KAI

At what cost?

He has not sat down, and he stares at Vance with disgust and hate. Vance meets his gaze, straightforward and unapologetic.

VANCE

We were very young. It's no excuse, I know.

AIDAN

What did you do?

VANCE

We spliced into our genes.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

VANCE (CONT'D)

Into the very heart of who we were.
Our adult genes.

AIDAN

That technology's forbidden.

VANCE

Yes, it was then too.

He shakes his heads, drinks.

VANCE (CONT'D)

Mackler and I thought, if we could
force our bodies to adapt faster -
to mimic the centuries of culling
that produced the Nomads -

AIDAN

And you created us -

VANCE

No, child. First we destroyed, before
we ever created. Mackler tested it.
Before it was ready.

AIDAN

On who - oh. Oh my God.

VANCE

Yes. The whole Shelter. It backfired,
to say the least.

AIDAN

How could you?

VANCE

I didn't. The man went behind my
back and he -

Vance stops, calms down, drinks some more.

VANCE (CONT'D)

We tried to fix it. Went back to
basic genetics. His daughter, me,
him. The only clean people in the
shelter. Tried to create a child.

Aidan looks ill. Kai moves behind her, steadies her. She
leans against him for support.

VANCE (CONT'D)

Didn't work. We needed a broader
gene base. A better gene base. We
went Topside.

(CONTINUED)

AIDAN

Oh, you didn't.

VANCE

We were desperate. Mackler had a way to make you believe very word he said.

Kai's hand digs into her shoulder as Vance nods, shame and regret in every motion.

VANCE (CONT'D)

Twelve woman. Out on a walk, picking berries. We took them.

Aidan stands up, violently, knocks over her cup. She has to lean on the table for support. Vance reaches out, but she jerks back.

AIDAN

Don't touch me.

VANCE

We thought we were saving ourselves.

She turns to go. It is too much for her, and her eyes roll back and she faints.

Kai hisses between his teeth, catches her, glares at Vance. Vance accepts that, nodding his head sadly.

VANCE (CONT'D)

Come, put her to bed. You have nowhere to go tonight.

INT. VANCE'S CABIN - MORNING

Aidan awakes, starts. Vance is leaning over her, removing a syringe. He smiles, pats her arm.

VANCE

Last course of this. Should have you feeling as good as new soon.

Aidan says nothing, sits up, flexes her arm.

VANCE (CONT'D)

Do you want to hear the rest of the story?

AIDAN

No. You kidnapped and raped twelve woman. I came from that.

Vance sighs, puts the syringe away.

(CONTINUED)

VANCE

Your friend is outside. He refuses to enter if I am in the room. I would recommend another day of rest.

AIDAN

Will I die if I leave now?

VANCE

No.

AIDAN

Good.

She stares at him until he stands up. She pulls the blanket back, swings her legs over the sides.

VANCE

You shouldn't judge me. I've been judged already.

Aidan shakes her head, dismissing him completely. Vance slams the syringe case on the table. He storms out of the room, and Kai enters.

AIDAN

Take me home, Kai.

Kai nods, moves to help her out of bed.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Kai and Aidan stop in a small grove. Aidan is riding, Kai leading. Aidan is slightly pale, but her breathing is fine.

AIDAN

Don't stop.

KAI

We stop, and set up camp. You are still not well.

AIDAN

I am much better -

KAI

You must rest, or you will fall ill again.

AIDAN

I'm fine.

Kai helps her dismount. For a second, their bodies are touching, and Kai bends his head, so they are forehead to forehead.

(CONTINUED)

KAI

You are not fine. When you can
dismount without me helping you,
then you are fine.

Smiling, Aidan opens her eyes, looks into Kai's. He sets her
down on the ground lightly, hands still on her waist.

AIDAN

I could have dismounted, if you'd
given me the chance.

Kai smiles knowingly, inclines his head.

KAI

Perhaps.

The moment becomes serious, becomes meaningful. Aidan, still
raw from Vance's confessions, places her head on Kai's chest.

AIDAN

I apologize for him.

With much sorrow, Kai nods. The moonlight falls across them
both, giving enough light to see their faces by. Reaching
up, Aidan cups Kai's face, gently, then brings his face down
to hers. The kiss is gentle, sweet.

AS it finishes, Kai kisses her forehead, looks into her eyes.

KAI

I would lie with you tonight, Aidan,
daughter of the shelter.

The words are spoken formally, the cadence and intonation
rich with tradition. Aidan is suddenly shy, blushing, unsure
of what to say.

Meeting Kai's eyes, she calms. The answer is there.

AIDAN

I would have you lie with me tonight,
Kai, of the Fourth Tribe.

And as she finished naming him, he kisses her, a move of
animal-like fleetness and infinite tenderness.

EXT. WOODS - MORNING

Aidan wakes, alone, covered in a dusty horse blanket. She
stretches, revealing a nude back.

Kai is readying the horse, his back to her. Aidan, shy, waits
for him to turn.

A moment later, he does. He smiles at her, and she smiles
back.

(CONTINUED)

KAI

We slept late. We must ride now.

Nodding, Aidan reaches for her clothes.

EXT. NOMADS' VILLAGE - AFTERNOON

As Aidan and Kai ride into the village, all activity stops. Everyone stares at Aidan, some in fear, others in curiosity. Some call out questions to Kai in a musical language part Spanish, part Portuguese and part Pueblo.

Aidan stares back, drinking in the sights and sounds. They pass by a small child, one arm shrunken into its chest. Aidan recoils. Kai, noticing, looks at the child.

KAI

Desigual.

Aidan doesn't understand, Kai searches for the English.

KAI (CONT'D)

Different? Maybe.

Aidan nods.

KAI (CONT'D)

Not so many desigual, not now. Less each ...

He searches of the word.

AIDAN

Generation?

KAI

Yes. Generation.

Aidan nods, looking back at the boy.

KAI (CONT'D)

The *abaixo*, you do not have desigual?

AIDAN

No, no we don't. Not like that, anyway.

Kai absorbs this in silence. They reach a central hut, and dismount. Aidan is aware of the stillness, of a sense of anticipation.

KAI

The Elders will meet you. I will ask for two more horses, leave to see you home.

He notices her apprehension, squeezes her wrist.

(CONTINUED)

KAI (CONT'D)

Don't worry. They do not bite.

He says this with great pride, as if he has just learned it. Hearing it so surprises Aidan she laughs out loud.

KAI (CONT'D)

Vamos.

INT. ELDERS TENT - MOMENTS LATER

There are six older men and two women sitting around a fire. They do not look up when Kai and Aidan enter. Kai waits respectfully by the entrance. Aidan wrings her tunic until Kai reaches out and gently takes her hand. She grasps his tightly.

As the group finishes their hushed conversation, two men leave. As soon as they have left, the oldest man looks up. His eyes are covered in a white film.

AIDAN

Glaucoma. He's blind.

KAI

He has other sight, Aidan.

ELDER

Kai, estas es tu amiga, no? Llavas a mi.

Kai brings Aidan closer to the fire, into the light. She reluctantly lets go of his hand, faces the Elder.

KAI

Si, abuelo. Ella es muy inteligencia y muy agradable...

ELDER

Si, si, te gusta. Comprende.

AIDAN

What did you say?

KAI

Nothing.

The Elder asks Kai a long question. Kai nods, answers back. Aidan, exhausted, sways. One of the woman notices, begins to chatter. Immediately, Aidan is seated, given something to drink. As she sits, drinking, she can no longer follow the linear course of events.

SERIES OF SHOTS

A. Kai and Elder smoking, talking, handing pipe to Aidan.

(CONTINUED)

- B. Woman chattering, pointing to Aidan's geiger band.
- C. Smoke wafting through building
- D. Kai leaning over her, face concerned.

INT. SHELTER - CONTROL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kincaid and the scientist stand by her computer. Kincaid is furious.

KINCAID

What do you mean, you can't find them?

SCIENTIST

The tracking devices were found, ma'am. They had been ripped out -

KINCAID

I don't care how they were removed.

Forcing herself to calm down, Kincaid sits.

KINCAID (CONT'D)

Are there any other reverts I should know about?

SCIENTIST

Many that have been tested show the beginning stages, but none have reached the secondary or tertiary stages.

KINCAID

Good.

SCIENTIST

But, Ma'am, we , uh, recommend, um, not sending anyone out for awhile. The actual trigger is still unknown.

Kincaid closes her eyes. Nods. The scientist hesitates, then leaves quickly. As the door whooshes shut, Kincaid opens her eyes. She is bone-weary, and haunted. Leaning forward, she places her head in her hands. She does not cry, and after a moment she stands up, enraged, and throws a clipboard at the wall, screaming.

The scream ends, and Kincaid, her fists so tightly clenched that blood seeps from between her fingers, stares with desperation at the blank wall in front of her.

INT. SHELTER - SCIENCE LAB - LATER

Evie is sitting at a microscope when Daven enters. She looks up, startled, then smiles in relief.

(CONTINUED)

DAVEN
Do you live here now?

EVIE
It's a classroom, so it's not
patrolled or monitored. It's safe
here.

Daven nods, gestures towards the papers on the table in front
of here.

DAVEN
Find out anything?

EVIE
No. Find Shae?

Daven shakes his head. He is dusty and filthy, eyes red-
rimmed.

DAVEN
Just bits a metal, some sort of
transmitter device, a tooth.

Evie sighs, flips some paper over.

EVIE
Did you -- Did you finish Shae's
journal?

DAVEN
No.
(he looks at Evie,
who looks away)
Why?

EVIE
It says she volunteered for this.
And I found records, to back that up --
she signed a waiver, Daven.

Evie holds a piece of paper, which Daven roughly rips from
her hand, reads.

DAVEN
It says fertility testing.

EVIE
Yes.

DAVEN
In-vitro childbirth.

EVIE
Daven --

Daven slams the paper down, stares at Evie.

(CONTINUED)

DAVEN

Was it?

EVIE

Was it what?

DAVEN

Was it fertility testing? Did it just go wrong?

EVIE

I ... I don't think so.

DAVEN

Did Kincaid know?

Evie can't answer that. Daven swears, knocks over a stack of research discs. They clatter to the floor.

EVIE

We only have a few days, Daven. I found some more records, of Kincaid's testing.

Daven sits down, rubs his eyes.

EVIE (CONT'D)

They were all involved. Charlie was first, by three weeks.

DAVEN

Oh, God.

EVIE

Then Frannie. There was only two weeks between her and Kent, and then four between Kent and Shae.

DAVEN

Were there any others?

EVIE

Yeah, one or two -

She turns away, searching for something. It is a pretense, meant to hide something, and Daven sees right through it.

DAVEN

Who else, Evie?

EVIE

Daven -

DAVEN

Who?

(CONTINUED)

EVIE

Aidan. Aidan volunteered for the treatments a week or two after Shae did.

Daven is silent, refusing to say anything.

EVIE (CONT'D)

We have a week, maybe less.

DAVEN

She may not come back here.

EVIE

She may not want to.

Daven bows his head, and Evie touches his arm, then squeezes. Neither speaks.

INT. ELDER'S TENT - CONTINUOUS

Aidan sits straight up, gasping. The Elder smiles at her, steadies her with his arm.

ELDER

Buenos tardes.

Aidan, still panting, nods. After a moment her breathing eases somewhat. Someone hands her a steaming mug, and looking up, she sees Kai.

AIDAN

Kai.

He smiles, touches her shoulder.

AIDAN (CONT'D)

Have I been asleep long?

ELDER

Dos o tres horas. Se bueno, senorita.

Aidan looks at Kai, not understanding.

KAI

Two or three hours. He says it is all right.

He kneels by her, not touching her but close enough.

KAI (CONT'D)

The horses are being readied. We leave now.

Aidan relaxes completely.

(CONTINUED)

AIDAN

Good. I must get back, Kai.

Kai nods, says something to the Elder. The Elder slowly agrees, then stands up.

EXT. NOMADS' VILLAGE - MOMENTS LATER

The horses are saddled, and Aidan and Kai are waiting. The village is gathered around, waiting.

The Elder comes out, holding his ritual staff.

KAI

He wishes to bless us before we go.
It is *tradicion*.

AIDAN

Tradition.

KAI

Yes.

They bow their heads as the Elder approaches. His hand trembles as he lifts the staff. With a whispery thin voice, he blesses them.

ELDER

Despidida, Aidan. *Vaya con dios*.

AIDAN

Gracias, Elder.

KAI

Despidida.

They mount, and ride out of the village to cries of "*Hasta la vista, Ciao, Despidido, Hasta luego, Adios*" fading behind them.

As soon as they leave the village completely behind, the two turn and grin at each other.

BOTH

Race!

INT. SHELTER - SCIENCE LAB - LATER

Evie sits, poring over her notes. She murmurs something to herself, writes something down, erases it.

Daven bursts through the door, rushes to her, starts grabbing papers.

DAVEN

The slides, hurry.

(CONTINUED)

EVIE
What are you doing?

DAVEN
The slides, Evie. Now.

His voice is so commanding the Evie begins gathering her things up as quickly as she can.

DAVEN (CONT'D)
Got everything?

Evie nods, tries to double check but Daven grabs her and runs out of the room.

EXT. OUTSIDE SHELTER - CONTINUOUS

Aidan and Kai ride up. Aidan is pale but otherwise all right. Both dismount. Aidan goes to her tree, begins to pull her leads out. Kai stops her with a sound, choked off, filled with longing. She moves to him, and he places both hands on her shoulders. His hands are gentle. Aidan doesn't move away. Slowly, Kai moves a little closer. When he is close enough that his body touches hers, he stops. Aidan doesn't move.

KAI
Don't go.

Aidan breathes in quickly with surprise and longing.

KAI (CONT'D)
This place is bad, Aidan. This underground. Stay with me.

Aidan turns, looks out towards the shelter. The sun is almost gone, and she watches it. She leans into Kai's arms, rests her head on his chest. He waits, hardly breathing, running his hands through her hair. She turns back to him.

AIDAN
After this. I'll stay with you.

They stare at each other, and the suddenly, with great force, they kiss. It is desperate and fierce as the sun sets behind them.

They break apart, Kai's hands tight on Aidan's shoulders.

KAI
After.

Aidan nods, blinks tears, kisses him, hard. She moves away before Kai can touch her. Kai, bemused, touches his lips.

KAI (CONT'D)
I will wait here. Three days, and then three nights.

(CONTINUED)

Aidan nods, understanding.

AIDAN

The choice - it may not be mine.

KAI

I will wait.

It is said with such a quiet strength that Aidan has to close her eyes to keep from crying.

KAI (CONT'D)

I, and Day-see.

Aidan chokes on a laugh, and Kai smiles. He touches her cheek, then melts into the darkness of the trees surrounding the grove.

With a shiver, Aidan turns back to the leads.

INT. SHELTER - LOWER CAVERNS - HALLWAYS - CONTINUOUS

Daven leads Evie through the hallway at a run. Exasperated, Evie digs in her feet and forces them to stop.

EVIE

What the hell is going on?

Daven blinks, taken aback. Evie clutches her papers and slides close to her chest, but doesn't move.

EVIE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry - but why -

DAVEN

The ransacked my room, and when I used my ID card I was ordered to report to Kincaid.

Evie pales, clutching the papers even closer.

EVIE

I have to go back to my room.

DAVEN

Evie-

EVIE

I have to go back. Shae's journal -

Daven measures her, then nods.

DAVEN

Fine.

INT. SHELTER - CONTROL ROOM - LATER

Aidan enters to find the room empty. She closes her eyes, flexes her hands, watches the seamless panel in the back wall where the door is.

Moving around the room, Aidan searches for the door she knows is somewhere. She is panting, shaking. Frightened.

INTERCUT - SECURITY CAMERA POV

On a grainy TV screen, we see Aidan searching the room. Kincaid's finger traces Aidan's path.

KINCAID (O.S.)
She's back early.

SCIENTIST (O.S.)
She could be -

KINCAID (O.S.)
She is not.

SCIENTIST (O.S.)
Kincaid, call the guards.

KINCAID (O.S.)
I will not.

BACK TO SCENE

Abandoning her search for the door, Aidan sees the camera. She waves at it, forcing a smile.

AIDAN
Come out, come out wherever you are.

Behind her, a door open silently. Kincaid stands in the doorway, watching Aidan.

KINCAID
You wish to speak with me?

Aidan whirls around, poised to flee. Kincaid smiles, moves into the room. Aidan backs away, giving Kincaid room to get to her chair.

AIDAN
Yes.

KINCAID
Why the dramatic entrance?

AIDAN
There haven't been any transfers for over a year.

(CONTINUED)

Pulling her head back, Kincaid says nothing. Returning Kincaid's stare, Aidan is still not sure what she wants Kincaid to say.

AIDAN (CONT'D)

Can you explain that?

She is not confrontational. She does not want to believe what she suspects. Kincaid is still silent. Taking a step closer, studying Kincaid, Aidan slowly realizes that Kincaid is not surprised. Kincaid watches Aidan, sadness on her face.

AIDAN (CONT'D)

Tell me you can explain this.

KINCAID

I cannot.

Aidan reacts as if slapped, sucking in her breath, holding it for a moment. Unable to be still, she begins to roam the room. Impassive, Kincaid watches her. This is a discussion she has been preparing for.

Reaching a wall, Aidan stares at it for a second, mustering herself. She bends her head for a second, almost praying.

AIDAN

What did you do to her?

KINCAID

Why assume I did anything?

Aidan turns back to her, sneering. She has been deeply betrayed, and the anger at that betrayal has risen to the surface.

AIDAN

You did something to all of us. You and your father and Vance.

KINCAID

You've been Topside too long.

She stands up, starts to walk to the door. Aidan grabs Kincaid by the arm, restrains her.

AIDAN

Whatever you did, we're paying the price now, and I need to know.

KINCAID

Let go of me this instant.

Aidan doesn't let go. Kincaid smiles, a dangerous glint in her eye. With her cane, she hits Aidan hard, right across the face. Aidan stumbles backwards, blood flowing from her

(CONTINUED)

lip and check. She wipes it off, stares at her hand in shock. Kincaid straightens her tunic, meets Aidan's eyes.

Straightening, Aidan takes a step closer to Kincaid, blood still flowing down her face.

AIDAN

What did you do to us?

Kincaid chuckles, shakes her head, pats Aidan's shoulder. Aidan recoils from the touch. Kincaid's hand remains mid-air for a moment before she slowly withdraws it.

KINCAID

You're making up stories, Aidan.
Jumping at shadows. Rest.

Horrified, seething, Aidan presses her palm into the blood on her face. Before Kincaid can react, Aidan reaches out and grabs Kincaid's shoulder. When she moves her hand, a bloody palm print is left on Kincaid's tunic.

AIDAN

I know you did it, Kincaid, and unless
you have the balls to kill me now,
I'm going to prove it.

KINCAID

I don't need to kill you.

Kincaid leans in close, close enough to whisper.

KINCAID (CONT'D)

All I have to do is keep you down
here. Until you die a natural death.

Kincaid turns and leaves the room. As the door closes behind her, Aidan rushes it, hitting the solid metal door and pounding on it.

AIDAN

Kincaid! God damn it! Get back out
here!

INSERT - SECURITY CAMERA POV

Aidan, on the screen, bangs on the door, screaming soundlessly.

SCIENTIST (O.S.)

Can I call security now?

There is a long silence. Aidan bangs on the door for a second longer, pauses, bangs again, then, giving up, flops against the wall and sinks to her knees.

(CONTINUED)

SCIENTIST (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Ma'am?

KINCAID

No. She's angry, not dangerous.

INT. SHELTER - SECURITY CAMERA ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kincaid watches Aidan on the screen, then closes her eyes for a moment. She is desolate, but as her eyes open, there is a new, harder glint.

KINCAID

She'll come around. She's always been smart.

Kincaid reaches out again, pushes the zoom so the Aidan's despairing face fills the screen. She traces it, gently.

SCIENTIST

Ma'am, she's an extreme risk.

KINCAID

She'll be fine.

Her voice brooks no disagreement. The scientist nods, stiffly.

INT. SHELTER - AIDAN'S ROOM - LATER

Aidan enters, bleeding. She closes the door, leans against it.

AIDAN

Evie?

There is no answer. She goes to the sink, washes the blood off her face, checks her RAD band. It is a bright, pumpkin orange.

AIDAN (CONT'D)

Oh, God.

She closes her eyes, rests her head against the mirror.

The door opens, and Aidan springs back, fear on her face. Daven and Evie enter, voices low. They stop when they see Aidan. She stares at them, tears in her eyes, and takes a step towards them

AIDAN (CONT'D)

There haven't been any Shelter to Shelter transfers in two years.

She looks at Daven, a pleading expression on her face.

AIDAN (CONT'D)

You were right. I'm so sorry.

(CONTINUED)

Daven and Evie rush forward as Aidan falls.

INT. SHELTER - LOWER CAVERNS - LATER

Aidan, Daven and Evie stand in Shae's chamber. Strips of cloth are scattered around the floor at their feet.

DAVEN

We tied her up, but she managed to escape. We haven't been able to find her since.

Aidan, looking ill and tired, leans against the wall in exhaustion.

AIDAN

She'll be back, her stash is here. She's always been picky about her things.

She smiles, but the joke falls flat. Aidan sits down. Evie sits beside her.

AIDAN (CONT'D)

Daven, sit. You're hovering.

Daven starts to argue, then thinks better of it. Shutting his mouth, he sits on the other side of Aidan. The three sit in silence for a moment, along one wall.

DAVEN

I'm glad you're back.

Aidan replies automatically, not even opening her eyes..

AIDAN

Glad to be back.

Evie lets out a snort of laughter. Aidan and Daven look at her. Evie tries to stop, but can't. She is almost hysterical.

EVIE

She's glad ... to be back!

Her laughter is contagious, and soon Daven and Aidan are chuckling. After a moment, the chuckles turn to snorts, then shouts of laughter.

AIDAN

(through the laughter)
Oh, God.

INT. SHELTER - LOWER CAVERNS - SHAE'S CHAMBER - MOMENTS LATER

The three are still sitting. Evie is speaking, her voice too low to hear. When she finishes, Aidan starts to laugh.

(CONTINUED)

DAVEN
This isn't funny -

AIDAN
No, it's not. It's just...too perfect.

She laughs again, this time with a trace of hysteria.

EVIE
Aidan, what is it?

AIDAN
I never would have thought ... the
fertility experiments.

EVIE
It's the only common thread.

DAVEN
Do you feel sick yet? Maybe your
immune.

AIDAN
No, not immune. Just cured.

She laughs again, harder. Evie feels her forehead. Aidan
bats her hand away, tries to calm down.

INT. SHELTER - LOWER CAVERNS - SHAE'S CHAMBER - MOMENTS
LATER

Daven and Evie sit, in stunned silence. Aidan, no longer
laughing, stares at her fingernails.

DAVEN
You've known this Rider how long?

AIDAN
Almost a year.

Daven lets out a low, scornful whistle.

AIDAN (CONT'D)
We were just friends.

Daven is about to make a reply when Evie interrupts, unaware
of the spat about to begin.

EVIE
Vance - he admitted to everything?

AIDAN
Pretty much.

Evie leans her head back against the wall, sighs.

(CONTINUED)

DAVEN

What's are next move, then?

AIDAN

Get Vance, get back here.

Daven scoffs, disbelieving.

DAVEN

What - you think Kincaid is just going to let him waltz in here?

AIDAN

So one of us gets a Council edict.

Daven shakes his head.

AIDAN (CONT'D)

What? She can't ignore that.

DAVEN

Yes, she can. Unless there's might behind it, it's a piece of paper, easily misplaced. And Runners get lost all the time.

Aidan pounds her head on the wall behind her.

AIDAN

What do you want to do, then?

DAVEN

We need proof. With that, we can maybe force the Council to come here, with their army.

AIDAN

So, how much more proof?

EVIE

Kincaid's lab. Where she actually did her experiments.

Aidan nods, stands up.

DAVEN

Where are you going?

AIDAN

Kincaid's lab.

DAVEN

People are looking for you. For us, as well.

(CONTINUED)

AIDAN

That's why those maps you have will come in handy. Has to be more than one way in.

She grins at them.

EVIE

What about Shae?

AIDAN

I don't think she'll miss us, Evie.

INT. SHELTER - LOWER CAVERNS - UNDER KINCAID'S LABS - LATER

The three are walking down a corridor, Aidan and Evie with lights. Daven stops, looking at his map.

DAVEN

According to this, if we were two levels up, Kincaid's lab would be right there.

He points to his right.

Aidan goes to the wall he pointed to, inspects it. Daven goes a little further down, looks there. Evie holds the light.

EVIE

And what I want to know is, why is Evie always the one stuck holding things?

No one answer. Evie jiggles the light.

AIDAN AND DAVEN

Hey!

EVIE

Sorry. I mean, she's capable, intelligent, even tempered. And yet, it's always, 'Evie, do this -'

AIDAN AND DAVEN

Evie!

EVIE

Sorry.

She idly flicks the light around.

AIDAN AND DAVEN

Hey!

EVIE

What's that?

(CONTINUED)

AIDAN
What?

EVIE
That -

She points almost at the ceiling. Aidan looks up, squints.

DAVEN
I'll be damned.

Up above them is a small hatch. Now that they are looking, they can see broken ladder rungs on the wall.

AIDAN
OK. Daven, lift me up there.

Daven grunts as he lifts Aidan up. If it hurts her, she doesn't say anything. She inspects the hatch, then slides her fingers through the grate and pulls. The metal, rusted away, gives easily.

Aidan peers up, then snorts in disgust.

AIDAN (CONT'D)
Light.

Evie hands it to her, and she shines it up.

AIDAN (CONT'D)
Bingo, guys. I'm going up.

Daven grabs her ankle.

DAVEN
And if you get caught?

AIDAN
Then I won't be back.

DAVEN
Aidan -

AIDAN
It's 3 a.m., Daven. Nothing's staffed now.

DAVEN
Just be careful.

She smiles, kicks her ankle loose.

AIDAN
I'll be fine.

Daven lets go, reluctantly.

(CONTINUED)

DAVEN

OK, on three. One, Two Three.

He grunts as he pushes her up, Aidan scrambles for footing for a second, then disappears up the shaft.

Daven watches her go up, shoulders slumping.

EVIE

You really ought to stop doing that.

DAVEN

What?

EVIE

Helping her scurry right out of your grasp.

DAVEN

Evie.

EVIE

Sorry.

INT. SHELTER - DUCT UNDER KINCAID'S LAB - MOMENTS LATER

Aidan crawls in the duct, heading towards a faint square of light. Once or twice she stops, rests, then continues on. When she reaches it, she looks out. Kincaid's lab is empty.

She breathes out a little sigh, then tries the grate. It holds for a second, then releases. Gently, Aidan lifts it up onto the floor, and slithers out.

INT. SHELTER - KINCAID'S LAB - CONTINUOUS

Moving quickly, Aidan moves to the supply cabinet. She breaks the lock, opens it, takes vials out.

Behind her, a computer beeps. Aidan stops, turns, looks at the screen. She reads for a moment, than runs to the desk, throwing papers around to find a small mini disc. She finds one, puts it in.

AIDAN

(reading from screen)

Disk not formatted. Please format.'

Ok, format.

She clicks a button. The computer beeps

AIDAN (CONT'D)

Come on, Come on.

The computer beeps again.

(CONTINUED)

AIDAN (CONT'D)
 (reading screen)
 Unable to format. Please insert
 another disk.

Aidan frantically begins searching again. She finds another one, inserts it.

AIDAN (CONT'D)
 "Disk not format .." Son of a bitch.

She hits the side of the computer. It beeps, and whirs.

AIDAN (CONT'D)
 (reading from screen)
 File saved. Eject Y/N?' Yes, yes.

She grabs the disk, sticks it in with the vials, looks around one more time, sees Kincaid's pad of paper, grabs that. Nothing seems to stand out, so she creeps back to the duct, drops down, and closes the grate.

INT. SHELTER - LOWER CAVERNS - UNDER KINCAID'S LAB - MOMENTS LATER

AIDAN
 Guys. Guys.

Daven stands up, looks up into the hatch.

AIDAN (CONT'D)
 Catch.

She drops the pack, then drops down herself. As she hits the ground, she sways, almost falls. Daven catches her.

DAVEN
 Are you all right?

Aidan nods, pulls away.

AIDAN
 We need to go, now. The cameras saw me. Kincaid will have guards here any second.

INT. SHELTER - LOWER CAVERNS - HALLWAYS - CONTINUOUS

The three hurry back down the hallway.

They hear shouts behind them, and strobes of light flash here and there. They break into a run.

AIDAN
 I found a file on Mackler and Vance.
 On what they did. It goes in depth.

(CONTINUED)

DAVEN

Good.

Shouts behind them, closer now.

AIDAN

And Kincaid's paperwork on her experiments as well.

DAVEN

Great.

EVIE

Less talking, more running!

They run harder, turn a corner, another corner, go down again on a long, rickety ladder. Their pursuers pass by.

AIDAN

Fun. Always forget how much fun this place is.

INT. SHELTER'S HALLWAYS - LATER

Evie, Aidan and Daven stand, flattened to one wall. Sirens blare in the background.

DAVEN

So that's it, then. Evie, stay here, find Shae. Wait for us.

Evie nods.

DAVEN (CONT'D)

We'll be fine.

EVIE

Be safe, both of you.

Evie nods, hugs both of them, and clutching a pack, slips down a grate.

INT. SHELTER'S HALLWAYS - MOMENTS LATER

Daven and Aidan are pressed against a wall. Daven peers around it, signals on all clear. They both enter the next hallway. Aidan sighs with relief when she sees the door to the midway chamber.

AIDAN

What are we going to do about the guard?

Daven holds up his fist. Aidan raises her eyebrows.

(CONTINUED)

AIDAN (CONT'D)

Oh, that'll work. Have you seen the size of that guy?

DAVEN

Do you have a better idea?

That silences her. Grudgingly, she shakes her head.

They start forward, but Aidan stops again, pulling Daven back.

AIDAN

Let me go first.

DAVEN

No. One of us has to get the doors open and ready. You've always been faster at that than me.

Aidan hesitates, then nods.

INT. SHELTER - DECON ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The GUARD at the desk looks up as Daven and Aidan enter. There are two other guards there as well. Daven and Aidan look at each other, uneasy.

INSERT

Picture on computer terminal of Daven, Evie and Aidan with the words "WANTED FOR QUESTIONING" beneath them.

BACK TO SCENE

Coming out from behind his desk, the Guard stops them.

GUARD

I'll have to ask you two to wait here -

Before he can finish, Daven punches him in the jaw. The other two guards rush forwards. Aidan delivers a solid kick to one which hurls him backward. The other guard rushes her, and she barely blocks the attack. She counters with a series of hard, fast punches, then gets him square in the chest just as the second guard recovers and attacks again.

Daven is in a wrestling match the first guards as he sees the third guard make his way to the desk.

DAVEN

Aidan!

Aidan whirls, ducking under the second guard's arm, but she can already tell she is going to be too late to stop the third guard from hitting the alarm button.

(CONTINUED)

AIDAN

No!

She can't stop him, because the second guard is coming at her with all his strength. Desperate, she fights him off, trying to beat the second guard to the desk.

The poker used to push leads and clothes down the incinerator shoot is lying on the floor. Flipping herself over, Aidan grabs it, and in one long, smooth move, sends it sailing over the third guard's head to skewer the second guard completely through the chest.

Daven finishes off the first guard with a swift kick as Aidan, using both hands as a club, knocks the third guard unconscious.

They both stand for a second, gasping.

AIDAN (CONT'D)

Next time, let me go in first.

Daven grins at her, claps her on the back.

DAVEN

You bet.

He goes to a closet in the wall, grabs leads, and heads towards the door.

Still grinning, Aidan quickly sets the doors in motion.

INT. ANTECHAMBER TO SHELTER - MOMENTS LATER

Aidan watches the door cycle shut, staring past it at the dead guard in the decon room. The door closes, and she breaks the control panel.

AIDAN

That'll stall them for a little while.

Aidan walks up the stairs. She stops when she realizes Daven isn't following. He is at the bottom of the stairs, pulling on his leads.

AIDAN (CONT'D)

Daven, just -

DAVEN

No. I refuse.

AIDAN

Fine.

She starts to walk up the stairs. After a moment, only half in his leads, Daven follows, cursing.

Kai recoils, but Aidan grabs his hands. Helpless, he shakes his head in denial.

KAI

We cannot.

AIDAN

We must.

KAI

He is the defiler. I did not know when I first took you there, but the shame now -

AIDAN

We must, Kai. So many lives depend on it, the shame will be forgotten.

There is no refusing her, the command in her tone, the sorrow in her eyes.

KAI

I will take us to the Elder, and my father, first. They will decide this.

AIDAN

I will go to Vance, Kai, with or without you.

Kai stands at this, bows his head. When he speaks, his voice his fierce.

KAI

I will go with you, to the ends of the plain.

AIDAN

(teasingly)
Even to Vance?

Kai nods, stiffly, refusing to joke. Daven, annoyed and ignored, finally speaks up.

DAVEN

You like this guy?

For the first time, Kai looks at Daven. He is openly scornful of the other man. Aidan hides another smiles, stands up.

KAI

Why do you wear those things?

DAVEN

They keep me safe.

KAI

Not on a horse.

(CONTINUED)

DAVEN

I'm not taking them off-

AIDAN

Stop it. Daven, you'll have to. The horse will never bear the weight.

Daven nods, crisply, angered but keeping his mouth shut. He eyes Kai warily as he turns to remove the leads. Kai snorts derisively and Aidan closes her eyes in exasperated disbelief at their actions.

INT. SHELTER - LOWER CAVERNS - SHAE'S CHAMBER - SAME TIME

Evie sits in the chamber, waiting. She can hear, faintly and far away, the sound of footsteps and shouting voices.

She looks up, concentrating. A soft scuffle is heard. Evie stands up, hand on her knife. She notices this, forces herself to let it go.

Shae enters the room. She stops when she sees Evie, emits a low growl.

EVIE

Shae, please. It's me? Remember?
Evie? I used to steal your dolls in
the crèche.

Shae growls again, louder.

EVIE (CONT'D)

OK, sorry. Bad memory.

She smiles. Shae cocks her head, sniffs.

EVIE (CONT'D)

Yeah, I know. I need a shower. Been
busy, though -

Shae moves closer. Evie goes perfectly still. Shae stops in the middle of the room, sniffs again.

Evie holds her breath.

Shae moves closer, then reaches out and grabs the bag by Evie's feet. Evie jumps, stifles a cry. Shae leaps back, higher than any human should be able to jump, clutching the bag.

EVIE (CONT'D)

Sorry, Sorry.

Shae watches Evie warily for a moment, then digs into the bag and gets a bun. Grumbling, Shae begins to eat, ravenously. Evie watches, comprehension dawning.

(CONTINUED)

EVIE (CONT'D)
 You're hungry. Of course you're
 hungry. I have food.

Bending down, she freezes when Shae snarls.

EVIE (CONT'D)
 More food, Shae. More -

Evie gestures eating. Shae quiets, watching. Slowly, Evie gets another bag, pulls out more food, holds it out. Tentatively, Shae reaches out, and takes the food from Evie's hand. Shae looks eyes with Evie, and there is a flicker of recognition.

SHAE
 Ev.

EVIE
 Yes, Shae, Ev.

Evie collapses, half laughing, half crying. Shae cavorts around her, repeating her name over and over.

SHAE
 Ev, Ev, Ev.

EXT. ELDERS TENT - LATER

Aidan, Kai, Daven, and the Elder sit in his tent.

Kai speaks to the Elder, whose eyes flicker to Aidan, then back to Daven. Kai continues to speak, urgently. Finally the Elder nods, says something.

KAI
 He has agreed. To send men with Daven.

Aidan closes her eyes in relief.

KAI (CONT'D)
 There is a condition.

DAVEN
 What?

KAI
 The Council must agree to hear our
 cause. There must be no more -

He searches for the right word. Aidan fills in.

AIDAN
 Land-grabbing.

KAI
 Is that right?

(CONTINUED)

DAVEN

Close enough. I don't have that power,
Kai.

Kai simply stares at Daven.

DAVEN (CONT'D)

I'll propose it.

KAI

You will take the Elder and four
horseman with you, and present them
to the Council.

DAVEN

I don't know if they'll even let
them in -

KAI

20 men with 100 horse will wait
outside the bridge. If the Council
listens and agrees, the horses will
be at your disposal.

DAVEN

I don't -

AIDAN

Agree, Daven. We'll need the horses
to bring the Council's forces back.

Aidan opens her eyes and fixes Daven with her bright, hard
stare. Daven slumps back, defeated, as the Elder speaks.

KAI

The Elder wishes to know why you
wish to seek this man, Vance, again.

Aidan sits up at this mildly asked question. The tent falls
silent.

AIDAN

He can save my people.

The Elder speaks, quietly.

KAI

Why should the Wanderers of the Plain
care about your people?

Aidan bows her heads, afraid of the hurt she is about to
cause. Looking up, she meets Kai's stare with her own.

AIDAN

We are your people, too. He has bound
us.

(CONTINUED)

Kai translates. The Elder is the first to understand. His sucks in his breath, than hisses it out.

AIDAN (CONT'D)

The woman they kidnapped were used
as ... they are our mothers.

Kai does not translate this. Faintly, behind her, she hears Daven whisper frantically.

DAVEN

Oh, dear God.

AIDAN

Their blood is my blood, and the
blood of countless of the Shelter's
children.

The silence that hangs in the tent is immense. Kai's eyes burn into Aidan's, but she does not look away. She says the words he taught her, in his language.

AIDAN (CONT'D)

(in their language)

I am so sorry. The dishonor of my
fathers stains even the honor of my
mothers.

After a moment, the Elder speaks. Kai listens, then nods. His voice his husky.

KAI

There is no shame in your act, Aidan
of the Shelter. Permission is granted.

The Elder speaks again.

KAI (CONT'D)

He withdraws his conditions. The
warriors and the horses are gifts to
children of the Wanderers.

Again, the Elders paper-thin voice crosses the tent.

KAI (CONT'D)

He wishes us luck.

Aidan grins, the sorrow washed from her face for a moment.

AIDAN

People keep doing that.

DAVEN

You'd think we were up against long
odds or something.

INT. SHELTER - LOWER CAVERNS - SHAE'S CHAMBER - LATER

Shae is laying down, her head in Evie's lap. Evie is stroking her hair, talking softly to Shae.

EVIE

They're out there, Shae, trying to find the man who can save you. Save all of us, I think.

SERIES OF SHOTS

SHOT A

EVIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Daven is going to the council,

Daven gets on a horse, wobbly. He clutches Aidan's hand in good-bye, then follows another Rider out of the camp.

Shot B

EVIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And Aidan, Aidan's going to find the man who did this.

Kai mounts a horse as does Aidan. Kai is leading another horse. The Elder blesses them both, and they leave the village.

Shot C

EVIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Daven has to convince the Council to remove Kincaid - forcibly if necessary.

Daven riding across the plain, dozens of Nomads streaming out behind him.

EVIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

That's never been done, not ever.

SHOT D

EVIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

If they can't, Shae, if they don't convince the Council or find Vance.

Daven pulls up in front of the ruined Golden Gate, Nomads behind him, as the sun sets.

SHOT F

EVIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I think it'll be the end of us, I really do.

(CONTINUED)

Kai and Aidan halt in front of Vance's ramshackle cabin. The porch is empty, and the place looks deserted. They dismount, Kai calming the skittish horse.

SHOT G

EVIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I think Kincaid can hardly wait. I think she's been waiting for this for years.

Kincaid in the control room, throwing things. Her face is red, and she is shaking violently.

SHOT H

Evie buries her head in Shae's hair.

EVIE (CONT'D)
I'm scared, Shae. But we'll be safe here. Right? No one can find us here.

EXT. VANCE'S CABIN - MORNING

Aidan and Kai, leading a saddled but empty horse, approach Vance's cabin.

Vance meets Aidan and Kai on his front porch. Again, he holds his slingshot at them. Aidan dismounts first, moves towards him. She holds her hands out at her sides. Kai stays mounted. Vance moves the slingshot from Aidan to Kai, back and forth. Aidan waits. After a moment, he gestures them inside. Kai does not go in. As Aidan enters, he dismounts and goes to the porch, waiting.

INT. COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS - DINING HALL - CONTINUOUS

Daven and four Nomads stand in the middle of the hall, surrounded by irate people.

DAVEN
Please! Please. They're harmless.

A tall man faces off with Daven.

TALL MAN
The only harmless Nomad is a dead one.

DAVEN
Oh, that's original. Just make that up?

Before the tall man can reply, the COUNCIL CHAIR appears. He is a tall man, impressive in his bearing and stature. The room quiets.

(CONTINUED)

COUNCIL CHAIR

What's this?

DAVEN

We need to speak with you, sir.

COUNCIL CHAIR

Council is not in session. We have no quorum.

DAVEN

Sir, a whole Shelter may die if you do nothing.

His words reverberate through out the hall, silencing all.

COUNCIL CHAIR

And your ... friends?

DAVEN

They are necessary, sir.

COUNCIL CHAIR

Come with me.

INT. VANCE'S CABIN -- CONTINUOUS

Vance turns to Aidan as they enter his cabin. He is still gruff, but seems older and more tired than before.

VANCE

Something else has happened.

Aidan closes her eyes, nods her head.

AIDAN

Yes. She tried to reverse the sterility.

VANCE

Hoping to be able breed the trait back in to the general population.

AIDAN

I think so.

VANCE

It would never work.

Aidan stares at him, shocked.

AIDAN

It might, possibly, someday -

VANCE

No, child, not ever. You were born sterile. You all were.

(CONTINUED)

AIDAN

What?

VANCE

A horse and a donkey produce a mule.

Paling, Aidan shakes her heads, digests the information. She is shaken to the core of her being.

VANCE (CONT'D)

The generations spent apart, the radiation one group lived with, it created two species with-in one genus.

AIDAN

How is that even possible?

VANCE

It has been centuries, Aidan, since the majority of man moved below. How do we know how much, we, genetically, resemble those who first fled?

AIDAN

But we look --

VANCE

Not so much, if you look closely. The difference, perhaps, between Homo-erectus and Homo-sapien.

AIDAN

So we can have children together ..

VANCE

But those children will be sterile.

She is shattered. Vance reaches over, clumsily, and pats her hand.

AIDAN

We were told it was because of the radiation we were exposed to as Runners.

VANCE

Probably true, even without the previous history.

Again, Aidan can only nod. She stops suddenly, looks at Vance with wild hope.

AIDAN

The crèche babies.

(CONTINUED)

VANCE

Yes?

AIDAN

We were told they could be ours.
They harvested eggs.

VANCE

No, Aidan, I'm sorry. The newer
generations can only come from the
original stock.

Aidan stands, turns away, turns back.

AIDAN

I need a moment.

VANCE

I'll make tea.

He leaves. Aidan stands, half in shadow, half in light from
the doorway, puts her hand over her empty womb, bows her
head, and cries.

INT. COUNCIL CHAIR'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

The Council Chair sits at his desk, stunned. In front of him
are vials, papers, everything Aidan had gathered from the
lab.

COUNCIL CHAIR

Your evidence is impressive.

DAVEN

We have hundred horses ready to ride,
sir. We can make it to the Nomads'
village in a two days, if we ride
hard.

Council Chair looks askance, leans back.

COUNCIL CHAIR

Why would we do that?

DAVEN

We need them, sir. And to be honest,
we owe them.

Council Chair looks at the Nomads, shakes his head. Daven
leans in.

COUNCIL CHAIR

Owe them? They barely civilized.

(CONTINUED)

DAVEN

After what you've just read sir, I'd
hesitate before I call anyone
uncivilized.

Council Chair hesitates, bows his head.

COUNCIL CHAIR

I'll call Council to order. It's a
formality. We'll leave tomorrow at
first light.

INT. VANCE'S CABIN -- CONTINUOUS

As Vance enters the room, he sees Aidan's eyes begin to close,
and she starts to fall sideways. With a yelp of surprise, he
drops the two mugs - which crash on the floor - and runs to
her, catching her and lying her down on the bed.

VANCE

You haven't rested. I told you you
would need rest.

AIDAN

Small problem ... of .. saving the
world.

VANCE

Fah. Let the world rot occasionally.

A wave of nausea hits Aidan, and she gags. Kai, having heard
Vance's cry, comes in and moves to Aidan's side, protective.
Vance leaves the room. Kai strokes Aidan's hair back from
her forehead, murmuring in his language.

KAI

Rest.

AIDAN

That would be nice, wouldn't it?

Vance re-enters, holding a vial and a hypodermic needle.

VANCE

Let me see her, now.

Vance is almost gentle as he moves Kai out of the way.

KAI

No hurt.

VANCE

I'll try not to.

AIDAN

This is what you gave me, last time?

(CONTINUED)

VANCE

No. This will help you sleep.

Aidan hesitates, then nods. Vance fills the needle, and slowly injects it into her arm.

AIDAN

What you gave me before - it's your vaccine. All the files said you had a cure - to save the shelter.

VANCE

Maybe.

He turns, shuffles back out of the room. Aidan's voice stops him.

AIDAN

What do you mean, maybe?

VANCE

Mackler never touched my genes. Or yours. Whatever his brat of a daughter did, it merely accelerated an original error. She didn't add new ones.

Vance sighs, rubs his eyes, looking very old and very frail.

VANCE (CONT'D)

What I have combats the cell degradation caused by radiation. It can only do so much, so fast.

AIDAN

(with dull realization,
fighting sleep)

It may do nothing for the general population.

VANCE

Probably not. Possibly.

AIDAN

But other Runners?

VANCE

Perhaps. It worked on you, so there's a chance.

AIDAN

You'll come back with us?

VANCE

Doesn't seem like I have a choice.

(CONTINUED)

KAI

We will leave at first light, return
to the village.

Vance nods. Aidan, exhausted, is asleep as soon as she sees that.

EXT. VANCE'S CABIN - MORNING

Aidan and Kai mount Kai's horse. Vance finishes strapping on his medical equipment to the second horse, gets on the third. They ride off.

EXT. NOMADS' VILLAGE - AFTERNOON

The Council's forces stare uneasily at the villagers. The villagers stare back.

Vance, Kai and Aidan come riding up. They take in the face-off. Kai mutters something, then turns to the villagers.

KAI

(in native language)

All right, enough, go about your
lives. They won't harm you!

The villagers grumble, disperse.

AIDAN

Where's Daven?

The Council's forces shift.

SOLDIAR 1

The Council Chair and some guy went
over there.

He points.

KAI

The Elder's tent.

INT. ELDERS TENT - MOMENTS LATER

Kai, Aidan and Vance enter. Things are tense between the Elder and Council Chair. Daven looks miserable. He rushes to Aidan.

DAVEN

You have got to get Kai to translate.
They've been staring at each other
forever.

Kai moves forward, speaks to the Elder, while Aidan, Daven and Vance all sit around the fire.

(CONTINUED)

ELDER
In native language

KAI
 He says that the men are ours, with
 one condition.

The Council Chair leans forward.

DAVEN
 He already promised us men!

KAI
 Men to escort you to the bridge. Not
 to fight your war for you.

DAVEN
 This is crazy!

COUNCIL CHAIR
 Enough. I will hear the condition.

ELDER
In native language.

COUNCIL CHAIR
 What?

ELDER
In native language

KAI
 You leave our land to us. No more
 raids.

Council Chair hesitates, leans back.

AIDAN
 Sir, you have to.

After a moment, Council nods, puts his hand out.

COUNCIL CHAIR
 Deal.

The elder stares at the Council Chair's hand.

AIDAN
 Kai, he has to shake it.

INT. SHELTER - CONTROL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kincaid sits in her chair, surrounded by uniformed men. They
 are high-ranking guards, standing at attention.

(CONTINUED)

KINCAID

These rebels have teamed with the Nomads and will kill every man, woman and child.

CAPTAIN

How soon before they attack?

KINCAID

Soon. We need to arm every able-bodied person and assemble Topside.

She stops, stares at her CO's with a slightly crazed stare.

KINCAID (CONT'D)

They cannot be allowed within the Shelter's corridors.

CO'S

Yes, ma'am.

KINCAID

Get started.

They exit.

EXT - OUTSIDE SHELTER - DAY

The shelter is behind Kincaid's army. They face a rolling, dusty vista. Sound of thundering hooves is heard. A cloud of dust appears.

The troops behind Kincaid mutter, sounding anxious and uncertain. Bravado is giving way to realizations of their mortality.

The cloud of dust slowly comes into focus, revealing mounted soldiers and infantry running behind. As the mounted men advance, we hear whooping, hollering. The murmurs behind Kincaid get louder.

Kincaid's army is shifting, nervously clutching and unclenching weapons that are unfamiliar to them, judging from how they hold them. The weapons themselves are old, and many are duct taped together, or show signs of being jerry-rigged to work. The men (and woman) themselves are barely holding together. Most have been cooks and cleaners until now. Few have ever been topside before.

Two young BOYS kneel down, one showing the other how to charge the weapon. One boy is nervous, dropping the weapon repeatedly. The other boy grabs it out of his hands, rapidly goes through the movements of charging it, hands it back.

EXT - DAY AMONGST THE NOMADS - SAME TIME

The Council's soldiers flash by, hollering war cries and waving spears. The mounts and Nomads are covered in War Paint, and their armor is hodgepodge, salvaged from many sources.

Foot Soldiers are clothed in heavier, more radiation proof garments though some have shed parts of it. Armed with the same, but better quality, weapons that Kincaid's army is, these soldiers hold their guns with confidence, and jog at an even rate.

The call is given to halt, and the Nomads bring their reins in. The front line neighs, whickers, but stands ready, waiting for the call to attack.

Across the plain stands Kincaid's army. Kincaid herself is in front, silently staring at the Council's forces.

EXT-WAR COUNCIL - SAME TIME

Aidan, Vance, Kai, the Village Elder, Daven and the Council Chair all sit on horses, slightly behind the front line, watching Kincaid and her forces. Kincaid's action has unsettled all.

Aidan is furious, too angry to speak right away. She pulls her horse back, hard, and it starts to rear, stopped only when Kai grabs the bit. Aidan gets the horse back under control, hands trembling.

The Council Chair shifts nervously in his saddle as Aidan's horse is brought back under control. He has never ridden before and is already hurting.

COUNCIL CHAIR

What're the odds of this woman surrendering?

DAVEN

None, sir. She's already risked everything, just by bringing the general population Topside.

Daven looks slightly more at ease in the saddle than the Council Chair, but compared to Kai and Aidan seems unbalanced in his seat.

COUNCIL CHAIR

Doctor. Doctor ...

Vance slowly gets his horse closer to the Council Chair, awkwardly maneuvering himself into place. He is still smoldering and resentful of being brought here in the first place.

(CONTINUED)

VANCE

Give an old man a few minutes, sir.

COUNCIL CHAIR

We may not have a few minutes, Vance.

VANCE

Kincaid seems perfectly content to wait for you to make the first move.

He cackles then, perversely enjoying the other man's discomfiture.

VANCE (CONT'D)

Of course, if she waits too long, all her people will just die anyway.

AIDAN

What's she waiting for? What are you waiting for?

COUNCIL CHAIR

I need to know my options, Aidan.

He turns away, dismissive of her interruption.

COUNCIL CHAIR (CONT'D)

How long before they become too weak to fight?

VANCE

The general population? Hours.

He cackles again. Council Chair looks away in disgust.

COUNCIL CHAIR

(under his breath)

This is what you bring me, Daven? A crazy man and savages.

Before Daven can reply. Vance continues.

VANCE

Hard to tell, now, how long they've been out here. Kincaid's bright enough to time these things.

COUNCIL CHAIR

How long, Doctor, before your serum no longer has any effect?

VANCE

Well, death, sir, would certainly inhibit its effectiveness.

Another nasty chuckle, this one phlegm ridden.

(CONTINUED)

COUNCIL CHAIR

Damn-it, Doctor. Is it worth fighting?
Can you even save any of them, or
should we just wait until we are
walking over corpses?

Aidan gasps, and Daven nudges his horse so that she cannot ride over to the Chair.

DAVEN

Sir-

Vance interrupts, and Daven holds back Aidan as Vance speaks.

VANCE

You get me to the Runners in the
next 8 hours, and they'll be fine.
General population, it's maybe too
late already.

AIDAN

If you wait, all the ones inside
will be dead. She'll open the doors
and kill them all.

Council Chair ignores Aidan, leans closer to Vance.

COUNCIL CHAIR

And you can save the Runner's?

VANCE

The ones you don't kill first, yes.

Council Chair leans back, thinks for a second. Abruptly, he sits up, points to Kai imperiously.

COUNCIL CHAIR

You, take your men and prepare for
assault.

KAI

We stick to the plan?

COUNCIL CHAIR

No changes unless you get a message
from me. Wait for the sound of the
horn.

Kai nods, speaks to the Elder in their flowing language. The Elder gives him a blessing, flowing his hands from Kai's forehead to his heart.

DAVEN

What did he say?

(CONTINUED)

KAI

May my heart be strong, and my mind
wise.

Daven stares at Kai for a minute, then nudges his horse to the elder. Taking his gaze from Kai, Daven bows his head. The Elder pauses, thinking, then blesses Daven. Daven lifts his head up, bows slightly to the Elder, and pulls away, ignoring Kai's half-smile of triumph.

Kai nudges his horse to Aidan, touches her cheek. Neither speak. He removes his hand, turns towards the Council Chair and Vance, bows stiffly, and rides towards his Nomads.

Kai gives out a wild yell, which the warriors echo. All split off, except for a few contingents, and begin galloping away towards the left of the Shelter. Kincaid's army panics, and shoots off meaningless gunfire. From the distance, Kincaid is frantically yelling, ordering them to cease-fire.

Daven nods, waiting. The Council Chair seems momentarily saddened, then straightens.

COUNCIL CHAIR

Give the order, Daven. I want that
Topside door breached by twilight.

Daven nods, a gallops along the line of men, hollering the order:

DAVEN

Attack! All men, forward and attack!

The hon blows, and the soldiers surge forward, men on foot yelling and screaming, waving weapons, men on horse waving their spears and bows above their heads, whooping. They are a fearsome, blood pounding sight, and there is a tremendous noise as they sweep by.

Aidan starts to ride. The Council Chair grabs her reins, almost unseating himself.

COUNCIL CHAIR

You stay here, with the Doctor. Keep
him safe and don't fall off.

With that, the Council Chair rides off to join the fray.

EXT - DAY BATTLEFIELD - SAME TIME

Kincaid's forces have hit the Council's. Horses are falling, screaming in agony. Men fall, get up, fight. The two boys in Kincaid's army that were loading the gun before run into battle grinning. One goes down immediately. The other kneels by him, weeping, until he is lifted out of the battle by one of the Council's mounted men and taken away from the fighting.

(CONTINUED)

Men and horses fight, blood flows in the ground, and the sun passes overhead.

EXT. - DAY - BATTLEFIELD -- LATER

Kai fights from his horse, handling his double-edged ax with great skill. The battle swells around him, but the Council's forces are winning.

While fending off blows from one side, Kai's horse is shot out from under him by a soldier armed with a pulse rifle. He falls, rolls, looks up in time to see another soldier take aim at him.

Kai stares at the young man as the soldier's eyes bulge, and he falls over. Behind him stands Daven, grinning. A knife protrudes from the young soldier's back.

Daven helps Kai to his feet, and the two re-enter the battle, side by side.

EXT. - DAY - BATTLEFIELD -- LATER

The fight is over. The remains of the shelter's soldiers are beginning to lay down their weapons. Nomads ride amongst them, overseeing.

Aidan, watching, dismounts from her horse and begins to walk to the Shelter.

VANCE

Where are you going?

AIDAN

I have some issues to resolve.

Awkwardly Vance dismounts, follows her. Aidan faces him, hands on her hips, head cocked.

VANCE

You were ordered to stay.

AIDAN

Look, in a little bit the Chair will be back, and he'll want to sweep each level of the shelter. Shae doesn't have that kind of time.

VANCE

The people in the Shelter, they don't know the battle's over.

AIDAN

I'm going.

(CONTINUED)

VANCE

What good are you going to do Shae
without me?

Aidan smiles, smug.

AIDAN

What makes you think you weren't
coming?

Vance sputters, outraged. Aidan smiles. Shaking his head,
Vance peevishly leads the way. Aidan, following, allows
herself a short, satisfied laugh.

VANCE

I heard that!

EXT - DAY - OUTSIDE SHELTER, SAME TIME

Kincaid is attempting to give orders from the rear, but her
army has clearly deserted her. Surrounded by salvaged pieces
a metal, she paces and screams. Her hair is everywhere and
she has clearly lost her mind, speaking to her father as if
he was still alive.

She bites her nails, and we see that she has bitten them
bloody. Occasionally she wipes the blood on her cloths, so
by now she is covered in smeared blood.

Aidan crest the ridge, and sees Kincaid. Vance is in the
background, cackling.

Kincaid stops all movement when she sees Aidan, and her face
is lit by an incongruously happy smile.

KINCAID

She's back! The prodigal daughter,
the sinful sister, back to kill me
and take what's mine.

Aidan looks at Kincaid for a second, her fury draining,
replaced with pity.

KINCAID (CONT'D)

What?

AIDAN

Why?

KINCAID

I did it for you!

VANCE

Pah! Lies. Did you think of the
consequences?

(CONTINUED)

KINCAID

You!

Kincaid's lips draw away from her teeth. Her hands form into claws, and she throws herself at Vance. Vance dodges, and Aidan positions herself between them

Kincaid tries to get around Aidan, but Aidan grabs her.

KINCAID (CONT'D)

Let me go! He killed my father!

Aidan wrenches Kincaid around, speaks into her ear.

AIDAN

Why?

Kincaid screams in pain. Aidan does not let her go.

KINCAID

My father died for you, all of you.

Kincaid reaches up and tries to pry Aidan's fingers off her blouse. Aidan just grips her harder.

KINCAID (CONT'D)

Get off me.

Kincaid rears back and flings Aidan off. Aidan hits the ground, hard, flops over, tries to get up. Vance rushes Kincaid, but Kincaid, using her cane, hits him in the sternum, then the groin. Vance falls, groaning. Kincaid turns to Aidan, who is still on the ground, walks over, nudges Aidan with her boot.

KINCAID (CONT'D)

Get up.

Aidan lays still, eyes closed. She looks ill, skin clammy and white, circles under her eyes.

KINCAID (CONT'D)

I said, get up!

A swift kick to Aidan's stomach. Aidan convulses, then slowly pulls herself up to her knees.

KINCAID (CONT'D)

All the way.

Biting back a groan, Aidan stands, facing Kincaid.

AIDAN

Why did you do it?

Kincaid slaps her, hard.

(CONTINUED)

KINCAID

Stop saying that, you lousy little
shit!

Aidan, blood dripping from her mouth, takes a step closer to Kincaid.

AIDAN

Why did you do it?

Enraged, Kincaid backhands Aidan, follows it up with a blow to Aidan's solar plexus. Gasping again, Aidan goes down.

VANCE

Get up, Aidan! Get up, now!

Kincaid turns from Aidan for a second, glares at Vance, drags her hand up and points at him. Vance stumbles back.

Lifting her head, Aidan stares at Kincaid through a fog of pain. She raises one hand to her head, weakly.

Kincaid is distracted, stalking Vance as the old man runs around, stumbling, in circles.

Aidan pushes herself to her feet, tackles Kincaid when Kincaid's back is turned. Both woman fall to the ground. Kincaid manages to roll on top, holding Aidan down be her throat. Aidan chokes.

Vance, seeing Aidan in danger, begins to look frantically for a rock, something.

Aidan desperately claws at Kincaid's hands, gasping.

Vance finds a stick, comes up behind Kincaid. He tries to hit her with it, but Kincaid stops him, holding his arm up with one hand. This causes her to weaken her grip on Aidan.

Aidan breathes, gasping for air, sees Vance's struggle. She knocks Kincaid's hand off her throat. Kincaid lets go of Vance, who falls backwards. Aidan reaches up and takes Kincaid by her hair, throwing Kincaid off her.

AIDAN

(scrambling to stand)

What. Did. You. Do. To. Us.

Aidan screams the last word and attacks Kincaid, banging her head on the ground again and again. Kincaid tries to crawl away, kicks at Aidan, gets her in the mouth. Aidan pulls back, watches Kincaid scramble away. Kincaid starts to sob, repeating "he was a good man" over and over.

Disgusted, Aidan slowly stands up, goes and helps Vance up. They begin to walk away, towards the Shelter's entrance.

(CONTINUED)

VANCE

What? You'll just leave her here?

AIDAN

We have to get to Shae, Vance.

Aidan looks back at Kincaid, who is still sobbing.

AIDAN (CONT'D)

Besides, she's done. Let the Council deal with her.

Vance looks regretfully at Kincaid, then follows Aidan.

As Vance crosses in front Kincaid, something inside her snaps. With a yell, Kincaid rushes at Vance, hitting him hard and knocking him to the ground. Kincaid begins pelting him, kicking him.

AIDAN (CONT'D)

No!

She rushes Kincaid, and the two wrestle. Kincaid pulls a knife. Aidan wrests the knife from Kincaid. In the struggle, she stabs Kincaid with it.

Kincaid goes down, shocked. She looks at he blood flowing from her chest, then at Aidan.

AIDAN (CONT'D)

Oh, Kincaid -

Kincaid falls to the ground, dead.

VANCE

Leave it be.

He tugs at her.

VANCE (CONT'D)

Leave it be and let's go. We're running out of time.

Aidan forces herself to move away, shocked and stumbling.

SERIES OF SHOTS

A) Evie sits in the lower chamber, still holding Shae. A faint RUSTLING is heard from outside the chamber. Waking, Shae moves from Evie and crouches. The rustling gets louder. Scared now, Evie gets up , pressing herself against the wall. Shae makes a low, growling sound.

B) On the battlefield, the fighting is ending. Kai and Daven moves their horses through the field, back to where Aidan is supposed to be. She is not there.

(CONTINUED)

C) Aidan and Vance move quickly through the upper tunnels, dodging a group of guards patrolling one area.

D) The rustling gets louder, and Shae begins to growl loudly, despite Evie's attempts to shush her.

E) Daven and Kai are frantically searching for Aidan on the field.

F) Aidan and Vance run into three guards. A short, intense fight. Aidan seems unstoppable, her face hard. Two guards go down, one flees.

G) KENT enters the chamber, terribly mutated, face vaguely simian. His fingers have turned into claws, and he walks stooped over. He is trying to get to their food. Evie stifles a scream as Shae and Kent begin to circle one another.

H) Daven and Kai discover Kincaid's body, run past it, into the shelter. It is a madhouse of panicked people.

I) Aidan and Vance reach the dark, shadowed entrance to the lower caverns.

J) Shae and Kent hurl themselves at each other.

K) Daven and Kai find Kincaid's body.

L) Aidan and Vance hurry through the lower corridors. They can hear Kent and Shae's screams of rage, and Evie's cries.

INT. SHELTER - LOWER CAVERNS - SHAE'S CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Shae is injured, this time it's her upper arm, clawed by Kent. The two grapple with each other in the center of the room, their cries inhuman. Evie is pressed against the wall, hand pressed against her mouth.

Aidan and Vance enter, stop. They are horrified by what they see in front of them.

VANCE

God save us.

Aidan watches, stunned.

AIDAN

Evie!

EVIE

I'm all right. Stop them, Aidan -

AIDAN

How am I supposed to do that?

Kent knocks Shae to the floor, throws himself on top of her.

(CONTINUED)

EVIE

He'll kill her, Aidan.

Shae shrieks, a cry filled with pain. This spurs Aidan into moving. With a shout, she jumps on Kent's back, knife drawn. Kent hurls her off. Aidan crashes into the wall, a bone crunches.

EVIE (CONT'D)

Aidan!

Evie lunges to help, Vance grabs her arm.

VANCE

No!

Evie whirls at him.

VANCE (CONT'D)

Get Daven, go run!

AIDAN

Go, Evie. Vance, help Shae!

Wincing, Aidan stands up as Evie hesitates then runs out of the room. Kent is staring out her, ignoring Shae. He comes closer. Aidan moves away, along the wall, looking for her knife.

Vance runs in, examining Shae.

Kent feints, Aidan dodges. It pains her. She sees her knife.

INSERT:

Close up on knife.

BACK TO SCENE

Aidan lunges for it, Kent moves to stop her, landing on top of her. Aidan groans, fingertips stretching for the knife. Kent knocks it out of he reach, slaps Aidan's face.

Vance pulls Shae out of harms way.

Aidan grabs Kent's arm, holds it away from her race. Kent howls, pulls free. Aidan pushes him off her with her knees, gets to her feet.

The two circle, Aidan holding her ribs.

SERIES OF SHOTS

A) Evie running down the corridors.

B) Daven and Kai through the deserted upper tunnels. An announcement is heard through the PA

(CONTINUED)

PA

Please remain in your quarters until further notice. Repeat: The Council has arrived and everything is in under control. Please remain in your quarters ...

- C) Vance pulls out a needle and injects Shae with it.
- D) Evie reaches the upper tunnels, continues running.
- E) Daven and Kai, running, turn a corner, meet Evie. All three run towards the lower caverns.

INT. SHELTER - LOWER CAVERNS - SHAE'S CHAMBER - MOMENTS LATER

Kent has Aidan up against the cavern wall, hand around her throat. Vance runs up, uselessly tugs on Kent's arm. Kent throws him down. Vance lies, stunned.

Aidan pants, pulling his fingers back from her throat. She brings her knee up, knees him in the groin with all her might. Kent stumbles backwards. Aidan scurries across the floor, grabs the knife, faces Kent.

Kent lunges for her just as Daven, Kai and Evie enter. Aidan knifes him in the chest. Kent collapses on top of her. Both fall to the ground.

EVIE

Aidan!

Daven and Kai run to her, pull Kent off her.

DAVEN

God.

Evie goes to Vance, helps him up.

KAI

Aidan, lie still.

Aidan sits up, hand on her ribs.

AIDAN

How's Shae?

VANCE

Breathing, for the moment.

SERIES OF SHOTS

A) The battlefield is being cleared. Bodies are being hauled away, funeral pyres are burning.

(CONTINUED)

B) Kincaid's body is being wrapped for burial. Daven, Evie and a weak Aidan look on.

C) The Nomads camp outside the Shelter, mingling with Shelter inhabitants.

D) The statue of Vance is being hauled away. The room is brighter, and chairs have been brought him. Some people are still bandaged, but it has been days since the battle. They are lining up to receive shots from Dr. Vance.

INT. SHELTER - CONTROL ROOM - AFTERNOON

Vance, Daven and the Council Chair stand in the control room. Aidan is sitting. Her arm and head are bandaged, but her skin has a healthier tone. Council techs are working on the computers, conferring amongst each other.

COUNCIL CHAIR

It's going to take a long time to bring this Shelter up to code.

AIDAN

Vance has already begin inoculations, and has almost finished the DNA exams.

Vance looks startled at being referred to. Everyone stares at him, waiting.

VANCE

Oh, uh- Well, so far, we are showing a 65% acceptance rate in the population.

DAVEN

Which means that most of the population can move Topside.

AIDAN

Not right away.

VANCE

No, there is still months, perhaps years of testing. The change on the DNA -

COUNCIL CHAIR

Please, Dr. Vance, the point.

VANCE

Mackler and myself started it. Kincaid changed things even more.

Council Chair looks impatient.

(CONTINUED)

VANCE (CONT'D)

We just need to make sure my serum works with the mutations.

COUNCIL CHAIR

And that can take months, years?

VANCE

The full impact of Kincaid's testing has yet to be realized so..

AIDAN

We just don't know, sir.

Council nods.

DAVEN

Most of our people are scared, sir. Kincaid filled their heads with myths.

AIDAN

Most think the Nomads are cannibals, waiting to eat our flesh.

DAVEN

Evie's been working with them, but even when their physically ready, they may not be emotionally ready.

AIDAN

Whoever you appoint as Guardian will have their job cut out for them, sir.

Council Chair nods. A tech comes up with a report, which he reads.

COUNCIL CHAIR

Thank you very much for this information. Vance, Daven, you may go.

VANCE

Aidan should really be back in bed -

COUNCIL CHAIR

And I will get her there in just a minute.

Vance hesitates, then leaves, Daven behind him.

Aidan shifts, looks at Council Chair expectantly.

COUNCIL CHAIR (CONT'D)

We've appointed a Guardian.

(CONTINUED)

AIDAN

Oh.

COUNCIL CHAIR

It was unanimous. The messenger just arrived. I have the vote in my hand.

He walks to her, hands it to her.

COUNCIL CHAIR (CONT'D)

I think you should read it.

AIDAN

Oh, sir, it really isn't any of my business.

COUNCIL CHAIR

I think it is.

He holds out the piece of paper, waiting. Aidan takes, reads, looks up at him.

AIDAN

I don't know what to say.

COUNCIL CHAIR

Yes is the usual response.

AIDAN

Can I have a little while to think about it?

Council Chair takes the note back, covers his disappointment.

COUNCIL CHAIR

Of course.

Aidan nods, slowly stands up.

EXT. - OUTSIDE SHELTER - LATER

Daven and Aidan walk outside, under the trees. They are walking slowly, Daven supporting her.

AIDAN

Shae may never recover.

DAVEN

I know. Vance says she was just too far along.

AIDAN

If only I had believed you -

Daven stops, turns to her.

(CONTINUED)

DAVEN
It's nobody's fault.

Aidan looks about to say something, then stops, shakes her head, looks around the clearing, breathes deep.

AIDAN
It's beautiful here, isn't it? So calm.

DAVEN
Yes.

They begin to walk back to the shelter.

DAVEN (CONT'D)
What are you going to do now?

Aidan smirks, picks a flower.

AIDAN
Council asked me to be Guardian.

DAVEN
And?

Aidan shrugs, continues walking.

AIDAN
What are you going to do?

DAVEN
Ah. Stay here. Take care of Shae. In a little while, leave.

AIDAN
For good?

Daven nods, slowly.

DAVEN
Yeah. Too many memories, I think. It would be too -
(he looks at Aidan,
searching for
something)
It would be complicated.

Aidan stops, looks up at him. He smiles, shrugs.

AIDAN
It would. It would at that.

DAVEN
I sometimes wish I could go back-

(CONTINUED)

AIDAN
We can't, can we?

Daven looks down at her, laughs sharply, shakes his head. He leans down, kisses her gently, but without passion. Aidan stays very still.

DAVEN
You will always be the woman I regret
letting go of.

At that, Daven strides away, quickly, leaving Aidan standing alone and listless in the warm sun.

EXT. EXT - OUTSIDE SHELTER - NOMADS CAMP - LATER

Kai is outside with the horses, rubbing one down. Aidan comes up behind him, watching. The sun outlines Kai, the horse, glimmers of the beads in Kai's hair.

AIDAN
Kai.

Kai stops, turns to her, brush in mid-air. He smiles, walks to her. Grasping her shoulders, he examines her.

KAI
You are well, then.

Aidan laughs, the sorrow echoes in it.

AIDAN
Yes, basically.

KAI
We sit, or walk?

AIDAN
Sit, if that's all right.

The move to a log on the ground, sit. There is a moment of silence, where Aidan watches the horses and Kai watches her.

KAI
Tell me.

Aidan, startled, looks at him.

AIDAN
What?

KAI
What it is that you are here for.

Aidan stares at him, looks away.

(CONTINUED)

AIDAN
I've been asked to be the Guardian.

KAI
Like Kincaid?

Aidan laughs again.

AIDAN
No, hopefully better than Kincaid.

KAI
Is it what you want?

AIDAN
I don't know. There's so much I want
to do here. And then ...

She looks at Kai, sorrow in her eyes.

Kai nods. Aidan reaches over and takes his hand, gripping
tightly.

KAI
Daven will stay here, too.

AIDAN
For a while.

Kai shakes his head, tightens his grip on her hand..

KAI
I can not stay.

AIDAN
I know.

KAI
And you will not go.

AIDAN
I don't know.

Kai stands, moves to a horse, begins brushing the horse,
harder than necessary. Aidan watches for a moment, then moves
to him, wrapping her arms around him and pressing her face
to his back. Kai stills, and they stand there for a moment.

Sighing, Kai turns around, touches her face.

KAI
The village would always want you.

AIDAN
I would always want them.

(CONTINUED)

Kai nods slowly, steps away from her, turns back to the horse. Aidan walks back to the shelter.

INT. SHELTER - MEDLAB - LATER

Shae lies in a hospital bed, with Evie sitting over her. She is reading from a book, occasionally reaching over and touching Shae's hand.

EVIE

"All the infections that the sun
sucks up/ from bogs, fens, flats, on
Prosper fall and make him/by inchmeal
a disease!"

AIDAN

What are you reading?

Evie, startled, closes the book.

EVIE

You scared me! The Tempest.
Shakespeare.

AIDAN

Right.

Aidan moves to the bedside, touches Shae's hand.

AIDAN (CONT'D)

How is she?

Evie sighs, puts the book on a small table.

EVIE

She's OK. The extent of the brain
damage was pretty severe, you know.

AIDAN

How are you?

EVIE

I'm OK, I guess.

Her last word ends on a sob, but she restrains herself. Aidan attempts to comfort her, fails miserably.

AIDAN

God, I'm bad at this. You need to
get out of here. Come on, let's go.

EVIE

But -

AIDAN

She's asleep, Evie. She's fine.

INT. SHELTER - KINCAID'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

The two enter, Evie hesitantly.

EVIE
Why are we in Kincaid's office?

AIDAN
It's not Kincaid's office, anymore.

EVIE
What?

AIDAN
The Council offered me the
Guardianship position.

Evie stares at Aidan.

EVIE
Oh, Aidan. That's wonderful.

AIDAN
I told them they were making a
mistake. And I told them who should
be guardian. And they agreed.

She pause, grins.

AIDAN (CONT'D)
Congratulations, Evie.

Evie sits, face white.

EVIE
Oh my God. Oh my God.

She looks up at Aidan.

EVIE (CONT'D)
I couldn't possibly.

AIDAN
No, you're the only one who can.

EXT. - OUTSIDE SHELTER - MORNING

Aidan and Kai stand beside their horses, which are loaded down with packs. Daven and Evie are standing. The light filters through the trees, casting shadows.

Evie and Aidan embrace while Daven and Kai shake hands stiffly with each other.

AIDAN
I'll come back.

(CONTINUED)

EVIE

You have to, don't you? Every three months, for Vance's magic shot.

DAVEN

You make sure she gets here, Kai.

KAI

I will.

Aidan turns to Daven, embraces him tightly.

AIDAN

Daven -

DAVEN

It's OK.

Aidan steps back. Kai places a protective hand on her back, helps her mount her horse. Kai mounts, and with a final farewell, they ride off.

The get to the end of the trees, then look at each other.

BOTH

Race!

They explode into a gallop, racing across the plain.

FADE OUT