

THE CHOSEN

CHAPTER ONE: THE ADVERSARY

Written by

Aaron Mebesius

Mebesius@gmail.com

BLACK

We hear GUSTING WIND.

FADE IN:

A MUTATED VULTURE soars into frame through heavy clouds, breaking through the clouds line, revealing a bird's eye view of world below.

The terrain is covered with impact craters of all sizes, transforming the picturesque country side into a hellish landscape of ravaged farmland and pulverized buildings.

Rotating in the atmosphere are tens of thousands of asteroids. They range in size from baseball to building-sized but each looms ominously, threatening to fall at any moment.

Our vulture flaps its wings, and sails toward the horizon. In the distance, we see its destination: dozens of vultures circle a spire of steam billowing upward from a fresh impact crater.

FRESH IMPACT CRATER RIDGE - DUSK

The WIND HOWLS, and we hear APPROACHING FOOTSTEPS.

Kyral walks to the edge of the crater and peers over its edge.

At the bottom of the crater are the remains of a large Elk-like animal. Apparently, it's been struck by a meteor, shredding it to pieces and scattering it across the crater's bottom.

We hear multiple APPROACHING FOOTSTEPS.

Lynn, Scavenger 1, and Scavenger 2 join him on the crater's edge, looking down at their fresh prize.

Kyral looks to Lynn and upon seeing the gory spectacle, she beams with excitement.

FRESH IMPACT CRATER BOTTOM - DUSK - MOMENTS LATER

Scavenger 1 and Scavenger 2 SLAM a large section of bloody meat onto a makeshift meat sled.

He pauses, catching his breathe and looks upward to the vultures circling overhead. Hundreds now circle above.

He let's out a worried sigh and begins dragging the sled, stacked high with scavenged meat, up the crater's embankment.

FRESH IMPACT CRATER RIDGE - DUSK

Scavenger 1 and 2 struggle to pull the sled over the crater's edge, and while Kyril is close enough to lend a hand, he doesn't, opting instead to stare towards the horizon.

The Scavengers struggle to find their footing in the muddy embankment, and begin to slip downward.

A hand grabs Scavenger 1 by the shoulder, helping drag the him and meat sled over the crater's edge.

SCAVENGER 1

(out of breathe)

Thanks Lynn.

Lynn smiles and walks over to the meat sled.

She opens her palm, and the sled telekinetically slides out from underneath the pile of meat.

Scavenger 1 grabs a canteen of water off their horse drawn cart and takes a large drink.

SCAVENGER 1 (CONT'D)

When we got here there were, what, a dozen circlers? Now there's, gotta be at least a hundred.

Lynn raises an eyebrow.

SCAVENGER 1 (CONT'D)

So it's hard to miss.

LYNN

You're that afraid of the souless?

SCAVENGER 2

Smart men are.

Lynn frowns, and kicks the sled over towards the scavengers.

LYNN

The sooner you finish, the sooner we head back.

Scavenger 1 grits his teeth.

SCAVENGER 1

If the two of you'd used your gifts
 we'd already be on our way back.
 But instead, the two of us'er
 breaking our backs for this prize
 while you stand, doing what
 exactly?

Lynn looks to the horizon behind the two Scavengers.

LYNN

Watching your back.

Scavenger 1 and 2 look behind them.

On the far side of the crater a large horde of people, a
 thousand strong, stand shoulder to shoulder, silently
 watching the small scavenging party.

SCAVENGER 1

(terrified)
 Souless...

LYNN

(matter of face)
 Hundreds of 'em.

Kyral walks passed Lynn and the two Scavengers.

KYRAL

More.

Lynn hangs her head, knowing what's coming is not going to be
 pleasant.

Kyral walks to the edge of the crater.

LYNN

(warning)
 Kyral...

Kyral stops, and looks back to her.

KYRAL

Don't let them leave.

He hops over the edge and begins marching towards the
 crater's center.

Lynn glances back at Scavenger 1 and 2, who have already
 turned to try to sneak away.

FRESH IMPACT CRATER BOTTOM - DUSK - MOMENTS LATER

A single man from the rival group is following in Kyr'al's lead, marching towards the center of the crater.

As Kyr'al walks passed chunks of meat he eyes it with subtle desperation.

He reaches the center and the two men square off, standing one meter apart, staring into each other's eyes.

His opponent is enormous man, standing 8 feet tall, covered from head to toe in crudely patched together animal skins.

His long, unhygienic white beard is stained red with blood, and half of the top of his head is missing, as if surviving some impossibly fatal head wound.

The tension mounts until finally, the huge man points to himself.

TUNDRA

Tundra.

Kyr'al looks into Tundra's eyes with new intensity and reluctantly repeating his gesture.

KYRAL

Kyr'al.
(beat)
This is mine, Tundra.

Tundra squints, not accepting his answer.

KYRAL (CONT'D)

All of it. I'm sorry your... kind got here second but those are the terms we agreed to.

TUNDRA

Ours.

KYRAL

No. No Tundra. We... I... got here first. First! You know first right!?

TUNDRA

(nodding)
First?

KYRAL

Yes!

TUNDRA
 (stops nodding)
 Ours.

Kyral grits his teeth with frustration.

KYRAL
 Treaty?

Tundra blinks. This word seems to have gotten through to him.

KYRAL (CONT'D)
 (pleading)
 Treaty, Tundra? Please? Hm?

Tundra looks back to his people, then back to Kyral.

TUNDRA
 Challenge.

Kyral lets out a heavy sigh and closes his eyes.

KYRAL
 (whisper)
 Accepted.

Tundra smiles a large broken-tooth grin, and let's out a THUNDEROUS ROAR. The grass and rocks near both men sway with the force of Tundra summoning an invisible inner power.

He charges at Kyral with his fist cocked, ready to deliver a single duel-ending headshot.

CRASH.

Tundra has extended his arm, but his fist stops mere inches short of Kyral's face.

KYRAL (CONT'D)
 Gifted.

Tundra grimaces and looks down at his chest.

Kyral has landed a blow too quick for us to see. His fist has broken through Tundra's ribcage above his heart.

KYRAL (CONT'D)
 But not chosen.

Tundra falls flat on his back. As he struggles to stand, Kyral casually walks over to him, and points his open palm over his chest.

Kyral unleashes a TELEKINETIC BLAST, SMASHING Kyral six inches into the ground, knocking him out.

The TELEKINETIC BLAST ECHOS through the crater as Kyral looks up to the sounding horde of Souless who stare down, silently.

They begin to disperse, as Lynn walks toward them.

She passes Kyral and kneels beside Tundra who is WHEEZING, barely clinching to life.

KYRAL (CONT'D)

Don't.

Lynn looks back to Kyral, confused.

KYRAL (CONT'D)

It wont matter.

Lynn places her hand over Tundra's wound.

LYNN

It should.

Kyral sighs and looks to the Scavengers watching from atop the crater's ridge.

KYRAL

(shouting)

I want to be on the move just after nightfall. Understand?

The two Scavengers nod, and reluctantly get back to work.

Tundra GASPS, awakens, and desperately grasps at his chest, feeling for a fatal wound that's nowhere to be found.

Tundra looks at Lynn, shocked and grateful.

TUNDRA

Mercy-giver.

Lynn smiles empathetically and points to her chest.

LYNN

Lynn.

Tundra stares back, spellbound.

LYNN (CONT'D)

(stern)

Treaty.

Tundra blinks. Finally understanding, he nods respectfully towards her.

TUNDRA

Treaty.

Tundra stands and looks to Kyral as if seeing him for the first time.

He places his hand on his chest while looking at Kyral.

TUNDRA (CONT'D)

Tundra.

Kyral lets out a heavy sigh, turns, and walks away.

Lynn looks to the sky and sees even more vultures joining the swarm circling above.

SERIES INTRODUCTION CREDIT SEQUENCE

RIBES

A small town surrounded by crudely built metal walls. Inside, the town bustles with activity. Men, women, and children move about carrying baskets full of a wide variety of berries.

Briasha, a well built attractive young woman, happily strolls through town carrying a large basket of mixed berries.

She passes an old western tavern style building.

SAXIF (O.S.)

Those for us?

The woman stops, and turns to the voice.

We see Saxif leaning against the Tavern. He is a young-man, in his late twenties, lean, with unkept hair.

Briasha's happy demeanor instantly turns to disgust.

BRIASHA

I suppose they could be, Saxif.

Saxif motions for her to come over to him and reluctantly she complies.

Saxif surveys her goods and picks up a berry.

BRIASHA (CONT'D)

A white raspberry.

SAXIF

You been hidin' these?

BRIASHA

A new hybrid. They just came in.

Saxif pops the berry into his mouth and chews it.

SAXIF

Delicious.

(beat)

You can *just* leave that here.

Briasha hesitates.

SAXIF (CONT'D)

That's the deal you made.

BRIASHA

I didn't.

SAXIF

Your guardian did.

Briasha pauses, considering to defy him, but drops her basket from waist height. It ungracefully lands with a resounding THUD and SQUISH.

Saxif glares at her, unhappy she purposefully bruised its contents.

She curtly turns, and walks away.

BRIASHA

(under her breathe)

Fucking ronin.

SAXIF

Praetorian.

She stops walking, and looks back to Saxif who smiles mockingly at her.

SAXIF (CONT'D)

Fucking praetorian, Briasha.

Briasha scoffs, and continues on her way.

Saxif picks up the basket full of berries, now dripping with juices through the wicker basket, and enters Ribes Tavern.

RIBES TAVERN

A dimly lit, western style establishment.

Empty poker tables are scattered everywhere save for one.

Two men play heads up Texas Hold'em, surrounded by a small crowd of onlookers.

Kerr, a well dressed upper-class looking man, sits behind a large stack of chips while the man opposite, obscured in shadow, has few chips remaining.

On the board: K, 10, 9, 7, 7.

KERR

It's too bad I have you covered,
otherwise I'd be raising here.

The obscured man looks over the in the last of his chips and leans forward in the light revealing his face. He is a handsome black man, with a straight edged cowboy hat.

HAWKSHAW

Is that you're subtle way of
telling me to fold, Kerr?

Saxif enters the Tavern, and takes a seat behind Kerr, confidently eating handfuls of berries.

Everyone in the room takes notices of his entrance, especially Hawkshaw.

HAWKSHAW (CONT'D)

Shall we up the stakes and make it
interesting?

KERR

What do you suggest, Hawkshaw?

HAWKSHAW

There's only one thing I want.

KERR

I told you before, that's too
high-a-price...

HAWKSHAW

And if I wager Saxif?

Saxif gags on the mouthful of berries. The observing crowd looks at one another.

KERR

For how long?

HAWKSHAW

Indefinitely.

SAXIF

Master, we could just take her by force...

The crowd stirs, unhappy with this threat.

Kerr glances at his cards and smiles confidently.

KERR

Can you even make that bet? You don't own him.

HAWKSHAW

And you don't own your daughter, but I have a feeling she will honor any request you make.

Hawkshaw glares at Saxif.

HAWKSHAW (CONT'D)

As will my prodigy.

Kerr looks around the room. The gamble of bringing Saxif into his ranks is worth the risk.

KERR

All I can promise is I'll ask.

Hawkshaw smiles.

HAWKSHAW

Fair enough.

KERR

Alright. I accept your terms.

Kerr motions over his cards, and they levitate over, revealing an 8 and a 6. Combined with the board, he has made a straight.

KERR (CONT'D)

You should have raised pre-flop and pushed me off that trash.

Saxif nervously swallows.

Hawkshaw motions over his cards and they levitate over, revealing a pair of Kings. Combined with the board, he has made a full house, and won the hand.

Saxif grins and leans back in his chair.

SAXIF

Don't feel bad Kerr, you're not the first piece of trash to be bested by an elite.

Hawkshaw pauses.

SAXIF (CONT'D)

I'll be sure to take good care of Briasha when we leave.

Suddenly, Hawkshaw gestures toward Saxif, and he telekinetically SLAMS against the wall behind him.

Hawkshaw walks up to him standing inches away from his face.

HAWKSHAW

Unbecoming, Saxif. Very unbecoming.

SAXIF

I only meant...

Hawkshaw opens his right hand, and Saxif's mouth opens.

HAWKSHAW

You meant what? To antagonize? To disrespect?

Hawkshaw slowly twitches his fingers. As he does, Saxif reluctantly sticks out his tongue just beyond his teeth.

HAWKSHAW (CONT'D)

To make enemies out of allies?

Kerr slowly clenches his hand into a fist. As he does, Saxif begins biting into his tongue.

HAWKSHAW (CONT'D)

There are countless adversaries waiting for us out there. And at least one is behaving unlike anything I've encountered before, razing cities and slaughtering our citizens. Or have you forgotten why we're here in the first place?

SAXIF

(struggling to speak)
I haven't.

Kerr relaxes his telekinetic grip and Saxif crumples to the floor holding his hand over his mouth, blood seeping through his fingers.

He stands and glares at Hawkshaw, who returns his stare, unafraid.

Saxif bows to Kerr, turns, and exits the Tavern.

Hawkshaw turns his attention back to Kerr who stares at him, awestruck.

Hawkshaw smiles and casually walks over to Briasha's bag of berries.

KERR

I know I'm not supposed to ask.
And, even if you are you're not
supposed to tell me....

Hawkshaw smiles, knowingly.

HAWKSHAW

There are no chosen, Kerr.

KERR

But your gifts? But the things
you've done, that I've seen you do.

HAWKSHAW

Every warrior I've encountered
whose invoked the title of chosen
is either bluffing, delusional, or
both. And if you're eager believe?
Myths become realities, right
before your eyes.

He pops a white raspberry into his mouth.

HAWKSHAW (CONT'D)

(chewing)

My talents are my own. The results
of training and discipline, not
gifts handed down from some
benevolent divine.

He swallows the berries.

HAWKSHAW (CONT'D)

Delicious. You might be in even more danger than I thought.

Hawkshaw picks up the basket full of berries and exits the tavern.

Kerr moves to the window, watching Hawkshaw walk down the street.

Out of the shadows a shimmering silver-auraed woman emerges. A divine.

KERR

He doesn't believe.

JIN

Or know.

KERR

What point is there in furthering his ignorance, of keeping him in the dark?

JIN

He's not in the dark. He's not in the light either. He's in the grey. And there he will remain until I decide otherwise.

KERR

Our time together is nearing its end isn't it, Jin?

Jin smiles.

JIN

Do you not want my help for your daughter?

Kerr looks through the Tavern's exit and sees Kerr walking toward the cities walls.

KERR

Of course I do.

JIN

I will miss our conversations. For your sake, I hope whatever he's hunting doesn't come here.

He frowns, worried for her, knowing that Hawkshaw is about to take his daughter on a dangerous journey to find the malevolent force.

KERR

I'm not sure that I do.

CRATERED COUNTRY SIDE - NIGHT

Lynn, Kyril and the two Scavengers walk near their cart full of scavenged meat.

Kyril glances at Lynn, sensing she's upset with him.

HE looks upward, seeing dozens of shooting stars streaking in all directions.

KYRAL

Traveling at night is ill-advised,
but it never disappoints.

Lynn curtly remains silent.

KYRAL (CONT'D)

Never?

LYNN

You didn't have to take it that
far.

KYRAL

The soulless aren't people, Lynn.

Lynn glares at him.

KYRAL (CONT'D)

Your empathy is admirable, but...

LYNN

A weakness, right?

Lynn's bluntness surprises him.

KYRAL

Wouldn't go that far.

LYNN

Colton would. He does.

KYRAL

He's our guardian. He has to be
strong. And unfortunately, strength
comes at the cost of compassion.

Lynn suddenly stops walking and Kyril moves passed her.

Kyril stops, thinking he's offended her.

KYRAL (CONT'D)

Lynn...

Confused, he looks back to her and sees Lynn looking behind them, immobilized with fear.

Behind them, an ominous fog bank is moving towards the group.

A shadowy figure emerges from the fog.

It raises its arm, reaching out to Lynn.

A SHRIEKING sound rings out.

Lynn's cheek splits open, as if being grazed by a bullet.

Behind her, Scavenger 1 grabs his chest and looks behind him, spotting the shadowy figure.

SCAVENGER 1

(struggling to speak)

Souless? Lynn... help me...

He falls face first into the mud, dead.

Lynn runs to his aid, and sees a bloody 3 inch hole where his heart used to be.

KYRAL

Not souless...

She looks back to the figure as Kyral positioning himself between Lynn and the figure.

KYRAL (CONT'D)

A ronin.

Another SHRIEKING BLAST cuts through the falling rain and Scavenger 2 GASPS.

Lynn turns her head to him, and sees him clawing at his chest.

The figure casually SNAPS his fingers and Scavenger 2's torso telekinetically rips apart, showering Lynn with blood.

Kyral grits his teeth, takes a monk-like battle stance, and begins POWERING UP. Kyral's eyes pulsate with a BRILLIANT YELLOW AURA as an invisible telekinetic barrier forms around him, revealed by the falling rain.

The ground RUMBLES. Rocks, dust, and pieces of the their harvested dead animal begin to VIBRATE and levitate.

A SHRIEKING BLAST rings out.

Lynn staggers backward, too scared to run and Kyral steps in between her and the shadowy figure.

The blast CRASHES through his barrier, striking him in the chest and immediately ceasing his power up.

Kyral drops to one knee and looks up at the figure walking towards them, trembling in utter shock.

Still walking, the figure begins POWERING UP in similar fashion. His right eye illuminates, pulsating with a BRILLIANT SKY BLUE AURA. The rain around him freezes into hail, and begins swirling around him.

Kyral squints, sensing the figure's overwhelming and yet...

Kyral's eyes go wide with fear and amazement as he realizes who is walking towards him.

KYRAL (CONT'D)

You're alive...?

The Figure stops within five meters of Kyral and lifts a finger upward. Kyral and Lynn begin to levitate, as if clenched by a unseen fist.

Blood pouring from Kyral's wound levitates along with them, looking like water floating in zero gravity.

KYRAL (CONT'D)

You don't need the girl! Colton and I are the only ones that matter!

The Figure slowly begins making a fist and the invisible grip tightens.

KYRAL (CONT'D)

A sneak attack? That's really how you want to kill me!?

Kyral's RIBS BEGIN TO SNAP AND POP.

KYRAL (CONT'D)

Zidane... you coward!

Zidane hesitates, relaxes his fist, and the pair fall to the ground.

Kyral GESTURES toward the horse drawn cart and the straps and buckles fall off, leaving just the horse for Lynn to make her escape.

The figure's eye FLARES with blue light, feeding off his frustration and anger.

LIGHTNING CRASHES, and we get a brief glimpse of Zidane's face. He is a young man, with an acidic scar running horizontally across his face, covering his left eye, which is cloudy and white.

He wears a black T-shirt, jeans, with no shoes. Underneath his clothes, dozens of rust colored bandages wrap his arms, legs, and neck.

Kyral's breaths are labored and congested, as he looks to Lynn, one last time.

KYRAL (CONT'D)

Warn him. Warn Colton. Don't let him fight alone.

Kyral hacks a thick gob of coagulated blood on the ground.

LYNN

Kyral... please don't make me...

Kyral looks back to Zidane with renewed determination.

Kyral POWERS UP, vaporizing the rain falling around him.

He lunges at Zidane's head with everything he's got.

Kyral's fist CRASHES against Zidane's telekinetic barrier, but while Zidane's head has turned from the sheer force of the blow, Kyral's fist cannot penetrate Zidane's barrier.

Zidane casually grabs Kyral's face and places his open palm on Kyral's stomach.

Kyral rips in two.

Zidane POWERS DOWN. His eyes cease pulsating with blue light, and the hail swirling around him falls on Kyral's face.

Lynn notices light from a small town flickering in the distance.

ZIDANE

How many sentinels does he command?

She looks back to Zidane, and sees him staring right at her.

ZIDANE (CONT'D)

Think carefully, before you speak.
I can't stand a liar.

LYNN
 (terrified)
 Si... seven.

ZIDANE
 Seven? He must be quite the warrior
 now.
 (beat)
 Deliver his message. Alone.
 Together. It wont matter. I just
 want *Colton's* best. Understand?

Lynn takes one last look at Kyral's body, stands, slowly walks over to the horse, and mounts it. And kicks the horse into a gallop.

As Zidane begins walking towards the town he flexes the arm covered in Kyral's blood. The blood leaps from his fist onto ground.

Kyral GASPS and Zidane stops in his tracks.

ZIDANE (CONT'D)
 Sheppard is cruel.

Zidane looks toward Kyral's dying body.

Kneeling over Kyral is glowingly yellow-armor clad divine. The divine is desperately using its power to keep Kyral clinging to life.

A shadowy BLUE-EYED DIVINE walks forward.

BLUE EYES
 Isn't he Hadriel?

Kyral's eyes, still faintly illuminated with the Yellow Aura, begin to flicker as he lies on the muddy ground, dying.

BLUE EYES (CONT'D)
 I did warn you. You can't say I
 didn't.

Kyral's labored breathing softens and the yellow aura in his eyes begins to fade.

HADRIEL
 Your offer?

BLUE EYES
 Unfortunately, that was a time
 sensitive arrangement. How could I
 ever trust you now with a knife to
 your throat?

Kyral GAGS, moments from death.

Realizing the futility of his efforts, Hadriel stands and squares his stance to Blue Eyes.

BLUE EYES (CONT'D)

Oh please. All that watching, and you don't know Him at all do you?

HADRIEL

More than you. More than you ever will.

The light in Kyral's eyes goes out and his BREATHING stops.

From out of nowhere, A RED ARMOR CLAD DIVINE darts forward, slicing Hadriel in half. His armor shatters like glass and the being held within it erupts into yellow sparks letting out a DEAFENING HOWLING.

The DEAFENING HOWL abruptly stops as Zidane stares at Kyral's corpse.

Zidane turns his attention back to the town in the distance, and casually begins walking in its direction.

FADE TO BLACK.

BRIASHA'S HOUSE

A modest home filled with the old tattered books and crude scientific equipment.

Briasha is studying a large tattered book.

A GENTLE KNOCK at her door.

She looks up, a bit confused.

BRIASHA

Hawkshaw?

KERR (O.S.)

No, it's just me.

She closes the book, revealing a very old book on WORLD HISTORY.

BRIASHA

It's not locked.

Kerr enters and Briasha puts the book away.

He enters, staring at her sternly.

BRIASHA (CONT'D)

Well?

Kerr let's out a heavy sigh and shrugs.

BRIASHA (CONT'D)

You lost then?

KERR

'Fraid so. Your father is a good man a terrible card player.

Briasha smiles, unable to hide her excitement and play along any further. Kerr reciprocates her happy expression.

KERR (CONT'D)

He'll tell you soon.

She pulls out a large pack, stuffed to the brim with books and traveling gear, ready to go, anticipating this moment.

KERR (CONT'D)

It wont be easy you know, becoming a praetorian.

BRIASHA

It's the fastest way I can improve.

KERR

Hawkshaw tell you that?

BRIASHA

When Saxif left here, he could barely nudge a drop of water. And now...

KERR

He is quiet powerful. And arrogant.
(beat)
You have more in common with him than you think.

Briasha glares at him.

KERR (CONT'D)

Ego often grows along with the gifts of young Praetorian. If left unchecked, it can overtake even the most promising of warriors. Thankfully, his mentor is a prime example of what a Praetorian should be.

BRIASHA

A prime example? Praetorian of the Reborn don't have wants or desires. They're compelled.

KERR

That's right.

BRIASHA

And, I suppose there's been no desire in eating everything that we produce or import?

Kerr frowns.

KERR

Like I said. Arrogant.

ALARM BELLS BEGIN RINING

Kerr and Briasha exchange worried glances with one another.

KERR (CONT'D)

Duty calls.

Kerr turns his back to Briasha and walks to the door.

BRIASHA

(pleading)

You don't have to...

KERR

I *must* confront whatever is beyond our walls. I *must*. Understand?

Briasha collects herself.

BRIASHA

I do.

KERR

No, you don't. But out there, you'll learn what choice really is. No matter the situation, no matter how desperate, you'll always have one. Don't let anyone convince you otherwise.

Kerr exits Briasha's Home.

RIBES GATE - INTERIOR

Hawkshaw sits atop the edge of a high stone wall, gazing out over the pulverized landscape.

Hawkshaw is still eating the berries Saxif took from Briasha.

SAXIF (O.C.)

Is it him?

Hawkshaw looks to his left, and sees Saxif walking towards him.

HAWKSHAW

If it is, the city of Ivory's fears are unfounded.

Saxif looks closer at the people near Ribes' gate.

A young man (about age 18) stands in front and a group of weary, muddy people.

SAXIF

Vagabonds.

HAWKSHAW

Most likely. And him?

Saxif squints, but senses no power from the young man.

SAXIF

He's no ronin...

HAWKSHAW

No. But, he claims to be.

Saxif looks to Hawkshaw, concerned.

SAXIF

A pretender? Shit.

(beat)

You think Kerr will offer terms?

HAWKSHAW

He must.

RIBES NORTHERN GATE - EXTERIOR

HAWKSHAW (V.O.)

But I sense the boy has something else on his mind.

RIBES NORTHERN GATE - INTERIOR

ALARM RING signaling an approaching warrior. Kerr moves through the crowd and up to the guarded tower looking over the gate.

From within the city walls, the populace of the entire town is hurriedly taking their seats in outward facing bleachers, excited to watch the coming duel.

RIBES NORTHERN GATE - EXTERIOR

The gates open and Kerr emerges.

He walks to within 1 meter of the young challenger.

The young man and Kerr stare each other down as the crowd looks on in silent anticipation.

DION

Terms.

Kerr squints trying to sense any power from his opponent.

KERR

First, I'd like to know your name,
Ronin.

JIN

He's not gifted.

Kerr glances behind him, and sees Jin walking beside Dion.

JIN (CONT'D)

Which means he's beyond
desperation, Kerr.

DION

Dion.

KERR

And what do you want, Dion?

DION

A duel.

Kerr smiles confidently.

KERR

Well, I can always use more
sentinels...

DION

For permanent residency.

Kerr's happy expression sours and the spectating crowd begins to murmur.

KERR

Those terms come with a heavy price, should you lose...

DION

I know.

KERR

Do *they*? As you fight on their behalf, if you should fall...

DION

I accept your terms.

JIN

You are honor bound to accept the challenge of any ronin and he knows it.

Kerr flexes, and the ground RUMBLES with power.

Dion's paper thin confidence wavers and he takes a single step backward, realizing what he's facing.

KERR

You're no warrior. But, I am. And as honor holds me to terms in defeat or victory, so too does it compel me to fight at full strength on behalf of my residents.

SAXIF (O.C.)

(shouting)

Give him Hawk's winnings.

Everyone looks to Saxif.

SAXIF (CONT'D)

That should be enough for at least a few months.

Kerr looks to Hawkshaw, who nods in agreement.

Kerr looks back to Dion, relieved.

KERR

A sponsor?
(back to Dion)
What do you say to that, son?

Dion looks back to his family, considering his offer. They exchange earnest looks, considering the offer.

Dion looks back to Kerr, a reluctant smile on his face.

Kerr smiles back.

DION

No.

KERR

Do you understand what sponsor means?

DION

I told you I accept! How many times must I say yes? Or are you simply a coward?

The observing crowd JEERS. Spectators begin calling for Kerr to fight him.

JIN

I told you. Not. Desperate.

KERR

So be it.

Kerr takes his battle stance, as does Dion.

WIND HOWLS, as the two warriors prepare to face off.

Suddenly, Dion lunges at Kerr's head.

Kerr easily dodges and places an open palm over Dion's heart.

Dion looks at Kerr with sad acceptance.

CRASH.

Dion's eyes roll into the back of his head, and he falls backward into the mud, dead.

Kerr looks over the faces of the people traveling with him, who all drop to their knees, heads lowered, eager for the same fate.

Kerr sighs and points his open palm towards the group of kneeling vagabonds.

Above, Saxif turns and walks away from the pending slaughter as we hear: MULTIPLE MUFFLED CRASHES.

The crowd watching the fight quietly disperses, upset at the lack of entertainment.

BRIASHA

You didn't have to do that.

Saxif stops.

SAXIF

I didn't do it for you.

Saxif resumes walking away.

RIBES GATE - INTERIOR GATE

The gate opens with Kerr silhouetted between the doors.

Behind him, the bodies of the vagabonds lie dead in the mud.

Kerr walks forward, noticeably shaken by the duty he's had to fulfill.

Hawkshaw and Saxif walk passed him, heading towards the bodies.

HAWKSHAW

He left you no choice.

Kerr looks to Briasha.

KERR

Remember what I told you?

Briasha nods and Kerr glances at Hawkshaw.

Slowly, Kerr resumes walking into town.

RIBES GATE - EXTERIOR GATE - MOMENTS LATER

Hawkshaw, Saxif, and Briasha are examining the bodies of the slain Vagabonds.

Saxif sees a charred orange, knocked loose from one of the vagabonds packs.

He telekinetically pulls it into his hand, sniffs it, and takes a bite.

SAXIF

(to Hawkshaw)
Sweet, like their berries.

Saxif tosses the fruit to Hawkshaw who also takes a bite.

HAWKSHAW

Sweeter.
(to Briasha)
Who produces these?

BRIASHA

Citrus.

Saxif kicks the bag open and dozens of charred oranges roll out.

HAWKSHAW

Who would guessed that something
sweeter than a berry still existed.
(beat)
Damn, I really thought Ribes would
be it.

Hawkshaw spots something in one of the bags. He tries to pull it out, but to his surprise, it is so heavy he must use two hands to lift it out of the bag.

He turns to Saxif and Briasha, revealing a RUST COLORED RIBBON.

Hawkshaw stares at the Ribbon, shocked.

BRIASHA

What is that?

Hawkshaw heaves the bandage to Saxif, who barely catches it, knocking the wind out of him.

SAXIF

A weighted training ribbon?
(beat)
This has to be him.

HAWKSHAW

(to Briasha)
How far to Citrus?

BRIASHA

(hopeful)
Three days on foot, two if we push.

SAXIF

That's not far.

HAWKSHAW

No. But, it *is* too late.

Saxif drops the bandage, and it lands with a HEAVY THUD.

CRATER LAKE - PREDAWN

A damsel fly lands on a still body of water. From out of nowhere, a trout rises and snatches it.

Aiden lifts his fly-rod into the air, hooking the fish, smiling with childlike delight.

Aiden is well built, handsome young man.

As he attempts to reel in the fish, we ZOOM out and see the lake Aiden is fishing on is a large impact crater with small creeks BABBLING into it.

The fish SNAPS his line.

Annoyed, Aiden points two fingers at the water.

The fish levitates above the surface, flipping desperately with the snapped line dangling from its mouth.

Aiden snaps his fingers, SNAPPING the fish's spine, killing it instantly.

CRATER LAKE - MOMENTS LATER

A skewered trout COOKS above a small camp fire.

Aiden and Gabriel sit around the fire, watching it cook.

Gabriel's eyes emit a yellowish hue and around his neck, a halo of pure yellow energy glows. Wrapping around the halo itself are additional, smaller rings of light.

Aiden stares into fire, avoiding Gabriel's stare, but he can only last so long, and eventually he makes eye contact.

AIDEN

I worked hard on that fly.

Gabriel glares at Aiden sternly.

AIDEN (CONT'D)

And, I need to eat.

GABRIEL

You *need* to respect our rules.

Aiden takes skewered fish off the fire and begins eat it.

AIDEN

What if I encounter him on the road
and I'm not at one hundred percent?

GABRIEL

I have been assured that will not
be the case. I've told you this,
many times.

AIDEN

Are we're close?

GABRIEL

Very.

Aiden smiles, excited at that prospect.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Aiden...

AIDEN

But what *if* we run into him on the
road? Like a surprise? You told me
he has a sense of humor.

Gabriel pauses for a moment, and Aiden thinks he may have
gotten away with abusing his power.

GABRIEL

No.

AIDEN

No? Just no?

GABRIEL

Shall I inform Micheal of this and
your other abuses when you meet
him? Is that the first impression
you want to make?

Aiden sighs.

AIDEN

(under his breath)
I can't wait for that threat not to
work any more.

GABRIEL

What's that?

AIDEN

A suspension then?

GABRIEL

How long do you think is fair for taking a life in such dishonorable fashion?

AIDEN

A fish's life.

GABRIEL

But a life nonetheless. If Aneal were here she could tell you its precise value.

AIDEN

Dawn?

Gabriel notices something behind him, and smiles.

GABRIEL

I accept your terms.

Gabriel nods to the something behind Aiden.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

And will hold you to them.

Aiden turns his head to look, and upon seeing what Gabriel is looking at, jumps to his feet.

He hurriedly mounts his horse, kicks it into a gallop, and rides off, leaving the cooking fish and still burning camp fire behind.

In the distance, vultures circle around a pillar of heavy black smoke billowing into the air.

CITRUS - SMOLDERING REMAINS

A large group of emaciated Souless slowly sift through the wreckage of a large smoldering town. They are covered in black ash, walk with their mouths open, and stare with unblinking lifeless eyes.

One of them discovers the charred body of a former Citrus resident and begins gnawing on it. Other souless stumble over, and begin devouring the corpse as well.

RIDGE ABOVE CITRUS

Aiden watches the macabre scene from horseback.

GABRIEL (O.C.)

Souless.

Aiden glances to his left, and Gabriel walks into frame.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

It appears they grew tired of simply scavenging.

Souless 1 picks up an orange and sniffs it

ADIEN

They've never been killers. They're maggots. And like maggots, they're only interest in eating the dead, not the living.

Souless 1 drops the orange. It picks up a charred leg and begins to gnaw on it.

GABRIEL

Maybe before.

Souless 1 drops the orange. It picks up a charred leg and begins to gnaw on it.

Aiden smiles, and dismounts from his horse.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

It's not worth the risk.

AIDEN

I heard their fruit was especially delicious. I'm not going to let a few ambitious souless stand in my way of enjoying that delicacy.

GABRIEL

Your suspension is still in effect.

Aiden looks at the horizon, and while the dawn is in full bloom, the sun itself has yet to rise.

AIDEN

Gabriel...

GABRIEL

I accepted *your* terms, remember? Think of it as training.

Aiden begins stretching as if warming up for fight as he walks towards the smoldering remains.

AIDEN

Slaughtering lambs isn't training.

CITRUS - SMOLDERING REMAINS

The souless continue to gather body parts, piling them together in what used to be the town's center.

SOULESS 1

Bodies. Many. Gather.

SOULESS 2

More.

SOULESS 3

Gather.

SOULESS 2

Bodies.

SOULESS 1

Many.

SOULESS 2

Gather.

Souless 1 pushes over a large piece of charred lumber and discovers a corpse laying face down.

He sniffs it.

SOULESS 1

Live.

SOULESS 2

Fresh.

SOULESS 3

Gather?

AIDEN (O.C.)

No.

The three souless look behind them and see Aiden confidently marching towards them.

SOULESS 1

Ronin?

Souless 1 turns to face Aiden. As he does, he inadvertently steps on a ripe orange.

Aiden scowls at him.

AIDEN

Looks like you're going hungry,
same as me.

Aiden notices a small piece of ORANGE FABRIC. He happily picks it up and tucks it away.

SOULESS 1

Ours.

SOULESS 2

Treaty. Fair.

SOULESS 3

Fair. Treaty. Ours. Understand?

Aiden leaps at Souless 1 and with one punch, brutally knocks out his teeth.

Aiden looks at his fist and sees Souless 1's tooth stuck embedded in his hand

AIDEN

(pulls tooth from his fist)
Disgusting!

SOULESS 1

(teeth falling out)
Violence!

SOULESS 2

Violence!

SOULESS 3

Violence!

The three souless lunge at Aiden. He effortlessly dodges, counters, and knocks each of them out with one punch.

Aiden walks over to the body discovered by Souless 1. He kneels down and brushes the ash away from its face.

The survivor is Lynn, unconscious, but alive.

AIDEN

Sheppard is generous today.

Hearing FOOTSTEPS behind him Aiden stands and turns around.

To his surprise, dozens of souless have surrounded him.

AIDEN (CONT'D)

Stealthy. I imagine that came in handy right before committed murder.

The souless begin lunging at him, and one by one, Aiden knocks each of them out with a brutal punch to the face.

Souless 4 manages to scratch Aiden's cheek.

Enraged, Aiden grabs him by the throat and knees his spine. We hear it CRACK as souless 4 WAILS PITIFULLY and falls to the ground.

The entire group surrounding Aiden recoils.

Aiden confidently stands upright, thinking they've afraid of him. Behind him a gigantic souless grabs him by the neck, and lifts him into the air.

TUNDRA

Ronin! Violence! Treaty! BROKEN!

Aiden knees him in the stomach, but to his shock, it has no affect and Tundra SLAMS Aiden into the dirt.

Tundra raises his hands over his head, prepared to deliver a killing two-handed blow.

Aiden rolls to his side, barely dodging Tundra's blow, and leaps to his feet.

Tundra begins swinging wildly at Aiden, and despite his agility, Tundra's flurry of attacks is so relentless the best Aiden can manage to do is dodge.

Finally, Aiden finds an opening and kicks Tundra square in the teeth, stopping Tundra's flurry of attacks.

Aiden notices Gabriel walking over to Lynn and kneel down next to her. Tundra follows Aiden's line of sight, but doesn't see Gabriel.

We hear a horse WAILING in panic and Aiden looks behind him.

RIDGE ABOVE CITRUS

A group of souless overpower Aiden's horse and drag it to the ground.

CITRUS - SMOLDERING REMAINS

Distracted, Tundra SMASHES Aiden in the face and Aiden staggers backward.

Tundra nonchalantly spits a bloody tooth out and smiles a broken tooth-filled grin.

AIDEN

Alright, enough.

Aiden begins POWERING UP.

His eyes PULSATE with YELLOW-ENERGY and the ground RUMBLES.

His POWER UP abruptly stops.

Surprised, Aiden looks to Gabriel.

GABRIEL

Dawn.

Aiden glances at the horizon, seeing the light getting brighter.

TUNDRA

Gather. Treaty. Fair. Understand?

AIDEN

You've got about two minutes left,
you half brain souless.

Tundra rushes Aiden grabs him by the neck with two hands,
lifting him in the air.

TUNDRA

SOULESS!? SOULESS!?

GABRIEL

Unwise Aiden.

Gabriel touches Lynn's forehead.

Lynn awakens and hears Aiden being STRANGLED by Tundra.

LYNN

Tundra!

Tundra turns his head, seeing Lynn awake.

TUNDRA

Mercy-giver?

Seizing the moment, Aiden head-butts Tundra.

Blood drips from his nose Tundra as he angrily turns his
attention back to Aiden.

Now he's *really* strangling him.

LYNN

Tundra, stop!

TUNDRA

Challenge! Violence! Us!

Lynn notices Souless 4, who MOANS pitifully on the ground.

She walks over to him, and places her hand on his wound.

Aiden, Gabriel, and Tundra watch in astonishment as Souless 4's spine snaps back into alignment.

TUNDRA (CONT'D)

Mercy-giver.

Tundra drops Aiden, who lands ungracefully, GASPING.

Aiden angrily scrambles to his feet as the sun breaches the horizon behind him.

He resumes POWERING UP.

GABRIEL

It's over Aiden.

Aiden exhales, and regains his composure.

AIDEN

That girl just saved your life.

Tundra turns from him, and walks to the other souless, and resumes collecting the dead bodies.

Lynn surveys the charred remains of the town.

She sees Gabriel and is terrified by his appearance.

Gabriel peers at her, curiously.

He marches over to her, and Lynn crawls backward, horrified at Gabriel's shimmering appearance.

GABRIEL

You see me?

Lynn nods, struggling not to cry.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Only chosen may lay eyes on me.

Aiden's mood becomes serious sensing Gabriel's aggression.

Gabriel leans in to within inches of her face, staring into her eyes, looking for an answer, uncomfortably close.

Gabriel straightens his posture and bows to her.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

I am Gabriel. Disciple of Micheal
the Righteous. The one beside you
is Aiden, my chosen.

Lynn is shocked that he knows her name.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

We have much to discuss.

ATOP THE SCOUTING RIDGE - NIGHT

Aiden sits near a fire, happily eating mangled oranges.

Lynn stands at the crest of the ridge watching the souless
drag away sleds stacked high with bodies and what remains of
Aiden's dead horse.

AIDEN

You were lucky for me to arrive
when I did.

GABRIEL

Luck had nothing to do with it.
This is Sheppard's doing.

Lynn doesn't break her vigilant stare.

AIDEN

I can't believe you're allowing
those things to do that. You lived
there didn't you?

LYNN

We have an arrangement.

AIDEN

With that animal?

From below, Tundra looks up to Lynn.

LYNN

Tundra. He's as close to a leader
as they've got.

AIDEN

That literal half-brain? I didn't
think they were capable of *being*
lead.

She gently raises her hand, waiving farewell. Tundra doesn't reciprocate the gesture, and continues leading his pack.

LYNN

Most citizens don't.

AIDEN

(a bit offended)
Oh, I'm no citizen.

Lynn glares at Aiden.

AIDEN (CONT'D)

You're welcome to go with them if you prefer. Of course, then you couldn't help me find the ronins responsible.

LYNN

It wasn't a ronin.

Aiden stops mid bite.

GABRIEL

A chosen. The one Aiden must defeat.

Aiden looks to Gabriel, who watches Lynn from a distance with a look of determination we haven't seen on him before.

Lynn sits in front of the fire, and gazes into it. The burning wood POPS and CRACKS. As it does, we see flashes of Citrus, engulfed in flames with Lynn standing in the center of it.

Through a burning building we see Zidane, his face warps with the heat of the fire.

THUNDER CRASHES in the distance and Lynn shudders.

She lays down near the fire, and rolls over, facing away from Aiden.

Aiden looks to Gabriel who nods, confirming Aiden's suspicion. The person she met is who he's promised to face.

The large fire POPS and CRACKLES as sparks rise into the night sky. As we look upwards, we see a cloudless star-filled sky, obstructed by the floating debris orbiting the atmosphere.

MOMENTS LATER

The fire is nearly out. Both Lynn and Aiden are asleep.

FLOATING DEBRIS FIELD ABOVE CAMPSITE

Gabriel stands on a large floating piece of debris, watching Aiden and Lynn asleep beneath him.

Around him, dozens of shooting stars, pieces of debris entering the atmosphere and impacting on the surface below.

MICHEAL (O.C.)

How is yours progressing?

As the debris rotates, a second divine rotates into view.

He is suspended vertically looking down on Gabriel and the pair sleeping beneath them.

GABRIEL

Micheal? I did not expect to see you so soon.

Micheal effortlessly hops off his floating rock, does a small flip in the air, and lands beside Gabriel, joining him in his vigilant watching of Aiden and Lynn.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Well. Quite well in fact.

MICHEAL

Weaknesses?

Gabriel hesitates.

MICHEAL (CONT'D)

Gabriel?

GABRIEL

He is quick to anger.

MICHEAL

I see...

GABRIEL

But, I have never seen one so fortunate in battle. Not ever.

Micheal looks on, unimpressed.

MICHEAL

You imply Sheppard's involvement.

GABRIEL

He has made his play has he not?

MICHEAL

Yes, but I doubt his ways would be obvious to anyone, no matter how attentive.

Gabriel sighs, fearing some unknown consequence for Aiden.

MICHEAL (CONT'D)

Although...

Gabriel perks up.

MICHEAL (CONT'D)

If he were undefeated?

GABRIEL

Aiden is.

MICHEAL

Then I will be curious to see how he fairs against my other prospects.

Gabriel pauses, fearing for Aiden's safety.

GABRIEL

How many remain?

MICHEAL

Seven.

Micheal squints, staring at Lynn.

MICHEAL (CONT'D)

Why is she still alive?

Gabriel hesitates.

MICHEAL (CONT'D)

You don't know?

GABRIEL

I was unsure if I should.

Micheal sternly glares at him.

MICHEAL

Do you ask permission to repeat my mistake?

Gabriel sighs.

MICHEAL (CONT'D)

Do you?

GABRIEL

(whispers)

No.

MICHEAL

She met him. Saw him fight. That knowledge has value.

GABRIEL

But the cost...

Micheal turns from Gabriel.

MICHEAL

Any act that leads to his defeat is sanctimonious. Hadriel and Zadikiel forgot that lesson, and where are they now?

Gabriel looks over to Lynn, conflicted.

MICHEAL (CONT'D)

Tonight. Or you can tell Aiden that his journey ends here.

Micheal gestures toward a shooting star and it's path alters, crashing harmlessly into a nearby lake.

CAMPSITE - DAWN

Aiden is tying a new fishing fly made from the ORANGE FABRIC he found in the ashes of Citrus.

He finishes tying the fly and picks up his fly rod, and begins strolling towards a nearby lake.

He looks back to Lynn who is still sleeping, and to his surprise sees Gabriel stands over her.

He picks up on Gabriel's internal dilemma and intent.

AIDEN

Without her consent?

GABRIEL

Do you think he would hesitate?

Aiden sighs, and begins walking to a nearby lake with his fishing gear.

AIDEN

You're not him, Gabriel the righteous.

Gabriel stares at Lynn, conflicted. He looks to the horizon and sees the sun is rising.

He looks to Aiden walking away, conflicted.

Gabriel kneels next to Lynn and places a single finger on her forehead.

SMASH TO BLACK**INSIDE CITRUS - THE NIGHT BEFORE**

Lynn awakens and finds herself inside of a gated town.

Lynn looks around her confused. This is Citrus... but that's impossible, Citrus was destroyed.

Colton marches toward Lynn who has been let through the town's gate. Colton's Sentinels surround her interrogating her relentlessly. Where are the others? Where is the prize? Where is the cart? Where's Kyral?

Colton moves through them and is shocked at Lynn's blood covered appearance.

COLTON

Lynn!

LYNN

Colton?

He sees the fear and sadness in her eyes. But mistakes her tears for that of her slain comrades, when really, she is overwhelmed seeing him alive.

COLTON

All of them?

LYNN

What?

COLTON

One man. Are you sure it was one man that killed Kyral?

Lynn grimaces. She's been through this before... but she's compelled to answer.

LYNN

He... he did. Even Kyral.

From a distance, Gabriel watches attentively.

BRECK

And you're sure it wasn't a
souless?

Colton and the surrounding sentinels exchange confused looks.

COLTON

It would take a hundred souless to
overpower a warrior like Kyril.

BRECK

A ronin then?

LYNN

Yes. But, I felt another. Right
before he...

Lynn struggles to recount the attack.

LYNN (CONT'D)

I don't understand... What is
happening?!

Colton walks over to her and places his hands on her
shoulders, comforting her like a father would.

COLTON

(gently)

Tell me. What did you feel?

Gabriel looks on, curious to hear her answer.

LYNN

Contempt. A cold merciless rage.

Gabriel squints.

Breck laughs dismissively.

BRECK

If he's so merciless, why are you
still alive?

LYNN

He wants Colton. Wants his best he
said.

BRECK

In a duel?

Colton reluctantly smiles.

COLTON

He'll get one.

The ten sentinels let out a ENTHUSIASTIC CHEER.

Lynn is outraged. The sentinels, Colton, and town seem more interested in the spectacle of a ronin duel than the loss of life that happened moments ago.

LYNN

(becoming emotional)

That's all you have to say?

The crowd quiets, seeing Lynn's response.

LYNN (CONT'D)

He murdered your scavengers. He butchered Kyral, and you're just going to give him what he wants?

COLTON

Powerful ronin become powerful sentinels. When he arrives I'll beat him, and offer him Kyral's position.

Lynn scoffs.

COLTON (CONT'D)

And if he refuses I'll avenge Kyral.

Breck nods, and the other sentinels walk into town.

LYNN

Kyral wanted you to fight together, not alone.

Colton smile confidently.

COLTON

(to Breck)

I don't want any distractions when he arrives. Understand?

(beat)

Fate is on my side Lynn. There is nothing to fear.

Hearing the word fate get Gabriel's attention.

COLTON (CONT'D)

Clean yourself up. He may need your talents after I've bested him.

Colton turns, and begins walking towards the other sentinels.

LYNN

You can't beat Zidane, Colton!

Colton stops in his tracks, utterly shocked.

Gabriel looks back to Lynn, stunned.

GABRIEL

Impossible...

COLTON

How do you know that name?

LYNN

Kyral said it.

Lynn moves passed Colton into town, disappointed but unsurprised.

LYNN (CONT'D)

Right before he ripped him in half.

Gabriel looks behind him and sees Sheppard.

GABRIEL

(whispers)

Sheppard!?

Sheppard is a handsome young teenaged male. His eyes are shut, and unlike the other divines, he emits no colorized aura of any kind. In the center of his forehead is a tattoo of a closed eye and he wears a set of OVERSIZED HEADPHONES.

CITRUS - STREETS

The populace is in motion. People move hurriedly through the streets, gathering food, eager to watch the coming deul.

Gabriel and Sheppard walk side by side together, observing the citizen's excitement.

CITRUS CITIZEN 1

How many Souless did Kyral kill?

DION

In the hundreds I heard. Not bad. We got a lot out of him before he finally ate it.

CITRUS CITIZEN 1

Colton hasn't had a real fight since...

DION

Since Kyral. And I heard this ronin killed him with a single blow. Should be interesting at least.

CITRUS CITIZEN 1

You're not worried?

DION

Nah, Colton never loses. Why do you think we have seven sentinels?

CITRUS CITIZEN 1

Six sentinels. It'll be seven after Colton beats him.

(beat)

Assuming he'll join us.

Citrus Citizen 1 looks at Breck who glares at him.

DION

They always do. Come on, I don't want to get a bad seat. Last time Colton punched a challenger so hard his teeth flew into the front row!

The two men walk by Sheppard and Gabriel.

GABRIEL

They have no idea what's coming.

SHEPPARD

They never do.

GABRIEL

You do.

SHEPPARD

Obviously.

Gabriel spots a mother with several children who are also heading towards the outward facing bleachers.

Gabriel grimaces, knowing they are going to die soon.

GABRIEL

All of them?

SHEPPARD

Oh yes. All of them.

GABRIEL

You couldn't have stop it?

SHEPPARD

It's already done.

GABRIEL

You didn't answer my question.

Sheppard smiles.

SHEPPARD

It's not my place to take sides. It never has been.

Colton walks passed them.

GABRIEL

(sarcastic)

So you say.

Sheppard stops.

Gabriel stops as well, terrified, he knows he's misspoke. He looks back, and Sheppard slowly opens his eyes.

His eyes are entirely black, and stare a piercing unblinking stare.

SHEPPARD

Micheal must be nervous to send you here, knowing what it will cost the girl.

GABRIEL

There's no rule prohibiting it.

SHEPPARD

There's no rule prohibiting me from having Aiden meet with some improbable accident either.

GABRIEL

(terrified)

If that is a part of father's plan?

(beat)

Micheal just wants to know what his chosen will be up against.

Sheppard stares at Gabriel, unconvinced.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

You could tell me.

Sheppard smiles, and closes his eyes and his demeanor returns to his original child-like exuberance.

SHEPPARD

I could.

Colton walks passed them.

SHEPPARD (CONT'D)

But seeing and knowing are different things.

Sheppard motions to Colton

SHEPPARD (CONT'D)

And I don't want to ruin the surprise.

LYNN'S HOME

Gabriel walks around the room, invisible to Lynn's vision.

Lynn has a pot of hot water in front of her. She is furiously scrubbing Kyral's dried blood off her face and neck.

Her possessions are strewn everywhere, as she is in a frenzy to pack and abandon the town.

She grimaces feeling something isn't right. She's done this before.

A GENTLE KNOCK at the door.

LYNN

I told you everything I know.

BRECK (O.C.)

That's not why I'm here.

Lynn's walks to the door, and begrudgingly opens it.

Breck stands in front of her, a soft smile on his face.

Lynn walks away, leaving the door open and Breck enters, shutting the door behind him.

He notices she's packing.

BRECK (CONT'D)

You're afraid.

(beat)

You don't have to be. Whoever he is, when he challenges Colton...

Lynn angrily stuffs some clothes into her pack.

LYNN

You could have talked him out of it, Breck.

BRECK

Where would you even go?

LYNN

Ivory.

BRECK

Ah, capital of the Reborn.

LYNN

It's your capital too.

BRECK

(dismissive)

I know you don't believe that.

LYNN

What I know is I'm not going to be here when he arrives.

She finishes packing, and walks to her door.

BRECK

This ronin... it can't be who you say it is.

With her back to us, Lynn trembles, overcome with emotion.

BRECK (CONT'D)

The most notable reason being he died years ago. But, even if he were alive, Kyril was far beyond him on even his best day. The warrior you describe...

She turns back to Breck, a look of pure terror on her face.

LYNN

Is here.

Breck is confused at first, but suddenly, he too senses something. He turns his head looking in the same direction.

RIDGE ABOVE CITRUS

The ominous fog is slowly creeping over the landscape.

In the distance we see Citrus.

CITRUS TOWER

Colton watches the incoming fog, awestruck.

He's felt this power before.

COLTON

Zidane? Is that you?

His hands begin to tremble.

Alarm bells begin RINGING.

RIDGE ABOVE CITRUS

Muffled alarm bells ring in the distance.

With his back to us, Zidane walks into frame heading towards the town's gate.

LYNN'S HOME

Breck is starring into the distance, awestruck.

BRECK

Your fear is well founded, this power is... overwhelming.

LYNN

Together then?

Breck doesn't look at her, still fixated on his approaching opponent.

BRECK

It's nothing he can't handle.

Lynn's eyes well up. She knows this is the last time she's going to see him alive.

Lynn walks out the door, and leaves it open.

CITRUS - STREETS - MOMENTS LATER

The ALARM BELLS ring continuously and regularly.

Residents eagerly scramble up the town's outward facing bleachers.

Colton walks confidently through the streets. Anticipating his duel, he has changed into a formal dueling garb.

Colton sees Lynn heading towards the town's rear gate.

They lock eyes.

BRECK (O.C.)

Colton!

Colton looks to his left and sees Breck marching towards him.

COLTON

Couldn't talk her out of it, eh?

Breck looks to Lynn and gives a reluctant nod, giving her his approval to run.

BRECK

Can you blame her?

Colton looks to Breck who stares at that approaching fog, terrified. He walks passed Breck toward the main gate.

OUTSIDE CITRUS' GATE

The ALARM BELLS CONTINUE TO RING.

The fog's momentum unnaturally stops and Zidane emerges.

The Citrus gate UNLOCKS and Colton causally steps through.

RINGING BELLS STOP.

WING BLOWS as Colton and Zidane stare each other down. From the stadium seating bleachers, the population of Citrus watches silently.

Colton notices the bandages wrapping around Zidane's neck.

COLTON

You injured? I know someone who could help you if you are.

ZIDANE

So do I.

COLTON

I guess I should thank you for letting her return in one piece.

ZIDANE

It wasn't my idea.

COLTON

No? Whose then?

Zidane smiles sinisterly.

ZIDANE

I think you know.

Colton's eyes go wide with fear. He *does* know.

COLTON

Zidane...

From atop the city walls, Breck and other sentinels look at one another, shocked at his revelation.

COLTON (CONT'D)

I can't imagine what you had to do, what you've endured out there, on your own. But if you killed Kyril...

ZIDANE

Who?

COLTON

Our sentinel.

Zidane squints.

COLTON (CONT'D)

The man you tore in half?

Zidane doesn't respond.

COLTON (CONT'D)

Today?

ZIDANE

You're going to have to be more specific.

BRECK

Souless madness...

Colton glares up at Breck who recomposes himself, ashamed.

COLTON

I know you're not here for the hospitality of Citrus. And, offering terms feels like it would be a useless endeavor, so I'll simply say this:

(MORE)

COLTON (CONT'D)

(beat)

When I'm victorious...

Zidane squints.

COLTON (CONT'D)

You can have a home here. You are welcome to take Kyral's place.

Zidane angrily grits his teeth.

ZIDANE

I'd rather fucking die.

Colton smiles remorsefully and gives a reluctant nod, respecting his answer.

COLTON

I don't want this.

Colton looks at the sentinels, standing atop the city walls.

The seven warriors leap from the wall and form a ten meter perimeter around Zidane.

COLTON (CONT'D)

And, I won't risk the lives of my people to satisfy my ego in a duel. Even against you.

ZIDANE

It's not up to you.

Zidane slowly takes his battle stance.

ZIDANE (CONT'D)

Or me.

With lightning speed, Zidane telekinetically pushes Colton, sending him CRASHING through the town's gate and into the town's bell tower. The Sentinels watch in disbelief, shocked at the speed of his attack.

IN THE DISTANCE

Lynn looks back to Citrus, having felt Zidane's power.

She watches in disbelief as the bell tower comes CRASHING DOWN.

BACK AT THE GATE

Breck looks back to Zidane, but he's vanished. Zidane's hand comes from behind him, grabbing him by the throat.

ZIDANE

You think I'm souless?

We hear Zidane POWER UP and we see his good eye PULSATE WITH BLUE ENERGY.

The flesh around Breck's throat begins to freeze.

ZIDANE (CONT'D)

You don't know what souless is.

Zidane CRUSHES Breck's windpipe.

Breck drops to his knees, clawing at his throat, GASPING, desperate to breathe.

Zidane points two fingers at Sentinel 1.

A telekinetic blast rips through Sentinel 1's face, exploding out the back of his head in a gruesome spectacle.

The remaining sentinels stagger backwards, terrified.

ZIDANE (CONT'D)

Seven sentinels? That might be impressive if you weren't so weak.

Sentinel 2 grits his teeth and leaps at Zidane, lunging at his face.

Zidane effortlessly catches his fist, and places his open palm on Sentinel 2's chest.

A telekinetic blast rips him apart, leaving Zidane holding Sentinel 2's severed arm.

The observing crowd ROARS with delight.

A series of telekinetic blasts ricochets off of Zidane's invisible barrier.

He casually tosses the severed arm over his shoulder, and glares at the remaining six sentinels, and begins slowly walking towards them.

The Sentinels unleash a flurry of telekinetic blasts but Zidane easily dodges, blocks, and bats away all of their attacks.

Sentinel 6 looks at the remaining sentinels who are inching backwards, panicked and desperate.

SENTINEL 6

Together!

The sentinels exhale in unison. They close their eyes and begin concentrating. Beads of sweat drip down their faces.

In front of each of man, a volleyball sized ball of pulsating transparent warped energy appears.

Zidane continues walking towards them.

SENTINEL 6 (CONT'D)

Now!

Their attacks combine in front of Sentinel 6. Joining together like drops of water, forming a giant ball of pulsating transparent energy.

Sentinel 6 hurls the ball of energy at Zidane.

Zidane backhands the ball away, redirecting it through town's wall and into the surrounding bleachers. It tears a 10 meter hole through every building and person in its path.

Exhausted, the remaining sentinels drop to their knees, as the town erupts into chaos.

Zidane slowly raises his open palm and all six men begin to levitate.

Zidane scowls, and slowly begins making a fist. As he does, the six sentinels mash together, unable to move or resist.

We hear their bones begin to CRACK and POP, as Zidane increases the telekinetic pressure.

Zidane clenches his fist, and the six men are CRUSHED together, forming a mangled oozing ball of body parts and blood.

Behind him, Zidane hears Breck's WHEEZING and GASPING.

He unclenches his fist, and the ball of men lands on the ground with a sickening SPLAT.

INSIDE CITRUS

The town is in chaos. People are running and screaming.

Colton, severely wounded, is staggering to get to his feet.

He sees Lynn running to his aid.

COLTON

Lynn...

Zidane walks through the gapping hole created by the sentinels attack, dragging Breck behind him.

LYNN

Let me help you.

COLTON

You wont have time.

LYNN

We could run. Come with me.

He angrily pushes her away.

COLTON

Not from this. Not from him.

Zidane locks eyes with Lynn and hurls Breck at her.

Colton telekinetically catches him and Breck floats inches away from Lynn's, WHEEZING.

Zidane SNAPS his fingers and Breck EXPLODES, ripped apart by an expanding ball of telekinetic energy in his chest.

The blast knocks Lynn into a nearby building, covering her with debris. Nearby, Dion watches, horrified.

Colton and Zidane lock eyes, and again, we see Zidane's terrifying blue stare.

Zidane reaches upward, opening his palm to the sky.

Confused, Colton looks to the clouds.

The realization of what Zidane is doing suddenly hits him.

COLTON (CONT'D)

No! No, don't!

Zidane clenches his fist, and brings his arm down.

Meteors of all sizes rain from the sky and begin pummeling the town. They tear through, crush, and otherwise annihilate everything and everyone. Buildings catch fire and explode with each impact, and soon what's left of the town is engulfed in flames.

ZIDANE

You seemed distracted.

Zidane places his arms behind his back.

ZIDANE (CONT'D)

No longer.

Colton grits his teeth and begins POWERING UP.

His eyes dilate and begin to GLOW WITH A RICH YELLOW HUE.

Around his entire body, A GLOWING YELLOW SUIT OF DIVINE ARMOR materializes, made of a shimmering transparent glass.

Bits of Breck's flesh begin to levitate, along with dust, debris, even corpses of the recently killed Citrus residents.

Lynn peers through the rubble of the building she was thrown into, shocked at Colton's power.

Suddenly Colton stops, shocked at what he's seeing.

Blue Eyes, walks through the flames of a burning building.

BLUE EYES

Colton. Been a while.

COLTON

You!?

Gabriel looks on, unsurprised Blue Eyes' presence.

BLUE EYES

Where's Zadikiel? I had an offer prepared for this exact moment.

Colton grits his teeth and takes his battle stance.

BLUE EYES (CONT'D)

I supposed I could offer it to you...

Zidane glares at Blue-Eyes.

BLUE EYES (CONT'D)

But a deal's a deal. It doesn't matter where he is. When you die, he will find him, he always does.

COLTON

(to Zidane)

And this is what you want?

ZIDANE

I wanted a challenge. Imagine my disappointment.

Colton grimaces, knowing this it.

COLTON

Well let's see it then. Let's see the power worth the price of your own soul.

Blue Eyes looks to Zidane who begins unraveling one of the RUST COLORED BANDAGES around his left arm, crumpling the bandage into a ball.

ZIDANE

You're unworthy it.

Zidane hurls the bandage Colton.

The balled-up bandage SMASHES into Colton's soul-armor, cracking it.

Colton grits his teeth and pounces at Zidane, his arm cocked ready to deliver a blow containing the full might of his power.

He SMASHES Zidane in the face.

As Zidane staggers backward, Colton pummels him with everything he's got, and surprisingly, Zidane appears to be taking damage.

Colton fires a TELEKINETIC ATTACK at point blank range.

Zidane catches the ball of energy, preventing it from impacting with his body.

The ball of energy begins pushing Zidane backward and he digs his feet into the dirt trying to regain control.

Zidane grimaces with effort and redirects the ball of energy into the sky.

Colton's attacks EXPLODES over head, vaporizing the clouds and debris floating above the burning town.

Colton watches the explosion overhead, shocked and confused.

CRASH.

Colton looks down at his chest. Zidane has punched clean through his soul armor, rib cage, and into his heart.

Colton smiles with reluctant clarity as blood pours from his mouth.

COLTON

Kyral was wrong. Even together, we
stood no chance...

Zidane scowls and extends his free arm.

Around his extended arm A RED AURAED ARMORED GAUNTLET begins to materialize. Similar in appearance to red entity that killed Hadriel.

Around his fingers, five, one meter claws form.

GABRIEL

(horrified)

No...

COLTON

Brother...

This revelation shocks Lynn, as in one fluid motion, Zidane releases Colton and preforms an oversized upper cut with his clawed hand.

Colton's body slowly splits in to six vertical pieces, and falls apart in gory spectacle.

Gabriel watches, trembling with shock.

ZIDANE

Micheal still hasn't found a worthy
chosen?

Zidane's remark catches Gabriel completely off guard. How can he see him? How could he interact with him, especially now?

Zidane turns to Gabriel revealing open scarred eye. Unlike his good eye which pulsates with blue energy, Zidane's scarred eye has BLACK IRIS with a RED PUPIL, an eye of a divine.

The GROUND RUMBLES.

ZIDANE (CONT'D)

You're about to.

Lynn erupts with power, flinging burning debris, bodies, and fallen meteors of all sizes everywhere.

A nearby building, engulfed in flames, COLLAPSES, falling between Lynn and Zidane.

She stares at Zidane with dilated eyes, pulsating with BLACK ENERGY.

LYNN

One day, I swear, I will fucking killing you.

BLUE EYES

Perhaps.

Lynn turns to Blue Eyes, and we get our first real look at him. He is a lean, pale man, wearing a dark black suit, with piercing blue eyes.

BLUE EYES (CONT'D)

But not here.

Zidane turns, and casually walks away, strolling through the carnage and mayhem he's created.

Lynn turns her attention to the divine.

LYNN

Who are you!?

They keep walking.

LYNN (CONT'D)

Divine!

Blue Eyes stops, and turns back to Lynn.

Lynn and Blue Eyes stare at each other through the fire, the immense heat warping their views of one another.

LUCIFER

I am Lucifer, leader of the divine rebellion.

He smiles at her revealing his unnaturally sharp and white teeth.

LUCIFER (CONT'D)

Pleased to meet you.

Lucifer turns, and walks into the darkness, leaving Lynn in the burning wreckage of her city and former home.

We linger on the town BURNING.

FADE TO BLACK.