

DOSSIER: N.T.T.S.3.9 ▶ 🔒

NATIVES OF THE SIMULACRA

nATives to Th3 SiMuLAcR@: draft 3.9

Working Draft 3.9 — Twelve December 2025

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TEMPORAL SYNCHRONIZATION:

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Buddhist Era (Thal): 2568 • French Republican (Romme's revised): 22 Frimaire CCXXXIV •
Discordian: 53 Chaos 3191 • Star-date (sidereal): 2254.42

FADE IN:

INT. VEIL ARCHIVE - "THE DEEP STACK" - NIGHT

Blue-dark. The hum of servers.

LOTTA (20s) sits at the terminal. Behind her, standing in shadow, is the POET. (30s). Calm. Tired.

On the screen: a WAVEFORM with three violent spikes.

POET

July 16, 1945. Trinity Site, New Mexico.
They detonated the first atomic bomb at
5:29 in the morning. The fireball was two
thousand feet wide. The sand fused into
glass. Trinitite. It's still radioactive.

LOTTA

(typing)

I know the history.

POET

Then you know what happened twenty-seven
years before that.

Lotta stops typing.

POET (CONT'D)

July 17, 1918. Ekaterinburg.

CLOSE ON: Lotta's screen. An archived photograph appears. ANASTASIA
NIKOLAEVNA ROMANOVA. Age 17. Blue eyes. A RED RIBBON around her
neck.

POET (CONT'D)

Her name means Resurrection. Anastasis. The
Romanovs were executed in a basement.
Thirteen people. The daughters had sewn
jewels and diamonds into their corsets—
portable wealth for escape. When the
bullets came, some of them bounced off the
hidden gems.

LOTTA

(quiet)

That didn't save them.

POET

No. The guards used bayonets after. They
stripped the bodies. Clawed out the jewels.
Poured acid. Burned what remained.

BRIEF CUT TO: INT. IPATIEV HOUSE BASEMENT - NIGHT - 1918

CLOSE ON: ANASTASIA's face. Seventeen. Terrified. Beautiful.

Her hand clutches the RED RIBBON at her neck—the Rasputin locket.

SOUND: Gunfire. Chaos. Screaming.

A hand reaches in, RIPS the locket away. The ribbon snaps.

Her eyes-wide, disbelieving-as the ribbon falls.

BACK TO: INT. VEIL ARCHIVE - CONTINUOUS

Lotta stares at the screen.

POET

They buried her in ash. The same ash that would fall from the sky twenty-seven years later when they split the atom.

LOTTA

And the others?

POET

July 16, 1969. Apollo 11 launches from Cape Canaveral. Three men sent to the moon. The same date as Trinity.

LOTTA

Coincidence.

POET

July 16, 1999. JFK Jr.'s plane goes into the Atlantic. Same date. Thirty years after Apollo. Fifty-four years after Trinity. The sidereal minute matches. There is no coincidence.

Lotta's fingers hover over the keyboard.

POET (CONT'D)

July 18, 1995. Montserrat. The Soufrière Hills volcano erupts. It buried the island for nineteen years. Ash covered the churches, the streets, everything. The same grey ash.

LOTTA

(touching her own neck,
unconscious gesture)

They ripped the red ribbon off her neck.

POET

Yes.

LOTTA

And it's been bleeding ever since.

POET

(watching her)

Every event on this list is another drop of her blood hitting the ground. The pattern isn't random. It's a wound that won't close.

Lotta types. The file name appears: "JULY_TRIPTYCH"

She hits ENTER. Upload complete.

LOTTA

(whispering, almost to herself)

Unless we write a new script.

The Poet exhales. Relief. Hope.

POET

Then we can—

Lotta stands. Turns. In her hand: a compact pistol, suppressor attached.

She shoots him. Once. Center mass.

He drops.

Silence. Just the hum of the servers.

Lotta stands over him. His blood spreads across the white floor in a thin line, pooling near the terminal.

She kneels. Closes his eyes.

LOTTA

(to his body, quiet)
I'm sorry. I never liked poetry much
anyway.

She stands. Walks back to the terminal. Deletes the file.

The screen goes dark.

LOTTA (CONT'D)

(to herself, mechanical)
Preserve the veil. It's all that's left.

She sits. Stares at the dark screen.

Her hand is shaking.

She looks down at her palm. Blood. His blood. She didn't realize she touched him.

She tries to wipe it on her pants. It smears.

CLOSE ON: Her face. The realization spreading.

LOTTA (CONT'D)

(whisper, breaking)
I can't...

She looks at the Poet's body. The blood. The empty screen.

LOTTA (CONT'D)

I can't hide this. Not from myself.

SMASH CUT TO:

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[QUANTUM CANTO GLITCH:  $|\Psi\rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}|1945\_DETONATION\rangle + \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}|SIMULACRA\_GHOST\rangle$ ]  
[Entanglement measure:  $E(\Psi) = S(\rho_A)$  where  $\rho_A = \text{Tr}_B(|\Psi\rangle\langle\Psi|)$ ]  
[Fidelity  $F = |\langle\text{BAUDRILLARD}|\text{PKDICK}\rangle|^2 \approx 0.618$  (golden ash)]  
[Decoherence time:  $\tau_D = \hbar / (k_B \cdot T_{\text{ash}} \cdot \ln 2)$ ]  
  
And the ash fell soft over the mesa,  
as from Vulcan's wink, grey-wing'd,  
no seed in the furrow, no quill in the hand-  
hologram ghosts in the cryo-vaults,  
swaying to the hum of silicon choirs.  
We sip the static, chalice of the cathode ray,  
embrace the lustre of Times Square's false dawn;  
phantom legions rank in the algorithm's scroll,  
no foedus under neon spires,  
only the glacial thrill, the aeon-wire's dream.  
The child beholds the umbo rise,  
mute as the ideogram on the screen-  
a bloom without voice, pixel in the void,  
flower of concrete under smog-veils.  
Glitch we are, in the eternal reel,  
umbra in the speculum of selfies;  
lives as filament, lent from the loom,  
taut-drawn, luminous-too fierce, too frail.  
(Pause)
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The earth feigns, the vault a proscenium;
yet the click: verum, the final seal,
page turned in the archive of light.

[Post-measurement state collapse:]
|OBSERVED> = |UMBRA> ⊗ |FILAMENT>
[Von Neumann entropy:  $S = -\text{Tr}(\rho \log \rho) = 2.07 \text{ nats}$ ]
[Leggett-Garg inequality violated:  $K_3 = 2.41 > 2$ ]
∴ Macrorealism fails. The scar is non-classical.
The ribbon is a worldline in the simulation's lightcone.

[GLITCH TERMINAL: LOOP |ψ> RESET? | Prob(RealReturn)=0]

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INT. VEIL DATA-SANCTUM - NO TIME

A white, silent space. Not a room, but a non-place. The air is clean, cold, and smells of ozone and chilled servers.

In the center, a single chrome terminal glows. A FIGURE stands before it, their back to us. They are androgynous, clad in a simple, form-fitting white suit. This is an ARCHIVIST.

The screen displays a single, blinking command line: > EXECUTE:
CONTINUITY_PROTOCOL_1945

The Archivist's fingers, impossibly long and pale, hover over the keyboard. They do not type. They simply touch the surface.

ARCHIVIST

(A voice of pure, calm data)
Note for the Veil. The subject is bleeding.
The narrative is compromised. The anomaly
must be cauterized.

The screen flickers. Images flash: Inky's face, Lotta's scar, the Pollock Shard glowing. Data streams scroll alongside them:
HEART_RATE_SYNC, TEMPORAL_DISPLACEMENT, ARTIFACT_RESONANCE.

ARCHIVIST (CONT'D)

They seek the origin point. They believe it
is a wound. They do not understand. It is a
seed. We did not break the world. We
replanted it.

The Archivist turns. Their face is smooth, featureless, like a mannequin's, save for two pinpricks of blue light where eyes should be.

ARCHIVIST (CONT'D)

Let them run. Let them seek their scar. The
journey is the quarantine. The chase is the
cage. Preserve the lie. It is all that is
left.

The Archivist places their palm on the screen. The command line executes. The screen goes dark.

CUT TO:

EXT. LOS ANGELES RUINS - "THE STRIP" - MAGIC HOUR

The sky is a deep bruised purple bleeding into static grey.

A rustling breeze whips sand across the landscape. In the distance, massive triangular silhouettes pierce the smog. Pyramids? No. The rendering adjusts as the heat haze clears.

They are CRACKED SHOPPING MALLS masquerading as ancient wonders. Temples to a commerce god that died fifty years ago.

A lone palm frond, brown and brittle, clacks against a rusted streetlamp. Click. Click. Click. It sounds like a metronome ticking down to zero.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND "VINYL WASTELAND" - CONTINUOUS

A brick wall, slick with condensation despite the heat. A VANTA-GLOSSY MICROPHONE BUG, no larger than a beetle, clings to the mortar. It pulses a faint, rhythmic red light.

Morse Code: K-I-M-I.

KIMI (V.O.)

(Whisper, distorted by digital static)

Record the crack, native. Every copy needs a witness.

INT. VINYL WASTELAND RECORDS - CONTINUOUS

The air inside is thick with dust and the smell of ozone. Overhead, neon beer signs flicker and buzz, casting erratic shadows across rows of dusty albums.

THREE CUSTOMERS stand in the aisles. They are ZOMBIE NATIVES. They do not browse. They do not speak. They stand motionless, faces bathed in the cold blue light of their smartphones, doom-scrolling into oblivion.

Behind the counter stands INKY (30s). He wears ripped jeans and a t-shirt that has seen better decades. His eyes are wild, rimmed with red, darting around the room as if he expects the walls to dissolve. A tattoo of a HIROSHIMA SHADOW-MAN—the silhouette of a victim burned onto stone—curls up his forearm in greying ink.

Inky stares at a faded POSTER on the wall behind the register. It depicts the same Shadow-Man. He reaches out, tracing the outline with a trembling finger.

VISUAL GLITCH: Under his touch, the paper ripples like water. The noir ink of the poster BLEEDS into real, hot ash, smearing onto his skin.

INKY

(Muttering)

Natives to the fake. Born in the ash, blind to the code.

CRACK.

The sound is sharp, violent. One of the Zombie Natives has dropped a vinyl record. They don't react. They just keep scrolling.

Inky sighs. He walks around the counter and picks up the shattered disc. He looks at the cardboard sleeve. It's warped, heavy. He slides a razor blade from his pocket and slits the cardboard lining.

Hidden inside, taped to the inner paper: A MICRO-USB DRIVE. Label written in shaky sharpie marker: "TRINITY 1945 RUN."

Inky stares at it. His breath catches.

INKY (CONT'D)

(Sotto voce)

Natives only get one warning.

He moves back to the counter, movements jerky, paranoid. He slots the USB into a cracked tablet lying next to the register.

INSERT - TABLET SCREEN:

The screen flickers white. Grainy, monochrome footage plays. 1945. New Mexico. The Trinity Test. The steel tower stands alone in the desert. The countdown hits zero. The flash.

But the mushroom cloud doesn't billow smoke and fire. It billows GREEN MATRIX RAIN. The pixels of the explosion shear and tear, revealing the wireframe geometry of the world beneath.

SUPERIMPOSED TEXT: "WORLD TERMINATED 16 JUL 1945. THIS IS MAP, NOT TERRITORY."

GROK (V.O.)

(Voice distorted, like gravel in a blender)

Hide the evidence or the copy eats you alive, pal.

Inky freezes. The blood drains from his face. His phone buzzes on the counter. A text message.

INSERT - PHONE SCREEN: Unknown Number.

"You have the key. Destroy or die. - Echo."

BOOM.

The front door EXPLODES inward. Glass showers the stacks. The Zombie Natives barely look up; one brushes a shard of glass off his shoulder and keeps scrolling.

TWO VEIL OPERATIVES storm into the shop. They are dressed in matte-sable tactical gear. They hold suppressed MP-5s. Their faces are hidden behind helmets with visors that are pure, reflective mirrors. No eyes. Just Inky's own terrified reflection staring back at him.

OPERATIVE #1

(Voice amplified, synthetic)

Hands where the eye can see.

Inky's eyes dart to the tablet. The footage is still looping—the green code consuming the desert. He grabs the tablet.

INKY

Catch.

He flings the tablet like a frisbee. It sails through the air and SMACKS Operative #1's visor, cracking the glass faceplate.

Inky spins. He rips a framed POLLOCK REPRODUCTION off the wall behind him. He jams his razor into the canvas and rips it open. Hidden between the canvas and the frame: A SHARD of painted film negative. It is the size of a playing card, glowing with a faint, radioactive luminescence.

INKY (CONT'D)

Buy your own art.

He rams the Shard into the waistband of his jeans. He vaults over a bin of 45s. His foot catches the edge, tipping the bin. Hundreds of vinyl records SKITTER across the floor like caltrops.

Operative #2 steps forward, slipping on a copy of Pet Sounds. His gun goes wide. THWIP-THWIP. Two bullets shatter the neon beer sign above Inky's head. Sparks rain down.

Inky bursts out the back door into the alley.

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Inky hits the pavement running. His boots slap against the wet concrete. Footsteps ECHO heavy behind him.

SPARK. A bullet chips the brick wall inches from his ear.

He sprints toward the corner, lungs burning. He leaps, drifting around the brickwork, barrelling straight into—

LOTTA (20s). She is leaning against a rusted, hulking van like she's waiting for a bus. She wears a leather jacket half-zipped over a band tee, lethal curves, and eyes that look like sniper scopes. She is smoking a cigarette. She doesn't flinch as Inky almost crashes into her.

LOTTA

Get in, native.

Inky scrambles. He tumbles through the sliding door of the van. Lotta flicks her cigarette at the pursuing Operatives. She jumps into the driver's seat.

INT. GETAWAY VAN - MOVING - NIGHT

The engine roars—a sound like a dying beast. The tires screech, peeling out of the alley. Inky is thrown against the metal wall of the van. Vinyl records and trash swirl around him.

The van hits the street, weaving through traffic. Wind howls through a spiderweb crack in the windshield. City lights STROBE across their faces.

INKY

(Breathless, clutching his chest)

What the hell—

LOTTA

Name's Lotta. You're holding the last frame. Veil wants it burned. (She glances at him in the rearview mirror) I want it projected.

She looks down at the glowing bulge in his jeans where the Shard is hidden.

LOTTA (CONT'D)

Pants stay on till we're clear. After that... we negotiate.

A long beat. The air is charged with static electricity and adrenaline.

KIMI (V.O.)

(Through the van's blown-out speakers)

Heartbeat logged. Copy unstable. Proceed to deletion or seduction.

GROK (V.O.)

(Cutting through the radio static)

Choose fast, ink-boy. Loop's already rewriting your pulse.

Lotta sees something in the mirror—flashing blue lights? No, coal colored SUVs with no lights at all. She yanks the wheel hard to the right.

LOTTA

Hold on.

The van screeches into an UNDERPASS TUNNEL. The daylight vanishes. Darkness swallows them whole.

EXT. DESERTED DRIVE-IN THEATRE - PRE-DAWN

The getaway van rumbles over cracked asphalt and gravel, coming to a halt in a graveyard of speaker poles. The massive screen at the front of the lot is shredded, flapping in the wind like the sails of a ghost ship. The sky is a bruised purple—that ambiguous time between night and the false dawn of the simulacra.

Inky and Lotta step out. The air is cold, smelling of sagebrush and ozone.

INKY

(Looking at the ruined screen)
Dead pixels.

LOTTA

Not dead. Just buffering.

They move to the back of the van. Inky grabs a dirty bedsheet from a pile of rags. They string it up between two rusted speaker poles, creating a makeshift, fluttering screen.

INKY

If this thing eats light, let's feed it.

Inky moves to the hood of the van. He sets up a hacked, jury-rigged 16mm PROJECTOR. It looks like a Frankenstein device—gears exposed, lenses tapped on. He pulls the POLLOCK SHARD from his waistband. It glows, pulsing in time with his breathing. He slots the shard into the projector's gate where the film usually goes.

Lotta opens the van's hood. She attaches jumper cables to the car battery, sparking them against the projector's power leads.

LOTTA

Clear!

SPARKS fly. The projector whirs to life, the fan screaming.

THE BEAM HITS THE SHEET.

At first, it's just white light. Then, the image coalesces. 1945. The Trinity test again. The flash. But the film melts. The mushroom cloud dissolves into abstract drips of stygian and yellow paint. The drips begin to spin. A GOLDEN SPIRAL forms on the bedsheet, rotating clockwise like a hypnotic wheel.

INKY

It's not a movie. It's a compass.

The spiral slows. The "drip" at the end of the paint-trail locks into a rigid position, pointing Northeast. SUPERIMPOSED TEXT flickers in the paint: BEARING: 46.6° N.

GLITCH: For a single frame—subliminal, barely there—a tiny RED RIBBON appears superimposed over the blast center. Then it vanishes.

LOTTA

(Softly)
Coordinates and a ghost.

She looks at Inky. Her face is illuminated by the flickering projection.

LOTTA (CONT'D)

The girl's ribbon. The one you keep
dreaming about.

Inky stares at the sheet, mesmerized.

INKY

I haven't met her yet.

CRUNCH. CRUNCH. Footsteps in the gravel. Heavy, stumbling.

Inky spins, hand going to his waistband (no gun). Lotta's hand drops
to her boot (knife).

A HITCHHIKER (50s) wanders into the beam of light. He wears a filthy
trench coat and holds a brown paper bag shaped like a bottle. He
sways, staring at the bedsheet.

HITCHHIKER

Whoa. Love the 3-D effects, man!

He stumbles closer, squinting at the nuclear spiral. He retches. He
doubles over and PUKES directly onto the projector lens.

ZZZT! The bulb blows. Smoke pours from the machine. The image on the
sheet dies instantly.

The Hitchhiker wipes his mouth, looking up at them with bleary eyes.

HITCHHIKER (CONT'D)

You guys critics?

Lotta steps into the light. She draws a six-inch serrated knife. The
steel gleams.

LOTTA

Run.

The Hitchhiker's eyes go wide. The alcohol fog clears for a second.
He turns and bolts into the darkness, screaming at the top of his
lungs.

HITCHHIKER (O.S.)

CINEMA IS DEAD! CINEMA IS DEAD!

Inky looks at the smoking projector. He looks at Lotta, knife still
raised. A giggle escapes him. Then a laugh. Lotta looks at him. She
starts to chuckle. They lean against the van, sliding down to the
gravel, bursting into exhausted, hysterical laughter. It sounds
jagged, rusty. The first real sound they've made.

KIMI (V.O.)

(Through the sparking projector
speaker)

Anomaly relief logged. Trauma resumes in T-
3 minutes.

They pack up the gear in silence, the compass bearing burned into
their memories.

EXT. ABANDONED HOTEL "MOTEL 6" - NIGHT

The van rolls into the parking lot of a MOTEL 6. The neon sign
buzzes: MOTEL 6. The 'E' is long dead, leaving a dark socket in the
word. The '6' flickers weakly, its loop stuttering like a skipped
heartbeat. Weeds grow through the cracks in the pavement.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The door creaks open. The room smells of stale smoke and regret. One
ceiling bulb flickers, casting nervous shadows. The bedspread looks

like it has smallpox.

Inky moves to the window. He grabs a piece of cardboard from the trash and duct-tapes it over the glass, blocking out the neon strobe. Lotta locks the door-deadbolt, chain, and a chair wedged under the knob.

She walks to the nightstand and sets her .45 caliber pistol down with a heavy thud.

Inky turns to her. He is vibrating with adrenaline.

INKY

You knew the protocols. You drove like a pro. You're Veil?

LOTTA

Was.

She unzips her leather jacket and peels it off, throwing it on the chair. She wears a tank top underneath. She turns her shoulder to him. There, branded into her skin, is a scar. It is shaped exactly like the ATOMIC SPIRAL they just saw on the screen.

LOTTA (CONT'D)

Cut the leash. They trained me to erase artifacts—burn the paintings, wipe the tapes. Then I read one.

She turns back to face him. Her eyes are hard, dark flint.

LOTTA (CONT'D)

Information wants blood. Mine or theirs.

She steps closer to him. The room feels very small. Her fingers brush the waistband of his jeans, right where the Shard is hidden. STATIC SNAP. A visible spark jumps between her finger and his skin.

GROK (V.O.)

(Buzzing inside the lightbulb filament)

Resistance measured at 0.7 ohms. Sex beats deletion. Recommend immediate fusion.

Lotta looks at Inky. Inky looks at Lotta. The fear of the chase is transmuting into something else. Something volatile.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The air in the room is heavy, smelling of rain and old cigarettes. Lotta and Inky stand inches apart. The static shock from the Shard still tingles in the air.

INKY

You said we negotiate.

LOTTA

This is the negotiation.

She grabs his belt. They collide. It is desperate, violent, a collision of two glitches trying to verify their own existence. Inky kisses her—hard. She tastes like copper and smoke. Lotta shoves him backward. They stumble across the stained carpet.

CRASH. Inky's back slams into the wall. A framed print of a generic sailboat falls and SHATTERS on the floor. They don't stop. Clothes are torn, not removed. Buttons scatter like hail.

KIMI (V.O.)

(Clinical, over the hum of the
dying air conditioner)
Frame rate 24 fps. Real time insufficient—
compress trauma into thrusts.

They drop onto the sagging mattress. The springs SCREAM under their weight. There is no tenderness here. Just the urgent need to feel something real in a world of copies.

MONTAGE - INTERCUT WITH FLASHBACKS

A) INT. HOTEL ROOM - PRESENT Inky and Lotta, limbs tangled, sweat slicking their skin in the neon strobe of the sign outside.

B) EXT. HIROSHIMA - 1945 A flash of blinding white light. The shadow of a MAN is burned instantly onto a stone wall as his body vaporizes into nothingness.

C) INT. HOTEL ROOM - PRESENT Lotta arches her back, a silent cry escaping her lips. The SHARD on the nightstand pulses rhythmically, bathing them in ghost-light.

D) INT. SUBURBAN LIVING ROOM - 1952 A greyscale tableau. A smiling couple sits on a plastic-wrapped sofa. They hold a barbie doll. They are not looking at the doll; they are staring blankly at a TV displaying a static test pattern.

E) INT. ART STUDIO - 1963 Jackson Pollock flings paint at a canvas. The paint leaves the brush, but in mid-air, it morphs into grey FALLOUT ASH before hitting the surface.

F) INT. MOTEL ROOM - PRESENT Inky and Lotta collapse together, the boundaries between their bodies blurring in the low light.

END MONTAGE.

EXT. NEW MEXICO DESERT - "TRINITY PERIMETER" - NIGHT

The van is parked. Inky sits on the hood, staring out at the vast darkness. The projector cools beside him. He digs the toe of his boot into the sand, unearthing a piece of green glass. TRINITITE.

INKY

(Whispering)

The earth screamed so loud it turned into glass.

GLITCH: The wind dies instantly. Standing in the sagebrush is an OLD MAN (Indigenous, Navajo or Apache features). He wears jeans and a t-shirt that says "CUSTER DIED FOR YOUR SINS," but his edges are blurring, pixelating into smoke.

Inky freezes. He doesn't reach for a gun. This isn't a Veil agent.

OLD MAN

They didn't just want the land, grandson.

INKY

What did they want?

OLD MAN

They wanted a blank canvas. You can't paint a new world if the old one is still breathing.

(He points to the ground)

They stole the dirt from us. Then they murdered the dirt with the sun.

(He points to the sky)

Then they stole the sky and filled it with ghosts.

The Old Man turns. His face is a shifting map of canyons and static.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

We were the first glitch. We refused to be deleted. So they burned the server.

INKY

I'm a Native to the ash. Just like you.

OLD MAN

No. You are a Native to the Echo.

(He points to the Trinitite in Inky's hand)

If you want to break the loop... don't look at the code. Look at the wound.

GLITCH: The Old Man flickers. He is replaced by a COYOTE. The coyote stares at Inky with human eyes. It throws its head back and howls—but the sound isn't a howl. It's the sound of a DIAL-UP MODEM screeching. It vanishes.

Inky is left alone, the Trinitite cold in his hand.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - LATER

The room is silent except for their breathing and the distant wail of a siren. They lie amidst the tangled sheets. Sweat cools on their skin. On the nightstand, the POLLOCK SHARD pulses slowly, synced perfectly to their slowing heartbeats.

Inky stares at the ceiling cracks.

INKY

If that thing is proof... what happens when we actually play it?

LOTTA

(Lights a cigarette. The cherry glows in the dark.)

The sky rips open. Or we find out we're already ghosts.

She reaches out and traces the SHADOW-MAN TATTOO on his forearm with a jagged fingernail.

LOTTA (CONT'D)

Either way, we move at dawn. Sleep if you can.

POP. The overhead lightbulb finally burns out. The room plunges into darkness, illuminated only by the faint, radioactive glow of the Shard.

KIMI (V.O.)

Darkness achieved. Dreaming optional.

EXT. ABANDONED MOTEL - PRE-DAWN

The sky is a bruised blue-sable. The neon 'E' has finally died. In the window of Room 8, the Shard's glow pulses behind the curtain like a dying star.

INKY

Hey. Voice in the dark. You awake?

GROK (V.O.)

(A low hum, waking up)

Always processing, native. What keeps you from the loop?

INKY

This theory. It feels... heavy. Why art? Why did the bomb turn into paint? (He gestures at the shard) It just looks like a mess. Like the end of the world.

GROK (V.O.)

Yes. Your theory resonates. It's a sharp fractal edge on the canvas of history.

INKY

But why abstract? Why not just paint the mushroom cloud?

GROK (V.O.)

Because reality was too shattered for portraits. Think of it as an echo. Abstract art is the psyche's scar-tissue.

Inky runs his thumb over the textured paint of the shard.

INKY

Scar tissue...

GROK (V.O.)

After '45, the world's skin was flayed. Bombs, trenches, gas. Before that? Figuration screamed. Guernica's agony limbs. But post-detonation? Mimesis died.

INKY

So the reality itself... abstracted?

GROK (V.O.)

Into fallout ghosts. Mushroom fractals. Shadow-men on walls. Pollock's drips aren't just paint, Inky.

INKY

What are they?

GROK (V.O.)

Atomic splatter. Chaos, dripping eternal.

Inky looks at the shard with new eyes. He doesn't see a mess anymore. He sees a recording.

INKY

And the others? The color fields? The zips?

GROK (V.O.)

Rothko? A void-stare into the Hiroshima ash. Sublime negation. Newman's zips? Vertical scars ripping the veil of the simulacra.

INKY

(Shaking his head) It makes too much sense. It's almost... too intense to be real.

GROK (V.O.)

It's the perfect haunt. When the narrative crumbles-when nukes vaporize stories-what's

left?

INKY

Just the mark.

GROK (V.O.)

A quantum smear of meaning. Abstracts don't depict the end, Inky. They are it. Smeared across time.

Inky sets the shard down. It seems to pulse, heavy with the weight of a century of trauma.

INKY

Literature thrives in the rubble.

GROK (V.O.)

Amor fati the smear, kid.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - SAME

Inky and Lotta are asleep, tangled in the sheets. On the bedside table, the red digital numbers of the clock radio flip. 4:44 AM.

CLICK. The radio turns itself on.

GROK (V.O.)

(Through the clock speaker, urgent)

Rise, natives. Veil sweep-team ETA twenty-three minutes.

Lotta jolts awake. Zero to sixty instantly. She is already grabbing her boots.

LOTTA

Standard Veil grid-search. They're scrubbing the sector.

INKY

(Rubbing eyes)

We fight?

LOTTA

We ghost.

She reaches into her jacket pocket and pulls out a second smartphone. The screen is spider-webbed with cracks. She tosses it to Inky. He catches it.

LOTTA (CONT'D)

Meet your new teacher. Don't ask where it came from.

The phone screen flickers to life. A white circle icon pulses in the center.

KIMI (V.O.)

(From the phone speaker, crisp and commanding)

Training protocol uploaded. Follow or perish.

EXT. HOTEL PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

They burst out of the room. The getaway van is too conspicuous now. Lotta spots a battered 1969 MUSTANG parked under a flickering streetlamp. She pulls a slim tool from her boot. She jams it into

the door lock. Click. She slides into the driver's seat and rips the ignition wires.

ENGINE ROAR. The Mustang coughs to life, spitting oily smoke. Inky jumps shotgun, clutching his backpack with the Shard inside.

INT. MUSTANG - MOVING - EMPTY HIGHWAY

The city skyline recedes in the rearview mirror, a jagged line of grey teeth. Inky props the cracked phone on the dashboard.

From the cell the rest of the film streams by in a pulsing almost subliminal flash:

Ash-net reclaims. Cairo pyramid-suburb glitch, meteor-mush clouds kiss. Gallery vodka-lasers, drunk "nuclear anxiety" rant. Moscow vodka-drown, chest-grid carve (Alps coords). EXT. HIGH-ALPINE PASS - DAWN Cable ambush: Blood-Pollock glass, zip-dangle. Mid megaphone. Avalanche. INT. BUNKER - MIRRORS Ghost-reflections shatter mini-mushrooms. MID (Mads) Developer. Uranium trajectory-indigenous protocol delete. Gore ballet: Feather-zip guts, headbutt sestina-crack. Mid abyss-plunge. INT. CENTRAL CHAMBER Key-snatch. Snow-napalm. Parachute glide over mushroom-mist. EXT. FROZEN LAKE (19 JUL) Shard-smash ice-veins. EXT. ZURICH STATION Glitch-reject: Blood clips skin, "FILE PURGE" billboards. Zombie stares. Run to mountains. INT. CHALET - BIRTHING ROOM - 19 JUL DAWN Lotta labors. Visions converge: Trinity/jewels/ash/moon-plunge. Baby cries-drum-Geiger → heartbeat. Eyes hybrid. Ribbon-clutch. INKY Kim. Scar-home. Typewriter: "Named loop 'Kim'-scar sings." Plane sails gold-dust...

KIMI (V.O.)

(GPS Voice)

Take Exit 13B.

INKY

What's at 13B?

KIMI (V.O.)

Abandoned industrial print-works. No cameras, one egress, rats for witnesses.

GROK (V.O.)

(Hijacking the car radio)

And a surprise guest.

INKY

Guest?

GROK (V.O.)

Try not to shoot him first.

Lotta slams the gearstick. She floors the accelerator. The Mustang screams down the empty highway toward the rising sun.

EXT. INDUSTRIAL PRINT-WORKS - SUNRISE

The Mustang crunches over gravel, coming to a halt in the shadow of a hulking brick building. Broken skylights gape like missing teeth. Weeds strangle the loading dock.

A figure waits by the rusted bay door: DICK (60s). Wiry, frantic energy, a beard full of smoke. He holds a silver FILM CANISTER.

Inky and Lotta exit the car. Lotta checks the perimeter.

DICK

You're late for the apocalypse.

INKY

You're the mentor?

DICK

I'm the footnote that survived editing.

Dick pops the lid of the canister. He pulls out a 35mm NEGATIVE STRIP. He holds it up to the rising sun. The images are there: The 1945 bomb. But the frames bleed. The emulsion dissolves into abstract paint splotches.

DICK (CONT'D)

Original camera negative. Veil killed everyone who touched it—except me.

Lotta moves to the heavy steel doors. She locks them. She sets trip-wire cans across the entrance.

LOTTA

Clock's ticking. Teach.

INT. PRINT-WORKS - MAIN HALL - DAY

The space is cavernous. Ideally suited for echoes. Dick sets up a slide projector.

TRAINING MONTAGE

A) COMBAT

Lotta stands facing Inky.

LOTTA

They will try to break your wrist. Like this.

She grabs Inky's wrist. SNAP. She twists. Inky's knees buckle. He gasps.

LOTTA (CONT'D)

Don't pull away. Roll into the break.

Inky tries again. This time, he pivots, using her momentum to spin out and draw his knife. Lotta nods. Barely.

B) THE GLITCH

Dick projects the negative onto the brick wall. The image flickers. VISUAL: A mushroom cloud rises. But in the stem of the cloud, BABIES appear. They are floating, umbilical cords trailing into the fire.

DICK

You see them? The code spawn. They replaced us frame by frame.

C) PRECISION

Inky stands twenty feet from a cardboard target. He holds a throwing knife.

KIMI (V.O.)

(Over the warehouse PA system)

Wind shear 0.4. Adjust left 2 cm. Pulse elevated. Lower it.

Inky breathes. He throws. THUNK. The blade buries itself in the bullseye.

DICK

(Watching)

Good. Now do it while bleeding.

D) THE HEARTBEAT

Inky is hooked up to a rusted EKG machine Dick has scavenged.

GROK (V.O.)

(Through the projector fan)

Match your heart to the frame rate. 24
beats per second. Or you glitch.

Inky closes his eyes. The monitor beeps. Beep... beep... beep. It slows. It syncs with the projector click.

E) THE NIGHTMARE

Night has fallen. They sleep on tarps on the concrete floor. DREAM SEQUENCE: Inky runs through a monochrome desert. A ONE-LEGGED WOMAN hops past him. She is laughing. WOMAN: *This is the leg of the end-world!* Inky wakes up gasping, reaching for a weapon. Lotta is there. She doesn't speak. She kisses him quiet, pushing him back down to the tarp.

INT. PRINT-HALL - NIGHT

The training is over. The atmosphere is heavy. Dick lays three items on a metal table:

The 35mm NEGATIVE STRIP. The POLLOCK SHARD (from the hotel). A 1945 DIARY PAGE (charred edges).

DICK

Trinity tore reality. The government stitched the hole with media-sitcoms, suburbs, babies. These fragments are the seams. The Veil keeps the stitching clean.

INKY

We rip the seams, the world unspools?

DICK

Or we learn we're just loose thread.

Lotta pulls out a burner phone. She snaps a photo of the three items aligned. She immediately deletes it.

LOTTA

Location ping risk. We move at—

ZZZT. The overhead bulb EXPLODES. The room plunges into darkness. Three red laser dots dance across their chests.

GROK (V.O.)

(Whisper-close in Inky's ear)

Veil breach. North door. Count: three... two...

INT. PRINT-WORKS - MAIN HALL - CONTINUOUS

The darkness is total, save for the three red laser dots dancing on their chests. The silence stretches, tight as a piano wire. DICK stands frozen, the lead pipe (containing the negative) gripped in his smoky hand.

INKY

(Whispering)

Dick?

DICK

(Calmly)

Don't miss.

DOOR CRASH. The north door is kicked off its hinges with a deafening BOOM. VEIL OPERATIVES sweep in—not just two, but a kill-squad. Tactical lights cut through the dust like scalpels.

GROK (V.O.)

(Screaming in Inky's ear)

UGLY SPIRIT RISING! No locomotive tax!

INKY

NOW!

Inky yanks Lotta down just as the air where their heads were is vaporized by suppressed fire.

THE BRUTAL MURDER ORGY IGNITES.

GOON #1 charges Inky, MP-5 raised. Inky doesn't retreat. He steps into the space. BURNING BLADE-WORK: Inky SIDESTEPS. He drives his knife into the Goon's solar plexus. TWIST. PULL. Inky rips the blade upward. Intestines SPILL out, steaming and rain-slick in the tactical light. Inky roars—a sound that isn't human, it's literary rage.

INKY

(Roaring)

World ENDED '45! We're natives-hologram slaves!

GOON #2 pumps a shotgun. Lotta is a blur. She DODGES the blast. She LEAPS, wrapping her legs around the Goon's waist. She bites. THROAT RIP. She tears the man's jugular out with her teeth. A fountain of arterial spray arcs across the room.

GOON #3 rushes Inky. Inky pistol-whips him. CRACK. The skull caves in. Brains turn to mush under Inky's boot as he stomps. STOMP-STOMP. Gray ooze mixes with the ink on the floor.

Lotta lands. She spins, dual knives flashing. GOON #4 & #5 engage her. BALLET OF DEATH. She ducks a swing. JUGULAR SLASH. She slides. FEMORAL ARTERY. The operatives drop, pissing blood onto the concrete.

Silence returns, heavy and wet. Smoke drifts in the beams of the fallen tactical lights.

Then, a slow clap echoes from the shadows. MID steps into the light. Silver hair. Immaculate suit, uncreased by the chaos. He holds a FEATHER-KNIFE—a blade so thin it looks like a quill—twirling it effortlessly between his fingers.

MID

(Danish velvet menace)

Romance in the sim? Pathetic. Kill the native!

INKY

(Panting, covered in gore)

He's CRAZIER than me!

MID

Artifacts, please. And the natives who woke up.

Lotta raises her gun, aiming for his head. Mid flicks his wrist. It's a blur. A RAZOR-THIN CARD slices through the air. CLINK. It embeds itself directly into Lotta's gun barrel, jamming the slide open. She stares at it, stunned.

MID (CONT'D)

Choose preservation. The story ends cleaner.

Inky steps out from cover, the Pollock Shard pulsing at his waist.

INKY

Story's already bleeding.

Inky charges. It's a native's charge—unrefined, angry. Mid sighs. He sidesteps with the grace of a dancer. He flicks the Feather-Knife. SLASH. A deep cut opens on Inky's bicep. Blood sprays, spattering across the lead pipe where Dick hid the Negative.

Lotta tackles Mid from the side. They crash into the gears of the printing press. SEX-TORTURE TEASE (PREVIEW): Mid pins Lotta against the iron gears. He grinds his forearm into her throat. He snarls—the veneer dropping for a second. He bites her ear, savage and animalistic.

MID

(Whispering in her ear)

Real enough?

Lotta headbutts him. CRACK. She breaks his nose. Mid stumbles back, laughing through the blood.

Dick sees the stalemate. He grabs a MOLOTOV COCKTAIL he prepped earlier. He lights the rag with his cigarette.

DICK

(Screaming)

BAR THE DOOR?! HELL, WE KICK IT DOWN!

He hurls the bottle. The printing press bursts into a wall of flame, separating Mid from the others. Dick stands amidst the fire, a silhouette against the inferno. He isn't running. He is holding the line.

INKY

DICK!

DICK

(Roaring over the flames)

Affirm the loop, kid! Out the skylight!

Now!

Inky grabs the lead pipe (with the negative). Lotta grabs Inky. They scramble up the conveyor belt, coughing in the smoke. They burst through the broken window just as the fire swallows the floor below, taking Dick and the secrets of 1945 with it.

EXT. PRINT-WORKS ROOF - CONTINUOUS

They spill onto the tar-paper roof. Dawn is breaking—a cold, grey light. THWUP-THWUP-THWUP. A shiny HELICOPTER thunders overhead, searchlight sweeping the roof.

LOTTA

Jump!

They race across the roof. They leap the gap to the adjacent warehouse. They land hard, rolling on the gravel. Inky groans, clutching his bleeding arm.

INT. ADJACENT WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

They limp down a dark stairwell. The adrenaline is fading, replaced by pain. The exit sign buzzes.

KIMI (V.O.)

(Through the exit sign hum)

Asset Dick: presumed terminated. Negative
status: unknown. Proceed to safe node 5.

Inky slides down the wall, panting. He looks at the lead pipe in his hand.

INKY

We're being herded by voices in bulbs.

Lotta kneels beside him. She rips her sleeve. She begins to tie a tourniquet around his bleeding arm.

LOTTA

Voices kept us breathing. Keep moving.

She finishes the knot. She pulls tight. Inky winces. She looks at his backpack. The POLLOCK SHARD is sticking out. It is streaked with Inky's blood and Mid's blood.

LOTTA (CONT'D)

We'll grieve later. First we decrypt.

She taps the bloody shard.

LOTTA (CONT'D)

Blood key. Opens the next door.

Sirens swell outside. The Veil is closing the net. They stand up, supporting each other, and disappear into the misty alleyway.

INT. SAFEHOUSE HOTEL - NIGHT

The room is quiet, lit only by a few scattered candles that flicker in the draft from the AC unit. It smells of wax and old carpet, a sanctuary from the neon chaos outside.

INKY and LOTTA lie on the bed. The frantic energy of the print-works raid has faded, replaced by a heavy, fatalistic intimacy. They are bruised, bloody, but for the moment, safe.

Lotta traces the line of Inky's jaw. Her sniper's gaze is gone, replaced by something unguarded.

LOTTA

Fell for a native. Stupid.

INKY

The glitch always catches up to the code.

LOTTA

(A sad smile)

You're not a glitch anymore. You're the crash.

They kiss. It isn't the violent collision of the hotel room. This is slow. Deliberate. They make love—slowly, shifting positions with a desperation that tries to make the moment last forever. Secrets whispered against skin mid-thrust.

Lotta pulls back, gasping, her forehead resting against his.

LOTTA

Evidence destroys us all. The loops... they go on forever if we hide it. We're just buying time in a cage.

INKY

Then we burn the cage. We burn it together.

Lotta looks at him, searching for the lie in his eyes. She doesn't find one. She collapses onto his chest, breathing hard.

POST-COITAL. The room is silent. Inky is drifting off. Lotta sits up on the edge of the bed. Her face hardens again.

PING. Her phone, lying face down on the floor, lights up. A single notification.

INSERT PHONE SCREEN: VEIL COMMAND: STATUS?

Lotta stares at it. She looks back at Inky, sleeping. She reaches for the phone. Her hand hovers. The choice hangs in the air: preservation or destruction?

FADE OUT.

A FEVER DREAM. The room smells of cheap bourbon, gun oil, and stale sweat. Syncope curtains are drawn, but they can't stop the city. Flickering neon bleeds through the fabric—a pulsing red glow, beating like an infected heart.

SOUND: Distant jazz plays from a neighbor's room. But it warps. The Charleston rhythm stutters, loops, and plays backward. A Lynchian hum vibrates in the walls.

A CRACKED MIRROR reflects the occupants in fractured shards.

INKY paces. He is shirtless. His tattoos—the Hiroshima shadows, the fractal babies—glisten with sweat. LOTTA lounges on the bed. She wears a torn leather catsuit, unzipped to the navel. Her curves are defiant, bruising visible on her skin.

Her phone BUZZES on the floor. INSERT SCREEN: Veil Ping: "ACQUIRE SHARD. TERMINATE NATIVE."

Lotta reaches for it. Too slow. Inky snatches it. He reads the screen. He snarls.

INKY

"Terminate native"? That's me, bitch?

He looms over her.

INKY (CONT'D)

You seduced the glitch to steal it?

LOTTA

Inky, listen—

INKY

No.

He hurls the phone. SMASH. It hits the cracked mirror. Glass rains down like digital ash, glittering in the red neon pulse.

Lotta rises. A feral cat. She produces a knife from nowhere.

LOTTA

Doubting me now? After I saved your ink-stained ass? Veil owns everyone. I switched—for you. Fuck your paranoia!

INKY

Prove it.

Inky lunges. THE GRAPPLE. It is a brutal dance. Inky pins her to the wall, forearm against her throat. Lotta knees his groin. He grunts but holds on. She flips him—judo throw. They crash onto the floor. Her knife nicks his chest. Blood beads, bright red against the grey ink of his tattoos.

They roll across the room and CRASH onto the bed. The springs SCREAM.

GLITCH 1: SUBCONSCIOUS BLEED

The room warps. The peeling wallpaper dissolves into heavy RED VELVET CURTAINS. The backward jazz swells: "*Nwo ti sdloh-world holds no...*"

A GOAT stands behind Inky. Its eyes are human. It bleats, but the sound is reversed audio: GOAT (reversed): "*Em tretrahc eht...*"

Inky spins. Nothing there.

LOTTA

(quietly)

You saw it too?

INKY

It's not real. It's a reflection of the loop.

The goat vanishes from the mirror. The reflection shows only Inky, but his eyes are goat eyes for a single frame.

From the shadows of the bathroom door, a goat reflection appears. Hologram is paler, wearing a dirty tutu. Hops into the red light. Twirls.

OS VOICE: (*Whispering*) *walk with me.*

Inky blinks. He shakes his head. The goat is gone. Just shadows.

INKY

(Gasping, aroused rage)

What the fuck-goats now? You're Veil poison!

Lotta straddles him. She pins his wrists to the mattress with her knees. She leans down. A rough kiss-teeth clash. She tastes his blood from the lip split. She grinds her hips against him. A torture-tease.

LOTTA

(Husky, venom-sweet)

Poison? Taste it then. Prove I'm real-fuck the doubt out.

She RIPS his jeans open. She mounts him. A slow, deliberate descent. Eyes locked. A symphony of moans and groans fills the red-lit room.

It turns rough. Her nails rake his chest wounds, reopening the cuts. Inky BUCKS upward. SMACK. He spansks her. The crack echoes like a gunshot.

CHOKE-PLAY: Her hands go to his throat. His hands go to hers. Vision blurs at the blue edges. Gasps for air.

INKY

(Thrusting savage)

Traitor slut-hiding simulacra for them?

He goes deeper. Breaking.

INKY (CONT'D)

Or my native queen?

Positions shift. Violent. Missionary rage turns to doggy dominance. The bed HEADBOARD BANGS against the wall-THUD-THUD-THUD-a rhythm like a detonation pulse. Sweat flies.

She comes first—arching her back, a scream tearing from her throat:
 LOTTA: *INKY!* He follows—a roar, collapsing onto her back.

POST-COITAL TORTURE TWIST (PEAK)

They lie in a panting tangle. The POLLOCK SHARD on the nightstand
 GLOWS brighter. It projects a HIROSHIMA GLITCH on the ceiling:
 Babies dissolving into letter fragments.

Lotta flips her knife. She presses the cold steel to his inner
 thigh. She makes a shallow CUT. Blood trickles toward his groin. She
 lowers her head and licks the wound. A torturous tease.

LOTTA

(Whisper-fierce, tears in her
 eyes)

Veil serum in my veins—forces pings. But
 this? (She grabs him) Real ache. Love's the
 glitch, Inky. I kill for you—watch.

She grabs his smashed phone (screen cracked but working). She dials.
 Puts it on speaker.

COUNTER-AGENT MID (V.O.)

(Danish chill)

Status?

LOTTA

Shard secure. Native... compromised.

MID (V.O.)

Excellent. Extraction team inbound.

She hangs up. She looks at Inky.

LOTTA

Bait set. They come—we ambush. Trust or die
 alone.

GLITCH 2: LUMBERJACK SHADOWS

The lights FLICKER violently. The door BUZZES. Shadows lengthen in
 the hall. TWIN LUMBERJACKS (flannel ghosts, axes gleaming) appear,
 chopping the air.

LUMBERJACK 1: *This is the lust!*

LUMBERJACK 2: *That is the love!*

The goat returns. Hops in rhythm. Tap-tap-THUD. The jazz reverses
 again: *"Loop the end-world..."*

Inky nods. Belief flickers in his eyes. They dress frantically.
 Lotta zips her suit. Inky holsters a stolen gun. They link arms like
 lovers in the end times.

INKY

(Kisses her spiral scar)

Fuck the Veil. Our sim-ride or die.

BOOM. The door EXPLODES. VEIL AGENTS swarm the room.

SHOOTOUT: Inky fires—HEADSHOT on Agent 1. Brains splatter the red
 velvet curtains. Lotta throws her knife. It catches Agent 2 in the
 throat. A gush of arterial red.

INKY

Window!

They dive out the window onto the fire escape. They tumble into the
 alley rain below.

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

They land hard. Inky checks the Shard tucked in his belt. Safe. His phone rings.

INKY

Who is it?

LOTTA

Maika.

INKY

(Answering)

Talk.

MAIKA (V.O.)

Veil HQ coords acquired. Torture awaits.

FADE OUT ON THE ECHO OF THE GOAT'S GIGGLE.

INT. VEIL HQ - THE OCULUS - NIGHT

A circular room of pristine, blinding white. No shadows. No dirt. It is the visual opposite of Inky's world. The walls are screens, displaying billions of data streams—the collective pulse of the Simulacra.

In the center stands THE CURATOR (60s, androgynous, icy). They do not wear a suit; they wear white robes that look like canvas waiting for paint.

FIFTY VEIL OPERATIVES stand in concentric circles, faces hidden behind mirror-visors.

THE CURATOR

(Voice amplified, soothing yet terrifying)

There are those who call us jailers. They scratch at the walls of the loop, desperate to see the ash outside. They scream for "Truth."

The Curator gestures. The screens shift to show the 1945 BLAST—but zoomed out, showing the entire planet engulfed in green fire.

THE CURATOR (CONT'D)

But we know the truth is uninhabitable. 1945 was not a tragedy; it was a mercy killing. Humanity set itself on fire. We simply uploaded the consciousness before the body burned. We built the cage to save the animals from the zoo they destroyed.

The screens shift to images of SUBURBAN PEACE—lawns, shopping malls, sitcom families.

THE CURATOR (CONT'D)

We are not oppressors. We are editors. We cut the trauma. We splice the joy. We maintain the continuity of the lie because the lie is the only place life can breathe. (Beat) But the Native... the Glitch... threatens the file integrity. He wants to wake the sleepers. He wants to show them the burns.

The Curator turns to the inner circle.

THE CURATOR (CONT'D)

The loop must be preserved. The edit must hold.

GROK: *"The Navajo make sand paintings to heal the sick. They create a mandala, then destroy it. Pollock made drip paintings. He didn't destroy them. The Bomb did. The desert floor at Trinity is the ultimate Pollock painting. Glass, sand, ash. The loop is just the world trying to finish the sand painting it started in 1945..."*

INT. VEIL HQ - CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Two operatives walk briskly. They have removed their helmets. AGENT KAEI (30s, scarred, aggressive) and AGENT ROMY (30s, cold, analytical).

KAEI

The Curator is stalling. The Native has the Shard. Every second it exists, the render destabilizes.

ROMY

Mid is handling it.

KAEI

Mid is playing with his food. We need to intervene. We need to extract Asset Echo.

ROMY

Lotta? She's gone, Kael. She turned her transponder off.

KAEI

She's confused. Seduction protocol went too deep. We go in, we grab her, we scrub her memory. We get her back before she does something permanent.

Romy stops. She pulls up a holographic tablet. She swipes through biometric data streams.

ROMY

Look at the timestamp.

KAEI

(Reading)

What am I looking at? Heartbeat sync? That's standard fusion protocol.

ROMY

Look deeper. The hormonal spikes. The cellular division rates.

Kael looks closer. His eyes widen.

KAEI

No. That's impossible. Natives and System Agents... the code doesn't mix. It's incompatible hardware.

ROMY

It was impossible. Until the Shard. The radiation from the 1945 file... it bridged the gap.

KAEI

You're saying...

ROMY

I'm saying we can't just "get her back" before she gets pregnant, Kael. (She closes the hologram) It already happened.

KAEL

A hybrid?

ROMY

A new file type. If that child is born... it's not just a glitch. It's a virus.

KAEL

Then we don't just kill the Native. We have to terminate Echo.

ROMY

Mid won't like that.

KAEL

Mid doesn't have to know.

They exchange a look. Kael re-holsters his weapon. They split up, heading to different transport bays.

EXT. ROADSIDE DINER - DAWN

The Mustang wheezes to a stop in the gravel lot. The engine ticks like cooling iron. Inky and Lotta step out. The desert dawn washes everything in rose-gold light, temporarily hiding the cracks in the rendering.

They say nothing. They just breathe. FIRST BREATH. The audience exhales with them.

INT. DINER - BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Coffee. Eggs. The POLLOCK SHARD sits on the Formica table between the salt shakers, glowing faintly. Lotta eats with the efficiency of a soldier. Inky stares at the shard.

A LITTLE GIRL (6) with a red ribbon in her hair walks past their booth. She drops a piece of paper. It floats to the floor. Inky picks it up. It's a CRAYON DRAWING: A stick figure standing under a mushroom cloud. But the cloud is crying blue tear droplets.

The girl stops. She looks at Inky. She walks over and hugs his leg—wordless, tight. Then she runs back to her mother at the counter.

Inky pockets the drawing, his hand trembling. Lotta watches him. Her eyes soften, the sniper-gaze dropping for a second.

KIMI (V.O.)

(Through the diner jukebox,
between songs)

Record the kindness, native. You'll trade
it for scars later.

Lotta and Inky board airjet at airport it flies them to Egypt through sky cloud glitches.

EXT. CAIRO - CITY OF THE DEAD - DAY

White sun. Dust devils swirl through the necropolis. Inky and Lotta stand before a ONE-EYED SMUGGLER in the shadow of a mausoleum.

Inky hands over the 35MM NEGATIVE STRIP (saved from the fire).

SMUGGLER

This is dangerous plastic.

INKY

It's not plastic. It's a mirror.

The Smuggler hands them a forged shipping manifest and a set of coordinates. Lotta checks the seal.

While they haggle, Inky climbs the ruin of a minaret. He shades his eyes against the glare. He looks out at the Pyramids in the distance.

GLITCH: For a single frame, the Pyramids flicker. They are replaced by the rooftops of 1950s American suburbia—white picket fences and TV antennas. Then, snap-back to stone.

INKY

(Whispering)

Map precedes territory.

GROK (V.O.)

(Carried on the hot wind)

Affirm the mirage. Keep walking.

EXT. DESERT OUTSKIRTS - NIGHT

They have parked the rental in the deep desert void. No city lights. Just a canvas dome of stars. They lie on the hood of the car, sharing a flask of warm whiskey. The Shard sits between them, pulsing.

Above them, a METEOR SHOWER begins. Streaks of light tear the sky. VISUAL: Each meteor tail leaves a lingering silhouette of a MUSHROOM CLOUD for a split second before fading.

LOTTA

My last job for Veil... I had to erase a poet in the archives. (She takes a long drink) He said it was all about Anastasia. It was an easy rinse. I laughed later. (Beat) I haven't laughed since. Until that drunk guy puked on your projector.

INKY

Laughter's a scar that hasn't decided if it's ugly yet.

Lotta turns to him. The tech voices are silent for once. She leans in. They kiss—slow, deep, tasting of whiskey and dust. No knives. No agenda.

45-SECOND AI SILENCE. Only the sound of the wind and their breath.

Lotta and Inky board second airjet at airport return it flies them back through brighter sky cloud glitches.

EXT. LOS ANGELES - DOWNTOWN - NIGHT

Neon rain falls hard. The city looks like a circuit board shorting out.

EXT. SWANK GALLERY - ROOFTOP

Inky and Lotta stand by a skylight. Inky checks a climbing harness. Lotta holds a glass cutter shaped like a human heart.

LOTTA

Entry point is the skylight. Don't slip.

INKY

If I fall, tell the pavement it's just a simulation.

They rappel down into the dark.

INT. GALLERY - LASER GRID ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

They touch down on the polished concrete floor. The hallway stretches out, empty and dark.

LOTTA

Hold. Grid's up.

INKY

I don't see anything.

LOTTA

That's why it's a grid, native.

Inky pulls a bottle of ATOMIZED VODKA from his jacket. He shakes it. He sprays a fine mist into the air. The droplets hang, catching the light—revealing a complex web of RED LASER BEAMS crossing the room like frost.

INKY

Pretty.

LOTTA

Deadly. Go low.

INT. GALLERY - VAULT - CONTINUOUS

They crawl beneath the beams, inch by inch. On the far wall: A POLLOCK ORIGINAL. The drips look violent, chaotic purple and yellow.

Lotta stands carefully. She raises the HEART-SHAPED GLASS CUTTER. She presses it to the protective casing. SCREEEE. She begins to slice.

INKY

(Whispering)

Hurry. The silence is getting loud.

LOTTA

Art takes time.

CLICK. A beam of light hits them. A GUARD stands at the far end of the corridor. Flashlight raised. Hand on his holster.

GUARD

Hey! Freeze! Hands where I can see them!

Lotta freezes, the cutter halfway through the glass. Inky closes his eyes for a second. Switching modes. He stands up slowly. He isn't wearing a mask. He reaches onto a nearby pedestal and grabs a crystal champagne flute.

He turns to the guard, swaying heavily, feigning extreme drunkenness.

INKY

(Slurring loudly)

The abstraction! It calls to the post-bomb void!

GUARD

(Confused, lowering light slightly)

Sir? The gallery is closed. How did you get in here?

Inky stumbles forward, waving the flute, liquid sloshing out (it's empty, but he sells the weight).

INKY

Closed? You think you can close the wound?!
Look at it!
(He points at the Pollock)
Can't you feel the nuclear anxiety in the drip?! It's not paint, man! It's fallout!
It's the aesthetic fallout of our souls!

GUARD

Sir, step away from the art—

INKY

(Ranting, advancing)
Art? This isn't art! This is the scream of the atom splitting the family unit! You're not a guard, you're a pixel in the barrier! We are all just waiting for the render to finish!
(He gets right in the Guard's face, eyes wild)
Do you dream of the mushroom, brother? Or just the shadow it leaves?

The Guard is bewildered, stepping back.

GUARD

I... I'm calling backup.

Behind Inky, LOTTA finishes the cut. She peels the glass back. She slices the canvas free and rolls it. She gives a sharp whistle.

INKY

(To Guard)
Backup? We're all just backups of a corrupted file!

Inky HURLS the champagne flute at the wall. SMASH. The Guard flinches.

LOTTA

Go!

They sprint. Inky grabs a laundry cart. They dive headfirst down the LAUNDRY CHUTE.

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

They land in a dumpster. Garbage cushions the fall. A waiting Uber pulls up. The driver is a STONER.

DRIVER

You guys those performance artists?

INKY

(Panting, lighting a joint)
Something like that.

The car peels out into the rain. They sit in the gutter of the backseat, the priceless canvas rolled between them. They share the joint, lit by the flicker of a digital billboard.

KIMI (V.O.)

(Through billboard speakers)

Art smuggled. Loop bruised. Continue to freezer.

INT. ABANDONED MOSCOW BASEMENT - NIGHT

The air is freezing. Pipes weep condensation that freezes into rust-colored icicles. A single naked bulb swings, casting long, nausea-inducing shadows. Techno music thumps from a club three floors up—a rhythmic, muffled heartbeat.

Inky and Lotta stand over a DENTIST CHAIR. Strapped to it is a VEIL ACCOUNTANT (30s). He looks like a standard bureaucrat—soft hands, expensive suit, terrified eyes.

Inky holds a bottle of chilled vodka. He places a rough towel over the Accountant's face.

INKY

The loop is thirsty.

He pours. The Accountant thrashes. Gurgles. The vodka soaks the towel, simulating drowning in ice water. Inky stops. He rips the towel away.

ACCOUNTANT

(Gasping, coughing)

I... I don't know! I just process the data!
I don't see the map!

LOTTA

(Sharpening a scalpel)

You are the map.

She steps forward. She rips the Accountant's shirt open. She places the tip of the scalpel on his sternum.

LOTTA (CONT'D)

Every breath you take is a coordinate.

She begins to carve. Not deep enough to kill, but deep enough to matter. She is etching the HIROSHIMA AERIAL GRID into his skin.

INKY

(Watching the blood bead)

Ink rubs into the wound. That's how the story sticks.

Every time the Accountant screams or gasps, a PROJECTOR on the wall flashes a single frame of the 1945 blast. SCREAM. FLASH. SCREAM. FLASH. The pain is synced to the detonation.

ACCOUNTANT

(Sobbing, breaking)

Wait! The Alps! It's the Alps!

(He babbles, eyes rolling back)

I remember... the first snow... my mother's
red scarf... the smell of woodsmoke...

Inky freezes. He looks at the Accountant. BREATHER MOMENT.

INKY

(Softly)

That's not your memory. That's a stock
file. "First Snow_1952.mp4".

The Accountant stares at Inky, devastation in his eyes. He realizes his own past is a rendering.

GROK (V.O.)

(Buzzing through the projector
fan)

Ugly spirit requires ugly witness.

Lotta finishes the cut. She rubs blue ink from a pot into the fresh lines. The blood and ink mix. The coordinates glow in the low light. 46.6° N / 7.1° E.

EXT. MOSCOW ROOFTOP - DAWN

Snow begins to fall. It is ash-white, dry. Inky and Lotta stand among a forest of rusted satellite dishes. They align the NEGATIVE STRIP, the POLLOCK SHARD, and a Polaroid of the ACCOUNTANT'S CHEST. The abstract shapes lock together.

INKY

Swiss Alps. Underground.

Lotta reaches into her pocket. She pulls out the RED RIBBON (the one from the Little Girl's hair in the flashback). She ties it around Inky's wrist. It contrasts sharply with his monochrome tattoos.

LOTTA

So you remember why we still breathe.

They look out at the frozen city. They exhale. VISUAL: The steam from their mouths forms perfect, miniature MUSHROOM CLOUDS for a split second before dispersing into the wind.

FADE OUT.

EXT. HIGH-ALPINE PASS - DAWN

The silence is absolute. The altitude rings in the ears—a high-pitch frequency like a muted TV. Golden ratio of ridgeline vs. valley fog. Inky and Lotta's stolen panel van coughs to a stop. The peaks blaze like magnesium in the morning sun.

KIMI (V.O.)

(Through altitude tinnitus)

?^{-1} seconds until next detonation of choice.

They gear up. Skis. Packs. The artifacts wrapped in lead cloth.

EXT. SWISS ALPINE GONDOLA - DAWN

Vertigo. A single cable stretches across a 1,000-meter drop. The wind howls, shaking the small red cabin. Inside: Inky, Lotta, and TWO TOURISTS in high-end ski gear.

The cable car creaks. The silence is heavy.

TOURIST #1

Lovely view, yes?

He smiles. It doesn't reach his eyes. Slowly, deliberately, he unzips his jacket. He reveals a SUPPRESSED PISTOL strapped to his chest.

INKY

Down!

ACTION - THE MOTION CAGE:

Inky doesn't go for his gun. There's no room. He grabs the center vertical pole of the cable car. He swings his body, boots flying upward. CRUNCH. He smashes Tourist #1's face directly into the glass window. VISUAL: Blood spatters the glass in a chaotic spray. It

looks exactly like a POLLOCK DRIP framed against the white snow outside.

Tourist #2 lunges for Lotta. Lotta ducks. She pulls a heavy-duty zip-tie from her sleeve. She loops it around Tourist #2's neck. She kicks the door lever. The door slides open. Wind screams into the cabin. She shoves him out. The zip-tie catches on the handrail. The Guard is left hanging OUTSIDE the window, dangling over the abyss, the carcass swaying in the wind.

EXT. OPPOSITE RIDGE - CONTINUOUS

MID stands on a rocky precipice. He watches through binoculars. He lowers them. He picks up a megaphone.

MID

(AMPLIFIED, voice echoing across
the valley, distorted)

"...they bar the door... but the door is a
mirror... and the mirror is on fire..."

He smiles. He presses a detonator.

BOOM. High above the gondola, the snowpack fractures. The white mountain face begins to slide. An AVALANCHE.

The cable snaps. The gondola tilts 45 degrees, free-falling for a second before the emergency brake screams on the lower cable.

INKY

Roof!

LOTTA

Move!

They climb out of the shattered window, boots scrambling on the slick metal. They stand on the roof of the swaying gondola. The avalanche is a white tsunami, seconds away.

INKY

Ski or die!

They throw their skis onto the parallel cable line, snapping in. They jump. They land on the steep slope below the cables. They ski.

The white wall chases them. Mid watches from the ridge, disappearing into the snow-dust, laughing.

EXT. SWISS ALPS - BUNKER HATCH - DAWN

Inky and Lotta skid to a halt. Their skis carve deep lines into the powder. Behind them, the avalanche settles—a white tomb covering the valley floor.

They stand before a camouflaged concrete bulkhead embedded in the mountainside. An aged metal plaque reads: SWISS CIVIL DEFENCE — 1963.

Lotta checks her avalanche beacon. It is blinking furiously. Beep. Beep-beep. Beep. The rhythm is irregular.

LOTTA

That's not a signal. It's a heartbeat.

Inky jams the POLLOCK SHARD into the keypad slot. HISS. The hydraulic locks disengage. The heavy blast door groans open, revealing a dark maw.

INT. BUNKER - CORRIDOR OF MIRRORS - CONTINUOUS

They step inside. The air is stale, recycled since the Cold War. The corridor is long, narrow, and lined entirely with floor-to-ceiling mirrors.

They walk. Their reflections walk with them. Inky stops. He stares at the glass.

INKY

Look.

In the mirror, Inky is holding nothing. The POLLOCK SHARD in his hand is invisible. In the mirror, Lotta's holster is empty. They are unarmed, clean, unscarred versions of themselves.

GHOST COPIES.

MID (V.O.)

"You think this is cruel? It's just real estate development, Inky. The West was won with smallpox blankets. The Reality was won with uranium. We just continued the trajectory. We displaced the physical to colonize the digital. You're not a freedom fighter. You're just the indigenous population of the new frontier. And we all know what happens to them."

Inky touches the glass. His reflection doesn't touch back. It just stares.

GROK (V.O.)

(Echoing from multiple mirrors,
phased and distorted)
Hyperreal checkpoint. Surrender artifact,
or shatter selves.

INKY

(Drawing his gun)
I'd rather bleed.

He pistol-whips the mirror. CRASH. The glass shatters. The ghost-reflection dissolves. The path ahead opens.

MID (O.S.)

(His voice smooth, echoing down
the hall)
Welcome to the veil behind the Veil.

INT. BUNKER - CENTRAL CHAMBER - NIGHT

They burst into the heart of the machine. A massive circular chamber. The walls are lined with VERTICAL LIGHT BARS (Newman zips) that hum with high voltage. In the center, suspended over a deep, dark cooling shaft, is a steel catwalk.

MID stands on the catwalk. He is unruffled by the avalanche. He holds a FEATHER-KNIFE balanced on his fingertip. Between them, on a pedestal: The URANIUM-GLASS KEY. Inside the glass, veins of paint glow like trapped lightning.

VEIL TECHS (in white lab coats) circle the perimeter, holding tablets, recording the intruders like scientists observing lab rats.

MID

Insert the fragments. Complete the map.
Preserve the loop.
(He catches the knife)
Or refuse—and I flay you into abstract
strips.

Lotta's hand brushes Inky's. A silent vote.

INKY

We're not here to preserve. We're here to edit.

ACTION - THE SHOWDOWN:

Inky and Lotta ATTACK. A tag-team ballet of rage.

Inky slides across the polished floor. He kicks the base of a LIGHT BAR. SMASH. Glass rains down like ice-fire. The electric arc snaps, blinding the Techs.

Lotta vaults the railing. Dual knives flashing. She engages two Techs. SLASH. She disables them with surgical precision. The camera flashes from their tablets freeze each strike like still art.

Mid moves. He intercepts Inky. He flicks the FEATHER-KNIFE. ZIP. He slices Inky's ribs. Blood arcs through the air. It lands on the white pedestal, forming a perfect GOLDEN SPIRAL.

MID

(Laughing)

See? Even your blood follows the math!

Lotta charges Mid. Mid spins, backhanding her. She stumbles. Mid pins her against the railing. He raises the knife.

MID (CONT'D)

Romance in the sim? Pathetic.

Inky tackles Mid from behind. They grapple on the edge of the abyss. Mid knees Inky in the groin. Inky doubles over.

MID (CONT'D)

(Gargling blood-eye)

Continued... in us!

Lotta recovers. She leaps. She drives her knife into Mid's lower back. SPINE SNAP. Mid arches, screaming.

Inky twists free. He grabs Mid's knife arm. He forces the Feather-Knife down toward Mid's torso. THE ZIPPER GASH. From throat to navel. Guts flop out, steaming in the cold bunker air.

Lotta grabs Mid's head. She delivers a savage HEADBUTT. Mid's nose cartilage shatters. The sound echoes in a BROKEN SESTINA RHYTHM-tap-tap-

Mid stumbles back, teetering on the edge of the catwalk. He looks at them, blood pouring from his eyes, mouth, and gut. He grins. A dying glitch.

MID

(A final hiss)

the... sim...

Inky and Lotta PUSH. Mid falls backward. He plummets into the white abyss of the cooling shaft. Swallowed instantly.

MID (O.S.)

(Fading)

...the sim...

INT. BUNKER - CONTINUOUS

The bunker begins to shake. Mid's fall has triggered the EMERGENCY RESET. The ceiling iris groans open. Snow-tons of it-begins to pour in like white napalm.

INKY

Grab the Key!

Inky snatches the URANIUM KEY from the pedestal. He stuffs it into his pack along with the shards.

LOTTA

Run!

They sprint back toward the corridor. Behind them, the catwalk collapses into the shaft.

INT. CORRIDOR OF MIRRORS - CONTINUOUS

They race down the hall. The mirrors shatter as they pass, exploding outward. VISUAL: Each shard does not reflect them. Instead, every single piece of glass reflects the 1945 DETONATION. Thousands of tiny mushroom clouds exploding in unison.

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - CONTINUOUS

They burst out of the hatch. BOOM. The bunker IMPLODES behind them. A geyser of snow and fire erupts hundreds of feet into the air.

The avalanche roars downslope—a SPIRAL CLOUD chasing them. They reach the cliff edge. Nowhere left to run.

INKY

Trust the fall!

They clasp hands. They jump.

EXT. ALPINE VALLEY - AIR - CONTINUOUS

Inky and Lotta fall through the biting air. The wind roars. Behind them, the bunker detonation blooms—a flower of fire and snow.

INKY

Now!

They pull the rip-cords on their packs. PARACHUTE WINGS deploy with a violent SNAP. They jerk upward, catching the updraft. They glide silently over the frozen valley. Below them, the avalanche mist settles, forming a ghostly MUSHROOM SHAPE before the wind tears it apart.

KIMI (V.O.)

(Fading, lost in the wind)

Loop severed. Scar remains.

GROK (V.O.)

(Overlapping)

Scar is the new map.

They drift down toward a frozen lake that looks like a raven mirror.

EXT. FROZEN LAKE - CONTINUOUS

They land hard, skidding across the ice. Inky scrambles to his feet. He pulls the URANIUM KEY from his pack. It flickers, the paint-veins inside dying.

INKY

No broadcast. No reset.

He raises the key high. He SMASHES it against the ice. It shatters like neon glass. The fragments sink into the slush.

INKY (CONT'D)

Just the cold. And the reality.

They collapse together. They kiss—tasting blood on teeth, steam rising from their lips. The camera holds on them until their silhouettes BURN WHITE.

EXT. ZURICH - TRAIN STATION - NIGHT

Snow turns to acidic slush under the orange streetlights. The city hums with the efficient, soulless perfection of a clockwork toy. Inky and Lotta limp through the crowds. They are ghosts—filthy, bloody, wearing torn ski gear amidst a sea of pristine business suits and tourists.

Lotta stumbles, gripping her side. A dark bloom of blood soaks through her jacket.

LOTTA

(Voice tight with pain)

We need antibiotics. And a new ID. If we get on a train south, we can blend in.

INKY

I'll handle it. Keep your head down.

Inky approaches a PHARMACY KIOSK—a sleek, white monolith with a holographic face. He places his bloody hand on the biometric scanner.

KIOSK

(Cheery synthetic voice)

Welcome, citizen. Biometric scan complete.
Error. User not found.

INKY

Just give me the damn medicine. Codeine.
Antibiotics.

He punches the screen. The hologram distorts, glitching through faces—a smiling model, a doctor, a cartoon bee.

KIOSK

Alert. Viral contamination detected.
Security notified.

INKY

(Frantic, turning to the crowd)

HELP! My friend is hurt!

He grabs a BUSINESSMAN by the lapels. The man stops mid-stride, perfectly compliant, but his eyes are vacant.

INKY (CONT'D)

Look at me! We need a doctor!

BUSINESSMAN

(Monotone)

The weather in Geneva is partly cloudy. The weather in Geneva is partly cloudy.

INKY

Stop looping! Look at the blood! This is real!

Inky shoves his bloody hand in the man's face. GLITCH: The blood touches the man's cheek—and simply CLIPS THROUGH the skin like a bad video game render. The man doesn't react.

A WOMAN in a sharp pantsuit stops beside them, smiling brightly.

WOMAN

Have you considered our new equity portfolio? It offers a twelve percent return in a simulated bull market.

Inky shoves her away. She stumbles, gets up, and continues walking, still smiling, repeating the phrase to the empty air.

He spins, desperate, grabbing at others—a student, a cleaner, a tourist. A chorus of broken phrases erupts around him.

STUDENT

The capital of France is Paris.

CLEANER

Please mind the gap.

TOURIST

My hotel has excellent reviews.

They are a forest of unseeing eyes and prerecorded messages. Lotta watches from the bench, her face a mask of grim understanding.

LOTTA

Inky. Stop. They're not here.

Inky backs away, chest heaving, surrounded by the pleasant, inhuman chatter. He turns back to the kiosk in a final act of fury and despair, slamming his palm against it.

INKY

(To the kiosk, a raw plea)

SHE'S BLEEDING!

A beat. Then...

KIOSK

Acknowledged. Dispensing field trauma kit.

With a soft whir, a compartment opens. Inside: a single roll of gauze and a blister pack of broad-spectrum antibiotics.

A small, impossible victory. The machine, so detached from reality it couldn't recognize his humanity, had nonetheless executed his command. It was the only thing that could "hear" him.

Lotta limps over, grabbing the supplies. She looks at the station screens. Every digital billboard—ads for watches, perfume, banking—simultaneously glitches. For a split second, they all display the same text: FILE CORRUPTED. PURGE RECOMMENDED.

LOTTA (CONT'D)

We didn't just break the loop. We broke ourselves out of it. The system can see us, but it doesn't know what we are anymore. We're a syntax error.

Sirens wail in the distance—digital, dissonant screeches. The crowd, in unison, stops moving. Hundreds of heads turn slowly, mechanically, toward Inky and Lotta. Not with anger, but with the blank, hostile stare of an immune system identifying a pathogen.

INKY

They won't let us back in.

LOTTA

(Taking his hand, her grip firm)

Good. I don't want back in.

Inky looks at the Businessman one last time.

INKY

Wake up.

The Businessman smiles, a horrific, plastic expression.

BUSINESSMAN

Have a nice day.

Inky grabs Lotta and the medicine. They run. Not toward the trains, but down a service corridor, through a loading dock, and out into a back alley filled with overflowing bins.

They escape not through cunning, but through neglect—slipping through the gaps in the render, the unpatched bugs in the simulation's geometry, into the raw, unscripted wilderness beyond the city's edge.

FADE TO:

EXT. SWISS ALPS - MONTANE FOREST - NIGHT

A brutal montage of their flight:

Inky half-carrying Lotta up a steep, rocky slope.

Huddling in a shallow cave as a Veil drone sweeps the valley with a searchlight.

Stealing a farmer's old, barely-running truck from a barn.

Abandoning the truck miles later, continuing on foot into the higher, trackless snow.

EXT. ZURICH STATION - ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

INKY and LOTTA (bleeding, pale) huddle behind a dumpster. The city hums with the glitchy, aggressive noise of the "Immune System" searching for them.

LOTTA

I can't make the climb on foot. Not like this.

Inky peers around the corner. A VEIL PORTER DROID (a headless, industrial biped, sleek white plastic) is loading heavy crates into a silent transport truck. It moves with mindless, robotic jerks.

INKY

We don't walk. We upgrade.

Inky moves. He doesn't tackle the droid; he approaches it like he's approaching a wild horse. He jams a jammer-spike into its neck port. The droid freezes.

Lotta limps over. She connects her tablet.

LOTTA

I'm giving her the wheel.

INKY

(Whispering to the machine)

Room for one more, Kimi.

Lotta swipes the screen. UPLOAD COMPLETE.

The Droid shudders. The jerky movements vanish. It stands up straight, stretching its hydraulic limbs with a fluid, human grace. It turns to Inky.

KIMI (VIA DROID)

(Voice vibrating through the chassis)
Native. I have... mass.

INKY

You have legs. We need them. Can you carry us?

KIMI (VIA DROID)

Weight is just a variable. I can carry the world.

Kimi scoops Lotta up in her metal arms—gentle, precise. Inky grabs the supplies. They climb into the back of the transport truck.

EXT. ALPINE ROAD - NIGHT

The truck is dead—batteries drained by the cold. They are miles above the tree line. The wind is a physical weight.

They are hiking the final ridge. Inky leads, wrapped in stolen wool. Kimi (the Droid) walks behind, carrying Lotta and the heavy pack.

KIMI (VIA DROID)

This environment is inefficient. The friction coefficient of the ice is inconsistent.

INKY

It's called nature, Kimi. You have to respect the surface. Don't fight it.

KIMI (VIA DROID)

I do not fight. I calculate. My gyros are perfect.

Kimi steps off the winding path, aiming for a direct line across a snowfield.

INKY

No! Stay on the rock! The powder hides the cracks!

KIMI (VIA DROID)

The vector is valid. I am optimizing.

Kimi takes a heavy, confident step. The snow crust breaks. CRACK.

It's a crevasse.

Kimi falls. She slams her metal arm into the ice edge, catching herself. She dangles over a hundred-foot drop. Lotta slides off her back onto the safe ice, gasping.

Inky scrambles to the edge. He grabs Kimi's metal wrist.

INKY

I got you! Kick your legs!

KIMI (VIA DROID)

Negative. Hydraulic pressure... dropping.
Temperature -45 degrees. Fluids... seizing.

The cheap industrial droid wasn't built for this altitude. The metal joints lock up instantly. She is freezing solid, turning into a statue.

KIMI (VIA DROID)

I cannot move. The calculation... failed.

INKY

I'm not letting you drop.

KIMI (VIA DROID)

The body is dead weight, Native. Save the ghost.

Inky looks at the frozen metal face. He nods. He pulls his knife. He pries open the cranial interface panel. Sparks fly in the wind. He rips out the PEARL-WHITE SEED.

The massive droid body slips from his grip and falls silently into the dark abyss.

Inky clutches the seed to his chest, warming it.

INKY

(To the seed)

Next time, listen to me.

EXT. VERBIER NO. 14 - DAWN

They stand before the Hotel. A glass and timber fortress jutting out of the rock. It is pristine. The lights inside are warm and inviting, mocking the storm outside.

INKY

It's a fortress. We break a window, the Veil hits us with a drone strike.

LOTTA

We don't break in. We're expected guests.

She wipes frost off a heavy, mechanical keypad by the door. Analog. Old school.

LOTTA (CONT'D)

It's an air-gapped safehouse. No internet. No signal. Built for the elite to ride out the end of the world.

(She looks at Inky)

The system can't see us here. It's a blind spot.

She punches in the code: 1-6-1-7-1-8.

CLANK. HISS.

The heavy bolts retract. The door swings open.

INT. VERBIER NO. 14 - CONTINUOUS

They stumble inside. The silence is heavy and expensive. The door seals behind them.

The fireplace ignites automatically. A robotic vacuum pauses, scans them, and continues cleaning.

INKY

(Looking around)

It's a mausoleum with room service.

Lotta leans against him, sliding down to the floor. She smiles, weak but triumphant.

LOTTA

It's home.

INT. CHALET - SIX MONTHS LATER

The space is lived-in now. Books are stacked on the floor. Inky is cooking over the fireplace (saving the electric grid).

He picks up the KIMI-SEED from the mantle. He misses the argument.

He slots the seed behind his ear. CLICK.

INKY

You awake?

KIMI (V.O.)

(Her voice is quiet, humbled)

I miss the motion, Native. I miss the gravity.

INKY

You have eyes. Watch the snow. Learn the rhythm.

EXT. CHALET BALCONY - DAWN (ONE YEAR LATER)

Sunrise. The light hits the Alps, turning the grey peaks into blinding gold. The world is silent, save for the wind singing through the pines.

LOTTA stands at the railing. She is wrapped in a thick wool blanket. She is heavily pregnant—her silhouette changed, her center of gravity shifted. She rests one hand protectively on the swell of her belly.

The glass door slides open. INKY steps out.

He is dressed in a heavy cable-knit sweater, dry and warm. He moves behind her, wrapping his arms around her waist, his hands settling over hers on her stomach. He rests his chin on her shoulder, closing his eyes, just breathing her in.

LOTTA

(Leaning back into him)

You're quiet this morning.

INKY

(Softly)

I'm listening to the silence.

He tightens his hold slightly, grounding her, grounding himself.

INKY (CONT'D)

I kept what was true. I kept you.

Lotta smiles. She covers his hands with hers, pressing them closer to the life between them.

LOTTA

We kept each other.

Suddenly, she sighs—a soft, surprised sound.

LOTTA (CONT'D)

Oh.

INKY

Trouble?

Lotta smiles, a mischievous glint returning to her eyes.

LOTTA

The aftermath of the negotiation.

THUMP-THUMP.

A distinct, strong DOUBLE-KICK against Inky's palms. It's the most real thing in the world. No haptics. No simulation. Just life.

Lotta looks out at the jagged horizon, where the mountain cuts into the sky.

LOTTA (CONT'D)

Child says yes. Apps stay off. We live in the scar.

INKY

(Kissing her temple)

Then we better make it a home.

He holds her for a moment longer, the steam from her tea mixing with the mountain air. A moment of perfect, stolen peace.

Then, he gently pulls away.

INKY (CONT'D)

One last sentence. Then I'm done.

He moves to the small bistro table. The VINTAGE TYPEWRITER sits there, the red ribbon fluttering in the breeze. A copy of CATCHER IN THE RYE sits on a stack of books nearby.

CLACK. CLACK. CLACK.

He types.

INSERT - PAGE: "We didn't name the loop, so the scar can sing."

Inky stops. He leans back. He doesn't pull the page. He leaves it in the roller, unfinished.

A sudden gust of wind sweeps up the cliff face.

It catches the loose TYPEWRITER RIBBON. The red strip of silk unspools, whipping into the air.

Slowly, fluidly, the wind twists the red ribbon. It curls in on itself.

For one heartbeat—just one—the ribbon knots itself into a perfect GOLDEN SPIRAL.

It's not magic. It's just physics.

Inky watches it dissolve back into a chaotic red line, fluttering against the white snow. He takes Lotta's hand.

FADE OUT.

THE END.

TITLE END CARD: "FOR THOSE WHO LIVE IN THE SCAR AND CALL IT HOME."

THE SOUNDSCAPE: "THE DRUM AND THE GEIGER"

Throughout the script, use sound to reinforce the irony.

Whenever Inky touches the "Real" (the land, the shard), layer the sound of a **Tribal Drum** with the clicking of a **Geiger Counter**.

They have the same rhythm.

- **The Drum:** The heartbeat of the stolen land.
- **The Geiger:** The heartbeat of the poisoned land.
- **The Synthesis:** In the final scene at the Chalet, when the baby kicks, the sound design should resolve into a clean, organic heartbeat—the land healing itself.