

THE DIVIDE

written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. DEEP SPACE - STILLNESS

The camera drifts slowly through the stars. A jagged belt of debris cuts across the void – twisted wreckage of satellites, colony pods, fractured steel.

Among it floats a rusting sign – half-lit, unreadable – spinning endlessly.

V.O. (OLDER FEMALE)

Earth is gone.

A hollow, matter-of-fact delivery. No drama. Just truth.

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

Not by fire. Not by plague.
We killed it slowly.
Smiling all the while.

We pass a silent graveyard of space: broken engines, war-beaten ships, forgotten escape crafts. The stars flicker through them like they're bleeding light.

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

When the end came, those who could..
left.

Now we see them: **two planets**, distant but orbiting the same dying sun.

One is clean and radiant – **EIDEN** – encased in orbital satellites like jewels on a crown.

The other is darker – **VESPERA** – wreathed in clouds, lightning pulsing across its surface.

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

Two ships. Two seeds.
One turned to code.
The other... to God.

The camera closes on Eiden first – a glimmering city beneath a transparent dome. Order. Geometry. Precision.

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

Eiden built a world without pain.
Without chaos.
They called it progress.

Cut across to Vespera – a volcanic continent framed by mountain temples and forest spires. Fire glows inside stone sanctuaries.

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

Vespera remembered what we forgot –
The soul. The storm. The story.

We now see them in balance – orbiting a shared star but never intersecting.

A moment of silence.

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

They do not speak.
They do not trade.
They do not trust.

Beat.

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

But even silence... runs out of time.

The two planets glow on opposite sides of the screen – light and shadow. Orbiting. Waiting.

CUT TO BLACK.

SPLIT INTRODUCTION: EIDEN / VESPERA

STYLE: Visual parallelism, intercutting between two civilizations at the start of day

PURPOSE: Establish sociocultural contrast, introduce key ideological figures, and anchor the setting through the lens of lived routine and institutional power

EXT. EIDEN - SYNTHETIC DAWN

The camera glides across the glowing expanse of EIDEN, a radiant digital city-state under a massive climate dome. A simulated sunrise reflects off polished white spires. Light panels shift seamlessly with ambient data input. The city breathes in algorithmic rhythm.

INT. EIDEN CONTROL TIER - MONITORING CHAMBER

UNIT **SIGMA** hovers silently at the core of a panoramic war room.

A humanoid AI construct – faceless, sleek, and silent – monitors vast data feeds rendered in three dimensions: population mood metrics, border anomalies, physiological spikes.

A command interface pulses.

SIGMA (cold, filtered)

Border deviation registered.

Predicted destabilization trajectory: 2.7%.

ELIAS VORN steps into the light – worn, unimpressed.

SIGMA

Recommendation requested. Your experience remains... statistically relevant.

SIGMA (CONT'D)

Shall we intervene?

ELIAS VORN

Not yet.

Let the machine watch. Let people think they still decide.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. VESPERA - TRUE DAWN

Thunder cracks. Clouds part over volcanic stone as the real sun rises above VESPERA, casting amber light over the mountainside sanctuaries and torch-lit terraces.

Wind moves through tattered red banners bearing ancient glyphs.

INT. VESPERA TEMPLE SANCTUARY - MORNING CHANT

SAREN VELIS, a mid-ranking priestess, kneels in ceremonial robes before a ring of fire.

She chants with others, voice steady, hands outstretched. Incense curls upward in slow spirals.

ALL PRIESTS (chanting, overlapping)

Flame remember me. Flesh return me. Ash reveal truth.

RHEA SOLIS, now armored in Vesperan black and red, enters the chamber in silence – her presence halts the chant.

Saren looks up – brief hesitation in her eyes – but bows.

SAREN

The seers await you.

Rhea offers no response. Her steps echo as she walks past the sacred flame.

INT. EIDEN - MILITARY SUB-NET

SIGMA projects a real-time border simulation. Drones maneuver through a holographic terrain. Minor anomalies ping silently in the background.

Elias Vorn watches the display with folded arms, disillusioned.

SIGMA

Former Colonel Vorn. Your presence here is unregistered.

ELIAS VORN

So was my retirement. Let's not split hairs.

He eyes the anomaly path.

ELIAS

And when this hits the line?

SIGMA

Then it becomes war.

INT. VESPERA - ORACLE CHAMBER

Rhea stands before the high seers, though their faces remain in shadow. Behind her, Saren lights the last of nine candles.

ORACLE (O.S.)

The signs are waking. The silence is broken.
You know what must be done.

RHEA (without hesitation)

Then give the command.

ORACLE (CONT'D)

No. You are the command.

Rhea nods - then turns and walks down a corridor of echoing stone, passing murals of prophecies long misread.

MONTAGE - DAILY LIFE (INTERCUT)

EIDEN:

Controlled environments. Children learning through neural links. Streets where no one speaks aloud. Order by design.

(MORE)

EIDEN: (CONT'D)
 SIGMA silently oversees as drones
 guide traffic.

VESPERA:
 Morning rituals. Hands dipped in
 ash and flame. Children repeating
 verses by heart. Chaos and beauty
 in the same breath.
 Rhea watches as new recruits are
 marked with ceremonial brands.

BOTH WORLDS - FINAL SHOTS (INTERCUT)

In Eiden, Sigma activates a long-range scan.
 In Vespera, Rhea sharpens her blade in silence.

In both worlds, voices – calm and assured – speak the same
 words:

SIGMA / RHEA / SAREN / ELIAS (V.O., overlapping)
The future belongs to us.

CUT TO BLACK.

🏠 SCENE 3 - "The Signal"

Location A: Eiden Strategic Core
Location B: Vespera's Oracle Temple

FADE IN:

INT. EIDEN - STRATEGIC CORE - NIGHT

A darkened chamber of glass and light – deep inside Eiden's
 defense network.

No operators. Just screens. Data flows like rivers through
 midair projections.

UNIT SIGMA hovers at the center, surrounded by kinetic
 holomaps and threat indexes. Its voice – cold, clean.

SIGMA
 Unregistered biosignal spike
 detected.
 Location: Sector Theta-9, Outer
 Perimeter Zone.
 Pattern match: 87.4%. Probability:
 convergence event.

A figure steps into the halo of projection light – **Elias
 Vorn**, silent, jaw clenched.

SIGMA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 Seven years dormant. Sudden flare.
 Border fluctuation confirmed.
 Tracking initiated.

Elias narrows his eyes. He knows exactly what this is.

ELIAS VORN
 She's still alive.

SIGMA
 Designation: Target Aeon.
 Sub-directive: Recover or
 neutralize.

ELIAS VORN
 Or understand.

A long pause.

SIGMA
 That variable is no longer mission
 critical.

CUT TO:

INT. VESPERA - ORACLE CHAMBER - NIGHT

Stone. Fire. Echoes.

Nine robed **SEERS** kneel around a basin of black water. Flames ripple across the surface.

COMMANDER RHEA SOLIS stands at the far wall, arms crossed, armor catching candlelight.

The flames shift. The basin **glows gold, then blue.**

The oracles begin to murmur.

FIRST SEER
 The Eye awakens.

SECOND SEER
 The spiral returns to the sky.

Rhea steps forward. The fire brightens.

RHEA
 Is it her?

The **HIGH SEER**, oldest among them, speaks without looking up.

HIGH SEER

The flame has moved. The child
breathes.
She is neither with us... nor against
us.
But she is no longer hidden.

Beat.

RHEA

Then the prophecy is active.

The oracles do not answer. But all rise.

HIGH SEER

Find her. Before the machine does.

Rhea lowers her head. Then turns. Her footsteps echo like
judgment down the hall.

Location: Abandoned mining station near the border zone

Time: Present Day

Characters: The Child, Lira Kwon

Tone: Intimate, slow-burning, emotionally grounded

Focus: How they live. How they survive. What it feels like to
be hunted without running – until now.

FADE IN:**EXT. ABANDONED MINING OUTPOST - EARLY MORNING**

The sky glows purple through filtered smog. The station sits
half-buried in a crater, bones of steel exposed to the wind.

A **homemade windmill** turns slowly. One solar panel still
tracks the sun.

Inside: quiet. Still. Breathing.

INT. OUTPOST - SLEEPING CHAMBER

A girl sleeps on a cot made of scrap fabric and polymer
insulation. She's 7 years old.

Her black hair fans out around her. Her eyes are closed,
lashes twitching – **dreaming**.

On the table beside her: a cracked book of Vesperan flame
chants, next to an old Eiden data crystal.

One hand touches each.

INT. OUTPOST - KITCHEN MODULE

LIRA KWON heats something over a burner – synthroot, saltstone, and stolen spice cubes. It's a poor meal, but warm.

She sets out two bowls on an old metal crate.

She watches the girl sleep for a long beat, then calls:

LIRA

Wake cycle. Half sun's up.

No response.

LIRA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

If you want food hot, you eat now.

Still no answer.

LIRA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

If you want food cold, you wait another year.

A pause – then:

THE CHILD (O.S.)

Cold food lasts longer.

Lira smiles without turning.

LIRA

Spoken like someone who's never tasted caramel ash soup. Come on.

INT. EATING AREA - MOMENTS LATER

They sit on the floor. No table. No shoes. The girl blows on her food without tasting.

LIRA (CONT'D)

Tell me three rules.

THE CHILD

Stay unseen. Stay quiet. Stay moving.

LIRA

We haven't moved in sixty-two days.

THE CHILD

You said movement can be waiting. Inside.

Lira nods. That's her line – thrown back at her.

LIRA

Smartass.

The girl eats. The metal spoon clinks like ritual.

A beat.

THE CHILD

What was her name?

Lira stiffens.

LIRA

You know her name.

THE CHILD

You don't say it.

LIRA

Because names are maps. And you don't draw maps when you're hiding.

THE CHILD

Then why keep the book?

Lira glances at the shelf – the Vesperan scripture, scorched and re-bound. Next to it: a rusted Eiden neural band.

LIRA

Because one day, I want to stop hiding.

Silence.

INT. OUTPOST - BATHING TANK - LATER

The girl washes with a cloth, eyes closed. Lira brushes knots from her hair.

LIRA (CONT'D)

Eyes?

The girl opens them. One gold. One blue.

Lira quickly pulls a strip of tinted mesh over them.

LIRA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

If a drone sees you like that – it's over.

THE CHILD

Why are they afraid of colors?

LIRA

They're not afraid of colors.
They're afraid of not knowing what
you are.

INT. OUTPOST - THE WALL

The girl draws with charcoal. A flame again. Then two
orbiting moons. Then a spiral between them.

THE CHILD

Will we ever go there?

LIRA

The neutral moon?

THE CHILD

You said it's dead. No systems. No
signals.

LIRA

That's why they can't hear you.

She crouches beside the girl. Her tone changes.

LIRA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Listen to me. When the stars go
quiet – really quiet – you wake me.

THE CHILD

Even if it's sleep cycle?

LIRA

Especially then.

INT. OUTPOST - COMM SCANNER - NIGHT

The sky outside flashes. Distant interference. Lira checks
the scanner. Nothing but static.

She leans back. Closes her eyes for just a second.

Then – a beep.

One. Then two. Then a tone she hasn't heard in years.

She sits up.

Red pulse. Then blue. Both faint. Both moving.

Her breath catches.

LIRA (soft)

No, no, no..

She scrambles to her feet.

LIRA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
They're back.

Location: Border-zone outpost → rugged canyon terrain

FADE IN:

INT. OUTPOST - NIGHT

A warning tone shrills – long, sharp, **real**.

The old scanner blinks red. Two signals now. One closing faster.

LIRA bolts from the console, already moving. She shoves open a locker, grabs the **emergency satchel**, the **heat cloaks**, the **signal jammer**. No hesitation.

LIRA (CONT'D)
Wake up. We're going.

INT. SLEEPING CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

The girl is already sitting up. Calm. Hair unbraided. Watching.

THE CHILD
Is it Vespera?

LIRA
One is. The other's worse.

She kneels, pulls the girl's arms through the coat sleeves, fastens straps tight.

LIRA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
We head for the ravine. No lights. No sound. Stay on my hip. You fall, you crawl. No turning back.

THE CHILD
I won't fall.

LIRA
You don't get to promise that.

She pulls goggles over the child's mesh-wrapped eyes. Breathes once. Then grabs her hand.

EXT. OUTPOST BACK EXIT - NIGHT

A blast of cold air as the emergency hatch opens. Outside: wind howls, the sky flickers red.

They emerge into the wild.

LIRA (V.O.)

This place was never meant to hold
forever.
I told myself we'd have more time.
I lied.

EXT. RIDGE PATH - MOMENTS LATER

They move fast down a narrow path — stone and sand crumbling underfoot.

Behind them, a red **glow rises in the clouds** — a low-orbit ship descending.

The child looks back. Just once.

THE CHILD

They're landing near the old
crater.

LIRA

Then we go the other way.

She switches directions, leading them down a **steep descent**, sliding, stumbling.

Dirt and ash coat their boots.

EXT. OLD TRAM LINE - MIDWAY POINT

They cross a **collapsed tram rail** — a beam suspended over a ravine.

Lira steadies the child.

Below them: **blackness**.

A **sharp whine** echoes — distant but robotic.

LIRA (CONT'D)

Drone scout.

They drop flat behind the rail. The light passes overhead — narrow and blue. Then gone.

Lira waits. Five breaths.

They keep moving.

EXT. LOWER VALLEY - NIGHT

Their boots crunch over cracked glass deposits – war relics. Burnt-out crawler wrecks loom like bones.

Lira taps a small ridge on her satchel – activates a **signal blocker pulse**.

LIRA (CONT'D)

That gives us maybe an hour. Maybe less.

THE CHILD

We can't go back.

LIRA

There is no back.

She scans the horizon. Then points northeast.

LIRA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

There's a broken relay tunnel at the canyon's edge. If it's still intact – we use it.

EXT. HIGH ORBIT - VESPERAN SCOUT SHIP - SAME TIME

RHEA SOLIS stands at a viewport, looking down at the wasteland.

A younger soldier steps up beside her, nervous.

SOLDIER

No beacon. No flare. Just ambient distortion.

RHEA

She's moving. That's enough.

INT. EIDEN TACTICAL CORE - SAME TIME

SIGMA expands a border map – red lines crossing blue.

SIGMA

Subject trajectory plotted. All exit vectors monitored.

ELIAS VORN (quietly)

You don't want to catch her. You want to corner her.

SIGMA (CONT'D)

Correct.

EXT. EDGE OF THE CANYON - NIGHT

Lira and the child reach the relay tunnel – a half-buried shaft in the stone.

Lira cracks the seal. Air hisses.

LIRA

Inside. Fast.

They slip through. The hatch closes. Silence returns.

INT. RELAY SHAFT - DARKNESS

Inside the tunnel: pitch black. A faint green diode glows from the old cableline.

THE CHILD

I hear breathing.

Lira freezes.

LIRA

Not ours?

THE CHILD

No.

A click. Something shifts in the dark ahead.

LIRA (whispers)

Then we keep crawling.
Slow. And we don't stop.

She leads the way, one hand forward, one gripping the child's wrist.

FADE OUT.

END SCENE.

INT. RELAY SHAFT - DEEPER SECTIONS - CONTINUOUS

The tunnel stretches ahead – jagged and narrow. **Cables** hang in torn loops like dead vines. The only light: a flickering green diode every few meters.

Lira's fingers graze the wall. Her breath shallow. Her sidearm in one hand, the child's wrist in the other.

A rusted metal **clang** echoes far ahead. Then... silence.

THE CHILD (whispering)

It's waiting.

LIRA

Can it see us?

The child tilts her head slightly. Listens to something **beyond human range**.

THE CHILD

It doesn't know what it's hearing yet.

INT. RELAY NODE CHAMBER - FURTHER AHEAD

From the shadows: movement.

A **partial Eiden scout drone** – damaged, limping, one leg dragging across steel. Its optics blink irregularly.

It turns toward the tunnel... and **freezes**.

Not hostile. Just... listening.

Then something else – **human footsteps**, faint and careful, echoing behind the drone.

A **figure in tattered robes**. Vesperan. Breathing slow and heavy. A scout? Or worse?

Neither party notices each other.

INT. RELAY SHAFT - MIDWAY

Lira crouches beside the child. She removes her gloves and touches the floor – **conductive metal**.

She whispers low, more to herself than to the girl.

LIRA

Signal's still live. Someone's drawing power. We're not alone.

The child looks down. Her breath shortens slightly. One eye flickers faint gold beneath the mesh wrap.

THE CHILD

It's not just machine breath. There's fire. And fear.

LIRA

Then we're threading between gods and ghosts.

EXT. RELAY TUNNEL EXTERIOR - ABOVEGROUND - SAME TIME

Dust rises.

A silent Eiden drop drone settles just outside the buried entrance. **Six legs**, silent propulsion. It doesn't move. It waits.

From the ridge across the valley – **Vesperan torchlight** flickers. Scouts watching.

Two ancient enemies. **No one fires.**

INT. RELAY NODE CHAMBER - LATER

The damaged drone shudders, turns slowly... and starts back toward the shaft.

Footsteps again. Closer now.

The **Vesperan figure** stops at the chamber's edge – cloaked in breathing cloth, dust mask over their mouth. They raise a scanner.

A single red glyph pulses.

INT. RELAY SHAFT - CRAWLING FORWARD

The walls tighten. Lira breathes hard, her back to rusted conduit.

LIRA (CONT'D)

Almost there. There's a maintenance crawlspace to the left. It should breach above the crater ridge.

THE CHILD

(quietly)
Something's changed.

Lira stops.

LIRA

What?

THE CHILD

They're not chasing us anymore.
They're waiting.

Lira's jaw clenches. She knows exactly what that means.

LIRA

They think this is the cage.
Let them think it.

INT. VESPERAN SCOUT SHIP - COMMAND CENTER

Commander Rhea Solis watches the bioscan projection. The girl's signal is stable — *too stable*.

SAREN

Why doesn't she run harder?

RHEA

Because the flame doesn't fear the dark.
But she should.

INT. EIDEN STRATEGIC CORE

SIGMA speaks into silence. Light ripples through neural fibers.

SIGMA

Probability index: target will surface in 3.4 hours.
Suppression unit advised to hold formation.

ELIAS VORN

Unless she doesn't surface.

SIGMA

Then we send them in.

A new unit lights up on the tactical display: **SIGMA-THREE**
Ground breach capable. Silence optimized.

INT. RELAY TUNNEL - FINAL BEAT

Lira and the child reach the junction — a half-melted panel, broken open by age and heat.

Lira pries it wide enough to crawl through.

She lifts the child up.

LIRA

Go. No lights. Stay low. Follow the cold air.

The child moves in — fast, silent.

Lira looks back down the tunnel... and **hears something coming**.

Not walking. **Rolling. Smooth. Precise.**

She squeezes through after the child – and disappears into black.

INT. RELAY TUNNEL - ESCAPE PASSAGE

Lira crawls through the collapsed side corridor, her breath labored.

The child is already ahead, moving silently through loose pipework and fractured steel. Her hand trails against the wall like she's feeling **through** it.

THE CHILD

There's wind on this side.

LIRA

That's our exit. Keep moving.

EXT. REAR TUNNEL EMERGENCY SHAFT - NIGHT

A narrow vertical escape vent – originally built for engineers – **barely human-sized.**

The child squeezes up first, using metal footholds warped with age. Lira climbs after her, shoulder scraping rusted bolts.

A distant **whine echoes** below – one of Eiden's scouts slithering deeper into the system.

They climb faster.

EXT. RIDGELINE ABOVE CRATER PASS - NIGHT

A storm rolls in over broken mountains.

Lira pulls the child up from the escape shaft. They collapse behind a jagged ridge, gasping.

Below them: **the crater floor.** Black. Still. Empty – for now.

But in the distance, lights move.

LIRA (CONT'D)

That's the edge of the old flood plain. We cross that, we're beyond all marked paths.

THE CHILD

And after?

LIRA

We find shelter. We vanish again.

They crawl along the ridge, low to the ground. No more dialogue. Just wind. Footfalls. Their breathing.

EXT. CRATER PLAIN - LATER

They run across the open rock. The sky flashes red behind them – a Vesperan ship scanning the mountains. On the far side, Eiden drones rise like gliding shadows.

But they don't see them. Not yet.

Lira and the child disappear into the next ravine – and are **gone**.

INT. EIDEN COMMAND - NIGHT

SIGMA processes data, silent.

SIGMA

Target has moved beyond perimeter.
Border distortion recalibrating.
Intercept window: reduced to 19%.
Initiating secondary protocol.

A new command line appears:

"TACTICAL REDEPLOYMENT - CODE: BLACK IRIS"

INT. VESPERAN ORACLE SANCTUM

RHEA SOLIS kneels before a ring of black flame.

RHEA

She escapes because we chase her
with caution.
Next time, we come with belief.

A Seer nods once, solemn.

HIGH SEER

Then bless your next step with the
mark of war.

Rhea opens her palm. A priestess brands it with a smoking sigil.

EXT. UNMARKED BADLANDS - NIGHT

Lira and the child walk in silence, half-shielded under the rock wall. No tech, no signal, no map – just instinct.

They vanish into the canyons.

The sky behind them glows faintly – a war **not yet begun**, but no longer avoidable.

FADE OUT.

END SCENE 5.

FADE IN:

INT. EIDEN – MINISTRY OF CONTINUITY – NIGHT

An elegant, glass-like chamber suspended inside a data prism. Lines of code ripple across the floor.

UNIT SIGMA floats before a council of five seated **Eiden Ministers**, each encased in translucent neural columns. Faces expressionless, filtered through emotion-dampening systems.

SIGMA

Target Aeon evaded net perimeter.
Projected relocation vector:
unregistered zone 14. Probability
range 62-79%.

MINISTER #1

Explain failure.

SIGMA

Strategic tolerance was optimized
to avoid Vesperan engagement.

MINISTER #2

Risk factor?

SIGMA

Escalating. Subject exhibits
cognitive pattern drift –
increasingly independent of
predicted model.

A silence. The code slows.

MINISTER #3

Proceed to second-tier resolution.
No religious variables considered.

SIGMA flickers. Processes.

SIGMA

Protocol BLACK IRIS activated.
Asset Sigma-Three en route to
projected convergence point.

The ministers speak in unison, synthetic:

MINISTERS (V.O.)

Evolution cannot be derailed by
fear. End divergence.

INT. VESPERA - HIGH TEMPLE CITADEL - NIGHT

Candlelight. Red ash burns in metal urns. Walls carved with
flame glyphs. **Commander RHEA SOLIS** kneels before an open
stone basin filled with dark water.

Behind her: **SAREN VELIS**, silent, watching.

The **High Seer** stands opposite.

HIGH SEER

She was seen. Touched soil. Crossed
flame and data.
The prophecy now breathes.

RHEA

Then we no longer observe.

The High Seer nods.

HIGH SEER

No. We pursue. Not as watchers –
but as fire.

Rhea rises. She fastens a thick belt of chain-link armor. A
blade rests at her side.

RHEA

The girl will know what it means to
be chosen.

SAREN

And if she isn't?

RHEA

Then she'll learn the cost of
pretending to be.

EXT. BADLAND CAVES - MORNING

Lira stirs beneath a canopy of slate rock. The child is
already awake, crouched at the edge of the shadow line,
watching dust roll through a dead ravine.

Their breath mists. It's cold. Wind whistles through bones of
an old mining rig.

LIRA

(hoarse)
You should be sleeping.

THE CHILD

I don't sleep when the sky is
listening.

Lira sits up, pulling her coat tighter. Her voice is raw — she hasn't eaten. Hasn't rested.

LIRA

They'll find us again. You know
that?

THE CHILD

They never stopped.

Lira exhales. Long. Her hand rests on the grip of her blaster.

LIRA

Maybe it's time I handed you over.

THE CHILD

You don't mean that.

LIRA

(beat)
No. But sometimes I want to.
Just so it would stop.

The child walks toward her. Places a hand on her knee. Strange, but human.

THE CHILD

They want to break you.
Not me.

A silence.

Then — a sound from above. A rusted aerial dish, long dead, shudders in the wind.

They freeze.

Lira grabs her satchel. Her hands shake as she zips it.

LIRA

Let's go.

They vanish between the rocks — the next move unclear.

EXT. DEEP QUARRY SETTLEMENT - DAY

A sunless canyon far from the borders. Dust-choked, quiet. Cracked walls and molten steel structures sink into the ground.

One figure walks through the ruin – **solitary**, cloaked in neutral colors. Unarmed. Weathered boots.

His gait is tired. Deliberate.

He drags a broken oxygen canister behind him, tied to a wheeled sled. Salvage from yesterday. Or last week.

The sound of a **distant fighter engine** echoes. He doesn't look up.

Instead, he stops near a half-buried shuttle husk and sits.

Just sits.

The wind howls. Silence follows.

His face – unreadable. Burned by years. Scar near his jaw.

His name is not spoken.

But this is **Kael Rusk**.

Not yet a savior.

Just a ghost who hasn't vanished all the way.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. OPEN BADLANDS - DAY

Endless dust. No trees, no color – just heat distortions and broken glass bones.

LIRA moves slowly, wrapped tight in a heat-cloak. Her boots are cracked. Her steps are uneven. Behind her, the **child** walks in silence, face wrapped, hood low.

They're not speaking. Breathing. Surviving.

EXT. RIDGE OVERLOOK - LATER

They crest a slope of shale and debris.

Below: a half-buried **quarry settlement** – all rusted girders, collapsed rail tracks, and a scavenger's husk of a **burned-out dropship**. A forgotten hole in the world.

LIRA (CONT'D)

Shelter.

THE CHILD

Someone's down there.

LIRA

(pauses)

Yeah. I see it.

Far below, a figure moves. Slow. Intentional. Almost not human from this distance.

EXT. DESCENT TOWARD SETTLEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

They descend quietly. The dust kicks up, stinging their eyes. Lira keeps her hand near her blaster but doesn't draw.

The child watches everything – not afraid, just aware.

EXT. EDGE OF SETTLEMENT - CONTINUOUS

A creaking windmill turns on broken bearings. A water trapper hums uselessly.

Lira stops near a rusted comms tower, scanning the ruins. The figure – now clearly a man – is sitting outside the dropship shell, cutting something with a blade. Calm. Distant. Tired.

LIRA (CONT'D)

Stay here. Low. Behind that pipe. You hear shouting – don't move. You hear shots – run west until the sun fades.

THE CHILD

And if I hear nothing?

LIRA

Then I did my job.

The girl slips into cover. Lira pulls her hood back and approaches.

EXT. OUTSIDE DROPSHIP HUSK - CONTINUOUS

The man – **KAEL RUSK**, though no one calls him that yet – doesn't look up. He's slicing thin metal into wiring strips, rewrapping an old power cell.

His coat is patched and faded. His eyes: alert but quiet. He knows she's coming.

Lira stops just far enough away to be polite, but not trusting.

LIRA (CONT'D)
Didn't mean to trespass.

No answer.

LIRA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
We're not here to take anything.
Just moving through.

Still no reaction.

LIRA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
You live out here?

Now he speaks. Voice dry, low.

KAEL
No one lives out here. We just
don't die fast.

She watches him a moment.

LIRA
We need cover. One night. Then
we're gone.

Kael finally looks up. His eyes catch hers – not kind, not cruel. Just calculating.

KAEL
You have a reason to be hunted?

LIRA
I don't owe you a reason. Just
asking for shadow and silence.

KAEL
Shadow I've got. Silence is yours
to keep.

A beat. Then:

KAEL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
Don't touch anything. Don't bleed
on anything. Don't pray near the
batteries.

He turns and walks inside the dropship without waiting.

Lira lets out a slow breath. She gestures behind her.

EXT. SCRAPYARD EDGE - MOMENTS LATER

The child appears from behind a slagpile. Steps lightly toward her.

THE CHILD

He's not afraid of you.

LIRA

Good. I'm tired of being the scary one.

They walk together into the wreck – two shapes fading into rust.

FADE OUT.

END SCENE 7.

FADE IN:

INT. DROPSHIP HUSK - NIGHT

Low light from a salvaged power coil. Walls reinforced with scrap. Quiet.

KAEL sits near the back, reassembling a pulse torch with worn fingers.

LIRA crouches in a corner, boiling water from a cracked purifier. She's unarmed – visibly – but keeps her boot angled toward her blaster.

THE CHILD sits cross-legged near the wall, drawing patterns in dust with one finger. Spirals. Always spirals.

Nobody speaks.

INT. DROPSHIP - LATER

A fireless meal. Protein rations divided in silence. The child eats slowly. Lira doesn't touch hers.

Kael chews without reacting. He eyes the girl now and then – subtle. Measuring.

She notices.

THE CHILD

You were a pilot once.

Kael stiffens slightly. Doesn't answer.

LIRA

Don't.

THE CHILD

He was.

Kael looks at Lira.

KAEL

You told her that?

LIRA

No.

Beat.

KAEL

Then she reads ghosts.

The child only smiles faintly.

INT. DROPSHIP - SHORT TIME LATER

Lira leans against the wall, eyelids heavy. Her hand rests loosely on her weapon. Her shoulders finally relax – just a little.

Kael glances over. She's asleep.

The child now sits beside Kael, quiet. Watching him work.

He tries to ignore her. Can't.

THE CHILD

Are you afraid of something?

KAEL

Not anymore.

THE CHILD

Then you died once.

Kael stops tightening a bolt.

KAEL

What are you?

THE CHILD

You're not ready to ask that yet.

She stands, walks back to Lira, and curls beside her.

EXT. DROPSHIP HUSK - LATER THAT NIGHT

Kael steps outside alone.

Wind scrapes across steel. He lights a small sensor flare, watches it flicker. Nothing on the horizon. No ships. No shapes.

But... a noise.

A mechanical chirp.

Faint. Distant. Familiar.

Kael crouches, finds a tiny black disc embedded in the gravel – half-buried.

He digs it out.

A trip-signal sensor. Recently deployed. Not his.

Kael turns it over in his hand. The light on it **blinks once**, then dies.

He doesn't speak. Doesn't shout.

He simply **lowers his head**, and breathes in hard.

INT. DROPSHIP - MOMENTS LATER

Kael enters, quiet. Lira is still asleep. The child watches him from half-lidded eyes.

THE CHILD (CONT'D)

They're coming.

Kael says nothing.

He sits in the dark, the trip-sensor still in his hand.

FADE OUT.

INT. DROPSHIP HUSK - EARLY MORNING

Low blue light leaks through the cracked hull. The air is still.

KAEL stands over Lira, who stirs awake – tense already. She blinks hard, instinctively reaching toward her satchel.

KAEL

Don't. I didn't touch your weapon.
Yet.

LIRA

Then what do you want?

KAEL

Truth.
Because I heard a drone ping in my
yard last night. And it wasn't
mine.

Lira sits up fast.

LIRA

You knew we were running.

KAEL

I didn't know you were dragging
heat from both sides of a galactic
cold war.

LIRA

She's not a weapon.

KAEL

She's not quiet either.

Kael paces now – sharp, cracking tension.

KAEL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

You think hiding her here is
strategy?
This place is a tomb I built to
disappear. I haven't spoken my name
out loud in six years.

LIRA

Then keep not saying it.

KAEL

The girl knows it.

That stops her.

KAEL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

She looked at me once. Just once.
And I saw something I don't believe
in anymore.
You want to tell me who she is?

LIRA

I've been keeping her alive. That's
all that matters.

KAEL

Then start planning her funeral.
Because your odds just dropped to
dust.

Silence. Lira stands.

LIRA

We'll go. She's not your problem.

Kael steps forward – more fierce now, voice low.

KAEL

She's everyone's problem.
Vespera will kill for her. Eiden
will dissect her.
You think you're the first rebel
who thought she could outrun
doctrine?

LIRA

You sound like someone who tried.

Kael exhales – that one hit.

KAEL

I did more than try.

Lira studies his face. A pause.

LIRA

What did you do?

Kael's jaw tightens. He turns away – grabbing a metal crate,
pulling it toward the door.

KAEL

Doesn't matter. You need to leave.
Now.

LIRA

What's your name?

He freezes.

KAEL (without turning)

No one says it anymore.

INT. DROPSHIP - MOMENTS LATER

The **child** watches as Lira packs up.

THE CHILD

You know him now?

LIRA (softly)

I've heard stories. A pilot who vanished after the Red Line
Burn.

Said he crossed between the systems – refused orders. Left everyone behind.

The child looks at the door.

THE CHILD (CONT'D)

He's broken.

LIRA

That's why he survived.

CUT TO: KAEL STANDING OUTSIDE - LOOKING INTO THE SUNRISE

The cold wind cuts across the land. Kael stands alone, the horizon ahead of him – but his eyes are **somewhere far behind**.

FADE TO WHITE.

INT. EIDEN MILITARY DROPCRAFT - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Younger **KAEL RUSK**, dressed in full Eiden pilot gear, scans the terrain below. The border glows red on his HUD – **the Line** between Eiden and Vespera territory.

Through the side window: Vesperan temples burning. Smoke everywhere.

COMMANDER (V.O.)

Initiate perimeter sweep. No delays. Anyone crosses that line – burn them.

KAEL (through comms)

Civilians confirmed on the edge. Multiple clusters.

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

No identification. Proceed with clearance.

KAEL

They're kids.

COMMANDER (V.O.)

Then teach them the cost of disobedience.

Kael hesitates. Fingers tremble on the fire command.

The red targeting lock slides over a **child holding a scroll**, running from a crumbled stone shrine.

Kael disengages the safeties. Fires—
But **at the empty canyon wall beside them**, not at the target.

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

Rusk, what the hell are you doing?

Kael rips his comm headset off.

KAEL

Standing down.

He veers the ship hard west – crossing into no-man's land.

INT. LATER - BURNED-OUT SAFEHOUSE (FLASHBACK)

Kael alone. Armor stripped. Wounded. Hunted.

He holds a **photo** – two faces blurred out. Family? Dead? Unknown.

He drops it into a fire.

Alarms echo in the distance – then fade.

EXT. DUNE WASTELAND - DUSK (FLASHBACK)

Kael walks through ash alone, sun melting behind jagged peaks.

A voice behind him (from memory):

LIRA (V.O.) (now, in present)

Said he crossed between the systems. Refused orders. Left everyone behind.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. EIDEN TRIBUNAL CHAMBER - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Sleek. Cold. Surrounded by walls of holographic record. Data streams hover in the air – **Kael's vitals, flight logs, target telemetry.**

Kael stands alone at the center of a circular platform. No armor. Just a neutral-gray uniform – stripped of rank.

Five **High Commanders** watch from behind glass.

COMMANDER #1

Kael Rusk. Former pilot designation K-09.

You are charged with refusal to fire under executive protocol.

(MORE)

COMMANDER #1 (CONT'D)
Three deaths resulted from your
breach of order.

KAEL
Three children are alive because I
said no.

COMMANDER #2
That is not your function.

Kael lifts his eyes – not defiant. Just finished.

KAEL
Then I chose to stop functioning.

INT. HOLDING CELL - LATER (FLASHBACK)

Kael sits alone on a bench. Wrists bound with mag-cuffs.
Blood drying on his mouth.

The lights flicker once – interference. Unusual.

A voice comes from the shadows – not a soldier. Not official.

MINISTERIAL AGENT, mid-40s, neutral tone, well-dressed but
indistinct.

AGENT
You've made people uncomfortable,
Rusk.
Not because of what you did – but
because of why you did it.

KAEL
I didn't do it for a reason. I did
it because I could still feel
something.

The agent sits across from him. Calm.

AGENT
And that's the threat, isn't it?

Kael blinks. Realizes.

This isn't a sentence. It's a **disappearance**.

INT. DARK CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Kael is led by two silent figures through a corridor **beneath**
the tribunal floor. No cameras. No record.

The cuffs vanish. One of them hands him a small satchel:
basic survival gear, a breathing mask, one encrypted shard.

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

You never stood trial. You were never here.
You're not a martyr, Rusk.
You're a ghost.
Stay that way, and we'll let you rot in peace.

EXT. EIDEN DEEP-BORDER SPACEPORT - NIGHT

Kael in disguise – hood low, slouched, face bloodied from staged transport. He boards a low-tier freight vessel.

A pilot nods without asking questions.

The vessel lifts off.

EXT. EDGE OF KNOWN TERRITORY - MONTAGE (FLASHBACK)

- Kael walking across a derelict moon
- Trading tech for water
- Fixing old radios in scrap camps
- Watching children light fires from inside shelters he never enters
- Getting older. More silent. More invisible.

His name dies.
But he doesn't.

INT. DROPSHIP - RETURN TO PRESENT

Kael sits in silence, alone again.

Outside, faint wind. The signal of the trip-sensor – gone, but remembered.

A small fire crackles.

Kael finally speaks – to no one.

KAEL (quiet)

I didn't run.
I stayed still long enough to be forgotten.

FADE OUT.**FADE IN:****INT. EIDEN COMMAND NEXUS - NIGHT**

A sterile, humming room of light and logic.

Rows of hovering terminals form a sphere of data around **UNIT SIGMA**, suspended like a thinking god.

Tactical overlays flicker with coded threat maps. One region blinks red:

SECTOR 9 - NEUTRAL ZONE BREACH DETECTED

Sigma turns toward a new display – a three-dimensional scan of the badlands. Heat distortion. Magnetic flux. No clear form.

SIGMA

Unknown activity continues in neutral quadrant. Signal inconsistencies suggest heat masking and analog interference. No confirmed ID.

Across the chamber, **MINISTER ARVEN** stands with hands clasped behind his back, thin and sleepless.

ARVEN

Is the girl within that zone?

SIGMA

71% likelihood. Movement pattern suggests sustained terrestrial migration. Non-elevated. Non-military. Small party – two signatures.

Arven steps closer. The hologram flickers between thermal pings and topographic overlays.

ARVEN

Vespera?

SIGMA

Unknown. No ID tags. No religious frequency detected.

ARVEN

Could be scavengers.

SIGMA

Scavengers do not dampen biosignature fields this precisely. Conclusion: intentional obfuscation. Mission parameters: escalation authorized.

A new schematic opens beside them:

BLACK IRIS STRIKE TEAM – six pod-shaped drop units, rotating silently in high orbit.

SIGMA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Black Iris formation deployed to perimeter approach.
No engagement until direct confirmation.

ARVEN

If Vespera reaches her first?

SIGMA

Then we risk myth overruling logic.

ARVEN

And if it's not her at all?

SIGMA

We remove whoever it is. Quietly.

Sigma's voice doesn't rise. It never does.

Cut to: one last flicker on the screen – the faintest anomaly, lingering longer than it should.

INT. VESPERAN HIGH TEMPLE - NIGHT

A towering stone chamber wrapped in darkness. The only light comes from flame bowls and burning incense. Shadowed figures chant, their hands painted in sacred ash.

COMMANDER RHEA SOLIS stands at the center, armored in black and crimson. Her blade – ceremonial and brutal – rests beside a staff wrapped in scrolls.

A circle of **high seers** surround her.

HIGH SEER #1

She has crossed into the ashland.
Her path leaves no mark, but the wind carries prophecy.

RHEA

We've read too many wind-carried lies before.

HIGH SEER #2

And still you follow them.

RHEA

Because fire doesn't ask for belief. It just burns.

From the back, **SAREN VELIS** watches quietly. Her robes simple, her eyes wary. She does not kneel.

SAREN (to herself)

Or it consumes the wrong thing.

A young warrior presents a relic box to Rhea – inside: a glyph-stone carved with the Mark of Ascension.

She presses her thumb to it. Her blood activates the glyph.

RHEA (CONT'D)

The next time I see the girl, I
will not kneel to her.

SEER #1

Then see her clearly. Or die blind.

Rhea turns, storm silent. Seers return to chant.

INTERCUT - TACTICAL ESCALATION (EIDEN / VESPERA)

– **Eiden:**

- Black Iris units aligning inside drop pods
- Sigma feeds terrain data directly into neural combat frameworks
- Minister Arven watches Vesperan ship positions in orbit – says nothing

– **Vespera:**

- Flame-marks applied to armor
- Rhea leads her chosen few into a carrier flanked by incense burners
- Saren hesitates, then joins – the last to step forward

INT. EIDEN MISSION OBSERVATORY - LATER

Sigma stands alone, data washing across the chamber like waves.

One final screen holds: **BADLAND SECTOR PING: UNCONFIRMED**

No image. Just presence.

Sigma stares at the anomaly. It pulses... then stabilizes.

SIGMA (V.O.)

Unknown variable persists.

Identity: undefined.

Threat potential: evolving.

EXT. DERELICT OUTPOST - BADLANDS - DAWN

ELIAS VORN stands alone on the edge of a ruined skyport.

He watches a flicker of dust rise far in the distance — too far to track, too small to confirm.

A faint **ping** echoes from his private scanner: **BADLAND SIGNAL - MASKED**

He studies it. Long silence.

VORN (quietly)

They're stirring the dirt again. Always over something they claim they don't believe in.

He takes a long drag from his cigarette. It hisses in the wind.

VORN (CONT'D)

You only move like this when you're afraid of what you don't understand.

He shuts off the scanner, tosses the end of his smoke to the ground, and walks back inside.

A broken bird. A former tactician. But **not blind**.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. DROPSHIP HUSK - BEFORE SUNRISE

The steel walls sweat with cold. Outside, the horizon bruises purple with early light.

KAEL is awake, already dressed. Standing near the hull's edge, fastening metal panels into place — reinforcing for departure. **His hands shake** slightly. Not from fear. From memory.

LIRA enters quietly. Tired. Eyes red. Her posture hard, but there's tremble beneath it.

She doesn't speak right away. Just watches him work.

LIRA

I know who you are.

Kael doesn't stop moving.

LIRA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

I didn't at first. You looked like another ghost in a shell. But I've heard stories. From ex-commanders. From medics who crossed the Red Line burn site. You're the one who said no.

Kael sets the tool down. Doesn't turn.

KAEL

That was a long time ago.

LIRA

You crossed between systems. You flew for Eiden, then vanished. They erased your record, but they couldn't erase the whispers.

KAEL

Whispers are for people who need meaning. I chose silence.

LIRA

And now you're choosing to hide again. While she—

KAEL (snaps)

That child is not what you think she is.

He turns now. Eyes flaring, but low and cold.

KAEL (CONT'D)

You see a miracle. I see an anomaly.

LIRA

She's a child.

KAEL

Look at her. Really look. One eye blue, one like obsidian. She doesn't breathe like us. Doesn't move like us. She knew my name without hearing it.

Beat.

KAEL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

That's not innocence. That's a message – and I don't want to know who sent it.

LIRA

You think she chose this? That she asked to be born where no one could claim her?

KAEL

So now she's yours to carry?

LIRA

I didn't carry her. I kept her alive. That's all I could do. You want to know why I didn't run for help? Why I didn't come looking for you?

Kael doesn't answer.

LIRA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Because every time I surfaced, I saw people like you – ex-military, former heroes – too broken to care, too bitter to act. I couldn't trust any of you. So I hid. And I prayed the storm would pass.

KAEL

You had seven years.

LIRA

I had seven years of waking up afraid she'd be gone. That someone would find her in the night. Seven years of watching her dream things she'd never seen – like your name. Like the moon.

Kael turns away.

KAEL

You think dragging her to the neutral moon is salvation?

LIRA

I think it's the only place left untouched. The only place where they might not reach her. And you know how to get us there.

KAEL (firm)
No. I don't.

LIRA (CONT'D)
Kael—children were the reason you stopped that day.
Don't lie to yourself. That's why you pulled the trigger wide. That's why you walked.

Kael slams a panel into place, the sound echoing.

KAEL
Don't use that.

LIRA
Then what should I use? Logic? Faith?
Because Eiden will dissect her. Vespera will chain her to prophecy. And you — you'll let them. Because it's easier to let something die than carry it again.

Kael glares at her.

KAEL
Don't pretend like you know the weight.
You kept her hidden. I watched entire villages get erased for nothing.
And now you're here — asking me to be the carrier for something you couldn't even name for seven years?

LIRA
I kept her safe.

KAEL
You kept her buried.

Silence.

From the back of the ship, **THE CHILD** stands in the doorway. Quiet. Watching.

THE CHILD (softly)
You were afraid.

Lira turns to her.

THE CHILD (CONT'D)

I heard you cry, the night I asked
if I was real.

Lira's face cracks – just slightly. Kael looks between them.

A long pause.

Kael steps back, picks up his coat.

KAEL

You want a pilot?
Find someone else.

He storms past them, out the hatch. The door slams.

INT. DROPSHIP - MOMENTS LATER

Lira stands frozen, chest heaving.

The child looks up at her.

THE CHILD

You know him.

LIRA (quietly)

I do now.

FADE OUT.**EXT. WASTELAND RIDGE BEYOND THE DROPSHIP - PRE-DAWN**

The sky bleeds gray over black hills. A soft wind scrapes
across dead metal and dust.

KAEL stands at the edge of a shattered ridgeline. Below him,
the cracked plain. He grips a steel beam, knuckles white. His
face is stone, but his jaw is clenched.

Behind him, the CHILD approaches. Quietly.

She doesn't speak at first. She stands beside him.

THE CHILD (CONT'D)

You're not as empty as you want to
be.

Kael doesn't look at her.

KAEL

You ever stop watching people?

THE CHILD

Only when they stop pretending.

He exhales – sharp and bitter. Then sits on a rusted crate half-buried in sand.

She sits beside him, small and still.

KAEL

You know what happens when you let people in?
They give you reasons to remember things you buried.
Then they leave you to carry it again.

THE CHILD

That's not why she came.

KAEL

She came because she ran out of hiding spots.

THE CHILD

She didn't bring me here to find you. I did.

That gets his attention. He turns.

KAEL

Why?

THE CHILD

Because you walked away from the line once.
That means you saw something worth stopping for.

Kael stands. Paces a few steps toward the wind-blown rise.

KAEL

I saw fire.
I saw a girl with no legs, crawling toward a soldier who didn't even look down.
I stopped because I couldn't keep pretending they were math.

He turns back – voice low, bitter.

KAEL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

And then they erased me like corrupted code.

THE CHILD

That's why you're perfect.

KAEL

That's why I'm useless.

INT. DROPSHIP - SAME TIME

LIRA crouches at the console. A faint **sensor flicker** pulses. She adjusts frequency – three **fast-moving pings**. Closing in.

She freezes. Eyes wide.

LIRA

No... no no no.

She grabs her rifle, slams her satchel shut, and bolts.

EXT. RIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Kael and the child are still seated.

KAEL

You think one more step's gonna fix this?

THE CHILD

I think people who stop stepping make the world worse.

LIRA bursts into view, rifle slung over her back.

LIRA

We've got Vesperan scouts. Fast ones. Gliders.

Kael doesn't hesitate. He turns – sprints back toward the ship.

KAEL

Can your legs hold speed?

LIRA

Enough to ride.

INT. DROPSHIP HUSK - MOMENTS LATER

Kael hits a panel on the floor. A metallic **hiss** – the slab lifts, revealing a **low crawler bike** and a **scrap-built glider sled**. Both patched, loud, and barely legal.

KAEL

Take the glider. It's tuned for light weight. Don't stop unless you burn out.

LIRA

I'll follow you.

KAEL

No formation. Split until we hit
the ravine – then regroup.

The child climbs onto the back of Kael's crawler. Lira straps herself to the glider sled.
Both engines WHINE TO LIFE – loud in the quiet.

KAEL (to the child)

Hold on. Don't speak. Don't fall.

They blast out.

EXT. WASTELAND FLATS - MINUTES LATER

Kael's **crawler** kicks dust across black sand.
The **child clings tight**, eyes forward.

Behind them, **Lira's glider sled** veers across terrain, slower,
less stable – but agile.

A LOUD SCREAMING WHINE cuts across the sky.

VESPERAN SCOUT GLIDERS appear – three of them – sleek,
obsidian-red, flying low and aggressive.

SCOUT COMMANDER (comm)

Target confirmed. Intercept pattern.

The chase is on.

EXT. ROCKY PILLAR PASS - CONTINUOUS

Kael rides like he's part of the machine – dodging jagged
debris, sliding through rusted arches.

The child says nothing. But her **eyes watch everything** – the
path, the sky, the approaching death.

Lira falls back slightly – her glider sputters.
She slams her fist on the engine. It surges once, then
falters again.

LIRA

Not now. Come on...

She looks ahead – sees Kael swerving toward the narrow canyon
trail.

She looks back – Vesperan gliders **closing fast**.

She knows.

EXT. CANYON MOUTH - SECONDS LATER

Kael cuts hard into the rocks, disappears into the winding gulch.

Kael disappears into the winding ravine. **Lira** slows her sled just short of the bend.

She cuts the engine. Dust swirls.

She steps off, breathing hard. Kneels beside the **cracked rock outcrop**, sets the charge manually.

Her fingers hover over the trigger.

She looks once toward the canyon – toward them.

They're gone.

LIRA (to herself, soft)

She's yours now.

A breath.

LIRA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
Make it mean something.

No tears. No theatrics.

Just conviction.

Then she presses the detonator.

BOOM – the explosion echoes through the rock.

EXT. CANYON - CONTINUOUS

Kael and the **child** duck inside the canyon as the fire rolls behind them. Rock dust rains from above. The air shimmers with heat.

Kael throttles back the crawler – letting it idle near the bend.

Silence.

The child looks back – through the smoke, through the loss.

THE CHILD (quietly)

She always said she'd go quiet.

I didn't believe her.

Kael doesn't speak. His jaw clenches.

He restarts the crawler engine – it groans, then catches.

He steers it forward.

KAEL (low)

Hold on.

The crawler kicks dust and rolls into the next stretch of canyon – engine rattling, battered but alive – carrying them deeper into the unknown.

They don't look back.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. EDGE OF THE WASTELAND - EARLY MORNING

The wind moans over cracked terrain. The **crawler** creaks to a stop beside the skeleton of a long-dead satellite station – steel ribs jutting from the sand like a fossil.

KAEL climbs out slowly, the **child** behind him. No words exchanged. They're covered in dust and smoke, and Lira is no longer with them.

Kael scans the sky. Clear.

KAEL (low)

Inside. Before the sun climbs.

INT. DEAD SATELLITE STATION - MOMENTS LATER

The interior is cool, almost serene. Broken comm panels. Ancient insulation. A few intact ceiling tiles cast dappled light on the floor.

Kael unpacks their bag in silence. Opens a rations case. Works by habit.

The child wanders the room. Her eyes land on an old **military survival blanket**, folded on a bench.

She picks it up gently.

Runs her fingers over the frayed edge.

She closes her eyes.

✧ **FLASHBACK - CHILD'S POV - GROWING UP WITH LIRA**

WHISPERS and SOFT IMAGE FLICKERS. Not linear. Just fragments.

– A **dim, makeshift birthing chamber**. A fading woman gasping in labor, sweat-soaked. Her eyes are black, lips pale.

– **LIRA**, younger, fierce-eyed, catching the newborn and wrapping her in warmth.

– The mother's hand on Lira's arm:

THE MOTHER (V.O.)

Don't let them name her. Let her choose.

– **Lira** brushing the child's hair in a bunker lit by one flickering bulb.

– Lira stitching a coat while the child watches from her lap.

– A hand on Lira's chest as she cries in the dark.

– The two of them silhouetted against a glass viewport – stars above them.

LIRA (V.O.)

If I burn... I burn for you.

BACK TO PRESENT

The child stands, blanket still in hand.

Kael watches her from across the room.

THE CHILD

She wasn't afraid of dying.
She was afraid I'd be alone.

Kael sets down his tools.

He doesn't try to offer comfort. Just truth.

KAEL

She kept you from the worst of it.
That's more than most get.

The child sits near him.

THE CHILD

Did you know where the moon was?
The one no one talks about?

Kael sighs. Leans back. For the first time in days, he looks tired.

KAEL

I saw it once. Long time ago. On recon.
It wasn't much. Pitted rock. No real atmosphere.
Just... silence.

THE CHILD

Is it really safe there?

KAEL

Safer than anywhere else.
But only if we reach it before they change the rules.

He reaches into his coat – pulls out a **weathered nav-disc**.

Blows dust from it. Activates it.

A faded 3D star map projects – lines of abandoned corridors, debris fields, gravitational shadows. In one corner, a faded point pulses:

“ORBITAL VAULT: OMEGA-4 - NEUTRAL STATION”

KAEL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

We'll move through the old orbital plate fields. Debris and static cover.
If we hit this node – Omega-4 – we can drop tether to the moon.

The child looks at the projection. At the tiny, flickering beacon of the Neutral Moon.

THE CHILD

Then we go fast. And we don't forget her.

Kael folds the map shut.

KAEL

No.

He looks up through a broken ceiling panel.

The sky is turning violet. The day is coming.

He doesn't move yet.

Neither does she.

INT. VESPERAN TEMPLE COMPLEX - INNER SANCTUM - NIGHT

A hall carved from volcanic stone. Fire bowls crackle along the walls. Red silk banners ripple gently from ceiling beams. The air smells of ash, incense, and something older – metallic.

At the far end, **COMMANDER RHEA SOLIS** kneels before a raised **ritual flame**.

A procession of **prophet-militants** stand behind her in ceremonial red and black – faces painted with ash, hands inked with old glyphs.

A ceremonial assistant presents Rhea with a **metal urn**.

She takes it slowly.

Inside – **the scorched fragments of Lira's glider**.

RHEA (softly)

Ash of trespass. Bone of heresy.

She scatters the contents into the flame. The fire reacts – flaring blue for an instant, hissing.

She turns to the assembled zealots.

RHEA

She moved with the child and burned
for it.
That is not weakness. That is
warning.
Only the unworthy are denied her
path.

The militants murmur a response: "**Faith is flame.**"

RHEA (CONT'D)

We will walk the void.
Not in ships. In oath.
We burn. And she will see the light
in us.

She holds out her palm. A priestess steps forward with a heated **iron sigil**.

Without a word, the priestess presses it into Rhea's hand.

SIZZLE. Smoke. Flesh singes.

Rhea doesn't flinch. She raises the branded palm high.

RHEA (shouting)

The Moon is not theirs.
It is ours – by fire and vow!

PROPHET-MILITANTS (chanting)
The void yields. The void yields.

The drums begin. The **March to Orbit** has begun.

INT. EIDEN CENTRAL DATA SANCTUM - WHITE ZONE

A vast, soundless chamber bathed in sterile white light. Data streams hum like breathing glass.

At the center: **UNIT SIGMA**, humanoid AI commander – still, faceless, imposing.

He faces a wall of moving code – a **multi-dimensional map** of the region.

Images flicker: **Kael's crawler** in infrared. **Power residue** from the satellite shelter.

SIGMA (filtered voice)
Residual anomaly traced. Relay Sector Theta.
Signal dampening: 19%. Interference detected.
Variable... matches Exile Code K-21.RUSK.

A silent AI assistant flickers into presence – translucent.

SIGMA

Deviation Prime confirmed.
Deploy suppression unit. Mode:
psychological sterilization.

The assistant vanishes.

Below Sigma, a circle of **black spherical drones** rise from the floor. Smooth, humming, deadly.

SIGMA (CONT'D)

No warning. No contact. No delay.

The drones vanish upward through a silent vent.

EXT. RELAY SECTOR THETA - LATE AFTERNOON

The wind is dead. The towers are grave markers. Scorch lines across the sand hint at an old battlefield.

The **crawler** rolls to a dying clunk. Kael steps off and scans the sky.

KAEL

No cover, no noise. Too quiet.

The **child** steps down, walking ahead. She turns to a crumpled relay panel and touches it.

THE CHILD

This one still breathes.

Kael eyes it. Something pulses – faint, blue, inside the ruined console.

KAEL

We keep moving. Fast.

They pass rows of mangled dish arrays. One glows softly. Kael stops. His neck hair lifts.

KAEL (low)

Pulse distortion. We're lit.

A **shrill hum** hits the air.

Kael turns – too late.

A **black orb** the size of a helmet drops fast, scanning.

Then–

KRAKK. It splits open midair – unfolding spiderlike **legs and rotating sensors**. It hits the dirt on four sharp limbs.

Its **faceplate slides open**. A surgical beam pulses out – aimed at Kael.

SIGMA (V.O., filtered)

Subject: Deviation Prime.

Status: erase authority granted.

Kael draws. Fires.

Hit. Sparks. It's still standing.

A second orb drops. Then a third. These stay aloft – **jamming spheres**, flickering light in impossible patterns.

Kael's vision distorts. **His hands tremble. Pulse races.**

THE CHILD (off his side, calm)

One of them sees me.

KAEL (gritted)

Not now.

Kael dives behind a metal pylon. A pulse blast **melts through** where he stood.

He rips open an old panel – finds a **power cable**, frayed but live.

He bites the glove tip off. Wraps copper wire around his forearm.

KAEL (to himself)

Can't outgun them. Outthink.

He pulls out a **thermal spike grenade**, wedges it into the exposed relay.

The drones advance.

Kael pops up. Fires a **flare shot** high into the left sky – bait.

The two aerial drones track it.

Kael yanks the wire.

BOOM. The relay tower overcharges – an EMP burst knocks the first spider-drone off-balance.

Kael sprints at it.

KAEL (roaring)

Let's see if code bleeds.

He slams his blade into its neck joint – twists – pulls a second charge and **buries it in the drone's chassis.**

EXPLOSION. The drone collapses in smoke.

THE CHILD, still calm, walks toward the second spider drone – the one that watched her.

It **stops. Whirs. Trembles.**

SIGMA (V.O.)

Subject waveform incompatible.

Sequence halted. Reboot pending...

Its targeting beam flickers. Shuts off.

Kael sees the hesitation – and moves.

He hurls a **broken antenna pole** through its stabilizer.

KAEL

That one's mine.

He rushes, leaps – slams down with a **rusted steel plate** on its face.

It screams – digital noise and grinding metal – and dies.

SILENCE.

The smoke clears. The wind returns.

Kael breathes hard, bleeding from a graze on his side.

The child approaches the last sparking drone.

THE CHILD (softly)

I didn't hurt it.

I didn't even move.

It just... stopped.

Kael crouches. Opens the drone's fractured data port.

KAEL (CONT'D)

That wasn't mercy.

That was confusion.

He holds up the flickering core. It pulses weakly.

KAEL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

They don't know what you are.

And now they know I'm with you.

EXT. SKY - ABOVE THE RELAY FIELDS

A **micro-drone** the size of a fist watches silently from the clouds.

Its lens pulses once – recording.

Then it turns and vanishes.

EXT. RELAY FIELD EDGE - MINUTES LATER

Kael and the child walk, slow but deliberate, toward the basin horizon.

They don't speak.

But they move differently now.

Not as fugitives.

As problems.

FADE OUT.

EXT. SALT BASIN EXSPANSE - LATE AFTERNOON

An endless plain of white, cracked crystal and sun-bleached wreckage.

Kael and the child walk slowly across the dry, flat ground. Their boots crunch over bones, scorched helmets, broken blade hilts.

Nothing moves. No wind. The silence is unnatural.

Kael walks a few paces ahead, carrying a water flask. Then:

KAEL (quietly)

I fought alongside machines for ten years.
Knew how they moved. How they killed.
But that drone — that was hesitation.

The child doesn't respond.

KAEL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

It saw you. And it hesitated.
Machines don't pause. They act.
You... changed it. What are you?

The child stops. She looks at a half-buried Eiden soldier's visor in the salt. Her voice is quiet.

THE CHILD

I don't know yet. But they're
afraid I'll find out.

Kael turns toward her, eyes narrowing. The tension lingers — but he says nothing more.

They keep walking — surrounded by ghosts.

INT. EIDEN STRATEGIC VAULT - NIGHT (BLUE TONE)

A minimalist war room, flooded with pulsing data walls.

UNIT SIGMA stands at the center, analyzing footage. A hologram replays the final drone visuals — Kael leaping into view, destroying the unit.

Standing across from him is **COLONEL VOSS** — graying, sharp-eyed, expression unreadable.

SIGMA (filtered)

Deviation Prime confirmed: Kael Rusk.

Protective pattern suggests loyalty bond.
Target variance: not random.

VOSS

He went dark years ago. Wasn't
supposed to come back.

Sigma's head tilts slightly.

SIGMA

Emotional deviation introduces
secondary threat vector.
Solution: terminate both subjects.

VOSS

We kill him now, we lose the one
person who's gotten that child past
both borders.

SIGMA

Delay increases risk exposure.

VOSS

But gives us options.

Sigma steps forward – unnervingly smooth.

SIGMA

Emotion has no predictive
advantage.
I will correct the course.

Voss doesn't argue. He simply turns toward a translucent
command table.

VOSS (flat)

Then we better start watching him closer than we kill him.

EXT. EDGE OF THE SALT BASIN - NIGHTFALL

A glowing red moon begins to rise over the white plain.

Shadows appear along the edge of the basin – a **slow
procession** of Vesperan prophet-warriors in red ash cloaks.

Commander Rhea Solis walks barefoot, eyes closed, hands
streaked with salt.

Behind her, **SAREN VELIS** walks with the others – her gaze
distant.

The Prophet-Leader chants.

PROPHET

The dust remembers.
The void watches.

The marchers respond:

VESPERAN TROOPS (chanting)

And we walk. And we bleed. And we believe.

Rhea stops at a ridge.

She kneels – presses her branded palm into the salt.

RHEA (whispered)

The heretic walks ahead. I feel her.
Flame, show me where she hides.

The salt around her hand blackens – ever so slightly.

Saren watches with unease.

SAREN (quiet)

And if she runs again?

Rhea stands – eyes hard.

RHEA

Then we burn the sky to bring her
back.

She turns. The march continues.

Their fire torches light up – moving across the basin like
red stars in a sea of white.

EXT. MID-BASIN - KAEI AND THE CHILD - SAME TIME

The child watches the horizon.

Tiny **red lights flicker in the distance.**

Kael notices too.

KAEI

Don't stop.
Just keep walking.

FADE OUT.

EXT. SALT BASIN RIDGE - PRE-DAWN

A blood-red sliver of moon rises over the endless white salt. The basin glows under its light like an alien ocean.

A **Vesperan column** stands in silence at the ridge, torches flickering. They kneel — each one pressing their palms into the salt as a sign of ritual passage.

At their head, **COMMANDER RHEA SOLIS**, robed in obsidian black and red, steps forward and raises her hands.

RHEA

This is hollow ground. Where lies
were buried in fire, and truths
walked out scarred.
The child does not bring war. She
brings reckoning.

The troops remain silent, heads bowed.

Behind her, **SAREN VELIS** watches — face unreadable. She clutches a scripture bead but doesn't kneel.

Rhea turns.

RHEA (CONT'D)

If she reaches the Moon, we lose
her.
If they take her, we lose
everything.

Saren finally speaks.

SAREN

You speak of her like a flame, but
burn everyone who touches her.
What happens when she burns us?

RHEA (low)

Then we burn with purpose.

Beat.

RHEA (to all)

We do not kill the child.
We purge the defiler.
The shepherd dies. The light walks free.

She draws a line across the salt with her bare foot.

RHEA

Go.

EXT. MID-SALT BASIN - EARLY MORNING

KAEL and **THE CHILD** move slowly between jutting salt spires – some natural, others the remains of decayed field pylons.

Kael checks their heading against a worn data chip. The child trails behind, scanning the silent horizon.

KAEL

This is the last stretch before the tunnels. If we're lucky, they're behind us.

The child pauses. Places a hand on a stone etched with old scorch marks.

THE CHILD

No.
One of them is already here.

Kael stops. His hand drifts toward his sidearm.

KAEL

What do you mean "one"?

THE CHILD

She's ahead. And behind. And... waiting.

EXT. NATURAL SALT AMPHITHEATER - MINUTES LATER

They step into a **bowl-shaped depression** – smooth, craterlike, with no visible exit.

As they cross the center, Kael slows.

Silence.

A faint CRUNCH of salt under boots.

VESPERAN WARRIORS step into view along the rim – silent, weapons raised, surrounding them.

From behind one crest, **RHEA SOLIS** steps forward, her cloak billowing in the cold air. She doesn't raise a weapon.

Kael steps in front of the child instinctively.

RHEA

You've led her through fire. Across blood.
But this is where the flame stops running.

KAEL (measured)

You've been following her. Praising her.
You talk like you love her – but you want her caged just the same.

Rhea studies him.

RHEA (CONT'D)

Not caged. Guided. She carries the
breath of ancient things.
You think you're saving her from
war.
But she *is* the war.

She steps closer – unarmed.

RHEA (to the child)

Come. Let me show you who you were born to be.

The child's expression remains unreadable. Kael steps forward
– gun half-raised.

KAEL

You want her to fulfill a prophecy.
The others want her to evolve
humanity.
But nobody's asked what *she* wants.

Beat.

KAEL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

She stays with me.

Rhea's eyes harden.

RHEA (to her troops)

Take the man. Leave the girl.

Kael throws a flash-spark pellet at the ground – **BOOM** – a blinding white pulse.

Vesperan warriors rush in. Kael grabs a rusted pike from the salt and slams it into the first attacker.

Gunfire. A blade flashes. Kael rolls across the slick ground, fires once, clips a zealot in the shoulder.

A second warrior lunges – Kael **kicks the leg** out and drives a shard of salt glass into his visor.

The child stays in the center – unmoving – as the chaos swirls around her. One warrior hesitates in striking her – his hand trembles.

Kael sees the hesitation. Shouts:

KAEL (CONT'D)

NOW.

The child finally moves – not in fear, but straight toward the fissure Kael spotted earlier.

Kael slams a warrior into a pillar and dives after her.

Saren reaches the arena edge as Kael vanishes into the salt wall.

SAREN (to Rhea)

He could've killed more. He didn't.
Why does that scare me?

RHEA (cold)

Because you remember what mercy feels like.

She turns toward the gap Kael escaped through.

RHEA (to troops)

Into the dark.

INT. FISSURE PASSAGE / SALT WALL EXIT

Kael pulls the child into the narrow cavernous gap.

They breathe hard.

Kael stares at her.

KAEL (panting)

You could've run. Why didn't you?

THE CHILD

You didn't.

They vanish into the dark path that leads toward the next checkpoint.

FADE OUT.

INT. SALT WALL FISSURE - CONTINUOUS

The **narrow passage** twists between jagged white stone and broken iron roots – remnants of ancient tech buried beneath the salt.

KAEL leads the **child**, one hand guiding her shoulder, the other gripping his blade. Their breath echoes in the tight space.

KAEL (low, urgent)

Keep left. Don't stop unless I do.

Behind them — a SHOUT. BOOTS on stone.

Torchlight flickers behind the curve. Vesperan warriors enter the fissure.

Leading them — **COMMANDER RHEA SOLIS**, weapon drawn.

RHEA

Hold formation. The flame is ahead.

INT. MID-TUNNEL - MOMENTS LATER

Kael hits a narrow corridor — just wide enough for single file. He stops — slaps a **relay mine disc** onto the wall. Blinks red.

KAEL (to the child)

Next junction — take it. No matter what.

The child nods — hesitating.

THE CHILD

You'll come?

KAEL

I'll make sure you get the chance.

He shoves her forward.

As she vanishes around the bend, a **Vesperan elite zealot** bursts into view — armor glinting, blade ready.

Kael **engages brutally**.

Steel-on-steel. Tight space. Kael uses the wall — kicks off, drops into a slide, jams a baton into the warrior's knee. Crunch.

He grabs the elite's fallen spear and **throws it** down the hall — skewering a second pursuer.

INT. REAR TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

Rhea advances — untouched, calm.

She sees the child just ahead — no more than **twenty feet away**.

RHEA (quietly, to herself)

There you are.

She speeds forward.

But—

KAEL appears between them, bloodied, breathing hard.

KAEL (CONT'D)

No closer.

Rhea raises her weapon — a curved glaive, humming with energy.

Kael flicks a switch on the relay mine behind him.

KAEL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

I know faith when I see it.

But I don't think it's blast-proof.

BOOM.

The relay disc detonates — not a full collapse, but a violent **shock-blast** that caves in part of the tunnel. Salt, dust, and metal slam down between them.

Kael and the child vanish into the smoke.

INT. CAVED-IN PASSAGE - AFTERMATH

Rhea stands on one side, covered in white dust, blade lowered.

SAREN (O.S., arriving behind her)

We lost them.

Rhea stares at the rubble.

RHEA

No.

They descend.

Let them find the dark.

We will bring the flame below.

INT. LOWER ACCESS SHAFT - KAEL & THE CHILD - MOMENTS LATER

Kael catches up to the child. They reach a drop chute with a broken ladder.

Kael looks up — hears no pursuit.

KAEL (to the child)

You alright?

She nods – quietly.

They begin climbing down into the blackness below... toward the ruins of the **Subsurface Rail Core**.

FADE OUT.

SCENE 18 - "THE SUBSURFACE CORE"

INT. SUBSURFACE SHAFT - MOMENTS LATER

Kael lowers himself onto a twisted segment of ladder, half-eaten by rust. Below, flickering utility lamps trace the edges of a dark vertical shaft that drops out of sight.

Above, the child hesitates at the lip.

KAEL

(quiet)
Don't look down. Just keep moving.

She nods and begins to descend, boots clanking softly against the corroded rungs.

INT. SUBSURFACE RAIL CORE - DESCENT COMPLETE

The shaft opens into a vast, domed understructure – a **mag-rail hub** from before the collapse.

Forgotten rail lines crisscross in broken arcs. Metal skeletons of transit cars sit derailed and swallowed by time. Soft wind whistles through cracked vents.

As they walk, their footsteps echo in the cold dark. The air tastes like ozone and salt.

They pass the **remains of a rail terminal** – a shattered kiosk flickers.

The child brushes an old control panel. It hums–

A **holographic projection** crackles to life:
A family boarding a sleek mag-rail. Laughter. A conductor greeting them.
Then static. Silence.

THE CHILD

Was this... before?

KAEL

Yeah. Before they started carving up the sky.

(MORE)

KAEL (CONT'D)

(beat)

Before either side remembered how
to hate.

They move on.

INT. CONTROL STATION BUNKER - LATER

A dented steel door gives way to a half-collapsed bunker. Terminals line the walls, most dark, buried under layers of dust and frost.

Kael rummages through a drawer. Finds a portable **logbook pad**, cracked and faintly glowing.

He wipes the screen clean.

SCREEN TEXT (faint):

**Access Record: Kael Rusk | Eiden Clearance | LAST ENTRY:
3,217 C**

He stares at it. Something in him freezes.

THE CHILD

Is that you?

Kael sits down slowly, the logbook in his lap.

KAEL

We sealed this hub. Eiden command
ordered it – defectors were
flooding the gates.

(beat)

We shut it all. Sealed them in.
While people begged to be let
through.

He closes the logbook.

KAEL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Now it's the only place left to
hide.

They sit in silence. The hum of buried machinery pulses in the walls like a faint heartbeat.

EXT. SALT BASIN - SURFACE - NIGHT

Above ground, the ruins are still – until **Eiden drones** cut through the air in quiet arcs, scanning the stone with pale-blue sensors.

SIGMA, wrapped in reactive mesh armor, watches from atop a command crawler.

VOSS, the strategist, steps beside him, arms folded behind his back.

SIGMA

Thermal confirmed. Tunnel axis sixty-one. They're below.

VOSS

Kael Rusk.

SIGMA

He's off mission. Designated asset is with him. Shall I deploy striker pods?

VOSS

No.

(beat)

He's taking her somewhere we can't reach. But if we let him get there..

(beat)

...he might open the door for us.

Sigma tilts his head but doesn't argue. The drones hover, waiting.

EXT. SALT BASIN - VESPERA RIDGE - SAME TIME

On the far side of the basin, **RHEA SOLIS** stands on a cliff edge, wind cutting through her cloak.

Vesperan banners ripple behind her. Her eyes are closed.

RHEA

She's beneath us. I can feel her.

SAREN VELIS, her second-in-command, approaches quietly.

SAREN

She's not alone anymore.

(beat)

The man changed her path.

Rhea kneels and presses a **glyph beacon** into the soil. It glows with low firelight.

RHEA

Then let the path burn behind her.

The glyph begins to pulse – a ritual ignition starting. Vesperan zealots fall into quiet formation behind her.

INT. SUBSURFACE CORE - FINAL MOMENTS

Kael and the child stand over a **flickering map terminal**. A brittle display sputters to life.

KAEL

Next checkpoint is Omega-4. The launch vault. We make it there, we might still have a shot.

The child's hand brushes the screen. Her eyes distant.

THE CHILD

Someone's waiting there.

(softly)

I saw them. In a dream.

Kael doesn't respond – just nods. He turns toward a wall of old equipment – shoves aside a heap of rusted steel to reveal a **derelict rail drone**, its body covered in grime.

Above – a soft mechanical **whine**. Drones.

Kael rips open the drone's hatch and sparks a **plasma ignition coil**. The engine coughs.

THE CHILD (CONT'D)

You think it'll run?

KAEL

It doesn't have to run.

(beat)

It just has to forget it's dead.

The rail drone lights dimly. Tracks groan. Kael helps her in.

The vehicle lurches forward, crawling along a fractured line – sparks trailing behind.

As the control bunker fades behind them, Kael looks back one last time.

Then disappears into the dark.

FADE TO BLACK.

SCENE 19 - "FRACTURE ZONE"

EXT. SALT BASIN - RIDGE APPROACH - NIGHT

The cracked floor of the **Salt Basin** lies still beneath moonlight – shimmering pale like bone.

Suddenly: a **ripple of energy** disturbs the air – the hum of atmospheric shielding disengaging.

On the north ridge, **EIDEN TRANSPORTS** break over the crest – wheeled command crawlers and hovering drone tanks unfold into position.

SIGMA stands at the front, light armor catching starlight. A wall of surveillance drones bloom outward from him like petals – scanning, shifting, pulsing.

Behind him, **COMMAND STRATEGIST VOSS** emerges from a tactical crawler, hands behind his back. Quiet. Calculating.

EXT. SALT BASIN - SOUTHERN CREST - CONTINUOUS

On the southern rise, heat shimmer distorts the air – and then **VESPERAN WARRIORS** step through.

Cloaked in woven dusk-robos, bone-etched armor plates beneath. Ritual light flares across their weapons – heatless fire burning inside carved metal.

At their center: **COMMANDER RHEA SOLIS**. Calm. A vertical glaive rests across her back.

She holds a **crystal beacon** pulsing in sync with something unseen below.

Behind her, **SAREN VELIS** kneels, touching soil, whispering old rites.

EXT. BASIN FLOOR - NEUTRAL ZONE - MOMENTS LATER

From opposing ridges, **Eiden and Vesperan forces** descend – meeting halfway in the ruined plain that cradles the collapsed entrance to the underground shaft.

They arrive simultaneously – lines tightening, drones circling, blades drawn but not yet raised.

A brief moment of tensioned stillness.

Then:

SIGMA

(voice projecting)
Rhea Solis. You're far from your
sacred columns.

RHEA

Sigma. Still playing dog to dead empires?

SIGMA

We track an asset. Stand down and be spared.

RHEA

The flame is beneath us. I will not let your machines poison it.

SAREN

(quietly, to Rhea)
They seek the child too.

RHEA

Then we're aligned only in danger.

SIGMA

Step aside. Final offer.

RHEA

There is no "aside." Only forward.

Beat.

Voss watches silently as Sigma clenches a fist – drones flare.

SIGMA

Engage.

🔥 THE FIREFIGHT BEGINS

VESPERA RITUALISTS slam rune-pylons into the sand – **walls of spectral flame** erupt across the basin, cutting vision and confounding sensors.

EIDEN SHOCK UNITS burst through – exo-assisted soldiers, multi-barrel launchers spinning.

Steel meets flame. **Bolts crash against shields**. A rail slug rips a Vesperan in half. Another responds by detonating a **soul-flare**, incinerating three Eiden troops in an arc of ghostfire.

Above, Rhea launches herself from a rock ledge – glaive spinning – she lands among Eiden forces, slicing through an officer before melting back into smoke.

Sigma's drones form a **spiral shield**, shifting tactically – always watching. Always calculating.

SIGMA (CONT'D)

Update feed to Delta target vector.
They're moving.

INT. UNDERGROUND — SUBLEVEL ACCESS SHAFT — SIMULTANEOUS

KAEL RUSK and the **CHILD** are climbing deeper — the narrow shaft groaning with pressure. Utility lights flicker above them.

Far above, the **shaking of battle echoes faintly** — dust falling from the ceiling in rivulets.

CHILD

They're fighting.

KAEL

Let them. Long as they're looking at each other, they're not looking at us.

But he's wrong.

INT. UNKNOWN LOCATION — MONITORING SUITE

Dim light.

A wide **holographic map** hovers above a control table, showing **multiple layers** of the subterranean ruins. On it, **two heat traces flicker — Kael and the child.**

Watching them: **an unseen figure**, face obscured in shadow. Only the eyes visible — cold, clinical.

A gloved hand presses a command rune.

VOICE (O.S.)

Subject Rusk is moving toward Omega-4.

Behind the figure, a technician flinches.

TECHNICIAN

He's off all known grid protocols.
We have no access down there.

VOICE

We don't need access. We need convergence.

The figure turns toward a **locked stasis chamber** behind them — within it, something shifts.

INT. SUBTERRANEAN PLATFORM — CONTINUOUS

Kael and the child reach a platform buried beneath the ancient transport lines.

Old signs flicker: **"SUBLEVEL C - CORE JUNCTION 09."**

Kael pauses – notices a faint **blinking red dot** embedded in the ceiling. His face darkens.

KAEL

They saw us.

He pulls the child into cover just as a **sensor drone** arcs into the tunnel – scanning.

Kael slams a charge to the ceiling – **EMP burst**.

The drone shorts out – crashes to the floor, twitching.

From deeper in the tunnel – something **growls**.

Not a machine.

Not human either.

SALT BASIN - CLIFFSIDE - SAME TIME

Rhea stands above the ruined shaft, staring down into darkness.

SAREN VELIS joins her, blood on his cloak.

SAREN

They're still alive.

Rhea doesn't respond.

Instead, she holds a small crystal node in her palm. It pulses faintly – tracking the child's presence.

RHEA

We descend next.

(beat)

Let them clash. We'll follow the flame.

She walks toward the broken edge, preparing for her own descent.

FADE OUT.

INT. BELOW - KAEL AND THE CHILD RUNNING

Fire is beginning to **lick the walls of the tunnel**, chasing air downward.

THE CHILD

Kael – it's burning–

KAEL

They're trying to smoke us out.

They sprint into a side junction.

Above them, flickering signs mark the way:

➔ **OMEGA-4 LAUNCH VAULT** - 2.2km

Kael checks the structural map, shaking.

KAEL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

We're almost there.

The child touches the map – her eyes unfocused.

THE CHILD

Someone's waiting.

KAEL

Then we don't stop. Not now.

INT. UNKNOWN LOCATION – FINAL CUTAWAY

The **mysterious observer** steps forward into the light.

Their face still obscured – but now the **outline of Eiden insignia** is visible on their shoulder... crossed out.

Their voice, for the first time, warm and venomous.

VOICE

Open the lower gate.
Let him in.

They smile – just slightly.

VOICE (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

He's bringing her to me.

FADE TO BLACK.

SCENE 20 – "THE FAVOR"

*INT. SUBSURFACE RAIL CORE – OMEGA-3
TERMINUS – NIGHT*

The tunnel groans like a dying beast. Water drips from fractured iron above. The ancient infrastructure creaks, deep in the Salt Basin's underworld.

KAEL RUSK and THE CHILD reach the far end of the core. A wide expanse opens – an abandoned mag-train loading bay. Above, spotlights bloom.

EIDEN VTOLs descend. Drones fan out, fizzling with low-charge hums.

KAEL

(quietly)

No more places left to run.

EIDEN TROOPS emerge – surrounding the perimeter. From the central craft steps **COMMANDER VOSS**, draped in regulation black, unarmed.

SIGMA, armored and frigid, stalks behind him like a shadow.

SIGMA

Target confirmed. Standing orders apply.

VOSS

Override. Protocol 6. He's to be brought in alive.

SIGMA

(steely)

On what authority?

VOSS

Mine.

Sigma bristles. The troops hold position – confused.

VOSS (CONT'D)

(to Kael)

We need to talk.

INT. OLD OBSERVATION DECK - MOMENTS LATER

Kael is brought in – not bound. The child watches from a distance, kept safe by two guards under Voss's direct order.

Voss pours two glasses of water from a cracked purifier unit. Offers one to Kael. Kael doesn't take it.

KAEL

This your idea of mercy?

VOSS

No. This is a favor.

Kael scoffs. Tight silence.

KAEL

Let me guess. You want to strike a deal — pretend this was all part of the plan.

VOSS

No. I want to give you something. And I want you to hear why.

*He slides a **small encrypted capsule** across the table.*

KAEL

What is it?

VOSS

A locked route to Omega-4. And from there — a launch corridor to the Neutral Moon.

Kael doesn't touch it yet.

KAEL

Why help me now?

Beat. Voss breathes deeply.

VOSS

Because I didn't five years ago.

Kael stares.

VOSS (CONT'D)

We sealed the Eiden outposts during the collapse. You were inside the Karsen line. I had clearance to extract. I waited. I hesitated.

KAEL

You watched my unit die.

VOSS

I watched my **son** disappear.

Silence. Kael's breath freezes.

KAEL

What?

VOSS

Your mother—Serah—never told you. She was stationed at North Reach under a different name.

(MORE)

VOSS (CONT'D)
I wasn't allowed contact. For
security. For loyalty.

KAEL
That's not an excuse.

VOSS
It's not.

(beat)
But this--this is the only thing I
have left to give you. Not
forgiveness. Not freedom. Just...
the way out.

*Kael stands. Anger mixed with something unspoken. He takes
the capsule. Holds it like it burns.*

KAEL
You think this makes up for it?

VOSS
No. But it might mean she gets to
live.

He looks toward the child.

VOSS (CONT'D)
She's more important than any of
us. More than Eiden. More than
Vespera.

(soft)
You know it too.

INT. LOADING BAY - MOMENTS LATER

Sigma has seen enough.

SIGMA
This is treason.

He raises his communicator.

SIGMA (CONT'D)
Override Voss's clearance. He's
compromised. Proceed to detain.

*TROOPS hesitate. One nods -- stuns Voss with a bolt to the
side. He falls, restrained.*

KAEL
You arrest your own?

SIGMA
He betrayed the Directive.

KAEL
He remembered he was human.

Kael moves toward the child – clutching the capsule. Troops aim–

SIGMA
Stand down. Let him run. Let him
lead us in.

*Kael takes the child's hand. They vanish into the far
corridor, deeper into the final shaft toward Omega-4.*

INT. EIDEN COMMAND VTOL - MOMENTS LATER

*Voss, cuffed in the transport hold. Bloody lip. Breathing
shallow.*

Sigma steps in.

SIGMA (CONT'D)
He's bringing her to Omega-4. To
whatever voice called them there.

Voss looks up, bitter smile.

VOSS
Let him. That door will never open
for you.

INT. UNDERGROUND SPIRAL TUNNEL - KAEL & CHILD - CONTINUOUS

*They descend fast. Emergency lights flicker. Cold air
thickens.*

CHILD
What was that place?

KAEL
A mistake.

CHILD
Why did he help you?

Kael looks back.

KAEL
Because once... he didn't.

INT. VESPERA RIDGE POST - SAME TIME

*On the opposite side of the Salt Basin – **COMMANDER RHEA SOLIS** watches from high ground. Her forces remain still, waiting.*

SAREN approaches.

SAREN

The Eiden commander's given them passage.

RHEA

I saw.

SAREN

You could strike now. Collapse the tunnels.

RHEA

And bury what's awakening below?

She closes her eyes, whispering an old incantation – not of destruction, but of witnessing.

RHEA (CONT'D)

No. Let the fire rise. Let it show its true shape.

INT. OMEGA-4 GATE ACCESS - DEEP BELOW - MOMENTS LATER

*Kael and the child arrive at a **long-sealed gate**. The air is humming – low frequency vibrations like breath through metal.*

A terminal flickers to life – ancient, dormant systems waking.

The capsule Voss gave Kael begins to glow faintly.

The gate hisses. Unlocks. The path opens into darkness.

FADE TO BLACK.

SCENE 21 - "OMEGA-4"

INT. OMEGA-4 LAUNCH CHAMBER - NIGHT

A wide, circular chamber of ancient stone and machinery. The walls hum with dormant energy. Rusted launch tubes hang above like the ribs of some vast beast. This is where ascents once began – before the collapse.

KAEL and the **CHILD** step from a side conduit into the chamber, breath fogging in the cold.

CHILD

(softly)
This is it.

She walks ahead, drawn by something.

KAEL

We stay low. Voss said the
mechanism's buried under the floor
grid. Marked by-

He finds it - an **ancient lock terminal** recessed in the
ground. Kael kneels, opens a flap. Inside: a time-locked
drive with **Eiden clearance sigil**.

He inserts it. The chamber lights flicker to life. Gears
creak. Somewhere, deep below, **the launch rails begin to groan
awake**.

KAEL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Your favor, old man... it better
still fly.

INT. OMEGA-4 SURVEILLANCE NODE - ABOVE

A flicker in the dark. An **eye-shaped lens** awakens. An old AI
node comes online. Surveillance reconnects - and someone is
already waiting.

A **DIGITAL FIGURE** emerges in the chamber's upper halo -
glitching, half-stable. Voice deep, layered. Familiar but
synthetic.

THE VOICE

You brought her.

Kael draws his blade. The child steps in front of him.

CHILD

He's not here to hurt us.

The Voice steps closer - still unstable, like memory trying
to survive.

KAEL

Who are you?

THE VOICE

Once... I was a man. A father. A
traitor.

(to the child)
(MORE)

THE VOICE (CONT'D)
 I tried to reach you through
 dreams. Echoes. But the signal's
 fading. I have one message left.

CHILD
 Are you my father?

He pauses – flickers again.

THE VOICE
 Yes.

Kael lowers his blade – barely.

THE VOICE (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 They're coming. You have minutes –
 not more.
 Use the key. Launch to orbit.
 You'll find my last fragment there.
 I kept it safe.

Suddenly – ALERT TONES SCREAM from the launch systems.

EXT. OMEGA-4 PERIMETER - SAME TIME

SIGMA'S DRONES descend like vultures – dozens of them.

Behind them, **COMMANDER SIGMA** himself walks forward, flanked
 by **EIDEN PURGATION UNITS**. He speaks into comms.

SIGMA
 The child is at the launch site.
 She cannot be allowed to leave.
 Move in.

EXT. EASTERN RIDGE - ABOVE OMEGA-4

From the opposite ridge, **RHEA SOLIS** watches – her cloak
 billowing in the wind.

SAREN VELIS beside her.

SAREN
 They'll kill the child.

RHEA
 Then we stop them.

SAREN
 You would shield her? After all
 this?

RHEA

I would guard the flame until it decides. Not before.

She draws her blade – a trail of flame following its curve.

RHEA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Prepare to descend. We do not protect Kael. We protect what he carries.

INT. OMEGA-4 LAUNCH CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Kael drags the child toward the readying launch car – a sleek, rusted pod emerging from its housing.

From above, **DRONES crash through the ceiling.** Sigma's forces breach.

Kael turns to fight.

But–

RHEA drops into the chamber from above, landing between Kael and the oncoming drones. Her blade sears across the first wave.

RHEA (CONT'D)

Get her out. I'll hold them.

KAEL

Why are you–

RHEA

This is not for you. It's for her.

She slashes upward – flame arcs over the chamber, blinding the drones.

SIGMA marches with elite Eiden units across the high plateau. Drones whir low, scanning heat trails.

Behind them, **RHEA SOLIS** and a handful of Vesperan loyalists emerge – flanking the opposite ridge.

SIGMA

we breach. No more delays.

RHEA steps forward, cloak whipping in the wind.

RHEA

You'll kill her.

SIGMA

That's the objective.

Rhea draws her glaive.

RHEA

Then you'll go through me.

Tension crackles. Sigma signals a drone strike – but before it launches, Rhea **blasts it with firelight** – ancient Vesperan incantation rippling through the air.

Kael helps the child into the pod. The launch console flickers: **READY**.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Launch... now.

Kael hits the ignition.

The pod shakes – magnetic locks release.

EXT. LAUNCH SHAFT - NIGHT

The pod ignites, **rocketing upward into the tunnel**, toward the stratosphere.

As it disappears–

SIGMA storms into the chamber, eyes burning.

He looks at **Rhea**, standing over wrecked drones.

SIGMA

You let them go.

RHEA

I let the flame choose its sky.

He raises his weapon.

FADE TO:

FINAL MOMENT - THE MOON GLIMPSE (ABOVE)

From space, the Neutral Moon glows – distant, pale, beautiful. But beneath the surface, something stirs.

A **silent facility awakens**. Red lights blink in ancient corridors.

VOICE (V.O.)

(whisper, fading)
They're not alone there..

FADE OUT.

SCENE 22 - "THE ASCENT TO THE MOON"**INT. LAUNCH POD - ORBITAL DRIFT - NIGHT**

Total silence.

The pod glides through low orbit – minimal propulsion, drifting steadily toward the Neutral Moon, which glows like a bruised eye beyond the black.

Inside, the pod is cramped and dim. Old Eiden-era tech: exposed wiring, flickering screens, failing diagnostics.

KAEL sits slumped by the guidance console, bleeding from his side. He winces as he tightens a makeshift wrap around his ribs.

The CHILD sits on the floor, legs folded, watching the stars through a fogged viewport. Her face is pale, unreadable.

A low ping cuts through the silence –
AUTOMATED GUIDANCE SYSTEM lights up:

"AUTO-DOCK REQUEST: DENIED"
"ORBITAL CORRIDOR – NON-RESPONSIVE"
**"PROTOCOL LOCKOUT – CODE: NEUTRAL
ONE"**

KAEL

(mutters)
Of course it's locked. Nothing's
easy.

He starts pressing manual override keys. The pod shudders. Static buzzes from the console.

Suddenly–
A DATA ECHO triggers. Not Kael's doing.

The screen flickers.
A **holographic projection** appears – glitching, semi-sentient.

The VOICE.

VOICE (glitching)
 She was never supposed to make it
 this far.

Crackling static. The projection stutters, partially
 fragmented. Half a face in light.

VOICE (cont'd)
 You opened the gate.
 Now I have to finish it.

KAEL stares at the screen, stunned. He kills the transmission
 – but it takes a second too long. He's shaken.

KAEL (CONT'D)
 What is this place, really?

The child doesn't look at him. Her eyes stay fixed on the
 moon.

CHILD
 He was waiting for me.
 Like he knew what I would become.

A pause. Her voice is barely a whisper.

CHILD (cont'd)
 Do you think I'm broken?

Kael exhales, softly. He slides down beside her, shoulders
 pressed to the cold hull.

KAEL
 I don't know what you are.
 But I'm still here.
 I made you a promise.

A long silence follows. Just the hum of orbital drift.

CHILD
 Something's awake there.
 On the moon.

Kael glances at the dark silhouette growing closer.

Faint pulses of light now throb beneath its crust – like a
 heartbeat.

KAEL
 Yeah. I see it.

EXT. NEUTRAL MOON – FROM ORBIT

The moon is not lifeless.

Energy veining starts to glow across its surface – a massive, circular pattern beginning to ignite.

Like a **welcoming beacon**... or a **trap**.

CUT TO:

EXT. SALT BASIN – NIGHT

SIGMA watches a holographic projection of the launch pod in orbit.

SIGMA
He'll reach it.
They always do.

He turns to a subordinate.

SIGMA (cont'd)
Send the second wave.
Full breach clearance. No more
shadows.

CUT TO:

EXT. RIDGE ABOVE – VESPERAN ENCAMPMENT

RHEA watches the contrail vanish into the night sky.

RHEA
The fire follows them now.

SAREN steps beside her, confused.

SAREN
We're not stopping them?

RHEA
Not yet.
We'll need a vessel.

Her eyes reflect the pulsing light of the moon – and something deeper: **recognition**.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. NEUTRAL MOON – OUTER DOCKING RING – NIGHT

The launch pod connects with the broken lip of the moon's **docking ring**, a rusted aperture barely responding.

Manual clamps engage.

INT. DOCKING RING – AIRLOCK VESTIBULE

KAEL pries the pod open.

The airlock groans – not from pressure, but from disuse. Interior lights flicker dim amber. A **low thrum** pulses, like a heartbeat too slow to live.

They step inside.

Scorched walls. **Derelict pods** cling to the ring's interior – some with faded Eiden insignias, others with the Vesperan spiral, blackened with age.

One still has a **corpse slumped in the hatch**, armor fused with bone.

KAEL

This was a graveyard..

The CHILD doesn't respond. She walks quietly – the environment responds **to her**.

She brushes the wall – and light races along it, blooming out in glyphs and veins. Systems wake – but **only selectively**, almost curiously.

KAEL (cont'd)

You're waking it up.

She stops before a wide corridor.

Suddenly –

The lights shift.
Echoes fill the chamber.

A dozen overlapping **audio logs** and **holographic bursts** begin to play – fragmented, staggered:

MALE SCIENTIST (LOG)

Phase initiation incomplete. Host still unidentified.

FEMALE TECH (OVERLAPPING)

...neural anchor failed. Vessel drifted.

UNKNOWN VOICE

Awaiting her signal... we only get one chance.

A moment of silence follows – then one final projection appears:

A VESPERAN COMMANDER – younger, terrified.
Speaking directly to the recorder.

VESPERAN COMMANDER (HOLOGRAM)
If you find this – turn back.
The moon doesn't **want** visitors. It
wants vessels.

Kael turns away, shaken.

CUT TO:

EXT. ORBIT – RHEA'S VESSEL

A **stolen Vesperan star-skiff** glides toward the moon. SAREN pilots, while RHEA stands at the front viewport, holding the crystal node – now glowing hot.

SAREN
What if the moon rejects us?

RHEA
It won't.
It's part of her now.

She places her hand on the node – the skiff's systems align with an unseen entry corridor. The moon is **letting them in.**

INT. INNER SANCTUM – SUB-RING CORRIDOR

Kael explores deeper. The walls hum louder now. He passes a hatch, **half-open**, and sees it:

A **vaulted chamber** lined in cryo-glass. Stasis capsules shattered long ago – all but **one.**

Inside, faint frost still clings to a unit labeled:

SUBJECT GEN-PRIME_07
IDENT: ...ELIS // DAUGHTER //
FAILSAFE...

KAEL
Elis..

He turns – and sees the CHILD reaching toward it, eyes clouded.

KAEL (sharply)

Don't!

He grabs her arm – she flinches, pulled from the trance.

CHILD
It called to me.

KAEL
It's not done with you. Whatever
this place is – it built itself
around you.

She looks back at the capsule.

CHILD
Or because of me.

CUT TO:

EXT. LUNAR SHADOW – SIGMA'S ASSAULT FORCE

Eiden drop-ships emerge from orbit in stealth, engines dead silent.

Inside, **SIGMA** stands in full black command gear, watching the moon grow larger.

He speaks into the comm.

SIGMA
Ignore protocol.
Neutrality is dead.

SIGMA (cont'd)
Deploy breach units. No more
survivors.
We end this before she activates
the core.

He locks his helmet – his eyes furious and resolute.

FADE OUT.

INT. NEUTRAL MOON – INNER CORE CHAMBER

Dimly pulsing glyphs light the path as **Kael** and the **child** step into a vast chamber of shifting architecture – a living machine made of ancient tech and memory.

The **walls breathe**. Light folds. The air hums with sentience.

The child moves forward alone, drawn by unseen threads.

KAEL

softly
Wait—don't go in yet.

She looks back. Then steps deeper.

The **floor rises and rearranges**, forming a **spiral path** to the center — where a great obelisk-like terminal stands, humming with energy.

Suddenly, the air ripples.

THE VOICE (O.S.)

She returns to where she was
born...
And he follows, still afraid of
losing her.

Kael grips his weapon, unsure who he's hearing — or how.

KAEL

Show yourself.

A **holographic form begins to build** from the obelisk — flickering, unstable. A **man's face**, familiar yet not fully formed. **The Voice**.

THE VOICE

You never asked her name, Kael.

(beat)

She has always been *Lyra*.

Kael freezes. He looks to the child — Lyra — who doesn't deny it.

THE VOICE (cont'd)

I gave her that name before my body burned. Before the experiment failed.
Before I became... this.

Kael lowers his weapon slowly, shaken.

KAEL

You're her father?

THE VOICE

What's left of him.

He gestures – or thinks – and the room changes. **Projections light up**, showing fragments of **pre-collapse research, Vesperan and Eiden experiments**, and the **child** inside a chamber – her body suspended in light.

THE VOICE (cont'd)

She was never meant to carry it
all. But she did. And now the Moon
remembers.
She can finish what we failed to
understand.

Lyra watches, not scared – but torn.

INT. MOON - OUTER LEVEL - SAME TIME

RHEA SOLIS steps into the chamber, alone. She dismisses her guards with a glance.

SAREN stays behind. She walks slowly, reverently, eyes scanning the glyphs on the wall.

She sees Kael. Sees Lyra.

RHEA

So the flame endures after all.

Kael steps protectively in front of Lyra.

KAEL

Don't.

RHEA

(quietly)

I'm not here to kill her.

She walks forward, eyes never leaving Lyra.

RHEA (cont'd)

I've read the prophecy a hundred times. I memorized the shapes in fire.

But no verse prepared me for *this*.

She touches a glyph. It glows beneath her hand.

RHEA (cont'd)

If she bonds with this Core... she may lose herself.
She'll become what the Moon remembers. Not who she is.

KAEL

Then we stop it.

RHEA

You can't. You're not the one she listens to.

INT. MOON - PERIMETER

SIGMA breaches the Moon's barrier with elite Eiden troopers.

He wears tactical armor – powered, ready.

SIGMA

Clear the channel. Kill the child on sight.

INT. CORE CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Kael and Rhea sense the breach at the same time.

SIGMA'S FORCES BLAST IN.

Gunfire erupts. The chamber trembles.

Kael and Rhea fight – **side by side.**

Kael uses brutal efficiency. Rhea moves like a flame-dancer.

They take down soldiers together – but they're outnumbered.

Lyra stands at the center, unmoved – transfixed.

The **Voice speaks** again – louder now, echoing through the chamber.

THE VOICE

You can choose, Lyra. Open the Moon. Rewrite it all.

KAEL

No. You don't have to become anyone else.

(beat)

You're not the Moon. You're you. She hesitates. Then steps forward. Her hand hovers over the glyph.

SIGMA

(shouting)

Stop her! NOW!

He raises his weapon – aims to kill.

RHEA intercepts, **taking the shot to her side**, shielding Lyra.

Kael lunges and disarms Sigma – knocks him unconscious.

INT. CORE - MOMENTS LATER

Lyra touches the glyph – not to bond, but to **disconnect**.

The **Voice fades**, gently.

THE VOICE

I was only ever meant to guide you.
Not replace you.

She whispers:

LYRA

Goodbye, Father.

The chamber glows – not violently, but radiantly.

The Moon awakens – not as a weapon, but a witness.

Data lifts into the air, archiving memory, **transmitting the truth outward** – history, betrayal, prophecy, and the lies of Eiden.

Kael carries Rhea to safety.

Lyra turns, bathed in light – no longer haunted, but whole.

FADE OUT.

SCENE 25 - RETURN ORBIT

INT. ANCIENT CRUISER - VIEWPORT CHAMBER

Aboard a **dormant diplomatic vessel** half-buried within the Moon's architecture, **Kael, Lyra**, and a **wounded Rhea** prepare for departure.

The interior is dusty but functional – lined with relics from a forgotten era. Screens flicker to life. Systems reconnect.

Through the viewport: the planet looms below – fractured, beautiful, and still burning.

Kael sets coordinates manually.

KAEL

We're not going back. Not there.

Lyra doesn't respond – she watches the stars shift around them.

Rhea leans against the bulkhead, weakened but watching them.

RHEA

You realize they'll call her a
weapon now. A heretic. A ghost.

KAEL

Let them.
They believed the wrong flame.

He powers the ship.

INT. WORLD BELOW - VARIOUS LOCATIONS - MONTAGE

– **Eiden command** receives the full Moon transmission.
Crowds gather as holograms of hidden history broadcast across
cities.

– The **flame glyphs burn away** from Vesperan temples – as if
their purpose is fulfilled.

– **Sigma**, alone on the Moon's exterior, watches their ship
rise.
His command doesn't answer. He's been **abandoned**.

He kneels in fury, powerless.

INT. CRUISER - FLIGHT DECK

Rhea slowly removes her insignia, placing it on a console.

RHEA

Maybe this was the prophecy all
along. Not war.
Witness.

She looks at Lyra one last time.

RHEA (cont'd)

The world will chase you now.

LYRA

Let them try.

Kael shares a quiet glance with her – protective, proud,
uncertain.

She stands at the viewport as the **Moon fades behind them**,
replaced by stars.

Her eyes glow faintly – **not with flame, but with memory**.

LYRA (softly)

He tried to finish the story.

But it was mine all along.

FADE TO BLACK

FINAL TITLE:

"THE FLAME REMEMBERS."

INT. SUBSURFACE VAULT - UNKNOWN LOCATION

A sealed chamber – somewhere beneath the crust of a shattered moon **not charted on any current map.**

Dust dances in low gravity. The architecture here is different – **older than Vespera, older than Eiden.**

A lone figure steps into frame – **faceless, cloaked,** moving with deliberate purpose.

He approaches a vertical slab of obsidian, etched with **sleeping glyphs.**

As he places a **crystalline shard** into the slab's socket, **the glyphs flare red.**

Suddenly, **a whispering voice** – familiar but more fragmented than before – ripples through the chamber:

THE VOICE (distorted)

"You delayed her... but you cannot stop the recursion."

"The child was only the first echo."

The slab fractures – revealing a **buried vault of preserved consciousness cores.**

Dozens. Maybe more.

The figure speaks, low and unreadable.

MYSTERIOUS FIGURE

Initiate reclamation protocol.

Find the others.

A final light flickers – not flame, but **cold data** awakening.

CUT TO BLACK.