

ABSTRACTION

By

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Based on novel

Dealer of Happiness

By

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Story by

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Logline: In a bleak city divided between emotionless "Greys" and exploited "Feelers," a jaded thrill-harvester uncovers a conspiracy to synthesize emotion, forcing him to lead a desperate revolt to save his friends and the last remnants of humanity.

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SUPER - Abstraction: A bio-interactive ribbon adhered to the skin to digitally capture or seed human emotion.

OVER BLACK

The sound of a motorcycle cuts the silence with a sharp high-pitched whizzing.

Rain crashes down on the city.

EXT. CITY SCAPE - NIGHT

Rain and mist shroud a colorless city. Monolithic buildings pierce the clouds.

SUPER - The future. Year. Unknown.

Light pierces through the clouds from the top of skyscrapers.

Massive, ULTRA-HIGH-DEFINITION DIGITAL SCREENS emitting a cool, sterile light, advertise a series of mantras. The background is pure, featureless white. In the center, a perfectly smooth text in black "Experience Without Conflict." Another reads "Symmetry and Balance." And the last reads "Masters of Purpose."

A sleek BRIGHT-ORANGE MOTORCYCLE rips through the streets in contrast to the words.

A bright green field lit by large ultraviolet lights, a grand greenhouse, illuminates the rider's helmet as he passes.

An ABSTRACTION glimmers in a series of colors and dances at the rider's side in the motorcycle's draft.

The rider slaps the face guard of his helmet open.

NEIL (32) smiles, exhilarated, with the mist crashing upon his cheeks. The leather of his gear accentuates a lean muscular silhouette.

He removes a blade tucked on his right leg protected by a metal cover over his knee.

With a quick slice across his thigh, he expertly sheathes the blade then applies the abstraction to his wound.

Like a racer, Neil turns a corner. The metal cover on his knee sparks the ground in bright orange. He speeds faster through traffic and obstacles as his vision tunnels and blurs through a row of buildings.

The thrill oozes from his expression until, like a switch, it changes blank, cold.

The abstraction radiates to a solid vibrant color of vermilion.

Neil recklessly brakes to a stop. He removes the abstraction and places it into a PROTECTED CONTAINER.

Neil slumps over the handlebars, struggling to keep the bike upright.

After a moment and a few deep breaths, Neil reignites the motorcycle.

A vehicle, hidden in the darkness, follows.

INT. VACUOUS BUILDING, FOYER - NIGHT

The immaculate foyer is empty, except for a beautiful secretary at the front desk.

Neil limps in, rain and blood soiling the carpet. His prize abstraction tucked under his arm.

RACHAEL (18), youthfully radiant in a bright red dress adorned with a scarf, observes Neil.

A simple RED ROSE the only other splash of color in the sterile room.

NEIL

You're new.

Rachael places an abstraction on her arm as she curiously looks him over.

RACHAEL

What's the hurry?

NEIL

I have a rush.

RACHAEL

So.

NEIL

Don't keep me here to peddle your junk.

RACHAEL

Don't ruin it.

Her brow furrows as she quickly releases the abstraction that radiates a bright yellow then fades.

NEIL

Too late.

RACHAEL

At least it lasts longer than your boner and not nearly as dangerous.

Rachael eyes his bloody leg.

NEIL

Nothing lasts forever.

Neil caresses the edge of the rose with his fingers.

NEIL (CONT'D)

What's he got you doing?

Rachael's data pad dispenses a pass.

RACHAEL

Floor one-thirteen.

Neil rips the pass from her grip.

NEIL

I know.

INT. LARGE OFFICE - NIGHT

Opulence, stripped of its soul. The furniture looks expensive but uncomfortable.

A blank figure of a man glides toward Neil.

49679

Do you understand what a rush means?

NEIL

Take your pedal bike and do it yourself.

The emotionless figure appears from the darkness, his face a mask of indifference tattooed with permanent expression lines, an illusion of humanity. A tattoo on his wrist highlights his designation "49679".

NEIL (CONT'D)

Vermillion. High grade. Why do you need this so bad?

49679
Temper your curiosity.

Neil retrieves the protected container and cracks the seal.

A faint orange glow illuminates their faces. The air hums with the lingering energy of Thrill as 49679 examines it.

49679 (CONT'D)
It's chaotic and irrational.

NEIL
Irrational?

Neil closes the container.

49679
It has its uses.

49679 observes Neil's leg bleeding.

49679 (CONT'D)
Self-inflicted trauma creates... static.
It pollutes the sample.

Neil sets the abstraction on a table.

49679 (CONT'D)
A deduction will be made.

NEIL
That's not the agreement.

49679 pushes it back to him.

49679
Would you prefer zero?

NEIL
No one else can do this.

49679 silently waits for Neil to relent.

Neil reluctantly pushes it back.

NEIL (CONT'D)
We done?

49679 taps on his pad.

49679
Payment completed.

Neil rushes out.

49679 activates a panel to monitor work progress.

A series of monitors engage to display various members of the emotionless hierarchy with their designations at the bottom of the screen. They encompass him making him appear small.

49679 stands at attention ready to present as the final monitor engages.

13612, the oldest of the group, face aged but wrinkleless leads the conversation.

49679 (CONT'D)

We are in session.

13612

Report.

49679

Synthetic curiosity is production ready.

13612

Your directive was to also include joy, envy, and love.

49679

Those are still in development.

13612

You do not need to state what I already know to be clear.

49679

I request more time.

13612

Denied.

49679

Re-creation has proved difficult.

13612

If the task is too difficult, I will provide it to another. Your failure will be noted.

49679

I request to examine other irrational variables.

13612

This does not eliminate our need for organic emotions.

49679

Changing the scope to more irrational variables may highlight stable variations our controls do not.

13612

We've been untethered from the irrational for years. It's what has kept us sustained.

49679

And stagnant. This was the objective of this program. Was it not? We cannot continue without untethering ourselves from them.

13612

Your request is granted. The timeframe for your success has been accelerated.

49679

Acknowledged.

13612

Our session is concluded.

The monitors fade to black and the room goes dark.

EXT. PERIPHERY - MORNING

The periphery, impoverished and lined with small homes and cramped apartments, pops with color from porches and balconies.

Plastered onto buildings, billboards illuminated by harsh ultraviolet grow-lights display, "We Protect Those Who Provide." Another reads "Purity is Purpose." Another reads "Irrational thought breeds chaos."

Graffiti, sprayed onto the signs, mocks them.

The sun pierces through the clouds and mist to cast light through the dark edge of the city.

MISSING PERSON FLYERS attached to street lamps also litter the streets. Residents trample the fallen flyers into the wet pavement. The paper tears into slush.

Children play in the street. Abstractions attached to each.

A parent collects abstractions when it turns a bright Sun yellow and the child goes limp. Another child is sent in to replace them.

Neil parks his motorcycle in front of the apartments. He picks up a few, salvageable, posters and reattaches them to a community board.

Another parent rushes over.

PARENT

Hey! Neil! You got any sunray to resell?

NEIL

Again?

The parent looks over the other children, envious.

PARENT

The adoptee I got is only throwing tantrums.

NEIL

Ever tried letting them just be a kid?

PARENT

Come on. I can't produce like they can.

NEIL

I can't help you. But looks like you're prime for a green.

INT. NEIL'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Fresh, colorful plants on the windowsills and balcony are the only things keeping the apartment from looking like a prison cell.

The screen displays "Feelers" persecuted by "Grey" lawyers in a courtroom show. It blares at high volume.

Neil collapses on his bunk. He reaches into a flowerpot next to the bed to twiddle on a BRIGHT ORANGE RIVER STONE.

TIM (O.S.)

You didn't die.

TIM (30), thin and quietly observant, rests on the other bunk.

NEIL

Not yet.

TIM

Did it at least pay well?

Neil turns and stares blankly at him.

NEIL

What the hell are you watching?

An abstraction on Tim's arm turns a bright amber and he shows it off before going blank. He takes deep controlled breaths.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Again? Who needs the outrage?

TIM

That grey lawyer client.

(To himself)

When does it end?

NEIL

Can you put your headphones in at least?

Tim switches off the screen.

TIM

You wanna go pleasure eat?

NEIL

Why? Bill does that enough for all of us.

TIM

Yeah. But we haven't just hung out in a while.

NEIL

The rent doesn't pay itself. And you know that amber isn't worth shit.

TIM

I'm working on it.

NEIL

Try harder. I can't keep carrying you.

TIM

He docked your pay again didn't he?

Neil doesn't acknowledge him.

TIM (CONT'D)
I'll figure it out.

NEIL
Soon would be preferable.

TIM
I got you bro.

NEIL
Just keep us off a poster. Alright?

Neil finds a picture above his bunk of a motherly figure with Neil and Tim as boys.

INT. CAFE - AFTERNOON

The cafe is simple and clean, with small tables and counters spaced perfectly for wheelchair access and movement.

A large man with a slovenly appearance, BILL (45), savors a tuna sandwich at the counter.

Neil and Tim quietly enter but the door creaks and a bell rattles.

BILL
Hey Neil! Come here! The tuna is incredible. You've got to try it.

TIM
Do you even know what a tuna is?

Covered in abstractions, Bill chews relentlessly until each abstraction flares a bright, sun-yellow. He slows to a crawl then carefully removes each one to contain them.

NEIL
You need a shower.

BILL
Beats working the fields all day.

Neil holds Bill upright before he falls out of the chair.

BILL (CONT'D)
You need a one? Might help you eat.

Bill points to his abstractions.

NEIL

You barely make enough from them as it is. I'll get this one. I'll even try the tuna.

TIM

What about me?

NEIL

You can get your own tuna.

A loud thump rocks the floor.

BILL

It's just Lily.

JUDY (25), an emotionless "Grey", studies them from across the cafe. She redirects her wheelchair multitasking and tapped into a computer. Judy's headphones protect her from distraction. A couple of grey ration cubes with slimy gravy sit on a table.

NEIL'S MEMORY

Neil and Tim serve two fancy plates with dull protein rations glazed in a similar color gravy. They place sun-yellow abstractions on the table.

The grey couple apply the abstractions. Goosebumps tingle and their eyes dilate captured in a flutter of joy with each bite.

BACK TO:

NEIL

Pathetic.

Another loud thump.

Tim taps Bill's shoulder, questioning.

BILL

She's moving flour bags.

TIM

The big ones? By herself?

BILL

Neil, your girl is fucking with pricing again.

NEIL

Not my girl.

TIM

I'll have Tousseau talk to her.

NEIL

He'll just talk you in to doing something stupid.

TIM

Where else are we going to get ribbons?

One last thump.

LILITH

Sorry about the wait.

LILITH (26), a tough redhead with piercing green eyes, shyly smiles with hints of flour on her apron.

NEIL

Umm.

Neil looks for an abstraction and quickly applies it.

LILITH

Really?

He sheepishly shrugs as she captures an abstraction as well.

NEIL

Tuna. I'll try the tuna.

Lilith winks at him.

Both abstractions turn a heavy pink color

LILITH

Coming right up.

Neil removes the abstraction and carefully places it into a container.

Tim mocks Neil, hands in a heart shape.

Lilith pulls Judy's headphones then whispers into her ear. She presses the pink abstraction onto Judy's arm.

Judy lights up, hit with a cupid's arrow, then blank as the moment fades.

Bill gets Neil's attention.

BILL

That's her sister.

NEIL
Right. What's her designation?

BILL
How many people you know are actually
blood related here?

Neil looks her over with a glint of disdain.

Lilith returns with a tuna sandwich.

BILL (CONT'D)
How's your sis?

LILITH
She's good.

NEIL
How can you tell?

LILITH
I just can.

NEIL
Right.

LILITH
Save your judgement for someone else.

NEIL
Like she would care.

LILITH
I care.

NEIL
I get it.

LILITH
Do you?

NEIL
I take care of this a-hole.

TIM
Forgive my brother. He's a judgmental a-
hole.

LILITH
What makes you any different?

TIM
I was a hand-picked adoptee.

Lilith looks over her sister, lovingly.

LILITH
Sometimes, it's like she wakes up and understands.

NEIL
Maybe you're reading too much into it.

Lilith straightens, stern and defensive.

LILITH
Am I?

NEIL
Probably.

LILITH
She has to face their prejudice. She doesn't need yours too.

NEIL
Habit. They usually don't leave them here.

LILITH
I'm glad they did.

A loud pinging interrupts them.

BILL
Orders?

Neil scrolls through his data pad.

Tim reads over Neil's shoulder.

TIM
I swear he hears us talking about him.

BILL
Maybe he does.

NEIL
How much do I owe you?

Lilith turns her screen and Neil almost explodes.

LILITH
You're buying his, right?

NEIL
How many did you have?

LILITH
Ten.

TIM
Got enough?

BILL
I'll get you back for them. Promise.

Neil reluctantly pays and exits.

Tim holds a moment while Neil leaves. He tosses an amber abstraction to Bill.

Bill catches it and silently nods.

EXT. NEIL'S APARTMENT, BALCONY - NIGHT

Neil and Tim relax watching the periphery. A cheap rusted railing wobbles as Tim plays with it.

NEIL
When are you going fix that?

TIM
Been to see mom?

Neil leans back on the rail, disheartened.

NEIL
I can't.

TIM
You should. She's raising some interesting kids.

NEIL
More interesting than us?

Tim glances out toward the distance.

TIM
You ever think there's more out there?

NEIL
Out there?

TIM
I'm just thinking.

NEIL
That's dangerous.

TIM
I'm serious. Ever think it's possible
people are still out... beyond?

NEIL
Where are you getting this shit?

TIM
It's just a thought.

NEIL
There isn't anything out there.

TIM
How do you know for sure?
(Beat)
There could be more. Maybe even something
free of all this.

Neil removes an abstraction and places it on his arm. It
radiates to a bright red.

NEIL
What else do we need?

The brothers embrace.

Neil grabs the railing and it breaks from the edge. He
falls but Tim catches him. The abstraction that had been
radiating bright red turns to a deep dark brown.

Tim pulls Neil up.

Neil slumps to the floor.

NEIL (CONT'D)
What the hell?

Neil removes the abstraction and Tim contains it.

Tim stares at the glowing abstraction, running a thumb
back and forth over its glossy edge.

TIM
Think Tousseau will buy it?

NEIL
Why?

TIM
He's talked about researching mixed
colors for purity. Besides, we need it.
Right?

Neil chides Tim, disappointed, but relents.

NEIL

Fine.

INT. NEIL'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Tim frantically stuffs clothes and gear into a duffel bag. He stops at his bedside table and softly clutches a BLACK KNIGHT CHESS PIECE.

Neil awakens.

Tim places the piece in a pocket.

NEIL

Where are you heading?

TIM

Selling the mixed to Tousseau.

NEIL

Don't get stuck there playing chess just because you beat him once.

Tim zips the bag, ready.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Why the bag?

TIM

Remember that guy who ordered the amber? My regular.

NEIL

What about him?

TIM

He invited me over.

Neil rushes out of bed.

NEIL

For the night?

TIM

It's for a special request. I need to be there in person.

NEIL

No. Eff that. We don't go into their world.

TIM
It'll be fine.

NEIL
Those are the last words of every bad
decision.

TIM
It's a couple of days max.

Neil stares through Tim like he should be blocking the door.

Tim moves to the door before Neil can.

NEIL
Do I need to say it?

TIM
Do you trust me?

NEIL
Are you expecting me to say no?

Tim and Neil exchange concerned glances.

INT. TOUSSEAU'S MANSION, PARLOR - DAY

The parlor is decadent, polished, and manicured by a maid.

TOUSSEAU (75), wheelchair bound impeccably dressed with a rose boutonnière, ponders across a chessboard.

Tim patiently awaits the next move.

TOUSSEAU
I should have never taught you this game.

Tousseau moves a piece slow and frail with a deliberate bravado then a soft click on the timer.

Tim moves, self-assured, with a strong press on the timer. They trade moves back and fourth.

TIM
I do this. We're square.

TOUSSEAU
More than.

TIM
Are you sure it's out there?

TOUSSEAU

Yes.

TIM

Leave Neil out of this.

TOUSSEAU

This opportunity only comes once.

Tim moves his knight decisively into place.

TIM

Check.

TOUSSEAU

Your play is reckless.

TIM

Is it?

TOUSSEAU

You're just prolonging the inevitable.

Tousseau places a data pad on the table. An article about falling birth rates among the populace with faster rates among feelers highlights it.

TIM

Excuse me?

TOUSSEAU

They know it's coming.

Tousseau calmly moves a final piece into place. He wheels his chair away from the table and pushes away.

TIM

The game isn't finished.

TOUSSEAU

Is it?

Tim reviews the board to reveal his position is unwinnable. He tips his King over and watches it wobble on the board.

Tim sends a message to Bill on his pad "We're out of time. He knows".

EXT. PERIPHERY, OUTSIDE THE CAFE - MORNING

Tim paces back and forth writing onto a note, bag over his shoulder. He sights Bill walking toward him.

Bill stops in his tracks, terrified, then hides.

Hard footsteps are heard from behind him.

Tim scribbles one last word onto the note then places it in his bag. He turns and tosses the bag at an ENFORCER. They're emotionless, expressionless, and ruthless.

The massive enforcer snatches the bag, throws it down, and shoves Tim into a waiting transport. A second, identical enforcer yanks him inside.

ENFORCER 1

Subject identified and secured.

A small stack of amber abstractions fall out of the bag.

ENFORCER 1 (CONT'D)

Informant information verified.

The enforcer smashes the stack.

INT. CAFE - NIGHT

The cafe is closed for the night. Lilith and Judy share a meal at a booth.

JUDY

Query?

LILITH

You can just ask, remember?

JUDY

Was that feeling Love?

LILITH

What do you think?

JUDY

I registered sensations I've never felt before. My body tingled.

Judy moves her hands close to her chest.

LILITH

Forget I ask.

JUDY

I can not.

LILITH

Love isn't something you feel. It's something you experience.

JUDY

I don't understand.

Lilith reaches out for Judy's hand, holding it.

LILITH

How does this feel?

JUDY

I register your hand touching mine.

LILITH

Love is knowing what this touch means to you, without me holding your hand.

JUDY

Does it fade away?

Lilith softly shakes her head "No".

There's a loud knock on the door that startles Lilith.

She carefully approaches the door.

Bill is waiting for her with Tim's bag.

Lilith quickly lets him in.

BILL

I need to you to give this to Neil.

LILITH

Why?

BILL

Please. It can't be me.

Lilith takes the bag and agrees with nod.

EXT. PERIPHERY - NIGHT

Neil trudges through the mist and watches his reflections in the puddles and potholes. He retrieves his river stone from a pocket to twiddle.

Neil stares into the cafe as Lilith and Judy talk. He notices a wry smile on Judith's expression with an abstraction to assist.

NEIL

She gets it, my ass.

DANIEL, a local homeless man covered in a plastic film over his already dirty clothes, steps close to Neil.

DANIEL

Think they'll spare a meal?

NEIL

I don't know. Just go to the shelter.
They'll take care of you.

DANIEL

Too crowded tonight. Got anything?

NEIL

I'm not far behind you.

Neil receives a ping on his data pad. It shows another order that releases Neil from his twiddling into a tight grip around the stone.

DANIEL

At least you can still do it?

Daniel shrugs and marches off.

Neil looks toward his motorcycle, deciding.

He searches the skyline for a tall building.

NEIL

Up we go.

A broken snap under Neil's foot grabs his attention. He finds the shards of a broken amber abstraction.

EXT. TALL BUILDING - MORNING

The building is porous and grooved to catch rainwater with cut outs that make it a climber's dream.

Neil stretches and readies his climbing gear to free solo climb the tall building.

A vehicle watches hidden behind others.

Neil eyes it, disgusted. He walks over and knocks on the window.

The window lowers to reveal Tousseau.

NEIL
Really?

TOUSSEAU
You've been avoiding me.

NEIL
You think?

TOUSSEAU
At least come for a game.

NEIL
Bored of beating Tim?

TOUSSEAU
It's important we speak.

NEIL
Important to you. Thanks, but no thanks.

Neil returns to the wall as the window closes. He dips his hands in the chalk pack on his back and slaps his hands creating a cloud.

When the cloud dissipates, MIKE (25), buff and pure muscle, does the same.

NEIL (CONT'D)
What the hell?

MIKE
We all have to make a living.

NEIL
Here?

MIKE
Race to the top?

Neil huffs at him.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Winner gets the best one?

NEIL
Why would I compete for something I already know I'll have?

MIKE
Mine will be better.

Mike removes a metal striker and places it on his hand.

Neil, shakes his head, and does the same then shows it off.

NEIL

How about winner gets both?

MIKE

You're on.

They both prepare abstractions to their sides.

NEIL

One. Two. Three.

They race to the wall on each side. They climb step for step until Neil pulls away.

Emotionless residents observe but barely register them as they pass.

They break through the clouds and daylight shines on them.

With enough lead, Neil peers over the clouds protecting the city to a blank desert-like canvas surrounding it. Hints of color, like a mirage, shimmer in the far distance.

Neil applies the abstraction to his arm before finding a smooth patch of building with no grips. In a fury, he gouges the building's concrete with the metal striker to create grips.

Neil drains of emotion as Mike gains on him when they approach the top.

EXT. TALL BUILDING ROOFTOP - DAY

Neil stretches for the edge and pulls himself over just in time to win. He slumps to the ground tired. Neil reaches for his abstraction.

Mike's hand slaps down on it first.

MIKE

Hold onto it a moment.

Mike offers his hand to lift Neil from the ground.

Neil lifts himself up.

NEIL

Pay out. Loser.

Mike grabs a bag from the corner with a parachute. He never applied his abstraction.

MIKE

Sorry.

Mike nods.

Out of nowhere, two enforcers grab Neil to push him to the edge of the building.

NEIL

What the fuck? Grey Enforcers?

The enforcers push Neil over and dangle him from the edge. He dangles over the edge terrified.

The abstraction that had been glowing vermillion changes to a deep black brown.

Neil glimpses part of a tattoo on an enforcer's wrist starting with "17".

MIKE

That's it.

The enforcers pull Neil back and remove the abstraction from his arm.

Mike secures it as Neil goes limp on the ground.

The enforcers leave as quickly as they arrived.

Neil, drained, crawls toward Mike unable to speak.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Not sorry.

Mike steps to the edge, parachute secured, and applies an abstraction. He flips a double bird and jumps.

Neil passes out.

EXT. STREET - AFTERNOON

Neil returns to his motorcycle. A container with a bright vermillion abstraction and a note rests on the gas tank. The note says "Fair Trade."

Neil crumples the note and tosses it into the street.

INT. VACUOUS BUILDING FOYER - NIGHT

Neil trudges in exhausted.

Rachael spots him and applies makeup.

RACHAEL

At least you're not making a mess this time.

NEIL

Yeah. Yeah. Why the urgency? Again?

Rachael types onto her pad and it spits out a pass.

RACHAEL

You know where to go.

Rachael turns to hide fresh bruises pronounced and haphazardly covered by makeup from Neil's gaze.

NEIL

Anything you want to tell me?

She shakes her head "No" then gently slides back into her seat.

INT. LARGE OFFICE - NIGHT

49679 exercises intensely on a treadmill, unaffected, like a leisurely stroll.

Neil approaches 49679 but enforcers block his path.

49679 cycles the treadmill to a stop. He pats himself with a towel then offers it to Neil. 49679 pulls it back.

49679

You used a different method.

NEIL

There are several ways to achieve the same results.

49679

Your last offering didn't yield the results.

NEIL

Not my problem. You already docked me for it anyway.

49679 snaps his fingers and the enforcers come to his side. They approach Neil.

NEIL (CONT'D)

That other thrill junkie try to sell you a mixed dark brown?

49679 tilts his head working out a problem.

NEIL (CONT'D)

I would almost think that was a question.

49679

Are you admitting to failed product?

NEIL

He didn't?

49679 snaps his fingers again.

The enforcers step forward and Neil pushes back.

49679

Test it.

They remove the abstraction from Neil then use a device to analyze it.

ENFORCER 1

Ninety-four percent pure.

49679

You'll only receive half payment. Your contract is terminated.

The enforcers ruthlessly guide Neil out of the office.

49679 sorts through his collection of abstractions. He compares two bright yellow abstractions. The first radiates pure without deviations in color and ambiance, organic. The other is rhythmic and pulses with color, synthetic.

49679 applies the pure abstraction. His eye dilate. A childlike grin awkwardly forms into a series of hitches and head turns.

49679 (CONT'D)

What value could a spoiled abstraction hold?

49679 snaps his fingers.

49679 (CONT'D)
Find who extracted it.

The enforcers acknowledge then quickly exit.

49679's expression fades, blank and cold.

INT. NEIL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Neil examines the apartment, eerily quiet. He removes the river stone then secures it into a pocket.

The colorful plants are fading from wilt.

NEIL
You gotta water them Tim.

Neil removes a small rainwater collection barrel from the window to water the plants. He pours the balance into a water filter for a drink.

There's a soft knock on the door.

Neil rushes to the door.

NEIL (CONT'D)
Tim?

He opens it to reveal Lilith holding Tim's bag and a red notice on the door.

NEIL (CONT'D)
Where did you get that?

Neil rips off the official then pulls the bag from her.

LILITH
Yours?

NEIL
My roommate.

LILITH
Everything ok?

NEIL
Delightful.

Neil tempers this emotion.

NEIL (CONT'D)
That it?

LILITH

I guess.

Neil rudely closes the door then rushes to check the bag. It yields nothing. Neil throws it on Tim's bunk.

Neil opens the red official notice with the words "Eviction" highlighted across the top.

He crumples it and throws it to a wall.

Neil reaches for an abstraction, only one left. He pulls the river stone and twiddles.

EXT. BACK ALLEY OF THE APARTMENTS - DAY

Neil carefully searches for observers as he pushes the motorcycle to an area covered by wall ivy. He pushes aside the ivy to reveal a gas barrel.

Neil taps the barrel to check the level, mostly full.

NEIL

At least there's that.

Neil siphons gas from the barrel to the motorcycle.

INT. CAFE - DAY

The cafe looks busier with new patrons.

Bill pleasure eats at a counter savoring each bite.

Neil slides in to avoid Lilith.

NEIL

Bill. Have you seen Tim?

Bill stops chewing and some of the abstraction on him flare to a bright sun-yellow but then dilute to brown.

LILITH

Can I help you?

NEIL

Hey, I'm sorry about the other night.

BILL

You might need a purple to prove it.

NEIL

Stay out of this.

BILL
Snapping at me now?

NEIL
It's not like that.

LILITH
Then what's it like?

NEIL
I didn't mean to take it out on you.

LILITH
That's your excuse.

NEIL
You don't know anything.

LILITH
I think we all know what that red note
is.

Lilith stops, her expression hardening.

Judy, in her normal location, observes the reactions.

Neil looks desperate. He glances at Judy, who has stopped
typing and watches him, blank but analytical.

NEIL
What? Need a good fuckin' laugh?

LILITH
Neil. Stop!

NEIL
Go on. Give her a hit of what you're
feeling. You're just as broken as we are.

LILITH
Enough! Get out!

Lilith stands defiantly protecting Judy from Neil's
outburst. She inches forward ready for anything.

Neil grabs a towel and throws it at Judy.

Lilith pushes back at Neil.

Neil, ashamed, applies his last abstraction that radiates
to a bright purple.

LILITH (CONT'D)
It's too late for that.

Embarrassed, Neil rushes out.

LILITH (CONT'D)

Are you ok?

JUDY

I was in no danger.

BILL

You have to forgive him. He just runs hot sometimes.

LILITH

I don't see it in him.

BILL

It's there. Trust us.

EXT. PERIPHERY STREET - DAY

Neil walks along the edge of the road as traffic passes. He sights a woman placing a missing person's flyer on a street lamp.

TERESA (55), wrinkled and aged by emotions with flashes of beauty still left in her smile, slides out each edge of the poster to give it a last look.

TERESA

Haven't you ever wanted to change this?

NEIL

Of course. But, how? People go missing all the time and nobody cares.

TERESA

Maybe someone should.

Neil contemplates in silence.

TERESA (CONT'D)

There's talk of a resistance.

Neil examines her poster. He recognizes Rachael with the red scarf.

NEIL

When did this happen?

TERESA

Do you know my Rachael?

NEIL

She's feisty. Maybe she'll be alright.

She notices Neil twiddling his river stone.

TERESA

You don't really believe that.

Neil stops, dejected.

NEIL

Have you seen anyone return?

Neither has a answer.

INT. NEIL'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Neil, deep in thought, chokes down ration cube with some water holding back a gag reflex.

Neil searches Tim's bag again. This time a note falls out.

TIM (V.O.)

If you got this, it's probably not good.
I don't need a ribbon to know what you're
thinking. I need you on the board.

The concern on Neil's face is palpable when the note turns to scribbles.

TIM (V.O.)

Enforcers.

INT. CAFE - NIGHT

Bill examines a stack of bright amber abstractions. He tests them for purity with a portable scanner.

Most register within ninety percent pure.

BILL

Keep collecting them.

NADIA (23), a beautiful woman with bright blue eyes, covered by a dark coat collects the abstractions.

NADIA

Won't we need more?

Bill nods then receives a ping on his data pad.

BILL

Be safe.

Nadia slinks out the back door.

EXT. PERIPHERY OUTSIDE THE CAFE - NIGHT

Neil paces back and forth.

Bill cautiously peers through the window.

Neil waves for him to come.

Bill sighs but obliges.

NEIL

I'm sorry about earlier.

BILL

I'm not the one you need to apologize to.

NEIL

I need some ribbons.

BILL

Why are you asking me? Go ask your girl.

NEIL

Not my girl.

Bill sees Neil's desperation growing.

BILL

Do you need some money?

NEIL

I'm figuring it out.

BILL

Then why come here?

Neil shrugs and twiddles on his river stone.

BILL (CONT'D)

Still have those plants?

NEIL

You know I do.

BILL

Sell them to Lily.

NEIL

Right.

BILL

You got a better idea?

NEIL

Not any good ones.

BILL

Like you just didn't help me out a couple nights ago.

Neil resists but give in.

INT. BOUTIQUE - NIGHT

Various packs of abstractions line the store with enforcers monitoring visitors. It's fancy and gritty all in the same view.

MILA (35) manages the counter. Faded glamour hides behind dark circles under her eyes, her posture heavy from nights spent on her back.

Neil slips inside, giving the enforcer a wide berth.

MILA

I don't need your shit today Neil.

NEIL

Oh come on Mila, you love me.

MILA

Uh huh.

NEIL

What's the rate?

MILA

Three thousand for a pack.

Neil checks his data pad to an account. A recent transfer from Lilith is registered to bring the account to less than Mila's demand.

NEIL

Cut me some slack.

MILA

I told you. I don't need your shit.

NEIL

I need to make money too.

MILA

Your shit requires purity.

NEIL

Tell me something I don't know.

Mila points to the door.

The enforcer turns his direction.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Alright.

MILA

You should go after the easy stuff like everyone else.

NEIL

You mean. Envy. Lust... How'd that work out for you?

MILA

How'd it work out for you?

Mila eyes him over like he's naked then snaps her fingers and the enforcer approaches.

NEIL

Ok. You got me. Chill the eff out.

Mila holds her palm out and the enforcer stops.

NEIL (CONT'D)

How does Tousseau get greys to work for him anyway?

MILA

Cause he's older than dirt and owns everything they don't.

NEIL

How about we make a deal?

Mila chastises him with her smirk.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Give me a mixed set so I can make some money.

MILA

For you. That's three thousand.

NEIL

Come on Mila.

MILA

You're desperate. Desperate enough to take a job?

She eyes him over again.

MILA (CONT'D)

You could get a pack of the good stuff for nothing.

NEIL

Fuck you.

MILA

You've already done that plenty.

NEIL

I'm just trying to make a deal.

MILA

Twenty two?

NEIL

Deal.

Neil taps his pad on the payment reader.

Mila grabs his items and places them on the counter.

He reaches for them but Mila covers them with her hand.

MILA

Hear Tousseau out. It's a good offer.

NEIL

I don't need that kind of trouble.

Mila removes her hand.

MILA

Suit yourself.

NEIL

I don't want to be pawn on his board too.

Neil grabs his items and quickly exits flipping off the enforcer as he passes.

EXT. CITY SCAPE AT THE PERIPHERY EDGE - NIGHT

Neil rides through, his awareness heightened.

Missing persons posters filter from the periphery into the grey world.

A feeler gets high in a alley.

A couple stands outside a fancy home abstracting envy with bright green abstractions.

A grey partnership inside the home apply a yellow abstraction to an emotionless child.

The child lights up in a series of giggles.

EXT. PERIPHERY - NIGHT

The color resumes as Neil turns into the periphery.

Homeless encampments are kept warm by dumpster fires.

Enforcers lurk in various vehicles.

A homeless shelter with a line around the building feeds the needy.

INT. NEIL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Neil removes all of the plants from the apartment and carefully contains them. He looks each one over like losing his friends.

Neil sets a small stack of missing person posters for Tim on a table. He throws a couple in his pack.

Neil pulls the stone from his pocket.

EXT. PERIPHERY OUTSIDE THE CAFE - NIGHT

Neil places all the plants in front of the building to be collected. He shoots a text to Bill.

Bill peers through the window with a thumbs up.

Lilith, hidden behind a curtain, watches disheartened.

Teresa passes and finds an enforcer watching from a vehicle.

Neil follows her keeping out of sight.

Teresa pounds on the window.

TERESA

Tell me where she is!

The enforcer watches her pound the window relentlessly until she is out of energy.

Teresa stops and moves slowly away. She removes a bright amber abstraction.

Neil gets a ping on his data pad. The contact registers as unknown.

INT. NEIL'S APARTMENT - DAY

Neil awakens from a deep sleep. His apartment is devoid of all the color it once had. No plants. No Tim.

BATHROOM

Neil showers and gears up for a motorcycle adventure.

KITCHEN

He bites through a flavorless ration cube.

NEIL

How?

Neil searches through his pack to find one half-eaten cube.

He rummages kitchen shelves which are bare.

EXT. CITY SCAPE - AFTERNOON

The mist falls relentlessly.

The streets are filled with the emotionless riding various transports home.

Neil eyes a pathway through the city with roads baked with danger.

He idles the motorcycle as he attaches an abstraction to his side.

Neil unzips a portion of the leg panel to expose the previous wound.

Neil's shakes, nervous, twiddling the stone between his fingers.

NEIL

Calm yourself. Focus. Breathe.

Neil inhales slowly and exhales at the same pace. He finds a rhythm then secures his helmet and stone.

With an explosion of rotating tires creating smoke, Neil guns it.

The motorcycle races through the city to capture his thrill but fails.

The abstraction radiates to a dull vermillion with a hint of brown diluting it.

NEIL (CONT'D)

FUCK!

Neil breaks to stop then quickly removes the abstraction.

Neil slumps over the motorcycle.

When he regains his composure, he examines the abstraction then destroys it in frustration.

Neil reignites the motorcycle.

MONTAGE

Neil tries the process again. Fail.

And again. Fail.

And again. Fail.

END MONTAGE

Neil rests on the motorcycle, cuts bleeding down his leg. He removes bandages from his pack to deal with the wounds.

Neil, disappointed, winces in pain when he applies antiseptic. The abstraction, that was a dull vermillion, changes to a shade of dark brown.

Neil removes and contains the abstraction to study it.

INT. VACUOUS BUILDING FOYER - NIGHT

Neil limps in with his leg wrapped in a blood soaked bandage. The pain abstraction tucked under his arm.

ENFORCER 1 (O.S.)

You are not welcome here.

Neil, startled, turns toward the enforcer.

NEIL

Can I see your boss?

ENFORCER 1

No.

NEIL

Talk to him?

ENFORCER 1

No.

NEIL

Do you only answer questions with "No."?

The enforcer pauses.

ENFORCER 1

No.

NEIL

Can you give me a different answer?

ENFORCER 1

No.

The enforcer rushes on Neil and grabs him by the shirt. He tosses Neil with ease to the floor.

INT. LARGE OFFICE - NIGHT

An enforcer pulls a figure of a man, beaten barely conscious, by the shirt.

49679

Take him downstairs for evaluation.

The enforcer removes the slumped figure out of the office.

INT. EVALUATION ROOM - NIGHT

The single light pierces all the clear adjacent rooms to reveal scared faces peering back. Holding cells.

The enforcer tosses the man into the room bleeding all over the pristine floor.

Tim stands as a witness to the carnage in the next room.

The enforcers slams the figure onto a chair and sets a table in place for him.

49679 strides in careful to avoid the blood on the floor.

49679

May I ask who you are?

The figure slumps.

49679 (CONT'D)

Do you register my voice?

They nod.

49679 (CONT'D)

Did he still have it?

The enforcer hands over the deep brown abstraction and places it on the table.

49679 applies a synthetic yellow abstraction. The intensity is different with less hitching but a childlike grin pierces his cold expression.

Tim watches curiously then recognizes the dark brown abstraction. He pounds on the window, panicked.

The enforcer pulls the man up to reveal Mike almost unrecognizable from the beating.

Their eyes meet and Tim turns away. It's not Neil.

The enforcer steps to the window face to face with Tim. He retreats from the window as the enforcer turns to block his view.

49679 (CONT'D)

Why?

49679 taps on the deep brown abstraction.

MIKE

I don't know.

49679
Who ordered it?

MIKE
I just provided it.

49679
How did you manage to harvest it?

MIKE
I just can.

49679 snaps his fingers and the enforcer pounds on Mike.

49679
Tell me. Or must I make it hurt.

49679 snaps his fingers.

The enforcer slams Mike onto the table in front of them and holds him in place.

Mike screams in pain.

49679 (CONT'D)
Enough.

MIKE
I don't know who ordered it. I got stiffed.

49679
What is it exactly?

MIKE
It's fear. Terror.

49679 snaps his fingers again.

The enforcer pounds a punch into his back then pulls him back to his seat.

49679
Like that?

MIKE
It's different.

49679
How?

MIKE
It's not extracted through pain. I pulled it from another feeler.

49679 turns his head questioning.

49679

Pure Terror?

MIKE

Something like that.

49679 examines the abstraction and motions for the enforcer to stretch out his arm.

The enforcer complies.

49679 attaches the abstraction to him.

The enforcer's eyes narrow with fear. He gasps, trembles, and struggles to maintain balance. The enforcer crumbles and curls into a ball in the corner.

49679 removes the abstraction and resecurer it into a container.

The enforcer stays frozen, eyes locked.

49679 snaps his fingers and the enforcer shudders. Another snap. Same result.

MIKE (CONT'D)

How do you like it? Asshole.

The enforcer, wide-eyed, stares blankly malfunctioning.

49679 grabs Mike by the throat and lifts him into the air with ease.

49679

Who else knows about this?

Mike, choking, barely responds.

MIKE

Only the feeler I took it from.

49679 throws Mike into the glass wall with thud.

Mike falls unconscious onto the floor.

The enforcer stares up at Tim, still scared, untethered from the abstraction to Tim's surprise.

49679 steps to the glass, threatening, eye to eye with Tim as his grin fades emotionless. He drags the enforcer out and the lights go black.

EXT. NEIL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Neil approaches the door to his apartment. A blaring screen can be heard from inside.

NEIL

Tim?

Neil swipes his key at the door. It fails to open. He jiggles the handle. Nothing. Neil pounds on the door.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Tim!

Heavy footsteps march toward the door.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Fuck off.

NEIL

This is my apartment.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Not anymore.

Neil pounds at the door.

NEIL

What the fuck!

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

I'm calling you in.

NEIL

Fuck you.

Neil relentless pounds on the door.

A transport in the distance speeds and screeches to a stop in front of the apartment building.

Neil jumps down the railing and into a back alley.

EXT. BACK ALLEY OF THE APARTMENTS - NIGHT

Neil, out of breath, finds his climbing pack straps dangling out of a dumpster.

The dumpster rats scream and squeak at each other when Neil approaches.

Neil cautiously lifts the lid and pushes it over. His belongings now a heap of trash.

The rats scamper to hiding spots but watch intently.

Neil pushes his motorcycle close and uses it to lift himself into the dumpster. He cycles through a few things but throws them deeper into the dumpster.

Neil finds the picture of himself and Tim as boys. He packs it into the climbing bag. Neil finds a couple articles of clothing not tainted by the garbage, gives them a sniff, then pushes them into the bag.

A half eaten ration falls out when Neil chucks the bag over the edge.

A rat examines it and scampers away.

NEIL

You too?

His stomach growls as he contemplates taking a bite.

Neil chucks it toward the group of rats watching.

They show interest but even they don't want it.

NEIL (CONT'D)

That tracks.

Neil hops out of the dumpster. He hides his motorcycle behind the ivy next to the gas barrel.

INT. TOUSSEAU'S MANSION, ROSE GARDEN - DAY

The beautiful garden is laid out like a labyrinth covered by a large atrium and bathed in ultraviolet light.

Tousseau calmly prunes the roses in the center.

An enforcer interrupts Tousseau whispering in his ear.

TOUSSEAU

Send him in.

49679 enters and analyzes the labyrinth. He finds the shortest path through.

TOUSSEAU (CONT'D)

Welcome. Here for another game? I can have them bring the chess board.

49679

Playing against you is futile.

TOUSSEAU
I find pleasure in it.

49679 freezes. For a fraction of a second, his mechanical posture hitches, before his face relaxes back into an empty, symmetrical mask.

TOUSSEAU (CONT'D)
You've been using?

49679
Merely testing effectiveness.

TOUSSEAU
Organic capture will always be more pure.

49679
Systems evolve. Change is inevitable.

TOUSSEAU
Well said.

49679 evaluates a rose. A thorn pricks his skin and a small bubble of blood bubbles out. 49679 curiously examines it.

TOUSSEAU (CONT'D)
I heard my throat's at risk.

49679
And I thought it was just my discretion and privacy that had been at risk.

Tousseau shuffles, uncomfortable.

49679 (CONT'D)
There is still a need for your materials.
(beat)
I've come for your knowledge, today.

49679 removes a deep brown abstraction in its container.

49679 (CONT'D)
Tell me about this.

TOUSSEAU
I would assume it's a spoiled abstraction.

49679
Is it?

TOUSSEAU

The color suggests it's mixed with another emotion.

49679

Fear?

TOUSSEAU

Possibly.

49679

What if I told you it was pure fear?

TOUSSEAU

That would be interesting. May I examine?

49679 hands the abstraction to Tousseau.

Tousseau examines the abstraction with a portable analyzer.

TOUSSEAU (CONT'D)

Would you like a demonstration?

Tousseau waves over his enforcer over to them.

TOUSSEAU (CONT'D)

Hold out your arm.

The enforcer holds out his arm while Tousseau rolls back his sleeve. It reveals part of a tattoo "1732".

Tousseau readies the abstraction and inches closer to place it onto his enforcer.

49679

Stop.

TOUSSEAU

Don't you want to analyze?

49679

I will complete my research under more controlled settings.

Tousseau resecures the abstraction and hands it to 49679.

TOUSSEAU

Do you see this as a threat?

49679

It's a possible conclusion.

TOUSSEAU

Fear can be a powerful raw emotion. The experience is an extreme fight or flight response. To weaponize this would mean one would scare themselves to near death.

49679

What would happen if the harvester expired during capture?

TOUSSEAU

Theoretically. It could be captured as emotion.

49679

What might it yield?

TOUSSEAU

Hard to say really. It would be an explosion of neurochemicals all at once.

49679

Could it have harmful effects?

TOUSSEAU

You mean other than death?

49679 registers the words, nothing more.

TOUSSEAU (CONT'D)

The effects could be harmful.

INT. CAFE - NIGHT

Neil paces back and forth on the sidewalk building up the courage to enter.

Lilith watches behind a curtain. She makes the first move and opens a window.

LILITH

Looking for Bill?

NEIL

I need to apologize.

LILITH

Ok.

NEIL

To both of you.

Lilith waves him inside.

Neil sheepishly enters and trudges to Judy's typical booth.

Judy barely registers his existence.

Lilith taps her on the shoulder.

NEIL (CONT'D)

May I sit?

Judy blankly stares at him and turns to Lilith.

LILITH

That's Judy for yes.

Neil sits as Judy eyes him the whole way.

NEIL

What are you working on?

One image on the monitor shows human DNA. Another is an image of a limbic system.

Judy's eyes move to the screen then back to Neil.

JUDY

Cellular and Molecular Neuroscience.

NEIL

What?

They blankly stare at each other.

NEIL (CONT'D)

I want to apologize about the other night. Do you understand what that is?

JUDY

I understand the mechanics.

NEIL

Do you have a magenta to help her?

LILITH

You haven't apologized. She understands.

NEIL

I don't get the mechanics.

BILL

You're losing your chance.

NEIL

Really?

Neil finally relents.

NEIL (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. I'm kind of losing my shit
right now.

LILITH
You threw a cleaning rag at her.

Neil sticks his arm out for an abstraction.

NEIL
If you need proof.

Judy, still blank, registers a micro expression of
empathy that Neil doesn't notice.

JUDY
Is that all you've needed to say?

NEIL
I guess.

Judy returns to her monitor and types feverously.

LILITH
That's all you're going to get.

Neil stands, disappointed. He turns to exit.

Lilith sighs then applies an abstraction that lights to a
bright magenta.

BILL
Empathy. How do you do it?

LILITH
I just can. Are you hungry? Have a seat.
I'll see what I can work out.

Lilith whispers in Judy's ear.

LILITH (CONT'D)
(Whispering)
This is how I feel it.

Lilith removes the abstraction and applies it to Judy.

Judy's eyes move to Neil. Her gaze weepy before it
reverts to a blank stare.

Neil, resigned, sits next to Bill.

BILL
Talk about needing a shower.

NEIL
I just went dumpster diving for my shit.

BILL
Need a place to stay?

NEIL
I'm going to head up to the shelter.

BILL
It's no trouble.

Neil rejects it with his expression.

BILL (CONT'D)
If you change your mind.

Lilith places a slightly burnt sandwich in front of Neil.

LILITH
It's a little brown. Didn't want it to go
to waste.

NEIL
Better than a protein ration.

BILL
Fuck man that's disgusting.

NEIL
Even the rats won't eat them.

BILL
I'll pay for his.

LILITH
It's ok.

NEIL
I've done nothing to deserve this.

LILITH
It's not about you.

Neil bites into the sandwich. He readies an abstraction
to capture the moment but Lilith holds his hand in place.

LILITH (CONT'D)
Don't.

NEIL
What do you mean?

LILITH
When does it end?

NEIL
It doesn't.

LILITH
That's kind of my point.

NEIL
What else can we do?

Lilith, defeated, slowly retreats to Judy.

BILL
They'd starve.

NEIL
So would we.

Neil retrieves the sandwich and makes for the exit. He turns back.

NEIL (CONT'D)
Thanks for the sandwich.

INT. LABORATORY FLOOR PLATFORM - DAY

The various stations house the purest organic samples of bright green, yellow, heavy pink, and vermillion abstractions.

49679 stands above his workforce overlooking a laboratory floor. The sterile white walls contrast against his skin.

Workers test and monitor synthetic abstractions compared to the organic.

49679 walks along the platform to observe then stops above the vermillion abstraction.

49679
Provide an update.

WORKER
Testing at fifteen percent.

49679 snaps his fingers and an enforcer brings the deep brown abstraction to the worker.

49679

Analyze it.

The worker tests the abstraction.

WORKER

Primary neurochemical. Norepinephrine.
Found in emotions of fear and trauma.

49679

Apply it.

The worker applies the abstraction without hesitation.
Incited and scared, the worker collapses to the floor.

49679 (CONT'D)

Failure requires punishment.

The enforcers pulls the worker from the floor and out of
the laboratory.

INT. HOMELESS SHELTER - NIGHT

Neil, defeated, trudges into the shelter.

A smattering of distressed and worn faces line the tables
hoarding whatever soup or food they can eat.

Workers share abstractions of bright baby blue gratitude.

Neil queues in the line for a cot.

In front of him is Daniel, covered in the same plastic
sheeting.

DANIEL

First time here?

NEIL

Hasn't everyone been through here once or
twice?

DANIEL

Maybe I can get a double wide for being a
regular.

NEIL

If there is such a thing.

There are a few people down the halls that take drugs
simply falling asleep on the ground.

DANIEL

Don't want to be that regular.

NEIL

I'll figure something out.

Neil removes his data pad to search for more orders. It's blank, nothing new.

VOLUNTEER

How can I help?

NEIL

Just a cot and place to stay warm.

The volunteer issues him a ticket.

VOLUNTEER

There's a lock code for a locker if you need it. Men's shower is down the hall.

NEIL

What are you trying to say?

The volunteer points down an empty hallway.

INT. HOMELESS SHELTER DORM - MORNING

A sea of cots, filled with the downtrodden, looks like a maze. Many pushed together for groups. Others segregated for single occupants.

Neil's cot is pushed alone next to wall. He sleeps with his pack tied to an arm, river stone gripped in his fist.

Daniel cautiously watches the room then taps Neil to wake him.

DANIEL

Your watch.

NEIL

I didn't agree to that.

DANIEL

Come on. I stayed up for you.

NEIL

I didn't ask you to. Just get to sleep.

DANIEL

Enforcers are patrolling. I've heard they're beating the shit out of "Feelers".

NEIL

What do you have to worry about?

DANIEL

Everything.

Neil tosses and turns unable to return to sleep.

NEIL

Sleep. I'll watch out.

DANIEL

Thanks.

Neil eyes the walls of the dorm. One side has a series of missing person posters. He takes one of Tim out of his pack.

Daniel falls fast asleep.

Neil walks to the wall to examine it and places Tim's poster. He finds Rachael's poster with a glide of his fingers over it to reveal an address.

Neil sights Daniel sleeping peacefully.

EXT. RACHAEL'S APARTMENT - DAY

Neil knocks at the door. No answer. He knocks again.

The curtains rustle as if someone is watching.

NEIL

I'm here to see Rachael.

NADIA (O.S.)

Haven't you seen the posters?

NEIL

I have. I guess I was just hoping she'd come back.

NADIA (O.S.)

They took both of them.

NEIL

What?

The door slowly opens enough to see only half her face with beautiful bright blue eyes.

NADIA
Why are you here?

NEIL
Who else is missing?

NADIA
My mom.

The comments gain Neil's curiosity.

NEIL
Can we talk?

Nadia looks him up and down. The door opens to expose her half naked and beautiful body.

NADIA
Quickly.

Neil rushes in and Nadia locks the doors behind him in a series of slaps and bangs.

INT. RACHAEL'S APARTMENT - DAY

Nadia, half naked, envelopes Neil with a kiss and seductive placement of her hands.

NEIL
I'm not here for this.

NADIA
Knock on this door. This is the payment.

NEIL
I've already been used once this week.

Nadia touches his groin.

NADIA
Seems like it wants it.

NEIL
Who wouldn't. But, I can't.

Neil pushes her back and she charges harder at him.

NADIA
It's not for you.

NEIL
Who buys this from you?

NADIA
Who do you think?

Neil fights her off for the moment and they circle around the furniture.

Nadia's lustful eyes take in each moment.

NEIL
Stop.

Nadia relents into tears. She removes an abstraction that has barely registered to a light pink.

NADIA
Tousseau said he knows where they are.

NEIL
Tousseau?

Neil shakes his head, disgusted.

NADIA
He said someone would come to help me.
This would be his trade.

NEIL
He didn't send me.

NADIA
I know that now.

Nadia covers herself in a robe and crawls into a ball on the couch weeping.

NEIL
I'm sorry. My friend's missing too.

NADIA
Enforcers took them.

NEIL
Why?

NADIA
Look in there.

Nadia points to a closet.

Neil opens the closet door and finds a large collection of amber abstractions.

NEIL

I watched her collect one.

Nadia's eyes go wide.

NADIA

When?

NEIL

The other night. She was banging on a door yelling at an enforcer.

Fear penetrates Nadia's hope.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Why is she collecting amber?

NADIA

Rachael. We didn't understand why she was working for that grey until we saw that other one.

Neil finds another abstraction that doesn't radiate like the others. He picks it out to examine it.

NEIL

What is this?

NADIA

A synthetic.

NEIL

He's making these?

Nadia confirms with a nod.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Is that why someone is organizing?

She shrugs her shoulders.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Toussseau?

NADIA

I don't know.

NEIL

Can I keep this?

Nadia nods.

Neil pockets the synthetic abstraction.

INT. HOMELESS SHELTER DORM - AFTERNOON

Neil returns to his cot to notice Daniel missing. He searches the dorm.

NEIL

Anyone see the guy that was here?

HOMELESS MAN

Not since this morning.

A volunteer walks through the cots passing out snacks.

VOLUNTEER

He was just here. But went out back.

EXT. BEHIND THE SHELTER - AFTERNOON

Neil comes out with two snacks looking for Daniel.

He finds an enforcer beating on something.

Neil cringes and hides behind a trash dumpster.

Screams and muffled noises burst from the enforcers target.

Neil throws a snack at the enforcer to find that he's beating on Daniel.

Daniel, entirely beaten, slumps to the ground seconds from dying.

Neil charges at the enforcer.

The enforcer easily throws Neil off.

Daniel dies exhaling his last breath. An abstraction on his arm turns black.

The enforcer harvests the abstraction into a container.

NEIL

Death.

The enforcer turns his attention to Neil and prepares another abstraction.

Neil runs.

It chases.

EXT. PERIPHERY - DAY

Neil skillfully navigates through the periphery to hold off the enforcer.

An abstraction falls out of Neil's pack when the enforcer grabs and stops Neil in his tracks.

The enforcer punches Neil in the stomach.

Neil latches onto the fallen pink abstraction.

Another punch pushes the air out of Neil with a grunt.

Neil applies the pink abstraction onto the enforcer.

The enforcer stops, awkwardly confused, almost tender.

Neil stands, worn.

The effects of the abstraction fade on the enforcer.

Neil bolts.

INT. LARGE GREENHOUSE - DAY

Various high yield protein crops, corn, wheat, and rice fill the two acre space. Grow lights heat the area.

Neil hides along the corn, sweating. He searches for the enforcer, panting.

From out of nowhere, Neil is tackled from behind.

The enforcer places his knee onto Neil's back, protective, searching through the crops. He pounds the ground next to Neil's face.

Neil glimpses a tattoo "17320" on the wrist of the enforcer.

NEIL

I'm not scared of you.

17320

Quiet.

Neil, confused, struggles but the enforcer adjusts to keep him pinned down and protected.

NEIL

Let me go.

17320

Quiet.

The enforcer pulls Neil by this collar then to his feet like dragging a nagging child. He pushes relentlessly until they are at the edge.

The enforcer throws Neil out.

17320 (CONT'D)

Go.

INT. EVALUATION ROOM - NIGHT

Tim, mostly beaten, slumps at the edge of the room.

A light pierces the windows.

Tim stands and peers through the glass.

The main door slides open to a guard's post outside. 49679 strides in, his focus on a container held by an enforcer.

Tim places his ear to the glass to listen.

49679 retrieves the deep black abstraction. He applies a synthetic curiosity abstraction. His head tilts, calculating.

49679

Did you follow my instruction?

ENFORCER 2

This was obtained randomly.

He places the black abstraction under a portable analyzer. The screen flickers, attempting to categorize it.

The analyzer reads "[COMPOUNDS] Contains: Serotonin (mood stability), Dopamine (pleasure/reward), Oxytocin (bonding) Endorphins (Joy) Norepinephrine (Fear). Key Signature: [UNIVERSAL]"

49679

I need another to test from our control subjects.

49679 snaps his finger and the enforcer finds a random room.

The light shines through all the rooms to reveal Mike being brutalized to death by the enforcer.

There is a knock on the window behind Tim.

Tim finds Rachael frightened and also beaten. He places his hand on the window.

Rachael places her hand opposite of his then rests her head on the window for comfort.

Tim matches her. He turns to look back toward the guard's post.

The enforcer returns with a black abstraction, hands bloodied.

Another test. Same Result.

49679 studies the abstraction. The tattoo lines appear to be smiling.

EXT. PERIPHERY HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Neil runs through the periphery to a small house at the edge.

The small house is quaint with perfectly manicured flowers, plants, and a greenhouse for a vegetable garden along the side.

GUZEL, an older woman with soft features and pleasant smile, teaches three children how to trim the flowers and pick from the garden.

Neil bangs on the door.

Guzel cautiously peers around the porch to find Neil scared.

GUZEL

Neil?

NEIL

I needed to see you.

Neil rushes to hug her.

GUZEL

Where have you been?

NEIL

I'm sorry.

GUZEL

You stink.

Neil's fear turns to an odd laugh.

GUZEL (CONT'D)

It's true. Go inside and get cleaned up.

Neil releases her and smiles.

GUZEL (CONT'D)

Come in kids. Your brother's here.

INT. PERIPHERY HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Neil glides in with a sigh.

Guzel pushes him along. She covers her nose.

GUZEL

Go on. Go.

BATHROOM

Neil showers and washes the blood from his wounds. He examines the cuts on his leg that have been reopened from the beating.

BEDROOM

Clothes have been laid out for him to replace his dirtied ones.

NEIL

Where's my stuff?

GUZEL (O.S.)

Washing.

Neil reflects on the events while he sits on a bunk.

Etched onto the bunk is his name. The bunk across from his is etched with another name "Tim".

Neil walks over to it and gently rubs his fingers over Tim's name.

KITCHEN

Neil sheepishly strides in to find Guzel directing the children to cook. She places his river stone on a table for him to sit.

The older of the three children, SAM, emotionless but inquisitive cooks with precision like every movement is deliberate and mimicked.

GUZEL (CONT'D)

Tamale?

Sam brings a tamale to Neil.

Sam watches Neil, inquisitive to his reaction.

Neil rips into the tamale. His eyes light up with delight.

NEIL

I needed this.

GUZEL

I didn't make it.

NEIL

What?

Sam looks over to Guzel and she gives him an ecstatic thumbs up. Still expressionless, Sam returns to the cooking counter.

GUZEL

I just love that kid.

NEIL

They aren't like us.

GUZEL

They?

Neil, surprised, retracts chastised like a child.

NEIL

I'm sorry. When did you start adopting gr... emotionless?

GUZEL

Not long after you stole my money to buy your motorcycle.

Neil, fully remorseful, breaks down.

GUZEL (CONT'D)

Tears don't taste good on a tamale.

NEIL

How long have you known?

GUZEL
Do you really have to ask?

NEIL
That long.

GUZEL
Of course.

NEIL
Why didn't you say anything?

GUZEL
I saw. Your brother sent me a photo of
you on your bike. You looked so happy.

NEIL
But why?

GUZEL
Why do you think?

NEIL
But it made you take in one of them.

GUZEL
Them? You? There's no difference.

Guzel walks over to Sam and pats him on the head then
gives him a kiss. She pulls an abstraction from Neil's
pack and applies it. The abstraction turns a bright red.

Sam, with recognition in his eyes, mimics her smile.

Neil, dismisses it, not quite convinced.

Guzel pulls a flyer from the counter. It's Tim's missing
person's poster.

GUZEL (CONT'D)
So, when were you going to tell me about
this?

NEIL
I was getting there.

GUZEL
Really?

NEIL
Some enforcer took him.

GUZEL
Why?

NEIL

He's been harvesting amber.

GUZEL

It's about time.

NEIL

For what?

GUZEL

What do you think?

NEIL

Rebellion? He didn't even tell me.

GUZEL

Of course. You're all wrapped up in me, me, me. You're too busy to think about anything else.

NEIL

It's crazy. They hold all the cards.

GUZEL

Is that what you think?

Neil's shoulders drop. His tense jaw softens, and he gives a single, heavy nod.

GUZEL (CONT'D)

Tim would've backed anything you'd have asked of him. But he goes missing and you come running home.

NEIL

I witnessed an enforcer beat a guy to death.

GUZEL

Still me me me.

NEIL

What am I supposed to do?

GUZEL

You already know.

Guzel pats him on the head and then with a kiss.

GUZEL (CONT'D)

What do you think he would do?

Guzel applies her bright red abstraction onto Neil.

His emotions well as he closes his eyes and takes it all in.

INT. LARGE OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Daylight shines into the offices as 49679 scrutinizes over the black abstraction.

A series of monitors engage to display various emotionless hierarchy. They encompass him.

49679 stands at attention as the final monitor engages.

49679

We are in session. What I have before me is a potential solution.

13612

Your failure has been consistent. What has changed?

49679

Through experiment, we've generated an organic abstraction that registers universal.

13612

How is this a solution? You've obtained pure organics before.

49679

The harvest of those organics was inconsistent. Variations made it difficult to synthesize. A universal harvest provides consistent ratios that can be mined and segregated for purity.

13612

What makes this new capture universal?

49679

Death of the harvested.

Silence oddly fills the room.

13612

A cull would be dangerous.

49679

But necessary.

13612

What is your request?

49679

The request is to harvest without restrictions.

13612

Denied.

49679

I request to continue my research.

13612

Granted with limitations.

49679

Your limitations?

13612

Those currently in your possession can be used for experimentation.

49679

Accepted.

13612

Results will be required before further requests will be granted.

49679

Acknowledged.

13612

Our session is concluded.

The monitors fade to black and the room goes dark.

EXT. PERIPHERY STREET - NIGHT

Neil slinks through the shadows, avoiding the streetlights.

EXT. PERIPHERY OUTSIDE THE CAFE - NIGHT

Neil hides in the doorway then peers in. He finds Judy typing away on her device and Lilith closing for the night.

INT. CAFE - CONTINUOUS

There's a knock at the door that startles Lilith. She sees Neil waving for her to open the door.

Lilith opens the door but blocks Neil from entering.

LILITH
What do you want?

NEIL
Open the door.

LILITH
Why?

Desperation and nervousness ripple off Neil.

NEIL
Please.

She lets Neil in and he races to hide behind the curtain and searches outside.

LILITH
What is it?

NEIL
Enforcers.

Lilith locks the doors and pulls the curtains closed.

LILITH
You can't stay here.

Lilith pulls him to Judy's booth and pushes him into the stall.

LILITH (CONT'D)
Why did you come here?

Neil points to Judy.

NEIL
She's the only one I know that might have some answers.

Lilith, curious, taps Judy to gain her attention.

LILITH
Judy.

Judy stops and acknowledges them.

JUDY
Yes.

LILITH
What is it you want to know?

NEIL

I was attacked by an enforcer. I only got away because I slapped a pink on him. I thought enforcers were different.

JUDY

Their machine is still the same.

NEIL

Is it?

Judy places her headphones on then activates a digital holographic scanner through them.

LILITH

Watch.

A screen activates revealing a live look at her limbic system with an inactive amygdala.

JUDY

When you're ready.

Lilith breathes in for focus and applies an abstraction to herself. It radiates to a bright red.

Neil's eyes light up surprised.

NEIL

You can't fake that.

Lilith quickly removes it and holds it out.

JUDY

We've never used that color before.

NEIL

You want that one. Trust me.

Judy applies the abstraction and is hit with a surge of intense happiness.

Neil watches as the screen lights up like fireworks.

Judy's amygdala a dance of colors before they slowly fade to nothing.

NEIL (CONT'D)

What made us different?

Judy removes her headphones to answer.

JUDY

Pair bonding, nurturing, societal growth
all require an emotional component.

LILITH

Don't you see?

JUDY

Love? Envy? Curiosity? Thrill?

QUICK FLASH

The enforcer stops, lovestruck, caresses its face before
it returns to chase Neil.

NEIL

It felt it. They just don't know how to
process it.

Neil stands and paces like it finally all makes sense.

NEIL (CONT'D)

What would happen if you applied an amber
to the emotionless?

JUDY

It could create conflict in our
understanding.

NEIL

A dark brown?

LILITH

Why would someone harvest that?

NEIL

Tell me.

JUDY

I would need data. But the level of
norepinephrine could be destabilizing.

NEIL

A black?

Lilith's eyes grow fearful.

LILITH

What are you getting at?

NEIL

The enforcer who chased me harvested a
black.

LILITH

How?

NEIL

How do you think?

Neil races back to the booth.

NEIL (CONT'D)

You have been seeding her with emotion.

LILITH

Not just the fleeting moments. It's got to be everything. Even the messy stuff.

NEIL

Does it really work?

Lilith sees Judy flash a micro-expression of a smile.

LILITH

I know it does.

NEIL

He doesn't want that.

LILITH

Who?

NEIL

The guy making these.

Neil tosses the synthetic abstraction on the table in front of Judy as it pulses.

LILITH

Is that what I think it is?

Judy quickly studies the abstraction and analyzes its content.

JUDY

This is a seventy-five percent pure digital recreation.

NEIL

Could it be possible to synthesize emotion?

JUDY

A universal abstraction does not exist.

NEIL

Yet.

Neil turns to her.

NEIL (CONT'D)

What could be more pure than experiencing it all at once?

LILITH

I don't know.

NEIL

Why is this all happening? Like the universe is circling me?

LILITH

Why not you?

NEIL

I didn't ask for this.

LILITH

Who could be planning all of this?

NEIL

The only person that could is Tousseau?

LILITH

Who is he?

Neil nervously shuffles back and forth.

NEIL

Danger. But he acts like your best friend.

LILITH

Could he really be behind all of this?

NEIL

I wouldn't put it past him. More than once, he's gotten us into some shit. But, why? He works in trades not risks. There's no trade value in this.

LILITH

What can we do?

NEIL

I don't know. But he is the only one that might know where Tim is too.

LILITH

I can come with you.

Neil, reluctant to answer, shakes his head "No."

NEIL
I'd have to go alone.

JUDY
He's lying.

NEIL
What?

JUDY
I've observed. We may not have the same
quantitative level of emotions. But we
can recognize a lie.

Neil relents.

NEIL
So maybe you're right. I don't want to go
alone.

LILITH
Then let me.

EXT. TOUSSEAU'S MANSION - DAY

Neil and Lilith ride on the motorcycle to the front gate
of the estate.

Lilith, already amazed by it's tall trees and grandeur,
studies the surroundings.

NEIL
Don't be lured in.

Neil presses a button for entry.

TOUSSEAU
(From the two-way speaker)
Neil. Welcome. Come in.

INT. TOUSSEAU'S MANSION - DAY

FOYER

Neil and Lilith enter to find beautiful artwork on the
walls, opulent furniture, and other luxurious decor.

LILITH
I've seen people draw in the periphery.
But, never anything like this.

NEIL
Temper yourself.

Neil reaches for an abstraction for her. She grabs it but places it in a pocket.

LILITH
I'm just taking it all in.

NEIL
That's what he wants.

An enforcer steps to them one hand over his wrist.

17320
This way.

The enforcer 17320, indistinguishable from the others, guides them to another room.

PARLOR

17320 directs them in.

17320 (CONT'D)
He'll be with you in a moment.

Lilith examines the room in awe.

Neil doesn't stop to look at the room. His eyes instantly dart from the high window frame down to the back door, measuring the distance.

LILITH
Who lives like this?

NEIL
I warned you.

A ramp from another room shines in bright marble into the parlor.

Tousseau, cordial, wheels down the ramp.

TOUSSEAU
I was hoping you'd visit. And this is?

NEIL
Lily?

LILITH
Lilith. Only my sister calls me that.

TOUSSEAU

I hope we can become acquainted enough that I may be able to call you Lily as well. Maybe even play a game of chess.

LILITH

What's that?

NEIL

We're not here for games. Besides no one beats you anyway.

TOUSSEAU

(Reflective)

You almost did. Once.

NEIL

Once.

Neil walks to a window, arms crossed and closed off.

Lilith makes herself comfortable.

TOUSSEAU

May I get you some tea?

LILITH

I've never had tea before.

NEIL

Pass.

Tousseau rings a bell and a couple of servants bring a kettle, a tray with cups, and sugar.

TOUSSEAU

Why so defensive? I've known you most of your life. You could at least be cordial.

NEIL

Cut the act.

Lilith looks confused about how to ready her tea.

Tousseau pours the hot water into each cup then gently spoons sugar into it. He glides the spoon in and stirs showing Lilith how.

Lilith copies his movement.

TOUSSEAU

Let it steep a moment.

NEIL
You know why I'm here.

TOUSSEAU
I do. Tim has gone missing. I was concerned.

NEIL
Really.

TOUSSEAU
I have been.

NEIL
Don't play dumb with me.

Tousseau reaches for his teacup then sips softly.

Lilith copies him. The sweet of the sugar hits her in a rush of joy.

LILITH
Is that real sugar?

TOUSSEAU
Do you like it? Abstract the feeling. I would be happy to pay for that feeling of joy again.

LILITH
I don't sell them.

NEIL
That's how it starts.

TOUSSEAU
Allow me to earn your trust again.

NEIL
You already know where he is.

Tousseau smirks.

NEIL (CONT'D)
How is Nadia collecting ambers connected to this?

TOUSSEAU
I'm not the person you should be asking.

NEIL
Do you really think a strike is better for us?

TOUSSEAU
I've warned Bill that it's dangerous.

NEIL
What?

Lilith's smile turns remorseful.

LILITH
He's not lying Neil.

NEIL
Excuse me?

LILITH
He's right. It's been Bill's plan all along.

NEIL
Because he's making him. What do you have on Bill?

TOUSSEAU
Nothing. He asked for resources to which I refused.

NEIL
Right. Like you're really sitting this one out.

TOUSSEAU
It doesn't hurt to be informed.

NEIL
That what you call it?

TOUSSEAU
It provides me no advantage to be involved.

NEIL
Plausible deniability. You're just like them.

LILITH
You are coy about it all.

TOUSSEAU
Coy?

LILITH
If you know where Tim is, just tell him.

TOUSSEAU

He's not going to like it.

Neil's anger boils over as he rushes toward him.

Lilith jumps in his way, abstraction at the ready.

Neil stops to calm himself.

TOUSSEAU (CONT'D)

Nice move.

LILITH

He's right. What are you playing at?

17320, from out of nowhere, pushes Lilith to her seat.

TOUSSEAU

I'm sorry. He's very protective of me.

Tousseau wheels toward the exit then outside.

INT. TOUSSEAU'S MANSION, ROSE GARDEN - DAY

Tousseau leisurely wheels through the garden admiring the roses and pruning them as he goes.

17320 trails a few steps behind Neil ready to pounce.

Lilith, now focused on Tousseau, ignores the beauty of it all.

NEIL

I was under control.

LILITH

Were you?

NEIL

You understand now?

Lilith nods.

TOUSSEAU

I'll tell you where he is. But allow me to indulge you in a story.

NEIL

You're going to anyway.

TOUSSEAU

Have you ever tested the edge of the city? Beyond the mist?

NEIL

Nobody has.

TOUSSEAU

What if I told you there is more out there?

LILITH

Are you talking about the Free People?

NEIL

Free people?

LILITH

It's a myth. An old story my mom told us when I was young.

NEIL

There's nothing out there.

Tousseau snaps his fingers and 17320 comes to his side.

TOUSSEAU

Bring me the piece.

NEIL

Nobody goes there!

TOUSSEAU

Long before this city existed another stood.

LILITH

We all know that. This city is all that's left.

TOUSSEAU

Is it?

Lilith and Neil exchange a skeptical glance. Neil steps back, crossing his arms, but Lilith leans closer to the Tousseau.

LILITH

They say it's been centuries since anyone has been outside.

TOUSSEAU

The clouds were created like a greenhouse. But there are other ways and places to survive.

LILITH

Are you saying there are people still out there?

17320 delivers a muddy and aged motorcycle helmet to Neil.

Neil cautiously looks it over.

NEIL

What is all this?

Neil highlights all the mud.

TOUSSEAU

What do you think it is?

NEIL

I don't know. That's why I'm asking.

TOUSSEAU

You think you've felt everything in this life. This is a reminder that you've just scratched the surface.

Tousseau points to the helmet.

TOUSSEAU (CONT'D)

That is called mud.

NEIL

From out there?

Neil drops the helmet into Tousseau's lap dirtying his suit, fearful.

NEIL (CONT'D)

What does this have to do with Tim?

TOUSSEAU

I offer a trade.

Neil looks to Lilith questioning.

LILITH

What's out there?

TOUSSEAU

Something I need.

NEIL

I won't be the first person you've sent out there.

Tousseau reflects apprehensive patting the mud from his pants.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Where is Tim?

TOUSSEAU

They don't know how to keep secrets.

NEIL

Neither do you.

TOUSSEAU

You already know where he is.

NEIL

How do we get in?

TOUSSEAU

Those are my terms. I help you to get in and find Tim. You escape beyond the city for me.

LILITH

Why does it have to be Neil?

TOUSSEAU

I can't go myself.

Tousseau smirks.

LILITH

Let's go.

TOUSSEAU

The clock is ticking.

Neil stops then grips his stone in a fist.

LILITH

What could be worth trading lives for it?

TOUSSEAU

Abstractions are not the only commodity in this world. I will not go quietly.

Neil sighs and contemplates.

TOUSSEAU (CONT'D)

I know what your family means to you. I wish only I could have had the same opportunity when mine was lost.

NEIL
Wouldn't you do the same for Judy?

TOUSSEAU
Is it a deal?

Lilith and Neil's eyes connect.

NEIL
It's a deal.

Neil and Lilith quickly exit.

Tousseau motions to 17320.

TOUSSEAU
Keep an eye on them. Destroy the lab if
he can't.

17320
Affirmative.

TOUSSEAU
Protect the girl. She may prove useful as
an alternate.

EXT. TOUSSEAU'S MANSION - DAY

Neil and Lilith prepare to ride.

Lilith's breathing turns rapid. She balls her hands into
tight fists, the veins on her knuckles pulling taut.

LILITH
I want to stick a spoon in that guy's
eye. Hard to believe he had a family too.

NEIL
I guess.

LILITH
What now?

NEIL
I don't know.

INT. CAFE - AFTERNOON

Bill relaxes at the counter reviewing notes.

Neil and Lilith enter with a creak of the step and ring
of the bell.

Neil rushes over to Bill and pushes him.

NEIL

When were you going to tell me?

BILL

I'm sorry.

Lilith pulls Neil back.

NEIL

Do you think this is funny that I'm the last one in on the joke?

BILL

Don't be mad at them. Focus it here.

Neil, betrayed, pleads.

NEIL

Why?

BILL

Look at me. Look at us.

Bill points to Neil's leg.

BILL (CONT'D)

We've ruined ourselves for what?
Pleasure? Thrill?

NEIL

Tim trusted you.

BILL

I know. But we felt the risk was worth it.

NEIL

How long?

BILL

What do you mean?

NEIL

How long have you been planning this?

BILL

Weeks.

NEIL

Weeks?

Neil's emotions subside as he sits at a table, defeated.

BILL

We had been talking about it. Then we met them.

Bill motions to Lilith and Judy.

LILITH

Why?

JUDY

I told them it was possible. Outrage seemed a logical choice.

BILL

We didn't believe her at first. But I went to Tousseau to deliver sunrays.

NEIL

Why does he need yours?

BILL

He hasn't been eating well lately.

Neil and Lilith turn to each other.

BILL (CONT'D)

While I was there, he accidently placed an abstraction on his enforcer. The thing lit up with a grin from ear to ear. Powerful.

NEIL

"Accident". He's playing all of us.

LILITH

What choice do we have?

BILL

Find Tim. Rebel. Or do nothing.

NEIL

Those aren't options. Those are suicide pacts.

BILL

Neil. Come on.

NEIL

These are bad choices. You're going to get people killed.

JUDY

There are ways to succeed but you need both to do it.

NEIL

Right. What's your logic tell you?

JUDY

We have a probability of thirty-one percent of finding Tim.

BILL

The strike?

JUDY

Unknown. The distraction can be enough to get you in the building and a contained rebellion may register enough with the emotionless to listen to demands.

NEIL

All of this? Thirty-one percent?

JUDY

It could all change if you destroy the lab in the process.

They look at each other questioning.

LILITH

Why make the deal?

NEIL

That's what Tousseau wants. Isn't it?

BILL

The alternative?

LILITH

You'd have taken the deal at one percent.

Neil races out to his motorcycle and Lilith chases after him.

EXT. PERIPHERY OUTSIDE THE CAFE - AFTERNOON

Neil rushes to ready his motorcycle and helmet. He radiates with fear and anger.

LILITH

Let those feelings go.

NEIL

How?

Lilith envelopes him in an embrace.

LILITH
Take me for a ride.

EXT. CITY SCAPE - AFTERNOON

A glow of amber shades through the clouds highlighting the wet ground below.

The motorcycle with two figures races through the city with a flash of an orange streak along the road.

LILITH
Faster!

Lilith arms move from Neil's waist to a solid wrap around his torso. Her helmet peers the road over his shoulder.

Neil shifts into high gear then slams the accelerator as she screams with joy.

The road blurs and tunnels with the speed.

Neil slaps his helmet open to feel the mist on his cheeks. He readies an abstraction.

Lilith places her hand over it to close it. She raises her arms high into the air with a rush of emotion and scream of pure thrill.

Neil smiles and takes it all in.

EXT. CITY'S EDGE - NIGHT

Clouds rush down to create a barrier. Nothing visible through to the other side.

The road fades into the clouds with warning signs that show imminent death.

The motorcycle speeds toward it but brakes to a stop a few feet from the clouds.

Neil and Lilith rush off the motorcycle.

They stare at the clouds that ruffles the grass like a curtain.

NEIL
Do you believe him?

LILITH
I don't know.

Neil picks up a rock and tosses it through the cloud. Nothing happens. He removes his river stone to hold it close.

NEIL

What would Judy say?

LILITH

Judy-pie.

NEIL

Judy-pie?

LILITH

She'd probably calculate the odds.

Lilith reaches for to the cloud, hand nearly scraping the edge.

Neil pulls her back.

NEIL

What is wrong with you?

LILITH

Is it really a greenhouse? There doesn't seem to be anything stopping us.

NEIL

For a reason.

LILITH

What if?

NEIL

What?

LILITH

The bed time stories are true. Judy and I shared a bed like most adoptees. I always had trouble sleeping. My mom would come in to check on us. She'd talk about this mythical land of the free people. Where emotion was never captured. It was only ever to be felt and lost to time.

NEIL

Did Judy ever really understand?

LILITH

She'd place her hand on my chest to feel my heartbeat. One day. Our mom told us a story. And Judy felt my heart slow down and calm.

(MORE)

LILITH (CONT'D)

She said "And there it fades, lost."
That's when I knew. She was always going
to be my sister.

NEIL

I don't care if there are free people out
there. I just need to get my brother
back.

Neil looks to the clouds.

LILITH

Can I ask you something?

NEIL

Can I ask you something?

LILITH

Me first. Why do you cut yourself when
you abstract?

Neil looks to the his leg and rubs his fingers over the
bandages.

NEIL

It changes the purity.

LILITH

That's not a why.

NEIL

These are not for sale.

Lilith marks his words with silent reflection.

LILITH

It takes so much from us.

NEIL

Why did you start seeding Judy in the
first place?

LILITH

So they couldn't take her away from me.

NEIL

What makes her different?

LILITH

They need to change. Or we do.

NEIL

What if neither of us can?

LILITH

What do you think your brother is feeling right now? Or all those people who are missing? Our friends in the periphery? It's already changing.

INT. CAFE - DAY

Judy ferociously types at the computer. She analyzes building schematics.

Neil and Lilith sleep back to back into a booth. The river stone falls out of Neil's pocket onto the floor.

The noise stops Judy instantly. She rolls close to pick it up.

Bill knocks at the door.

The noise awakens Lilith and she quickly answers it and lets Bill in.

Neil sees Judy gently rubbing his stone between her fingers. She quietly hands it back.

BILL

Good morning.

NEIL

Fuck you Bill.

BILL

Nice to see you too. So, what's the news?

LILITH

She's been at it all night. Hacking. Analyzing.

JUDY

I can hear you.

LILITH

Did you sleep at all?

JUDY

I rested.

Judy stops and wheels to the middle of the cafe.

LILITH

So?

JUDY

There's a growing probability for success.

NEIL

And?

JUDY

It may require some subterfuge.

BILL

You mean sacrifices?

JUDY

Seventeen percent will not survive.

NEIL

Don't talk about us in metrics.

JUDY

There are alternatives with a lower probability of success with fewer casualties. But the outcome will never be zero.

NEIL

Just lay it on us.

JUDY

Why would an emotionless society care that your kind go on strike?

On a table in front of them, Judy places small grey ration cubes on a table like chess pieces.

NEIL

Because we have what they need. Right?

JUDY

You can deny them services. Yes. But for how long? When does someone turn or give in to the pressure and relent to them?

BILL

I thought Outrage abstractions would turn them.

JUDY

It would be a moment. In order to turn them, they need to react.

LILITH

And they won't act on emotion.

Judy hits one of the ration cubes with her finger and it rolls off.

JUDY

The only way to have them react is through violence.

NEIL

You're saying we have to throw the first punch.

JUDY

It means some of you may have to act against your nature.

NEIL

But how do we win this?

JUDY

People willing to accept the consequences of this action.

EXT. PERIPHERY - DAY AND NIGHT

MONTAGE

Bill, Neil, and Lilith each go door to door seeking support. Some close the door in their faces as others listen.

Bill speaks with Nadia.

BILL

We have a plan to get them out. But we need help.

Nadia joins them going door to door.

Neil speaks to a group at the homeless shelter while showing a picture of Daniel to them. He rallies a small group.

Lilith hosts guest at the cafe demonstrating a bright yellow abstraction onto Judy. She hoists the synthetic abstraction for all to see.

Supporters grow.

Many make protest signs.

Feelers cancel orders on data pads.

Neil watches the periphery change and ready for the strike.

Grey enforcers watch but do not react.

END MONTAGE

EXT. PERIPHERY - DAY

A large gathering of people march to the edge of the periphery. Many carry signs of protest reflective of their feeler sentiments.

Bill leads the group. Nothing is said between them, no chants, many stark determined faces, and many scared fearful ones.

INT. LARGE OFFICE - SAME TIME

An update hits 49679's data pad with a ping. He snaps his fingers and two enforcers step to his side.

49679 monitors the group marching toward the edge of the periphery.

49679

They're assembling. Gather your teams and contain the situation. Do not engage.

INTERCUT - LARGE OFFICE and PERIPHERY

Bill turns the group and yells at the top of his lungs.

BILL

We must not give into them! We must stay united! I know many of us are scared! Capture it! Use it!

49679 reviews the protest on his data pad. He snaps his fingers again.

49679

Bring that one to me.

A large group of enforcers march toward the protestors like pawns on a chess board. They form a line like an opening attack in front of the periphery.

There are no weapons in this fight. No guns. No nightsticks. Just fists and brawn.

ENFORCER 1
Perimeter established.

EXT. BACK ALLEY OF THE APARTMENTS - CONTINUOUS

Away from the protestors, Neil and Lilith gather a small group of twenty people.

NEIL
Is she right?

LILITH
I trust her.

This group, made of people from the homeless shelter, has weapons with sticks cut from the trees. Metal rods pulled from balconies. Gas barrels closed with rags attached to the cap.

Neil looks back to the group. He hesitates to move.

LILITH (CONT'D)
It's the only way.

NEIL
I know.

Neil closes his eyes. After a few deep breaths, he looks each of them over with a caring glance.

NEIL (CONT'D)
This is dangerous for all of you. Daniel was our friend. He was one of us. I am asking you to be in harms way. So we can get our friends. Our family out. But it may cost us. Maybe even with our lives.

He turns to Lilith then back to the group.

NEIL (CONT'D)
You don't have to do this.

LILITH
We're not doing this for you.

Neil rolls the barrel down the road away from the protestor.

They all follow.

INT. VACUOUS BUILDING, FOYER - DAY

A gas barrel crashes through the glass and explodes rattling the building.

The group smashes the remaining glass and storm into the foyer.

An enforcer jumps to fight but is overwhelmed by the onslaught of the group. He dies beaten.

Neil and Lilith overlook the carnage they've brought on.

LILITH

There's no going back.

NEIL

Get them to follow you back.

LILITH

You need to get his earpiece.

Neil looks down on the dead enforcer. He quickly retrieves an earpiece from the enforcer and place it in.

EXT. CITY SCAPE - DAY

The group smashes windows and transports.

Most greys watch silent until the group hits one with a rod.

They react, registering the potential for injury, stoic but rushed.

Enforcers rush out of the building to give chase.

INT. VACUOUS BUILDING FOYER - DAY

Neil and Lilith hide waiting for the building to clear.

An elevator pings open.

Neil taps his ear piece.

NEIL

What now?

INT. CAFE - SAME TIME

Judy monitors several screens at once all displaying the building's camera views. She types at her data pad hacking into different systems of the building.

JUDY

Place a barrel in the elevator.

INTERCUT - NEIL and JUDY

Neil and Lilith speed to push a barrel in. It barely fits.

NEIL

Light it?

JUDY

Not yet.

NEIL

How do we get up there?

JUDY

Stairs.

NEIL

That's a hundred floors up.

JUDY

I know.

EXT. PERIPHERY - CONTINUOUS

The large group of protestors hear the sound of the explosion in the distance. Some are rattled and become fearful.

The line of enforcers doesn't even flinch.

Bill motions for them to harvest the fear with an abstraction by applying one himself.

BILL

They don't know how this feels.

Bill's abstraction turns a deep dark brown. As do many of the protestor's abstractions.

BILL (CONT'D)

Stay with me.

Bill falls to a knee, almost faint. He removes the abstraction and holds it ready.

Many of the protestors become faint from the abstraction. Others hold them in place for support.

PROTESTOR #1

Now?

BILL

Not yet. Ready the outrage. Hit them with every emotion we have.

Protestor #1 helps Bill to his feet.

Nadia removes a bright amber abstraction. She silently raises it clutched in her fist, defiant, and turns to the enforcer line.

Bill stands defiant in front of an enforcer. The enforcer pushes him back a few feet with ease.

ENFORCER 2

Stand back.

PROTESTOR #1

Now?

BILL

Not yet.

INT. LARGE OFFICE - SAME TIME

49679 analyzes a series of screens. He assesses the damage to the foyer. Searches for heat signatures in the elevators. The second group of protestors running from the building.

49679 applies a Synthetic Curiosity abstraction. He readies another monitor to search the stairwells. The screen flickers and fade.

With a tilt of his head, he assesses the screens.

49679

Tricky.

49679 ferociously types on his data pad with impeccable precision. He snaps his fingers for another enforcer.

49679 (CONT'D)

Capture them.

INT. VACUOUS BUILDING STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Neil and Lilith reach the ninth floor of the stairwell.

NEIL
How much further?

JUDY (O.C.)
(By earpiece)
Not mu-

The earpiece goes dead.

LILITH
Where is it?

NEIL
She didn't say.

They hear the sound of an enforcer pounding the steps down through the stairwell. Another enforcer's steps slam upward.

NEIL (CONT'D)
Judy? Judy?!

LILITH
They're coming.

Neil and Lilith rush the stairs to the closest exit.

INT. CAFE - SAME TIME

Judy speeds to the window and knocks three times.

Protestor #3 sees her then runs toward the main group.

Judy returns to her pad to regain her connection.

EXT. PERIPHERY - DAY

The second group races toward the enforcer line chased by other enforcers. They slam into the line with their weapons hitting any enforcer they can.

The enforcers retaliate brutally.

BILL
Now!

The main group push forward into the line.

The enforcers punch and kick at anything near them.

Bill bull rushes an enforcer and applies an outrage abstraction to its wrist then gets slammed in the face with a punch.

The enforcer pauses and a concerned expression radiates from his face. Protestors watch surprised. The enforcer pushes back at other enforcers attempting to beat Bill down. It lasts a few moments until his expression goes blank.

The enforcer's vigor to fight changes, almost unwilling. It blocks and defends itself, nothing more.

The fight continues into a full blown riot as many are beaten down by enforcers that swat at the abstractions so they can't be applied.

The cycle continues as others find ways to apply abstractions to enforcers. Outrage, Love, Envy, and curiosity send enforcers on different tangents but most return to the fight after a few moments.

The protestors are losing badly.

BACK TO:

INT. VACUOUS BUILDING, EMPTY FLOOR - DAY

Neil and Lilith run out of the stairwell onto an empty floor. Each enforcer finds another entry and races toward them.

Neil removes his bag and pulls out a metal striker. He readies for a fight then looks over to Lilith clutching his shoulder.

NEIL

Can you climb?

LILITH

Can I what?

Neil uses the striker to shatter the window into a thousand pieces.

NEIL

Climb!

The wind rushes in with a cold punch.

They step onto the broken window's edge out of reach from the enforcers.

Neil wraps a rope around her waist then ties it around his shoulders.

LILITH
I can't do this.

NEIL
If you can throw flour bags, you can do this.

Neil reaches for her hand.

NEIL (CONT'D)
Trust me.

EXT. VACUOUS BUILDING, FACADE - DAY

Neil stretches his foot along a ledge. Lilith follows and pushes Neil forward as an enforcer reaches out for her and nearly grips.

LILITH
Will they follow?

NEIL
Not likely.

The enforcer stares at them blankly but doesn't press out.

LILITH
What now?

NEIL
Step where I step. Three points of contact at all times.

LILITH
Three points?

Neil slaps his legs and one arm holding onto the building. He uses his free hand to break holds into the concrete with the metal striker.

NEIL
Don't move unless you're sure.

LILITH
I can't do this all the way up.

NEIL

I know. We'll figure it out.

INT. LARGE OFFICE - DAY

49679 types away at the data pad preventing access. He searches the screens to find his enforcers staring out windows.

49679

They're outside the building.

49679 examines footage of the lab and footage of the captives. He applies another Synthetic Curiosity Abstraction. With a head tilt, his eyes filter between the two screens.

49679 (CONT'D)

Protect the lab.

49679 sees the enforcers taking control of the protestors. He changes the frequency with a tap of his ear piece.

49679 (CONT'D)

Harvest from the dying. I'll protect the inventory from the intruders.

EXT. VACUOUS BUILDING, FACADE - DAY

Neil and Lilith slowly progress up the building. Neil's earpiece crackles back to life.

INT. CAFE - SAME TIME

Judy types away at the data pad.

INTERCUT - NEIL and JUDY

JUDY

Neil?

NEIL

She's back.

JUDY

He's moving.

NEIL

Where?

JUDY
It's a series of rooms.

NEIL
Prison cells.

JUDY
They could be defined as such.

NEIL
Where are they?

JUDY
Where are you? I don't register you in
the building.

NEIL
Cause I'm not IN the building.

JUDY
Where's my sister?

NEIL
She's here.

Lilith looks up at Neil exhausted.

NEIL (CONT'D)
We're climbing the outside.

JUDY
I'm going to run a series of lights along
the floors. Tell me when you see them.

They wait a few moments until a light flashes next to
them.

NEIL
Now.

The lights roll back to their location.

JUDY
Are they above or below you?

NEIL
One floor above.

JUDY
That floor is vacant. Can you find a way
back in?

Neil looks to his metal striker that shows signs of
damage.

NEIL

I think we can manage. What's it look like over there?

JUDY

Sixty eight percent have retreated to safety. Enforcers are collecting a black abstraction from those left on the ground. They are presumed dead.

NEIL

And Bill?

JUDY

I don't register him standing.

Neil presses his head against the wall, disheartened.

LILITH

What's going on?

NEIL

We're going back in.

EXT. PERIPHERY - DAY

Once colorful, the periphery is soaked in blood. Protest signs a mess strewn along the edges. Many lay beaten. Others taking their final breath.

Enforcers examine the dying and apply abstractions to collect the moment.

Nurses assist those the enforcers leave behind alive and pull them to safety and care.

Bill, pummeled but alive, crawls along the floor. He sits to take an overview of the scene.

A few enforcers lay dead among the protestors. Others seem to be malfunctioning, eyes wide as if scared.

Bill observes the dark brown abstraction on these enforcers.

BILL

It's fear that sticks.

Bill finds an unused deep dark brown abstraction. He sees Nadia, dead, with a black abstraction ready to harvest.

An enforcer grabs Bill by the ankle and pulls him with ease.

Bill wrestles with the enforcer and applies the deep dark brown abstraction to it.

The enforcer caves crumbling into a scared mess.

Bill crawls over to Nadia and brushes her hair around her ear.

BILL (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

Bill, curious, removes the black abstraction from her to examine it.

Another enforcer smacks him and tries to take the abstraction. Bill squeezes it onto the enforcer's wrist.

The enforcer immediately convulses then cycles through different emotions until he dies.

BILL (CONT'D)

That's it.

Bill retrieves several black abstractions collected by the enforcer.

BILL (CONT'D)

Each one of these was a life.

Bill kicks the dead enforcer.

Enforcers close in on Bill.

Bill stands and readies a black abstraction.

They stop in their tracks noticing the dead enforcer with a black abstraction. Each reviews the black abstractions they've collected.

Bill approaches close to one.

The enforcer creeps back.

Bill pulls in faster.

The enforcer escapes, self-preserving.

Bill turns to all of them, beaten but defiant.

INT. VACUOUS BUILDING, EMPTY FLOOR - DAY

The window shatters with the tempered glass falling everywhere.

Lilith peeks around the edge and sneaks to the floor, careful.

Neil follows her in.

NEIL

Where are we?

INT. CAFE - SAME TIME

Judy examines her data pad.

INTERCUT - NEIL and JUDY

JUDY

You're on the forty fifth floor. It's six floors above you.

NEIL

Is Tim there?

JUDY

Each is registered as a number. I do not have enough data to determine it.

Bill rushes in the cafe almost breaking the door with his size.

NEIL

Judy?

Judy registers his injuries and acknowledges his presence.

BILL

He's gotta find a black abstraction.

NEIL

What's he saying?

Bill catches his breath from the excitement and shows Judy a large collection of black "Death" abstractions.

JUDY

The abstraction from death.

BILL

They completely shut down and die.

JUDY

If you apply a black abstraction to the emotionless, they'll expire.

NEIL
You mean die.

JUDY
Affirmative.

Judy has a micro-expression of intense fear that Bill notices.

Bill looks fascinated but careful and tender toward Judy.

BILL
I'm sorry. I didn't mean to scare you.

JUDY
You need to separate now.

NEIL
No. I'm not leaving her.

JUDY
For this to succeed, you must.

Lilith, recovering from the climb, questions Neil with a look.

NEIL
She wants us to separate.

LILITH
Give me the ear piece.

Neil removes the earpiece and hands it over.

LILITH (CONT'D)
What are you talking about? Yes. I understand.

Lilith pulls the ear piece out and smashes it.

NEIL
What are you doing?

LILITH
We can get more done apart. Take the stairs. She'll guide you with the lights.

NEIL
What about you?

Lilith races to the elevator when it opens she finds the barrel still inside.

LILITH

I'm making sure you get out.

Lilith kisses him then pushes him back as the doors close.

Neil pries at the elevator doors when he hears it rise. They don't budge. He slides the metal striker between them. The tip breaks when Neil twists it.

Neil races to the stairwell.

INT. VACUOUS BUILDING, STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

The stairwell is nearly pitch black with a single light on a few floors above.

Neil pauses to think. After a beat, he cautiously steps to the lit floor. Neil examines the metal striker's broken tip.

Neil hears the muffled sounds of a person getting beaten.

INT. EVALUATION ROOM - DAY

49679 pounds on Tim relentlessly. He's ruthless, callous, and unforgiving but calm.

Tim laughs in his face.

TIM

My brother has hit me harder than that.

Blood splatters onto 49679. He reaches for a towel and pats it off like sweat from a workout.

49679

Our data predicts you might feel hope. Fear. Several at once. What is it you feel?

TIM

Guess.

Tim crawls to the window. He rises to find Rachael watching. Tim places his hands on the glass and Rachael matches his.

Tim kisses the window.

49679

Love?

TIM

What ever you're hoping to abstract, I'm
not going to let you have it.

49679 pulls Tim around and beats him harder. His eyes
connect and remain locked but blank with Rachael in his
sights.

Tim falls to the ground, near death.

49679

You don't have a choice.

49679 readies an abstraction and applies it to Tim.

Neil slams through the door and tackles 49679. He punches
wildly striking blows.

49679, reactionless, pushes Neil off and defends himself
using different fighting techniques.

For every swing Neil makes, 49679 counters.

INT. LARGE OFFICE - SAME TIME

The elevator opens and Lilith finds enforcers guarding
the lab.

Lilith kicks the oil barrel into the office.

Enforcers react defensively to avoid contact as the
barrel rolls through spilling onto the carpet. It breaks
through a glass double door.

Lilith lights the spill and flames follow the barrel.

The elevator doors close.

INT. PRODUCTION FLOOR PLATFORM - CONTINUOUS

The barrel slams through the glass double doors off the
platform and onto the production floor.

A large explosion rocks the entire floor in destruction.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

Lilith closes her eyes as the explosion rocks the
building. Her feet leave the floor as she becomes
weightless when the elevator falls.

INT. EVALUATION ROOM - SAME TIME

The large explosion shakes the building.

49679 stops beating on Neil. He quickly analyzes the data to realize the lab has been destroyed.

NEIL

You should be angry.

49679

I can build another.

49679 pulls Neil from the room and throws him into another.

49679 (CONT'D)

If there was an emotion to be felt, it would be gratitude. I can advocate for your... replacement. And have you watch as I abstract her death.

49679 gently closes the door behind him.

INT. EVALUATION ROOM #2 - DAY

Neil grabs at the door handle. Locked from the outside. He punches at it with the metal striker. It's too dull to puncture the glass.

Neil turns to the glass looking into the next room.

Tim lies motionless.

NEIL

TIM!

He pounds on the glass.

NEIL (CONT'D)

TIM!

The emotions hits him heavy with tears and anger.

The door opens.

Lilith's loving and concerned eyes greet him with warmth.

Neil races to hug her.

NEIL (CONT'D)

I thought-

LILITH
The elevator just stopped as it was
falling.

NEIL
Judy?

LILITH
I don't know.

Neil races to the other evaluation room pulling Lilith
with him.

INT. EVALUATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Neil rushes in to check on Tim.

Tim smiles awaiting his last breath.

Neil holds Tim in his arms.

The emotion bursts from Neil as he places his hand on top
of the abstraction.

NEIL
Give it everything.

TIM
For family.

Tim is near death as the abstraction turns black and he
dies.

Lilith comforts Neil with her touch.

Neil secures the abstraction. He gently sets Tim down and
stands. Neil views through the glass on each side to find
a series of faces staring back at him.

LILITH
Let's get them home.

NEIL
Don't come back for me.

LILITH
What are you talking about?

NEIL
Get these people out.

Several faces once seen on missing person posters now
stare back alive and thankful as they leave.

LILITH
We can make it out.

NEIL
But when does it end?

INT. GUARD'S STATION - DAY

A simple desk and screen monitor the evaluation rooms.

49679 watches calmly from it's vantage point with a yellow synthetic abstraction on his arm.

Neil and Lilith race through the hallways releasing all the captives.

INT. HALLWAY - SAME TIME

NEIL
Go.

LILITH
Neil?

NEIL
Please.

Lilith kisses him but is slow to release.

LILITH
Make it out.

Lilith guides the captives to a stairwell.

INT. GUARD'S STATION - AFTERNOON

Neil cautiously approaches from the evaluation rooms and peers to the edge.

49679 stands waiting for him in an open space in front of the desk. He taps on a synthetic yellow abstraction attached to his wrist.

49679
I was curious.

NEIL
Look who needs to temper their curiosity.

49679
That would infer I am becoming like you.

NEIL

I hear if you feel it enough, you can.

49679

Why do you continue?

NEIL

You haven't calculated it?

49679

You have less than a one percent chance of stopping me.

NEIL

That might be all we need.

49679 tilts his head.

49679

I see the vigor in your eyes. What emotion are you feeling?

NEIL

Several. But mostly rage.

Neil readies an abstraction and applies it.

49679

What will it pull? Anger? Outrage? Fear?

Neil circles 49679.

49679 observes curious and analytical.

NEIL

You're not going to stop us from leaving?

49679

I will collect them again.

The abstraction on Neil's arm turns a bright amber. Neil removes it into a container then palms the black abstraction.

NEIL

Want to try it?

49679

Outrage?

49679 curiously contemplates by stretching his arm out to pull his sleeve but stops.

49679 (CONT'D)
The only outrage I might feel would be
for your disruption of my work.

Neil charges to tackle 49679.

49679 defends by knocking Neil's hand first and tossing
him to the ground a few feet away.

The abstraction flies across the room.

INT. HALLWAY - SAME TIME

Lilith hears the fight begin as the last of the captives
descend into the stairwell. She looks back, deciding.

INT. GUARD'S STATION - AFTERNOON

49679 attacks relentlessly. He pounds Neil ferociously.

Neil counters with a punch to the face.

49679
Is that desperation? Interesting.

49679 gains control and pushes Neil to a wall. He lifts
Neil with one hand to his throat.

Neil chokes, feet dangling.

49679 stares blankly at Neil. Their eyes connected. He
reaches for an abstraction then like a light switch he
drops Neil.

49679's eyes change, fearful. He turns to see Lilith has
applied a black abstraction to him.

49679 (CONT'D)
Irrational.

Neil coughs and finds his balance.

NEIL
That one's fear.

49679 turns to face Neil, eyes wide then teary.

NEIL (CONT'D)
That one's sadness. Your life is coming
to an end.

49679 brows furrow into rage.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Be careful, that one is rage. A one percent chance?

49679 convulses, holding his chest, and falls to one knee. He looks up at Neil with a brother's love.

NEIL (CONT'D)

You don't get to keep that one.

49679's breathing shallows as he falls blankly to the floor eyes open. His pupils dilate pitch black and he dies.

Lilith and Neil stand over 49679 exhausted but victorious.

FADE TO:

EXT. PERIPHERY - DAYS LATER

The periphery is returning to life. The posters that once acknowledged the missing now shine remembering the fallen. Flowers and color surround the memorials.

Teresa and Rachael place red roses at a memorial for Nadia with Bill comforting them in their loss.

A fancy transport with dark tinted windows rolls through to the cafe.

Neil steps out of the transport.

Lilith watches from the cafe.

Neil looks to her with a half smile.

Tousseau whispers into Neil's ear then finds Lilith watching and tips his cap politely toward her.

Neil waves to Bill then sees Rachael with a rose in her hand. He looks back to Tousseau straightening his red rose boutonniere. The enforcer closes a door to reveal a tattoo "17320".

A flood of memories kick Neil in the gut.

NEIL'S MEMORY

The rose on Rachael's desk.

Tousseau cultivating roses in his garden.

NEIL (V.O.)
 What's he got you doing?

The dark brown abstraction that Tim sold.

TIM (V.O.)
 Think he'll buy it?

Neil dangles off the building.

The enforcer 17320 on the rooftop.

The abstraction harvested from Neil on the rooftop.

The enforcer 17320 forces Neil back and away from the transport.

17320
 Go.

Mila holding her hand over the abstractions.

MILA (V.O.)
 Desperate enough to take a job?

Nadia's bright blue eyes.

NADIA (V.O.)
 He said someone would come to help me.

The transport silently rolls away.

TIM (V.O.)
 Ever think it's possible people are still out beyond?

TOUSSEAU (V.O.)
 That is mud?

Neil hyperventilates, heartbroken and angry.

Neil races over to Rachael.

NEIL
 You knew this whole time.

BILL
 Hey easy. She lost a sister.

Bill blocks Neil from attacking her.

NEIL
 He fucking played us. He FUCKING PLAYED ALL OF US.

RACHAEL

I'm sorry. I didn't know.

Rachael places her hand on Nadia's memorial then shamefully walks away with Teresa.

BILL

It's not over.

INT. CAFE - DAY

Neil, dejected, contemplates at the counter.

Lilith reaches for his hand to comfort him.

LILITH

So, what happens now?

NEIL

I don't know. I want to stick it to him so bad. I want to destroy it in front of him and make him watch.

LILITH

You can't let this consume you. For the first time, we've made a difference here.

NEIL

Tell that to Tim.

Lilith hands Neil a padded envelope. It reads "For Neil".

LILITH

We either have to step up or step out.

Neil, enlightened, softens. He tears into the envelope and pulls a letter.

TIM (V.O.)

I'm sorry. By now you know the gambit. An endless chess game played out in real time. I wished for a better outcome. I took steps. We needed to know what Tousseau wanted. You have the advantage now. Be the man I know you can be.

NEIL

It was you?

Neil twiddles the envelope to feel something else. He turns it and Tim's black knight chess piece slides into his palm.

LILITH

He believed in you. He knew.

Neil embraces Lilith then slides his fingers around her ear.

LILITH (CONT'D)

What does he want out there?

NEIL

He said. "I'll know it when I see it."

Neil pulls the river stone from his pocket, contemplating then to the black knight in the other hand. Determined, Neil grips the chess piece into a fist then whispers in Lilith's ear.

NEIL (CONT'D)

We have to change the board.

LILITH

How?

NEIL

I know what he wants.

LILITH

What?

NEIL

If there's life out there, I need to find it.

Judy relaxes at her booth focused on her data pad.

Neil approaches her slowly.

NEIL (CONT'D)

May I sit?

Judy looks to Lilith.

Neil glides into the booth.

Judy closes her data pad for his full attention.

NEIL (CONT'D)

How did you know?

JUDY

You needed to be what they couldn't expect.

NEIL
And what was that?

JUDY
Emotional.

Neil nods in agreement.

NEIL
I have to leave.

JUDY
I know.

Judy slides her hand forward to touch Neil's hand.

He looks down at it surprised then back to Judy. A single tear runs down her cheek.

Neil, mouth agape, smiles.

Neil turns Judy's hand over to reveal a number on her wrist "31415" with a tattooed dot between the three and one. He glides his finger over it.

NEIL
It's perfect.

Neil removes his river stone, admires it for a moment, then gently places it into Judy's hand. He quietly closes her fingers around it.

NEIL (CONT'D)
Take care of them for me.

JUDY
I will.

EXT. CITY'S EDGE - AFTERNOON

Neil rides his motorcycle to the edge of the city. The cloud drifts down to the ground.

Neil slaps open the mask to let the mist crash upon his cheeks. He takes slow deliberate breaths closing his eyes.

Eyes open, Neil presses his hand into the cloud. Nothing happens. He pulls it back to look. Neil looks back to the city then forward into the cloud. He rides through it.

THE END.