

# **MONSTER SLAYERS** of **NEON CITY**

written by

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**BLACK.**

RIDLEY (V.O.)  
Today was a bad day.

**EXT. NEON CITY SKYSCRAPER ROOFTOP - NIGHT**

It's raining.

A spotlight in the sky reads: **THURSDAY.**

Tight on RIC RIDLEY's (think Josh Brolin) SHATTERED face. Broken nose. Broken jaw. He's in tactical gear and beat to hell.

RIDLEY (V.O.)  
Like I said-

Blood SPURTS from his mouth.

RIDLEY (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
-bad day.

**SOMETHING THROWS HIM OFF OF THE ROOF.**

**THE SKY ABOVE NEON CITY - FALLING**

Ridley falls in SLOW MOTION; he watches individual rain drops move past him.

RIDLEY (V.O.)  
Neon City is split in two. The wealthy  
Upper Echelon and the poor Lower Block.

**EXT. NEON CITY DOWNTOWN - NIGHT - 15 YEARS AGO**

Huge MONSTERS, think LOVECRAFT by way of Death Metal, chase SCREAMING Neon Citizens through the streets; pandemonium.

RIDLEY (V.O.)  
Fifteen years ago, we were attacked  
by honest-to-god, real life monsters.

One shears off a FIRE HYDRANT, water everywhere. Another, a bloody dog-thing, corners a MAN-

MAN  
No! NO!

He throws up his arms, protecting his face. It roars and RIPS HIM APART into a GORY MESS.

**THE SKY ABOVE NEON CITY - FALLING - CONTINUOUS**

Gnarly fractals of light refract off of ATLAS CORPORATION HQ: the Citadel. BIGGEST skyscraper in a skyline of big skyscrapers.

RIDLEY (V.O.)

After the world's governments collapsed, ATLAS took over. People could still stream movies and order delivery, so most of them didn't notice a difference.

The buildings are ARMED with INTIMIDATING automated gun turrets and scanners; it all looks very expensive.

Ridley's so slow, he's almost floating. His eyes DART LEFT to see a HUGE BILLBOARD on a skyscraper.

On it, Ridley and a group of paramilitary types pose HEROICALLY with IMPOSING guns and swords.

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

They created the SLYRs, a team of monster hunters dedicated to, you guessed it, hunting monsters. They put me in charge.

The billboard reads, "ADULT ILLITERACY IS A DIFFERENT KIND OF MONSTER!"

RIDLEY

(re: the ad)

Ah man, they can't read that.

We swing above Ridley; a SPRAWLING SLUM stretches out beneath him.

RIDLEY (V.O.)

As ATLAS dug deeper for the raw materials to build the city bigger for the people on top, it meant less room for the people on the bottom.

An EXPLOSION in the far distance cooks off, near dozens of small fires. No automated gun turrets down there.

RIDLEY

The focus was on keeping the Upper Echelon safe; that's where the money is. So the Block was left to fend for itself. Classic dystopia stuff.

Ridley's eyes dart RIGHT. A huge HOLOVID projects ATLAS propaganda videos against the night sky.

A WOMAN (40's) in a white lab coat crosses her arms; smiles to camera.

Text beneath her reads "ATLAS SCIENTISTS ARE KEEPING YOU SAFE!"

RIDLEY (V.O.)  
(re: the woman)  
Dr. Cassandra Howard. We used to be close. Things don't work out great for her, either.

**INT. DR. HOWARD'S SECRET LAB - DAYS AGO**

The lab is a MESS; papers, files and gross-looking BIOLOGICAL SAMPLES everywhere.

One wall is neatly-hung awards, another plastered with MONSTER NEUROLOGY RESEARCH.

The woman, DR. CASSANDRA HOWARD (think Kerry Washington), swipes through a holographic display.

>>>COMPLETE BIO-NEURAL UPLOAD? Y/N

A LONG CABLE snakes from the holo-computer to a translucent wristband on GENESIS HOWARD's (think Zendaya) wrist.

A DNA-linked smart watch and holographic projector in one: the ICE.

She hesitates, punches >>>UPLINK; a progress bar zips to 100%.

Relief on her face turns to panic as static electricity lifts the hair on her arm...

DR. HOWARD  
*Shit. They're here.*

ZZZZZT!

Behind her, a brilliant blue portal, a "FAULT" tears a hole in mid-air; energy SIZZLES and ARCS.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)  
You've got to go, Gen!

GENESIS  
No! Not yet!

Dr. Howard JERKS a SHOTGUN from under a desk.

DR. HOWARD  
You're ready. Tell me the plan;  
repeat it back to me.

GENESIS  
Get to the Block. Find Cadence.  
Tell her I have information for her  
if she keeps me safe.

DR. HOWARD  
Good. I love you.

Big, racking sobs as they hug. SLIMY TENDRILS snake their way  
out of the Fault towards Genesis; Howard RACKS the shotgun.

DR. HOWARD  
Go.

KERBLAM! She fires into the Fault; the tentacles recoil. Whatever  
they're attached to SCREECHES as the buckshot hits home.

Genesis doesn't move.

DR. HOWARD  
GO!

Howard UNLOADS; shell after shell.

Genesis sprints through the exit door. It SLAMS shut behind  
her. She presses her face to the door's PORTHOLE window-

GENESIS  
MOM!

The tendrils wrap around Dr. Howard's ankle, pulling her out  
of sight. She SCREAMS.

RIDLEY (V.O.)  
Yikes, right?

**INT. SKYSCRAPER APARTMENT LIVING ROOM**

A YOUNG GIRL attacks a TOY MONSTER with a TOY SLYR.

YOUNG GIRL  
(monster voice)  
Rawr! I'm gonna get you, Ridley!  
(Ridley voice)  
Never!

In the window behind her, Ridley ZIPS by at TERMINAL  
VELOCITY; she doesn't notice.

**STILL FALLING IN SLOW MOTION**

Ridley watches the toy-fight play out through the window.

RIDLEY (V.O.)  
 (re: the action figure)  
 They never got my face right.

He falls past a HUGE BANNER. It features a DARK HAired MAN surrounded by ADORING CHILDREN. It reads "CASPRO'S KIDS."

**INT. PRESS CONFERENCE - WEEKS AGO**

CHARLES CASPRO (60's) in an impeccably tailored suit. Think Greg Kinnear by way of Sean Hannity.

RIDLEY (V.O.)  
 Charles Caspro; ATLAS CEO.

CASPRO  
 The loss of life in the Lower Block during our most recent excavation was a terrible tragedy.

RIDLEY (V.O.)  
 If you're already guessing that he's the bad guy...

CASPRO  
 ATLAS is listening and we're learning. Because Neon City doesn't just belong to ATLAS, it belongs to everyone.

RIDLEY (V.O.)  
 You're right. Kind of. It's complicated.

**SOMEHOW STILL FALLING - REAL TIME**

Ridley's PLUMMETING, g-forces tugging on his face.

RIDLEY (V.O.)  
 Let's see, ATLAS, monsters, scientists, evil CEO...I think you're all caught up.

20 feet to go.

RIDLEY (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 In the back of my mind, I always thought I'd make it out ok.

He sails out of sight, past an especially HUGE window near ground level of the Citadel.

RIDLEY (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 But I guess that's part of the job.

A sickening WET THWAK. Blood SPRAYS across the glass spelling-

**TITLE: MONSTER SLAYERS OF NEON CITY**

DEAD RIDLEY (V.O.)  
 Welp, now I'm dead; great. And  
 worse? I'm getting ahead of myself.  
 Let's start at the start.

**EXT. UPPER ECHELON STREETS - NIGHT - THREE DAYS AGO**

SQUEEEEEEEEEEEP.

The title was a reflection on a skyscraper window. A squeegee blade drags it away, replacing it with:

**TITLE: THREE DAYS AGO - TUESDAY**

A bipedal WASHBOT hangs up the squeegee, admiring the monolith of perfectly clean glass.

Around it: the HIGHLINE-ESQUE UTOPIA of the Upper Echelon, bathed in the entire spectrum of neon light stretches for miles.

SMASH!

A Lovecraftian TENTACLE MONSTER CRASHES through the window.

It sails over Washbot, SLAMMING onto the pavement and scuttling down the street.

WASHBOT  
 Oh. No.

The creature ROARS; every window save for one SHATTERS.

WASHBOT (CONT'D)  
 Window. Integrity. At. One. Percent.

DISTANT VOICE  
 (getting closer)  
 ....ahhhhhhhhhhhHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

JAKE YOSHIDA (20's) and his MOTORCYCLE (leased), smash through the one remaining window.

Japanese, a long, lean body and bleach-blond hair he dyed in the sink.

WASHBOT

No. Please. My. Windows.

DEAD RIDLEY (V.O.)

Jake Yoshida; the best raw talent  
I'd ever seen. Came to us from the  
Lower Block.

Washbot's shoulders slump, defeated. The bike clips the  
window-washing lift, sending Washbot tumbling down.

Jake GUNS IT after the monster.

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

Your classic orphan story: parents  
killed, home destroyed. Taking him  
on as a rookie felt like the right  
thing to do.

JAKE

Ridley, you asleep up there or  
what? Wake up, grandpa!

DEAD RIDLEY (V.O.)

...most of the time.

The monster PLOWS through a coffee shop, dragging Jake around  
a corner. Debris clanks off of his armor plating.

Washbot SLAMS to the ground.

WASHBOT

Please. Help. Washbot.

Jake looses a burst of automatic pistol fire. Muzzle flashes  
as bullets SLAM into thick skin; nothing.

JAKE

I distinctly remember my partner  
telling me that this would be easy!

### **THE SKIES ABOVE THE STREET**

Ridley pilots an ATLAS QUADCOPTER to a hover over the scene.

RIDLEY

Partner? No, definitely more of an  
alpha wolf.

The pilot's seat slides out over the side of the quadcopter.  
Ridley shoulders a HUGE sniper rifle, feet dangling.



JAKE (O.C.)  
Really? I always thought of you as  
proud silverback gorilla.

RIDLEY  
Yeah?

Ridley KACHUNKS the rifle bolt; sights his SCOPE on-

**ON THE GROUND**

Jake zooms closer to the monster.

JAKE  
Yeah! And I'm a younger gorilla, ready  
to take over when you peacefully walk  
into the jungle alone to die.

He uncorks another burst into a tentacle, BLOWING IT OFF. It  
flops in the street. Green blood spurts everywhere.

The monster stops short. Jake skids to a halt 500 feet away;  
Washbot right between them.

They size each other up.

JAKE  
This is...this is a big one, huh?

RIDLEY (O.S.)  
Class Four. Tell me how I know.

JAKE  
Uh, over 12 feet tall, four, no,  
five rows of teeth, tentacles  
attached to the lower thorax-

RIDLEY (O.S.)  
Good; gold star.

It ROARS. Jake REVS his engine.

The monster CHARGES, yanking itself along the ground with its  
remaining tentacles.

JAKE  
This...might be a Class Five, I'll  
tell you in a sec, I'm about to get  
a closer look.

WASHBOT  
No. Please.

Jake SQUEALS FOWARD laying rubber; empties a magazine into the monster's chest.

It's not stopping. Uh oh. He reaches for the KATANA on his back.

JAKE  
Uh, hey, spike it!

Jake opens the throttle. His world BLURS, the tip of his sword millimeters above the asphalt.

### IN THE SKY

Ridley fires a TARGETING DART into the monster; it blinks RED.

RIDLEY  
Spiked-

He CENTERS the dart in his scope.

BEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEP

RIDLEY (CONT'D)  
Locked.

### ON THE GROUND

A nearby AUTOMATED GUN TURRET looses a MISSILE; it streaks straight up into the air.

RIDLEY (V.O.)  
Coming in hot!

Jake ramps his bike over a parked car, Katana high in the air.

JAKE  
YES!

His eyes widen - he's not slowing down.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
NO!

Inertia delivers him right into the tentacles, pulling Jake towards rows of GNASHING TEETH.

The monster casually tosses the bike away; it EXPLODES.

JAKE  
(choking)  
That was...a...lease...

The tentacles CONSTRICT around him, his lights start to dim...

The targeting dart turns a solid green. The missile streaks straight downwards-

BOOM!

It detonates just off target. The explosion sends Jake, Washbot and the monster careening over a guard rail.

WASHBOT

Oh. Noooooo.

### **IN THE QUADCOPTER**

RIDLEY

Yoshida? Jake? Can you hear me?

No answer. Ridley's scope bounces around until it finds Jake's unconscious body tumbling through the air.

The monster PLUMMETS next to him, tentacles streaming in the wind. Washbot isn't far behind.

RIDLEY

Vortex One, I'm going down to the Lower Block. Roll a response team.

The gunner's seat slides back into the cockpit.

VORTEX ONE (O.C.)

Ah, Ridley, things are still a little spicy down there. Do you need an escort?

RIDLEY

Negative.

He pushes in the stick and sends the copter into a NOSEDIVE.

### **THE SKIES ABOVE THE LOWER BLOCK**

The ground rushes up to meet Jake.

Just before impact, his ICE reads >>>EMERGENCY FAILSAFE; a ball of DENSE FOAM encases him.

He THUNKS off of the ground and rolls to a stop in-

**EXT. LOWER BLOCK DIG SITE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS**

A wet SQUISH as the monster's body LEVELS an apartment building; its RESIDENTS crawl out from beneath the rubble.

Seconds later, a hollow CLANK as Washbot hits the pavement.

A sign on the building that used to read "FUTURE ATLAS MINING SITE" is defaced to read "ALL MINE."

The copter touches down, landing lights flashing. Ridley springs out of the cockpit; sprints to Jake.

RIDLEY

Jake! Hey, you in there?

He CRACKS open the foam ball; Jake's unconscious body slides to the ground. Ridley slams an AUTOINJECTOR into his thigh.

Silence. The stimulant hits; Jake comes to with a GASP.

RIDLEY

You ok?

JAKE

I think so. Are we in the Block?

RIDLEY

We are.

JAKE

Did I fall over the edge?

RIDLEY

You did.

JAKE

(looking at his body)  
I got foamed?

RIDLEY

Big time.

Washbot stands up behind them, miraculously unharmed.

WASHBOT

I've. Never. Felt. So. Alive.

JAKE

Collateral damage?

A HUGE piece of the building COLLAPSES, crushing the celebrating Washbot.

RIDLEY

Some.

RIDLEY (CONT'D)

If you can go home at the end of the day, it's a good one. Second gold star.

JAKE

I'm sorry that I called you an ape.

RIDLEY

Gorilla, but I accept your apology.

Behind them, the tentacles start to TWITCH.

JAKE

What's the difference?

RIDLEY

A gorilla is a type of ape.

The monster, wounded but very much alive, uncoils to its full height; double its previous size.

JAKE

So all gorillas are apes-

RIDLEY

But not all apes are gorillas.

JAKE

Huh. I did not know that.

They freeze. Jake looks to Ridley.

JAKE

Still alive?

RIDLEY

Still alive!

They draw and fire in unison, diving in opposite directions.

The wounded monster RAGES towards them, BLOWING through the remains of the apartment building

CLICK.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Empty!

Jake unsheathes his sword. Ridley extends a BAYONET from his rifle. It glows red then WHITE HOT.

The two SLYRS WHIRL around, stabbing and slicing.

THWUMP! Ridley's rifle fires a metal JAVELIN from an under-barrel launcher. It PINS a tentacle to the pavement.

RIDLEY  
Get its attention!

JAKE  
You get its attention!

The monster RIPS OFF ITS OWN TENTACLE and keeps coming.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
Fine!

Jake breaks into a dead sprint.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
Hey, over here, uh, octo...bitch!

No dice. The monster SLAMS towards Ridley, demolishing a hydrogen fueling station with a MASSIVE BOOM.

RIDLEY  
Get its attention *better!*

Ridley fends it off, stabbing his bayonet into slimy flesh with a beefy SIZZLE.

Jake looks to his empty pistol; one option left. He fires a GRAPPLING HOOK into the monster's back and BOUNDS up its spine, shouting with every step.

JAKE  
You're. Supposed. To. Be. Dead!

With a final SCREAM, he drives the katana into its skull.

It drops. Jake stands atop the corpse, victorious.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
(big grin)  
I-

A GEYSER of green goop EXPLODES from the wound; Nickelodeon by way of Kurosawa. It goes on. And on.

And on.

Jake's completely drenched. His armor glistens in green guts. Ridley is SPOTLESS.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
(re: how clean Ridley is)  
Ah, man.

RIDLEY  
"Octo-bitch?"

JAKE  
Not my best. Oh, oh, what about  
"what's Kraken?"

RIDLEY  
Much better. Doesn't count, though.

The corpse convulses. They share a look and start reloading.  
Another SHUDDER ruffles through the body.

RIDLEY (CONT'D)  
(sighing)  
Sure.

The monster's SKELETON RIPS OUT OF ITS SKIN. The Octo-  
skeleton SCREAMS.

Bullets bounce harmlessly off of the previously endo-skeleton.

Jake throws a GRENADE. It EXPLODES, shrapnel clinking on  
bone. No effect.

The monster CLOMPS through the smoke cloud - closer and closer.

FEMALE VOICE  
Outta the way!

Out of nowhere, a WOMAN CHARGES towards the monster into the  
cloud.

The SLYRS COCK their weapons...

SHOOMP!

A GRAPPLING HOOK flies from a 10th story window, sticking in  
bone. Then another. And another.

The monster ROARS; it can't move.

VRRRRRMMMMMM!

It STOPS. Confused. Its hollow eyes dart around before its  
SKULL SPLITS IN HALF.

CADENCE YOSHIDA, (20's) covered in tattoos, flourishes her  
CHAINSAW PIKE. Chopped blue hair barely hides a small METAL  
PLATE on her face.

CADENCE  
Hey.

She leaps from the bones; they CRUMBLE DOWN behind her.

LOWER BLOCK FIGHTERS emerge in upper-story windows,. guns at the ready.

JAKE

Hey.

**EXT. LOWER BLOCK MINING SITE - NIGHT - LATER**

An UNEASY STANDOFF between Block and ATLAS as clean-up CRANES hoist the corpse into the bed of an oversized truck.

DEAD RIDLEY (V.O.)

Tentacle monster turns into a skeleton monster that gets sawed in half. Pretty normal day for us.

A visibly nervous security team holds back a gathering mob. They JEER and toss bottles at the ATLAS crew.

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

ATLAS wasn't popular in the block. But Cadence was. Folk hero, monster hunter and Jake's older sister. Turns out, killing monsters ran in the family.

Inside the perimeter, Ridley and Jake restock and reload, while Cadence polishes her pike.

CADENCE

Hoo boy, they're mad, huh? Not long before the pitchforks and torches come out.

JAKE

Let 'em. Garlic or crosses don't hurt us, either.

CADENCE

That's vampires.

JAKE

(scoffing)  
Whatever.

CADENCE

(re: the drill)  
Two thousand people live in this building and you're forcing them out.

JAKE

We're not doing anything.



CADENCE  
You're wearing their uniform.

ANGRY MOB MEMBER 1  
Go home, scab!

ANGRY MOB MEMBER 2  
Fuck you, traitor!

CADENCE  
(whispering)  
I think they're talking to you.

Jake stews.

RIDLEY  
Thanks for your help.

CADENCE  
I didn't do it for you, I did it  
for them.

ANGRY MOB MEMBER 2  
Go back where you belong!

ANGRY MOB MEMBER 1  
Eat shit, topsiders!

CADENCE  
Well, not *those* two specifically.

She shoulders her pike.

CADENCE (CONT'D)  
A couple of SLYRS get themselves  
killed in the Block and all of a  
sudden we got a thousand ATLAS jags  
down here cracking skulls for fun.

RIDLEY  
You fight like your brother.

CADENCE  
No, he fights like me.  
(gesturing to the crowd)  
Give Caspro a message from us?

She walks away, middle finger high in the air. The crowd  
CHEERS and parts to let her pass.

RIDLEY  
I don't get the feeling that she's  
interested in joining the team.

Jake fiddles with his gear, silent.

RIDLEY (CONT'D)  
Hey, you did a hell of a job today.

JAKE

Thanks.

RIDLEY

Rest up. Big day tomorrow.

Jake walks towards the crowd, stops, sighs, and walks back.

JAKE

My motorcycle exploded.

RIDLEY

Yeah, I'll give you a ride.

**CHECKPOINT ALPHA - NIGHT - LATER**

A DMZ between the Echelon and the Block. Barbed wire, tall fences and oscillating GUN TURRETS. On the Block side, a KID tags the wall with: **EARLIER**.

Genesis approaches, clothes still spattered in GREEN GORE. As she gets closer, an ATLAS GUARD creaks to his feet, saunters towards her.

ATLAS UNIFORM

Late night?

GENESIS

Yeah.

He eyes her clothes.

GENESIS (CONT'D)

Oh, that. I'm...really sick. Lotta-

She mimes throwing up. A lot.

ATLAS UNIFORM

Uh huh. Curfew's in effect until 0700. No crossings until then.

GENESIS

Ok, but I really-

ATLAS UNIFORM

You can come back and get in line with the rest of the trash.

GENESIS

But-

ATLAS UNIFORM

Are we gonna have a problem-

One hand drifts down to his pistol, the other brings up a portable ID scanner. It BEEPS when he scans her wrist:

>>>IDENT //ATLAS OMEGA PRIORITY//

He straightens up to attention and motions to his partner to open the gate.

ATLAS UNIFORM (CONT'D)  
Sorry m'am, I didn't know you were  
such a high-

She's already gone.

### **EXT. UPPER ECHELON HIGHWAY - THE NEXT MORNING**

Traffic moves in an automated flow, cars merge and pass like a well-oiled zipper.

A holographic highway sign reads: **WEDNESDAY**

DEAD RIDLEY (V.O.)  
Jake's big day; getting his SLYR pin. A  
piece of metal that tells everybody that  
you're a bigshot badass. Or very stupid.

In the distance, sunlight catches the endless glass of The Citadel.

VROOM.

A VINTAGE STREET BIKE weaves in and out of traffic, blasting down the highway toward the city's center.

DEAD RIDLEY (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Usually a mix of both.

### **THE CITADEL PARKING GRID**

Elevators lift sleek electric cars into unseen parking garages as ATLAS employees file in for the day.

The street bike RUMBLES into the Grid, piercing the zen HUM of the automated garage. A gate zips out of the way.

The bike screeches to a halt in one of the few remaining "parking spots."

An elevator silently lifts rider and bike to-

**THE CITADEL COURTYARD**

Trees, birds and the sound of an unseen water feature; an oasis in a desert of metal and glass.

The elevator slows to a halt. Jake pulls off his helmet, takes a deep breath and-

RIDLEY (O.S.)  
Let's go, you're late.

Ridley strides past him towards a bank of elevators. Jake jogs to catch up.

JAKE  
I leased a new bike. You like it?

RIDLEY  
(still moving)  
No. And leases are financially irresponsible.

JAKE  
What did you do, sleep here?

RIDLEY  
I would if I slept.

The doors of a particularly fancy elevator WHOOSH closed behind them.

**INSIDE THE ELEVATOR**

The elevator shoots up a glass shaft, Neon City sprawled out beneath them. Soft MUZAK plays.

RIDLEY  
You'll do great. Just be polite, smile and say thank you; don't be yourself.

JAKE  
You think Cadence is right about ATLAS? We don't spend a lot of time in the Block...

Ridley's eyes dart toward a SECURITY CAMERA on the ceiling.

RIDLEY  
I think what ATLAS wants me to.

Jake feigns swiping through his ICE.

JAKE

Huh, says here that ATLAS wants you to buy me lunch at Soupernoodle?

DEAD RIDLEY (V.O.)

This fucking kid.

The elevator flies upwards, the city's reflection glinting off of the glass.

**INT. CEO'S LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER**

The elevator doors open into an immense lobby. The ORIGINAL MONA LISA and other priceless art hangs on the walls.

EDGAR BANKS (30's, round) waddles toward them.

RIDLEY

We have a 3pm to see Mr. Caspro.

EDGAR

You're late.

JAKE

It's 2:57.

Edgar shuffles in close.

EDGAR

(hissing)

If Mr. Caspro ever wants to see you again, you will arrive at least 15 minutes early.

(quietly)

Goon.

JAKE

The fuck did you say?

DEAD RIDLEY (V.O.)

Oof. That is not something you call someone from the Block. Anyone, really.

Ridley steps between them.

RIDLEY

Is Mr. Caspro available?

Still glaring at Jake, Edgar turns on a shit-eating-grin.

EDGAR

He is. Right this way.

Edgar mounts a SEGWAY-ESQUE scooter and leads them to-

**CASPRO'S OFFICE**

Panoramic windows let in the entire city. A corporate quadcopter sits on a helipad just outside the windows.

Caspro's across the room, screaming into his ICE.

CASPRO

...I don't care what you have to do,  
just get it done. Clear my dig site!

He swipes the call away in disgust.

EDGAR

Mr. Caspro: Mr. Ridley and... this.

Edgar scooters out of the room.

CASPRO

Ah, yes: our first SLYR from the  
Lower Block.

RIDLEY

Yes, sir.

Caspro eyes Jake; examining a horse before the race.

CASPRO

Seeing what one of their own can  
accomplish if they'd only work  
harder Let them know they can pull  
themselves up by their bootstraps.  
Edgar, a picture with-  
(looks to Jake's nametag)  
Yosh-eye-dah.

Edgar scooters back in, sliding around the corner.

Caspro throws his arm around Jake, sparking a MEGAWATT smile.  
Edgar swipes a photo.

CASPRO (CONT'D)

(smile dropping)

Caption it "ATLAS President Charles  
Caspro with Lower Block..." What do  
you call yourselves?

JAKE

People?

CASPRO  
 No, that won't work. "ATLAS  
 President Caspro with "his name,"  
 blah blah, keeping Neon City safe  
 for everyone," you get the idea.

EDGAR  
 Got it.

CASPRO  
 Good.  
 (tosses Jake the pin)  
 Post it. They're getting restless.

JAKE  
 Uh, Mr. Caspro, sir? I'm honored to  
 be a part of the team. And I'm  
 looking forward to making you proud.

Silence. Caspro scowls.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
 ...sir.

EDGAR  
 Mr. Caspro, you have a 3:10.

CASPRO  
 Then Edgar, get me the fuck out of here.

Caspro shoves Edgar off of the scooter and motors out of the  
 room. Edgar WADDLES to ANOTHER SCOOTER parked nearby.

EDGAR  
 That will be all, gentlemen.

He whizzes away.

Jake's stunned. Ridley claps a hand on his shoulder.

RIDLEY  
 Hey, look at that; I am going to  
 buy you lunch.

**INT. SOUPERNOODLES NOODLE HOUSE - LATER**

SLURRRRRRRRRRRRP.

Busy and loud, this is a blue collar place. Ridley polishes  
 off a steaming bowl of noodles.

JAKE  
 First SLYR from the Block.

Jake pokes at his lunch, idly rubbing the SLYR pin.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
And I'm like an animal in a zoo.

RIDLEY  
Don't tell anybody I said this, but I think you're very brave. I couldn't do what you're doing.

JAKE  
Really?

RIDLEY  
Hell no.  
(then)  
Not finish my lunch? That would be impossible for me.

Jake smiles; digs in.

RIDLEY (CONT'D)  
(re: the pin)  
Can I see that?  
(Jake hands it over)  
Forget all of the political bullshit. You signed up to help people and you're good at it. Nobody can take that away from you. So-

Ridley carves a small STAR into the metal with his BOOTKNIFE.

RIDLEY (CONT'D)  
Gold star.  
(hands it back)  
I'm proud of you. Top marks in physical and IQ testing, Hex aptitude off the charts. Most recruits don't even make it past the psych eval.

JAKE  
(mouthful of noodles)  
Still not sure how you did.

RIDLEY  
When I joined it was the "Fast Attack Response Team."

A pause. Jake does the math.

JAKE  
So... "FART?"



DEAD RIDLEY (V.O.)  
We changed the name after we realized.

RIDLEY  
The only requirement then was a warm  
body you were willing to throw in front  
of something with a lot of teeth.

Jake finishes with a slurp.

JAKE  
Thanks.

Ridley swipes his ICE to pay the bill. A double take when he  
notices a red "PRIORITY MESSAGE." His face darkens.

RIDLEY  
We're moving.

JAKE  
Moving? But I was going to-  
Ridley's already halfway out the door.

**INT. HOWARD SECRET LAB - LATER**

It's wrecked.

ATLAS TECHNICIANS and SCIENCE-TYPES pick through the remains.

A pair of SLYRS, SARA STARLAND (30's) and JUAN GARCIA (20's)  
consult with them in hushed tones.

Jake stops, gobsmacked. Ridley crunches over broken glass.

JAKE  
They're not getting their security  
deposit back.

Ridley's not stopping.

STARLAND  
Ridley? Sir?

JAKE  
(walking backwards)  
Starland, Garcia. Yoshida. Hi, nice  
to see you again. We've met. New  
recruit training last year? I was  
the guy who; I'm with-  
(pointing to Ridley)  
So I should follow, I'm going to, uh,  
ok, I'll see you in the... place-

He jogs to catch up with Ridley and RETCHES when he comes upon-

An EXTREMELY BLOODY sheet. Ridley's on a knee next to it, face ashen.

GOUTS of green and red blood splatter the walls; a Jackson Pollock Christmas. Spent shotgun shells and debris litter the floor.

RIDLEY  
(pulling back the sheet)  
You know who this is?

JAKE  
Oh man, I know her.  
Doctor...billboard...doctor.

RIDLEY  
(quiet)  
Howard. Cassandra Howard.

DEAD RIDLEY (V.O.)  
Like I said: things didn't work out  
great for her.

Starland and Garcia hover in the doorway.

GARCIA  
Apparently the company didn't know she  
kept this lab. Real black book stuff.

STARLAND  
(re: shotgun shells)  
She did some damage but didn't  
really stand a chance. No trace of  
the scud, but we're looking.

RIDLEY  
What was it?

STARLAND  
Class seven. No clue how it happened.

GARCIA  
Must've been some kind of glitch in  
the system. This place is primed-

He jerks his head toward the gun turrets outside.

GARCIA (CONT'D)  
-guns should've been putting  
warheads on foreheads the second  
something got close. We're running  
diagnostics to see what went wrong.

Starland nods at the lab equipment.

STARLAND  
Just about everything was torched  
when we got here.

Ridley's motionless. Jake takes over, barking orders.

JAKE  
Ok, thanks you two. We'll take it  
from here.

GARCIA  
That's not-

STARLAND  
No, I don't-

JAKE  
Starland, we'll need IR *and* UV sweeps  
of the entire floor. Get the whole EM  
spectrum just to be sure. Garcia, get  
on a vid back to OICS and have them  
route the CCTV to our quad.

STARLAND  
Hey, we're not-

JAKE  
And for God's sake, somebody get  
ichor samples to the lab five  
fucking minutes ago.  
(no movement)  
Get your thumbs out of your dicks  
and go!

They hesitate. Jake glares. They leave.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
(watching them go)  
Did you buy that? I thought it  
sounded good.

RIDLEY  
She didn't deserve this.

JAKE  
You knew her?

RIDLEY  
We were close, then Breach Day changed  
everything. We all lost someone. Sandy  
and I were part of the first line of  
defense. She studied them; I killed  
them. It was a good system. But  
something changed; I don't know what.  
One of those things, I guess.

Jake raises an eyebrow; "Sandy?"

RIDLEY (CONT'D)  
We had a fight. Big fight. Hadn't  
talked since.

He pulls the sheet back over her. Jake can't find the words.  
He picks up a burnt PHOTO near the ruined lab equipment.

JAKE  
Who's this? A daughter?

Cassandra and Genesis smile up from the photo at Ridley.

RIDLEY  
I...don't know.

He waves his ICE over the picture. ">>>FACIAL RECOGNITION  
DATA NOT FOUND."

JAKE  
Maybe you didn't know her as well  
as you thought?

Ridley takes the photo; rubs soot away from it with his thumb.

RIDLEY  
Maybe. You up for a field trip?

**INT. SECURE LOCATION - CONTINUOUS**

We're pulled through a screen; Jake and Ridley examine the  
photo on a CCTV feed. We see another screen, another. Dozens.

No, HUNDREDS of hidden camera feeds are all being piped into  
this UNDERGROUND FACILITY.

A HOLOCOMPUTER blinks to life. A message appears: ">>>R IS CLOSE."

**EXT. LOWER BLOCK STREETS - NIGHT**

A particularly grimy part of the Block. Light barely  
penetrates dark alleys that stretch on forever.

The shadows morph to spell: **TUESDAY - ONE DAY EARLIER**

Genesis tiptoes through the streets. She ducks into an alley  
to check her ICE:

>>>ATLASNET TRACKING: YOSHIDA, CADENCE - 500m

A group of THUGS wheel around the corner; each of them sporting a brightly colored MOWHAWK and glowing pink eyes. They LAUGH as they break glass and whatever else they can.

Genesis spins and walks the other way.

Too late.

THUG 1

Hey joytoy, where you going so fast?  
Pretty inputs gotta move sloooow.

They fan out, swinging PIPES and CHAINS. Genesis backs away.

THUG 2

(sniffing)  
You smell that?

THUG 3

Mmmhmm; smells like preem Topsider.

They laugh and toss a cloud of PINK DUST into the air. They meander through the cotton candy cumulonimbus, sucking it in.

Genesis crab-scuttles back into a wall. Nowhere left to go. They're right on her.

Her ICE beeps. >>>ATLASNET TRACKING: YOSHIDA, CADENCE - 0m

Cadence TAPS her pike against the brick behind them.

CADENCE

Unless I'm forgetting something, I don't remember giving a bunch of fucking glowheads permission to hassle little girls on my street.

Thug 1, COBB, keeps his eyes on Genesis.

COBB

You see any monsters around here?  
No? So this ain't your business.

CADENCE

I'm feeling generous tonight. So pretty please, with fucking sugar on top, fuck off back to whatever the fuck you crawled out of.

Cadence creeps closer.

COBB

Slag off or we're gonna-

Cadence SMACKS him in the back of the head; he reels.

CADENCE  
What? Bleed on me?

The other thugs CHARGE at Cadence. She disarms one, jams his knife into his thigh. He SCREAMS.

Cobb pulls a CHEAP PISTOL, levels it on Genesis' head; she closes her eyes.

COBB  
I'm gonna frag this bitch, Yoshida!

Hearing the name, Genesis' eyes SNAP OPEN. With SUPERHUMAN SPEED, she grabs Cobb's wrist and breaks his arm at the elbow.

CRONCH!

The gun clatters to the ground. He stares at BONE tearing through the skin.

COBB  
My arm! She broke my fucking arm!

Cadence, bug-eyed, stands over her own handiwork: a pile of incapacitated thugs.

GENESIS  
You're Cadence Yoshida.

CADENCE  
(stepping back)  
Maybe. Who's asking?

GENESIS  
Cassandra Howard sent me to find you. I'm-

Genesis stops; tries to speak but the words don't come. Her eyes roll back and she COLLAPSES.

**EXT. THE OVERRIDE - NIGHT - LATER**

Bass THUMPS from behind the metal door of a run down building. Chromed-out, cybernetic humans vape nearby.

Cadence slinks out of a dark alleyway, Genesis' limp body slung over her shoulder. No one bats an eye.

She swipes her ICE. A jacked BOUNCER cracks the door. He's seven feet tall and more machine than man.

Looming, he takes a long drag from a VAPE. His eyes narrow and he THRUSTS his robotic FIST towards her.

They fist bump.

BOUNCER  
Wassup Cadence?

CADENCE  
Reggie, I need Melvin's help.

REGGIE  
You know he don't like it when you call him that.

CADENCE  
Reg, c'mon-

REGGIE  
Just saying. You know how sensitive he can be.

CADENCE  
Fine. I need to talk to "Meltdown."

REGGIE  
That's gonna mean a lot to him.

He swings the door wide into-

### **CLUB OVERRIDE**

They're hit by a sonic boom of THRASH METAL as they move through a thick haze of smoke and moshing PUNKS.

Reggie checks over his shoulder and opens a concealed door to-

### **CHOP SHOP BACK ROOM**

Muted music BUMPS. Operating tables occupied by SEDATED PATIENTS are tended to by dirty looking RIPPERDOCS.

A Ripperdoc HACKS off an arm with a gnarly BUZZSAW; blood everywhere. He ties off the stump and preps a robotic replacement.

Meltdown (20s), in a long leather jacket and sunglasses, kicks his feet up onto a desk.

REGGIE  
Yo, Meltdown; Yoshida is here.

"Meltdown" empties a baggie of iridescent PINK DUST onto the desk and waves Cadence in with a CYBERNETIC HAND.

MELTDOWN

Cadence-

He slams his fist on the table; a dense cloud of pink dust SHOOTs into the air. Eyes closed, he inhales it.

MELTDOWN (CONT'D)

You wanna get *bright*?

His eyes flutter open, glowing a dull pink through the dark lenses.

CADENCE

Melvin, I need to get her onto a VitaTable right now.

MELTDOWN

(re: his name)  
What did I say?

REGGIE

I told her, man.

MELTDOWN

You're not even gonna say please?

CADENCE

Please eat shit, Melvin.

MELTDOWN

I just got off a holo with my man Cobb. He said you and some kid tuned him up. He said the kid did something weird...but it was kinda hard to understand him through the tears.

(then)

And now you come in here and you can't even call my by my name? I dunno, not a lot of other VitaTables in the Block...

CADENCE

I don't have time for-

MELTDOWN

(dead serious)  
Just say it. Say my cool name.

CADENCE

(deadpan)  
Please help me, Meltdown.



MELTDOWN

See? All you had to do was ask.

Meltdown jerks his head at the VitaTable, a Frankenstein machine covered in wires, cables and hoses.

He slaps the POWER button. Nothing happens. Another press. Bupkis. Reggie yanks out its power cartridge, blows on it and slams it back in.

It powers on; DIAGNOSTICS scroll across the glass cover.

Automated straps cinch Genesis tight; the translucent GLASS slides over top of her.

MELTDOWN

So what kinda information we talking about here?

He swipes his hands across the glass as data flies by. LASERS crisscross Genesis' body; eyeballs rolling behind her lids.

CADENCE

The "critical to the survival of the Block" kind.

(then)

How's the book club, Reg?

REGGIE

Real good. This week we're finishing "Of Mice and Men." These motherfuckers love Steinbeck.

Meltdown leans closer to the display. He swipes his ICE, double checking his work.

MELTDOWN

Fuck me.

CADENCE

What?

His tough guy persona drops. An OFFICIAL LOOKING notice FLASHES on screen ">>>ATLAS IDENT>>>NEURAL INTERLOCK #62584."

MELTDOWN

ATLAS security program. We use a pirated version to send messages in Brain-Couriers. But this is the real deal. What's it doing in this kid's head?

Cadence stares in at the blinking error message.

CADENCE

No idea; but I'll find out.

**EXT. REDWOOD FOREST - DAY - LATER**

A QUADCOPTER glides along the treetops through the morning fog. It settles to a HOVER over a picturesque lake. A watery title: **WEDNESDAY**, bobbing on the surface.

DEAD RIDLEY (V.O.)

We went to the middle of nowhere  
to find the one person I knew would  
know something.

JAKE

Pretty far off grid.

RIDLEY

Has to be. I should tell you, this  
isn't exactly a sanctioned visit. So  
if you want to stay in the bird...

Jake scoffs.

JAKE

How do you know...

RIDLEY

"Mother." It's complicated; we used  
to work together.

The copter descends, rotor wash shrouding it in water vapor.

**NEAR THE LAKE**

Rows of identical white tents stretch forever into the forest; button candy on the forest floor.

The SLYRS hike through the rows, leaves CRUNCHING.

JAKE

So you're still friends?

RIDLEY

Not anymore.

JAKE

Wow, you are not a people person.  
(then)  
But you trust them, right?

RIDLEY  
Not even a little.

A pause.

JAKE  
So what the hell are we doing here?

Ridley drags his ICE across a tent flap; it falls open.

RIDLEY  
Because if anybody knows what's  
going on, it'll be them.

### **INSIDE THE TENT**

Ridley pokes his head inside. The interior is CAVERNOUS and sports the hottest tech from 1988; corded phones and tube televisions.

MOTHER (60's, southern dandy type) sits cross-legged in the corner of the room, cup of tea in hand.

DEAD RIDLEY (V.O.)  
Mother; ex-coworker, former Atlas  
super-hacker, current weirdo and  
creator of the world-wide metaverse  
we call "The Hex."

MOTHER  
Riccardo Ridley, as I live and  
breathe. I expect you're here about  
Cassandra. I was sorry to hear.

RIDLEY  
Thank you.

MOTHER  
We'll get to that. But first: who's  
this little Brussels sprout you've  
brought with you?

RIDLEY  
Jake Yoshida, this is Mother.

Mother springs to their feet.

MOTHER  
Charmed, I'm sure.

They shake hands. Mother's lingers. It's deeply weird.

JAKE  
Nice to-

Mother's face GLITCHES. Their appearance changes to look like a Judi Dench type.

MOTHER

Forgive the face. For my safety,  
you understand.

JAKE

(re: the face)  
Huh. Epsilon IP Shield?

MOTHER

And he's a technology connoisseur,  
to boot. No, it's Delta Wetware on  
an offshore matrix.

JAKE

Pretty good...for 20 years ago.

Mother circles Jake, delighted.

MOTHER

Oh Ridley, I like him.

RIDLEY

We went to Sandy's lab. The defense  
net in that district should've-

MOTHER

Flatlined anything within two  
miles, I know. So how on *Earth* did  
a monster get into one of the most  
secure locations in Neon City?

(sing song)

I know something you don't know.

Mother points an old-school REMOTE CONTROL at a CRT television. It clicks on with a HUM.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

These are her lab's access logs. I  
pulled them in anticipation of your  
arrival. Some very motivated Yakuza  
gentlemen asked after them, but I  
figured they'd be of more value to you.

RIDLEY

Too kind.

Mother waves their hands. Onscreen data flies by faster than anyone could possibly read it.

MOTHER

An average person would see this and think that everything was operating normally, but I'm far from average.

The data pauses.

RIDLEY

What am I looking at?

Mother points to the screen, waiting for Ridley to be impressed. Nothing.

MOTHER

You never studied. Six minutes are missing. Six minutes of no defense net or security feed. Plenty of time for someone or something to come and go.

Jake moves closer to the screen.

JAKE

Damn.

MOTHER

Whoever covered this up is very good. Lucky for you, I'm better, but not by much. This is exquisite work. Don't you dare tell anyone I said that.

Mother opens a window, to reveal a beautifully sunny BEACH; bright light and ocean sounds come STREAMING in.

Where the hell are we?

DEAD RIDLEY (V.O.)

I thought that was a nice touch.

Ridley flashes Mother the picture.

RIDLEY

Do you know who this is?

MOTHER

Of course I do.

Mother brings up the Howard Lab's SECURITY FEED; pausing the video on Genesis.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Genesis Howard; Cassandra's daughter.

(MORE)

MOTHER (CONT'D)

She went to great lengths to keep her out of the facial recognition database. Classic ATLAS; rules for thee, and not for me.

Ridley's stunned. She never told him.

MOTHER

Don't be too offended. I think the existence of the younger Howard was kept very close to the vest. Cassandra was working on something, Riccardo; "Project Carcosa."

RIDLEY

Should I know what that is?

MOTHER

No, but I should. And that's just it; I don't. And I know *everything*  
(to Jake)  
"MomSmasher69."

Jake blushes.

RIDLEY

Ok, what have you found?

MOTHER

Encrypted bits and pieces; data fragments.

Mother zips the data over to Ridley's ICE; their entire body GLITCHES to look like a Michael B. Jordan type.

RIDLEY

Thanks. What do I owe you?

MOTHER

Let's call this one a freebie, for old time's sake. But the next one is going to be big.

Ridley goes to leave; Mother stops him.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

(gesturing)

Big.

RIDLEY

I get it.  
(to Jake)  
Let's move.

MOTHER  
Best of luck. I'm rooting for you,  
Brussels sprout.

Mother waves a single-index-finger goodbye as Jake and Ridley leave the tent.

**EXT. REDWOOD FOREST - DAY - CONTINUOUS**

The tent flap SLAPS shut behind them.

JAKE  
What're you thinking?

Ridley takes a knee; shakes his head.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
Yeah, me too.  
(then)  
You don't think ATLAS...

RIDLEY  
No. I don't know. I don't think so.  
(then)  
She was too valuable. They wouldn't.

Right?

JAKE  
What the hell happened between you two?

RIDLEY  
I wanted to kill them; she wanted  
to understand them. Like oppositely  
charged magnets-

He splits his fingers apart.

JAKE  
So, what do we do now?

RIDLEY  
Stay off of comms. Your SLYR credentials  
will get you on ATLASnet; try to find  
anything related to what Howard was  
working on; do some snooping.

JAKE  
I don't snoop. I've never snooped.  
Never snept? Sneeped? What's the  
past-tense of-

RIDLEY

I'll pick you up in the morning.

The world around them starts to GLITCH and DEMATERIALIZE as Ridley's hands move towards his head-

**INT. RIDLEY'S APARTMENT - SLYR HOUSING - CONTINUOUS**

-to pull off a black VR HELMET. We've been in the HEX.

This place used to be organized, but 15 years of being a widower is chipping away at it.

Ridley tosses aside his helmet. A picture of a younger, smiling Ridley and his WIFE is propped up against a lamp.

RIDLEY

Lights.

SMART HOME VOICE

Turning on the lights, Ridley.

Dim lights reveal a SAD apartment.

DEAD RIDLEY (V.O.)

I was going to clean up, but I was busy, you know, saving the city.

**INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - SLYR HOUSING - CONTINUOUS**

Jake's kitchen is a cluttered mess. Empty wrappers, dirty plates and junk food.

He swaps the VR helmet for a pair of HEADPHONES. The world goes quiet around him. Ambient noise replaced by chill beats.

He tears the wrapper from a prepackaged dinner, tosses it on the floor and SLAPS the meal it into a re-heater.

JAKE

Heat it up.

SMART HOME VOICE

Re-heating dinner, MomSmasher69.

**RIDLEY'S KITCHEN**

Ridley takes a bite out of a Yakitori SKEWER, Mother's data file floating above his ICE. He hesitates, then OPENS IT.

Two files. He opens the first: a series of CRYPTIC SYMBOLS.



RIDLEY  
 (voice command)  
 Translate.

SMART HOME VOICE  
 Unable to translate. Would you like  
 to know a fun fact about cats?

In the kitchen behind him, a BRIGHT BLUE LIGHT...

### **JAKE'S BEDROOM**

A RETRO POSTER of a 90's LAMBORGHINI hangs above an impressive but sloppy looking COMPUTER RIG.

Jake, mouth full of grey mush, brushes away empty soda cans and plops in front of the screen.

"SLYR ACCESS GRANTED." He flies through heavily REDACTED ATLAS data.

>>>PROJECT CARCOSA: CLASSIFIED

>>>DIG SITE QUARANTINE REPORT: CLASSIFIED

>>>DR.CASSANDRA HOWARD PERSONNEL FILE: CLASSIFIED

JAKE  
 (pushing a button)  
 And...snoop.

>>>DECRYPTING PERSONNEL FILE...

### **RIDLEY'S LIVING ROOM**

Ridley swipes the symbols to a holo-projector. He circles around them as they float in the middle of the room.

He flips open the second folder to display COVERTLY taken images of those same symbols carved into stone.

RIDLEY  
 C'mon Sandy, talk to-

A gigantic GORILLA MONSTER BASHES THROUGH THE WALL.

### **JAKE'S BEDROOM**

Jake grooves to the music as the decryption completes.

JAKE

I'm in.

(then)

Man, I wish somebody had heard me say that.

He grimaces, scrolling by GRISLY photos of the Howard autopsy. He lands on the last report in the file.

>>>Dr. Howard's PIP Test indicates a lack of allegiance. Her dedication to [[REDACTED]] and participation in [[REDACTED]] notwithstanding, recommend going forward with [[REDACTED]]

Frustrated, Jake swipes the report away and shuts down the computer.

### **RIDLEY'S APARTMENT**

The monster lunges at Ridley through the hologram, throwing weird shadows across the room.

It SLAMS Ridley on the table and wraps one of its four hands around his neck; STRANGLING him.

Ridley pounds on the monster's fist. Big, hard haymakers.

RIDLEY

Lemmego!

SMART HOME VOICE

Playing. Hall. And. Oates.

The mystery symbols are replaced by a MUSIC VIDEO for Hall and Oates "You Make My Dreams Come True."

HOLO HALL AND OATES

"What I want, you've got..."

The monster's grip holds. Ridley slams his hand across the table, looking for any kind of weapon.

-and finds it; a MEAT SKEWER. He JAMS into the monster's eye.

It ROARS and staggers backwards, JOHN OATES' hologram dancing across its chest.

Ridley rolls under the table, gasping for air.

### **JAKE'S BEDROOM**

Jake hangs his gun belt behind the door, lays the katana on its stand and throws his pants over the bed.

He catches himself in a mirror. Admiring the top half of his uniform, he rubs the SLYR pin on the lapel and BEAMS.

### **RIDLEY'S APARTMENT**

Ridley crashes into the living room; the monster BASHES through a wall in pursuit; raining down sheetrock.

Ridley dives towards a REVOLVER in a GLASS CASE on a side table. A plaque on the case: "FOR MERITORIOUS SERVICE ON BREACH DAY"

HOLO HALL AND OATES  
"candle feeds the flame..."

But the gorilla SNAGS him out of mid-air. THWAM! It flings him through one of the remaining walls-

### **JAKE'S APARTMENT**

-into Jake's bedroom. Ridley rolls over the bed. Jake rips off the headphones. The chill beats fall away, replaced by the squeal of fire alarms and smooth sounds of Hall and Oates.

Ridley looks at Jake; pantsless.

RIDLEY  
Hey, neighbor.

The monster bashes through what's left of the wall. Jake DIVES for cover, rolls and jerks his pistol from the hanging gun belt.

BLAPBLAPBLAPBLAPBLAP

Jake RIDDLES it with bullets; green blood splooshes everywhere.

It charges forward, protecting its face with its arms.

JAKE  
Ridley! Ridley! This thing is  
heavily armed! Get it?

RIDLEY  
(out of breath)  
Gold...star...

Ridley CRAWLS away and stumbles to his feet. He staggers back to the glass case, SHATTERS it and grabs the revolver.

The monster PLOWS Jake through the bedroom wall. Water SPURTS from where the toilet used to be.

Ridley clicks MASSIVE bullets into the revolver's cylinder.

HOLO HALL AND OATES

"You make my dreams come true!"

ZIZZZZ. He spins the cylinder and slams it shut.

The monster, a hideous ape/spider thing, LEAPS at Jake, its arms fully extended.

KERBOOM!

Its chest DETONATES.

Green guts DRENCH Jake.

He sees Ridley hefting the magnum through the dinner plate-sized hole in the middle of the monster's chest.

JAKE

YES!

The monster's limp body sails towards him.

JAKE

NO!

It SLAMS into Jake, blasting him through even more drywall.

Ridley limps over, puts his boot on the monster's head and yanks the skewer out of its eye.

Jake thrusts his top half out from beneath the corpse.

JAKE (CONT'D)

(labored)

I'm starting to think...we're on to...something.

DEAD RIDLEY (V.O.)

We were.

A tiny CRUNCH from the entryway; Jake aims his gun, Ridley THROWS the skewer, sticking it in the wall next to-

CADENCE

No thanks; vegan.

She's framed in what used to be the doorway. Jake lowers his gun.

CADENCE (CONT'D)

We gotta talk.

A chunk of SHEETROCK falls to reveal a title: **THURSDAY.**

**EXT. CLUB OVERRIDE - NIGHT - LATER**

Cadence leads Jake and Ridley to the Override's graffiti-covered rear entrance. A GLOWHEAD, zooted out of his mind, stands "guard," facing the wrong way.

CADENCE

How's your night going, Stan?

STAN

No thank you, I'm Stan.

Stan presses his forehead against the wall. Cadence shoves him out of the way, bangs on the door.

RIDLEY

(unrumpling the photo)

You're *sure* this is her?

CADENCE

My answer hasn't changed in the last 20 minutes.

Reggie cracks the door, eyes Cadence with suspicion.

CADENCE (CONT'D)

He's cool. Trust me.

REGGIE

You say so.

(Ridley slips past)

Whaddup, Stan?

STAN

That would be great, Stan.

JAKE

You must really be desperate.

CADENCE

I found you pinned under a four-armed gorilla monster. I'd say that makes us the same amount of desperate. Let's go.

JAKE

Apologize.

CADENCE

We don't have time-

JAKE

You want my help, say you're sorry.

Cadence simmers. Jake waits.

CADENCE

I'm sorry.

JAKE

Sorry for *what*?

CADENCE

Calling you a "piece of shit sellout." But do you remember how *bad* it was back then? ATLAS sealed off the Block; The NLS Pandemic. Then Breach Day and Mom...when you left, it was like you were abandoning me.

JAKE

(raising his voice)  
Abandoning you? I was *helping* you; trying to get you out!

CADENCE

How? By going on some bullshit corporate crusade? The Block needed you. I needed you.

STAN

Stan needed you!

Reggie clears his throat, still holding the door.

JAKE

*Fine*; I'm sorry. We're the same amount of sorry.  
(then)  
And it was a four-armed ape, by the way. Not all apes are gorillas-

REGGIE

But all gorillas are apes. Did you study primatology, too?

Cadence checks over her shoulder and slams the door behind her.

**INT. CLUB OVERRIDE - LATER**

Bass thumps through the concrete walls. Ridley stares down at Genesis on the table, one hand resting on the glass.

The scanner's lasers work overtime, data filling the translucent screen.

An eyepatch-wearing RIPPERDOC analyzes the readout.

RIPPERDOC

Whatever this is, it's really gumming up the works.

MELTDOWN

Very helpful, thank you.

RIPPERDOC

Fuck off, *Melvin*.

JAKE

We know someone who'd be perfect for this.

RIPPERDOC

Sure, let's all do whatever we want.

The Ripperdoc storms off. Jake stares in at Ridley.

RIDLEY

No. No. No way.

(then)

Absolutely not.

(then)

Yeah, alright.

He dials Mother (now a Danny Trejo type); their holo-projection SPRINGS out of Ridley's ICE.

MOTHER

(re: Genesis)

Well, look what the cat dragged in. Where did you find her?

CADENCE

We ran into each other on the street.

MOTHER

Deus Ex Machina. Lazy. I assume something is locked away in that adorable noodle of hers.

JAKE

Yeah. How'd you know that?

MOTHER

I may not have been *entirely* truthful about the nature of our association. From time to time, Cassandra came to me for information.

RIDLEY

Goddammit. If you-

Mother FLITS to the VitaTable. The display FLICKERS as they hack in to take control.

MOTHER

Don't bleach your peaches; I'll help you find whatever Cassandra left...oh. Oh no.

JAKE

What?

MOTHER

Our little eclair's head is encrypted tighter than a boiled owl.

JAKE

Do people say that?

CADENCE

Can you break it?

MOTHER

No; because I made it. Cassandra asked me for something nigh-unbreakable; it was a challenge, so I obliged. I created a single set of decryption keys for her. Which means ATLAS has them now and they would have taken them to...

Mother's face falls. Ridley straightens up. Jake catches on.

JAKE

I'll get my gear.

RIDLEY

Stay here; I need someone I can trust.  
(to Cadence)  
No offense.

CADENCE

Some taken.

RIDLEY

Can I borrow your new bike?  
(Jake squints)  
Not your bike because it's a lease but-

JAKE

(tossing him the keys)  
Yeah, yeah, fine. Please don't explode it.



RIDLEY

No promises. But if you start to miss it, you can keep an eye on it through my bodycam. Stick with your sister; she can probably teach you something.

Ridley winks. Cadence fights it, but smiles anyway. Ridley slips out the back door

DEAD RIDLEY (V.O.)

If I'd known that was the last time I was going to see Jake, I would've said...something else.

REGGIE

(reading Of Mice and Men)  
Lenny, you gotta be careful, man.

### ON THE HIGHWAY

The street bike RIPS over the pavement, rain streaking Ridley's helmet visor; neon light bouncing everywhere.

DEAD RIDLEY (V.O.)

I was going to the most secure room in the most secure building in Neon City to steal secret encryption keys to crack into the brain of my dead friend's secret teenage daughter.

In the distance, the Citadel LOOMS.

DEAD RIDLEY (V.O.)

Just another Thursday.

### CLUB OVERRIDE

Mother fills the room with a holographic projection of Genesis' BRAIN.

MOTHER

The interlock is here, in the amygdala, sealed off from her conscious mind.

MELTDOWN

Too much heat. We're gonna get busted. This is too much heat. They're gonna be in here any minute!

CADENCE

"Meltdown." I get it.

MOTHER

Even with the decryption keys, this won't be easy. The early VitaTables weren't designed to carry a neural load of this size.

MELTDOWN

I'm sorry my gear isn't up to your standards! Maybe ol' Chuck Caspro will send us a complimentary upgrade? We don't even have to call, because any minute hundreds of ATLAS-

### CASPRO'S OFFICE LOBBY

The elevator doors slide open; Ridley jogs past Edgar's desk. It's empty, save a framed 8x10 of Caspro.

Ridley swipes in to the office. A single RED LIGHT under the desk starts to pulse.

### CLUB OVERRIDE

Meltdown's rant continues as Mother helps Jake and Cadence OVERCLOCK the VitaTable.

MELTDOWN

-and connect electrodes to my NUTS!  
And Meltdown doesn't need that-

JAKE

Shut the fuck up!

CADENCE

Shut the fuck up!

MOTHER

Connect the DVID cable to the HLS port.

CADENCE

Won't work; cryo-cooling needs the entire HLS bus.

MOTHER

Well, if you can think of a better way to access the DNA-level data, I'd like to hear it.

Reggie's still in the book.

REGGIE

You guys have ATLAS mainframe access, right? Offload the integer calculations there to overclock the APU.

He turns the page, a tear in his eye.

REGGIE (CONT'D)  
Just look at the rabbits, bro.

Everyone stares. Goddamn; he's right. They kick into gear.

### **CASPRO'S OFFICE**

Dim lights reflect off of a WASHBOT as it makes its way across the floor, whistling quietly to itself.

Ridley approaches Caspro's desk; stares at his reflection in the holocomputer.

>>>HOWARD CRIME SCENE

>>>>INFOSEC DIGITAL RECOVERY

Eerie turquoise shadows dance across Ridley's face as he flips through the file structure.

>>>>UNKNOWN DECRYPTION KEYS - TRANSMIT?

>>>>>Y

No turning back now.

### **CLUB OVERRIDE**

Genesis is barely visible through all of the hacked-together cables.

JAKE  
Hope that works.

CADENCE  
I bet it will. My kid brother used to be pretty good at this stuff.

Jake grins.

MOTHER  
Eyes up sugarplums; Ridley's transmitting.

Mother projects their display to the room. ">>>NEURAL LINK UNLOCKED>>>HELLO CADENCE."

**CASPRO'S OFFICE**

Data SCROLLS by as the decryption keys zips into the ether.

RIDLEY  
(on the radio)  
Are you getting it?

JAKE (O.C.)  
We got it; get back here.

Alarms WAIL; the office goes into LOCKDOWN. Giant walls of opaque ARMORGLASS close over the panoramic windows.

The radio CRACKLES and FIZZLES out.

Starland, Garcia and a platoon of ATLAS ELITE GUARDS rush the room; Caspro and Edgar right behind them.

CASPRO  
ArmorGlass is strong but just *terrible*  
for wireless signals, I'm afraid.

RIDLEY  
Sara, what's going on?

STARLAND  
Just following orders, Ric. You  
know how it is.

He does.

CASPRO  
I like you Ridley; so that's going  
to make this next part even worse.

**CLUB OVERRIDE**

JAKE  
(tapping his ICE)  
Ridley? You there?

Mother's hands WHIZ over the VitaTable's controls.

MOTHER  
I'm in.

JAKE  
(to himself)  
I knew it would sound cool.

CADENCE  
Shh!

A holographic Dr. Howard flickers to life.

HOLO DR. HOWARD

Cadence: If you're seeing this, you've met Genesis. It's a shame that we never met in person. Please consider Genesis my last gift to you; you must protect her at all costs.

JAKE

You've got to be kidding me. You knew her?!

CADENCE

I didn't KNOW her. She sent us stolen ATLAS gear in exchange for monster parts: blood and guts type stuff. Stuff she had to keep off the books. But this...

HOLO DR. HOWARD

...Genesis has always been my "break glass in case of emergency," solution. It's time to break the glass.

Genesis eyes' VIBRATE behind their lids.

MOTHER

Well, hello there; something's happening inside of our little cream puff's lower cortex.

>>>UNLOCK 10% COMPLETE

**CASPRO'S OFFICE**

GARCIA

(re: Ridley's sidearm)  
Hand it over, Ric.

CASPRO

If nothing else, you've helped us get to the bottom of our Lower Block problem. Shame about what's-his-name; he was going to be a PR slam dunk.

(to Edgar)

Put something together like "Lower Block assassins murder decorated veteran SLYR Riccardo Ridley." Punch it up; you get the idea. Book me an interview for tomorrow morning and make sure my bad-news-suit is pressed.

Edgar sneers at Ridley and SCOOTERS away.

Garcia moves closer. In a flash, Ridley disarms him, jamming his pistol into his back.

RIDLEY  
Too slow, Juan.

Unmoved, Caspro swipes his ICE, bringing up a CAMERA FEED from inside the club.

CASPRO  
We needed to know how far Howard's information had spread, so thank you for putting everyone who knows something in the same room. You and your goon partner did a bang up job.

On the feed, Cadence, Jake and the rest are circled up around Genesis.

DEAD RIDLEY (V.O.)  
Whoops.

We move through the video feed back to-

### **CLUB OVERRIDE**

CASPRO (V.O.)  
For the past fifteen years, this city has been infected. But we had the cure: the SLYRS.

MOTHER  
Almost there...

>>>UNLOCK 25% complete

CASPRO (V.O.)  
The only thing more powerful than controlling the cure--

HOLO DR. HOWARD  
Forget what you think you know about monsters.

CASPRO (V.O.)  
--is creating the disease.

HOLO DR. HOWARD  
ATLAS brought them here.



MELTDOWN

A dim? What the fuck is a dim?!

REGGIE

Dimension. A world beyond our own.  
Another plane of existence. A new-

MOTHER

Forty percent...

The power SURGES; half a dozen faults CRACKLE to life in the room.

Cadence KICKS the VitaTable away towards a BACK OFFICE,  
wheels SQUEAKING. She pulls her gun.

CADENCE

Nothing gets near the kid.

The thudding bass comes to a halt as SCREAMS echo from the  
club beyond the doors.

Jake, Meltdown and Reggie form up around her as the light  
fixtures SPARK and EXPLODE.

### **CASPRO'S OFFICE**

Starland spins and aims at Caspro as he ambles towards Ridley  
and his hostage.

STARLAND

Mr. Caspro? Sir? what's happening?

CASPRO

Carcosa: a realm beyond your  
understanding. Home to the most  
powerful beings in the universe.

Caspro's eyes FLICKER; bright amber. His voice deepens. His  
movements become jerky; puppet-like. Some unseen thing  
pulling the strings.

POSSESSED CASPRO

A power that your friends are about  
to become very familiar with.

Red dots CHICKENPOCK the LOWER BLOCK map readout.

### **CLUB OVERRIDE**

Chaos.

DOZENS of monsters INVADE as more FAULTS explode to life.



A BAT-MONSTER flies through Mother's holo-projection; teeth and claws everywhere.

MOTHER

Almost...

>>>60% UNLOCKED

JAKE

Stop narrating! Only narrate when you're done!

Jake and Cadence fight in a precise ballet. The bat-monster SCREECHES, zooming at Jake.

He ducks; Cadence rolls over his back, THRUSTS her pike upwards and BISECTS the bat.

CADENCE

Close the shutters, Melvin!

MELTDOWN

Not my name!

The bat's halves hit the floor with a MEATY thump in front of Meltdown.

MELTDOWN (CONT'D)

But I'm gonna let it slide. Let's go, Reg!

Reggie grunts and COVERS Meltdown as they move towards the SHUTTER CONTROLS.

Distracted by a bipedal FISH MONSTER, Reggie spins and PUNCHES it; green blood glistens on his metal fist.

A WOLF MONSTER careens through a FAULT straight for Meltdown. It HOWLS an ear-shattering howl.

MELTDOWN (CONT'D)

Shitshitshitshit!

Meltdown goes to yank a BONESAW from an operating table but immediately TRIPS.

MELTDOWN (CONT'D)

SHITSHITSHITSHIT!

He tries to CRAWL AWAY but it's too late. TEETH sink into his shoulder. He SCREAMS as it RIPS away a huge chunk of FLESH.

REGGIE

Melvin!

Reggie HURDLES over a table and grabs the wolf by the scruff of the neck.

His cybernetic arm starts to SMOKE; LUBRICANT leaking from the joints.

He ROARS and TEARS THE WOLF'S HEAD OFF AT THE NECK. His cyber-arm goes limp as he tosses the head aside.

### **CASPRO'S OFFICE**

Caspro's eyes glow YELLOW; their movements matching the eyes peering through the gateway.

POSSESSED CASPRO  
We are not here to destroy Neon  
City; we're here to save it.

BLAM!

Blood SPRAYS Ridley's face as Garcia's head SNAPS BACK. Caspro REHOLSTERS the smoking pistol in his jacket.

RIDLEY  
SARA!

Starland FIRES; 10mm slugs PUNCH through Caspro's chest. Nothing. GREEN BLOOD seeps from the wounds.

STARLAND  
Fuck.

Caspro closes his eyes and starts to CHANT. Guttural noises and grunts; the ELDER TONGUE.

POSSESSED CASPRO  
*Mglw'naph, ont'pwth, Has'tur.*

The guards faces go slack; eyes glowing bright YELLOW as their minds are INVADED.

In unison, they aim their guns at Ridley and join in Caspro's chant; LOUDER AND LOUDER...

POSSESSED CASPRO AND GUARDS  
MGLW'NAPH, ONT'PWTH, HAS'TUR!

Energy CRACKLES.

A HUGE MONSTER bounds through the blue cloud. Smooth, wet skin, horns and leathery wings.

A NIGHTGAUNT.

And it's coming straight for Starland.

She gets off a shot - it doesn't matter. The Nightgaunt hoists her above its head and RIPS HER IN HALF.

RIDLEY

NO!

It ROARS as it's showered with BLOOD AND GORE.

The chanting reaches a FEVER PITCH; the Nightgaunt WAILS. It CHARGES Ridley and tackles him THROUGH the ArmorGlass shield, out onto the rooftop helipad.

**CLUB OVERRIDE**

>>>85% UNLOCKED

Jake STABS another SPIDER MONSTER with his katana.

CADENCE

Where're we at with those shutters Reg?

Reggie, Meltdown SLUNG over his broad shoulder, makes it to the controls; slams his hand down on the button.

Cadence aims and fires a burst of FLAME from her pike; torching the last pair of flying BIRD MONSTERS.

THICK METAL SHUTTERS slide down, sealing them off for now.

CADENCE (CONT'D)

Form up around Genesis and reload.  
How're we looking, uh-

MOTHER

We haven't met; I'm Mother and a big fan of your work. We're close. The suspense is killing me; I hope it'll last.

The group tightens up around the VitaTable; Mother's hands FLYING over the controls.

JAKE

(reloading)  
Ridley's gonna come through.

CADENCE

Yeah, sure, any second now.

Monsters CRASH against the shutters. They won't hold long.

MELTDOWN

Don't let me die, Reg.

Reggie curls his arm around his neck.

REGGIE

Just look at the rabbits.

MELTDOWN

(shaking loose)

Were you about to Lenny me?

REGGIE

Hey, you read the book!

>>>100% UNLOCKED

SCREEEECH! Monsters TEAR through the steel shutters. The group opens fire but they're OVERWHELMED.

MOTHER

Hold on to your hoecakes.

Genesis' eyes SNAP OPEN.

### **THE CITADEL ROOFTOP - NIGHT**

It's raining.

Caspro and the guards follow the Nightgaunt out onto the roof, their clothes soaking through.

POSSESSED CASPRO

For fifteen years, you believed you were in control.

The Nightgaunt stabs a BONY BLADE at Ridley; he rolls away, CRUNCHING over shards of glass.

The monster SKEWERS Garcia's body instead; HURLS it at Ridley, missing him by inches.

POSSESSED CASPRO (CONT'D)

We've been in control for millenia.

Lightning FLASHES.

### **CLUB OVERRIDE - GENESIS POV**

The world around Genesis is at a complete STANDSTILL. She hops off the table, moving towards the BREACHING monsters.

POSSESSED CASPRO (V.O.)  
 We thrive on your fear and your  
 anger; on your hopelessness.

She can see Mother's individual PIXELS flicker; a drop of  
 SLIME as it drips from a monster's mouth.

POSSESSED CASPRO (V.O.)  
 It's why we're here.

Genesis takes a SCALPEL from a nearby operating table, gently  
 drives it through a monster's SKULL and moves on to the next.

### **THE CITADEL ROOFTOP**

The Nightgaunt TROMPS towards Ridley, backing him towards the  
 edge of the roof. He dodges one swing, but it's too fast.

A MASSIVE PUNCH SHATTERS his JAW. Another. Dark blood DUMPS  
 from his nose as he SKIDS across the wet ground.

He manages to UNLOAD on the monster; automatic gunfire barely  
 audible above the rain.

>>>ATLASNET CONNECTION LOST

It GRABS him by the throat and HOISTS him off of the ground.  
 Whatever's controlling Caspro moves him in closer.

POSSESSED CASPRO  
 You're right to be hopeless...

The guards SCREAM their TERRIFYING CHANT.

POSSESSED GUARDS  
 MGLW'NAPH! ONT'PWTH! HAS'TUR!

They lodge their pistols under their chins; eyes BURNING AMBER.

POSSESSED GUARDS (CONT'D)  
 THE KING IN YELLOW IS HERE.

They smile UNNATURAL SMILES and, in unison, SHOOT THEMSELVES.  
 Rainwater washes away CHUNKS of GREY MATTER.

All Ridley can do is grit his teeth as the Nightgaunt CHOKES  
 the life out of him.

Caspro, IN CLOSE, whispers something in Ridley's ear.

DEAD RIDLEY (V.O.)  
 I could tell you what he said, but  
 where's the fun in that?

The shock on his face is interrupted by a spray of blood from his mouth when he catches a BONY SPIKE in the chest.

**CLUB OVERRIDE**

Genesis is a SMEAR; a BLUR. Severed monster parts TWIRL through the air trailing GORE as she moves through the room.

JAKE  
You seeing this?

CADENCE  
Barely.

Monsters drop left and right. A lucky one gets a chance to take a swing; Genesis STABS the scalpel through its neck.

Jake sidesteps a GOOSH of blood.

They rush to help. Jake SLICES a monster in half. Cadence CHAINSAWS the last limbs from another.

A DOG MONSTER tries to crawl away; Genesis runs and CRUSHES its head.

The three of them stand there. What the fuck just happened? Jake nods at the pile of monster bodies.

JAKE  
(panting)  
Pretty good, I guess.

One last monster roars; Jake jumps, startled.

Genesis flicks the scalpel in the air and KICKS it through the monster's JUGULAR.

A FIRE HOSE OF green blood DRENCHES Jake.

**THE CITADEL ROOFTOP**

WHAM! The Nightgaunt HAMMERS Ridley in the face, smashing his nose. Another HAYMAKER and his jaw CRACKS.

Ridley spits blood as his hand snakes down towards his boot...

**CLUB OVERRIDE**

Jake MOPS off his face; looks around. Everyone else is clean in comparison.

JAKE

This is seriously uncool.

A soft BEEP. Mother's face lights up.

MOTHER

Jacob, Ridley's signal is back!

JAKE

Good. Pipe him into the room. I'm gonna give him a raft of shit for missing-

Mother throws the projection on in the middle of the room. The words stop in Jake's throat.

**RIDLEY'S BODYCAM POV - CITADEL ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS**

Ridley's looking down his ruined chest, blood gushing from around the spike driven through him. He looks up to the Nightgaunt

If it could laugh, it would. But instead, it-

HURLS HIM OFF OF THE ROOF. Time slows to a crawl.

DEAD RIDLEY (V.O.)

Great, you're all caught up. Well, not great for me, but you get the idea.

**CLUB OVERRIDE**

Cadence watches Jake watch Ridley watch the rooftop get smaller. She moves to him; he shrugs her off, transfixed.

It's silent save for the HUM of neon lights barely audible over the sound of wind WHIPPING by Ridley's bodycam.

200 stories left. 100. 50. Ground floor. The feed cuts out. Mother, Meltdown and Reggie look away.

DEAD RIDLEY (V.O.)

For what it's worth, it only hurt for about a millisecond.

Jake falls to a knee, a single ANGUISHED SCREAM claws its way out of his mouth; silent sobs convulse through him.

Cadence kneels, hand on his shoulder.

CADENCE

Jake. Look at me. You're here. You're home.

(MORE)

CADENCE (CONT'D)

I'll give the "famous" Ric Ridley this: he knew what he was doing when he left you here with us. With me.

DEAD RIDLEY (V.O.)

That's very sweet, but this was a complete accident.

CADENCE

You're not alone, ok? I've got you.

Cadence's eyes well; she throws her arms around him as he SOBS.

**EXT. CLUB OVERRIDE ROOFTOP - MORNING - THE NEXT DAY**

A plume of smoke from a pile of BURNING MONSTER BODIES twists skyward to spell: **FRIDAY MORNING.**

Reggie hands Meltdown his vape. Meltdown takes a RIP and nods; Reggie shoots MED-GEL into Meltdown's wounded shoulder.

MELTDOWN

OW! Goddammit!

REGGIE

(re: Genesis)

You know what this means?

MELTDOWN

Yeah, it means I never wanna see any of you motherfuckers ever again.

Genesis heaves the last monster on the pile; it goes up in flames.

GENESIS

It's Meltdown, right?

(he nods)

Cool name.

Meltdown GRINS.

MELTDOWN

(heading downstairs)

What was that upset fruit book you wanted to talk to me about?

REGGIE

*Grapes of Wrath*, man.

DEAD RIDLEY (V.O.)

So how does the story end? No idea: I'm dead.

(MORE)



DEAD RIDLEY (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 Still, I'm not quite ready to leave  
 Jake behind. I think I'll stick around  
 in this weird, liminal space and we can  
 find out what happens together.

In the distance, dozens of QUADCOPTERS hover around the top  
 of the Citadel.

Huge HOLO-PROJECTIONS of Jake and Cadence in the sky. "CITY  
 MOURNS SLAIN SLYR - LOWER BLOCK ASSASSINS ON THE RUN."

Genesis dangles her feet over the edge of the roof. She takes  
 inventory; unhurt save a small SCRAPE on her arm.

A double take - it's oozing GREEN BLOOD.

She tugs down her sleeve when Cadence sits next to her, feet  
 dangling.

CADENCE  
 Wild night.

Genesis snorts.

CADENCE (CONT'D)  
 How're you feeling?

GENESIS  
 I'm a genetically engineered, monster-  
 killing super weapon who doesn't even  
 know how to drive. So, pretty weird.

CADENCE  
 Can I ask...how did it feel when  
 you uh, whatever that was?

GENESIS  
 Ever feel like you're watching yourself  
 from way up above your own body? Like  
 something else is controlling you and  
 you're just along for the ride?

CADENCE  
 Look, if you want to get out of  
 town we can-

GENESIS  
 No. My mom made me into whatever I  
 am for a reason. She knew what was  
 coming. It would've been nice if  
 she'd asked first, but here we are.  
 I can't change the past, but I can  
 maybe help shape the future.

FOOTSTEPS behind them: it's Jake. Blood crusted on his face and still in his filthy uniform.

CADENCE

Hey. How are you?

Wordless, he moves to the ledge; pulls the SLYR pin from his dirty lapel and rubs it between his scraped up fingers.

JAKE

Bad.

CADENCE

Yeah.

(then)

What're you thinking?

JAKE

I'm thinking about Ridley. I'm thinking that you were right. I'm thinking I'm gonna stick around a while.

He turns the pin over, Ridley-carved-star side up.

JAKE (CONT'D)

And I'm thinking I'm ready to hunt the real monsters of Neon City.

The three of them stand in a COOL TABLEAU; looking out over the city; rising SUN BLAZING behind them.

A LONG pause.

GENESIS

Wait, do you mean-

JAKE

ATLAS, I mean ATLAS.

CADENCE

Because there are actual monsters to-

JAKE

I know!

**POST CREDITS TAG**

**INT. THE CITADEL - CASPRO'S OFFICE - NIGHT**

Caspro, in his Bad News Suit, wraps an interview.

## CASPRO

The ATLAS family is devastated and  
we won't rest until these killers  
are brought to justice.

The camera clicks off.

Caspro, robotic, stands up as the hidden wall reveals the  
STONE ARCHWAY, crackling with blue energy.

The YELLOW EYES glare down at him. He walks through the gate into-

**EXT. ???**

A dark, barren tundra; dead trees and black sand.

Blue lightning FLASHES, giving us a glimpse of gargantuan  
LOVECRAFTIAN MONSTERS floating in the sky.

The spires of a castle jut up towards dark clouds. A window  
in the highest parapet glows a familiar YELLOW...

END OF PILOT