

"ISCHIA IS BURNING"

An original screenplay

by David Boles

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FADE IN:

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY

THE DAWNING SUN

slips through a crack in the mountains and dances in the fresh dew as it glistens on a field of clover.

EVAN'S LEATHERY HAND

grabs a tuft of clover and pulls. A yard of clover moves and is folded onto itself. The clover is artificial and stitched to a bolt of canvas.

EVAN'S PALM

sweeps away dirt covering an electronic meter.

EVAN'S FINGER

taps the display. The needle won't move.

THE NEEDLE

is peaked and melted onto the printed gauge at 100%.

EVAN'S MOUTH

opens to speak into a dispatch microphone.

EVAN'S THUMBNAIL

turns from pink to white as it presses against the microphone's talk switch.

EVAN'S TONGUE

moves in SLOW MOTION across the teeth and between the lips as each consonant is formed.

EVAN  
(whispering)  
Ischia is burning.

CUT TO:

THE VALLEY

of clover swirls and shrivels brown as "Ischia is burning" races across as a hot wind.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE SKY

is on fire with the sun as a warbling and digitized "Ischia is Burning" stretches across the blue younder and slings itself across the Heavens.

CUT TO:

INT. I.M.P.S. - DAY

As the now faint and cracked residue of "Ischia is burning" falls tattered and faded into

DALONEY'S EAR

at the Internal Military Planning Station (I.M.P.S.), we see him form his

HAND

into a makeshift "gun".

DALONEY

cocks back his thumb and he "fires" the gun with his index finger.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY

A NINE MILLIMETER PISTOL

shakes in a gloved hand.

EVAN'S EYE

squints.

EVAN'S MOUTH

silently forms the word "no" as a shot is fired.

THE METER

is speckled with blood.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

EXT. LANDSCAPE - DAY

DARKNESS

encapsulates us. We hear nothing but the faint sound of a roaring jet engine.

There is no sense of place or time. Then, suddenly

THE HORIZON

stretches beyond us forever upside down!

The thin line where the land touches the sky appears as a dark slash across the dawn.

A MOUNTAIN

erupts into view, blocking our sight -- then quickly -

-

DARKNESS

again. Still no sound.

No point of reference exists.

Then, magically, as if a veil is lifted from our eyes,  
we can see again as the sun rises.

THE BURGUNDY SKY

washes into day-break violet before our eyes.

THE LAND BELOW

lengthens into an emerald blur. A small

IRON AGE FARM

consisting of thatched huts, a pond and smelting  
factory become visible deep in a far off basin.

CUT TO:

EXT. MEZZAVIA ON PITHEKOSSAI - DAY

A FUNERAL PYRE

towers above the Iron Age farm Villagers. The dawn  
has yet to break the high rim of the horizon that  
surrounds this village basin.

EVAN'S CORPSE

is shoved onto the wooden lattice by four teenaged  
children dressed in Iron Age period clothing.

TORCHES

are the only light as the children wrap the body with  
a blanket made of woven hemp.

## THE ELDERS

Hans, Rachel, and Anke are the only adults in the village.

They are all over 40 and all the children are 20 or younger. Each Elder stands stand at a corner of the funeral tower.

## THE CHILDREN

slowly form a circle around the funeral pyre and link hands.

## LARS

a clumsy-good-of-a-boy, at 19, steps up to ignite the pyre with a torch.

## KIRA

a proud and rugged woman of 18 bursts from the circle of children in a tearful rage and knocks the torch from Lar's hand.

She muffles the flame into the ground and clambers up the wooden pyre.

## KIRA

Father! I want to be released  
with you!

She weeps over his corpse.

## ANKE

calls out to her from below.

ANKE

Kira! Let him go. Come and stand  
with me.

HANS

re-ignites the torch.

KIRA

KIRA

No, mother! I won't leave him!

RACHEL

steps away from her post and shouts up to Kira.

RACHEL

We'll burn you alive with him if  
you don't come down right now!

LARS

looks at Rachel in shock.

LARS

Mother?

RACHEL

Quiet, son.

HANS

Light her up, Lars.

HANS

hands the torch to Lars.

LARS

I won't do it!

RACHEL

Then I will.

Rachel grabs the torch from Lars and touches it to the pyre.

FLAMES

erupt and engulf Kira and her father.

KIRA

sweats in the heat as the flames lick the air. She smiles as the wood crackles to black.

KIRA

I'm here with you, father. You won't go alone.

CLOSE ON ANKE

Her eyes are wide with fear.

ANKE

(Shouting)

Kira? Jump!

LARS

No! It's too far. Kira! Lower your legs and stand on my shoulders.

ANKE

She can't hear you, Lars! The fire is shouting you down!

Lars finds a section of the pyre that isn't burning and he pulls himself up to the top.

LARS

grabs Kira.

KIRA



Let me be!

LARS

No. I'll drop first, and you  
place your feet on my shoulders...

KIRA

No!

She pushes him hard, he grabs her and drags her off  
the pyre with a heroic leap.

THEY FALL TOGETHER

and Kira lands on Lars.

THE PYRE EXPLODES

above them! As the flames eat Evan's corpse, the air  
is filled with the remains of his

FLICKERING EMBERS.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LANDSCAPE - DAY

FLICKERING STARS

that wink at us as they fade away into the new day and  
speed by.

Air rushes across metal.

The ground is still a blur. The rumble of a high-  
powered jet engine reverberates in our chest. A radio  
transmission hisses over a headset.

DALONEY (V.O.)

Popcorn Fire, Popcorn Fire. Come  
in. This is Hidden Jackal. Over.

SAWYER

a handsome young military pilot with perfect, pearlescent, teeth answers. His flight helmet is painted with a half-shucked ear of corn.

SAWYER  
Roger, Hidden Jackal. Popcorn  
Fire is ready to grease the pan,  
drop and pop. Out.

CUT TO:

INT. COCKPIT - DAY

THE HORIZON

is now seen through the scratched high-impact plastic  
of the cockpit canopy.

THE VIEW

flips 93 degrees as Sawyer banks the jet into a dollop  
roll.

MOUNTAINS

fill the view.

FLIGHT INSTRUMENTS

throb and gobble in the dark cockpit.

SAWYER maneuvers his jet through a jagged break in the  
mountain range surrounding Mezzavia on Pithekoussai.

INSTRUMENTS

whir and bray as missile alarms blare warnings that  
they are engaged and ready to be dropped.

MEZZAVIA ON PITHEKOUSSAI

Edges into the cross hairs.

DALONEY (V.O.)  
Popcorn Fire? Do you read? We  
lost you on radar echo. Do you  
copy? Over.

SAWYER

Popcorn Fire copies. Mark is in  
visual range and computer sighted.  
Ready to drop kernels on your  
"go." Over.

SAWYER'S FINGER

tenses around the missile trigger.

SAWYER'S EYES

narrow as he tenses his shoulders.

CUT TO:

EXT. MEZZAVIA ON PITHEKOSSAI - DAY

ANKE

pulls Kira to her feet.

LARS

grins and wipes the ash from his eyes as the funeral  
pyre continues to burn.

ANKE

Your father isn't in pain now,  
Kira. He wouldn't want to be the  
cause of your suffering, either.

Kira nods.

CUT TO:

INT. COCKPIT - DAY

SAWYER

nods his head and his shoulders tense.

DALONEY (V.O.)

Fire!

SAWYER'S POV

He sees flames from the pyre below him.

SAWYER

gasps and releases his finger from the missile trigger.

SAWYER

Hidden Jackal. Hidden Jackal.  
There is grease outside the  
griddle and it's on fire. Over.

DALONEY (V.O.)

Stay on target. Stay on target!  
Drop those kernels NOW!

SAWYER

Negatory! Negatory!

Sawyer curls his jet around to take another look. He looks down and sees the Villagers.

DALONEY (V.O.)

Sawyer! Do your job! That's an order.

SAWYER

No can do! There are ants at the picnic. Pulling up and coming home.

DALONEY (V.O.)

Gawdam you, Sawyer! I got this all on tape you know. This time your court-martial'll stick!

SAWYER

There are people down there,  
Daloney! You told me this was a  
test run. Out.

SAWYER'S EYES

narrow as he looks up from the flames below and sees

TREES

erupting from the mountains before him.

SAWYER

yanks on the controls and tries to roll out of danger.

No luck.

GROUND BECOME SKY

TREES BECOME JET

SUN RIPS THE EYES

as the jet breaks the plane of the mountain range.

Blinded, lost, disoriented... scrape... Wham!

A WING

is sheared off.

CLOSE ON SAWYER

as he grunts to regain control.

CLOSER ON SAWYER

as the veins pull out from his forehead.

DALONEY (V.O.)

Answer me, Sawyer! That's a  
direct order. Refuse to copy  
that? Okay, bigass! That's two  
court-martials!



SAWYER'S JET

spirals out of control along rim of Mezzavia on Pithekoussai.

SAWYER

strains as he fights to stay conscious.

SAWYER

Fatal error. Popcorn is burned  
and stuck to the pan. Ejecting.

DALONEY (V.O.)

No! No! Stay with the aircraft.  
Stay on target!

EXT. MEZZAVIA ON PITHEKOUSAI - DAY

Kira's back is turned to the villagers and the pyre.  
In the morning sky, Kira alone sees

A BLACK BLIP

arching across the rim of her horizon. Then,

A BRILLIANT EXPLOSION

alights the sky where the black blip began.

KIRA'S MOSSY EYES

scour the sky and discover the black blip floating to  
earth from the heavens on a parachute.

She is mesmerized by the

FALLING SPARKS

of metal and the

ASHY REMAINS

of the jet that riddle the sky.

THE OTHER VILLAGERS

turn from the pyre and

THEIR EYES

hungrily search the horizon for the source of the explosion they heard.

As

THEIR EYES

tilt to the sky in unison, a white-hot answer to the spectacle of their wondering minds appears:

THE MORNING SUN

cracks over the basin's rim that defines their horizon.

THE GLOWING SUN

shimmers in Kira's wet eyes.

RACHEL

You see? The gods have welcomed  
Evan into their realm with a roar!

HANS

Children. It's time to go back to  
work.

THE CHILDREN

break hands and disband.

RACHEL

approaches Kira but is stopped by

ANKE

ANKE

Let her be with her dreams.

RACHEL

nods and walks away. Anke follows.

KIRA

cocks her head back and stares at the sun above her as  
the

OPENING CREDITS ROLL:

IN KIRA'S SHINING EYES

Time accelerates, the sun climbs to its zenith, then  
hurriedly falls down to dusk.

CREDITS OUT

KIRA BLINKS

away tears. As she opens her eyes

DARKNESS

has arrived as the day has come and gone for us in  
Kira's eyes. She hasn't moved from her station. The

MOON

now swims

IN HER EYES

as she turns to the pyre. Embers glow orange

KIRA

kneels next to the ashes as

SMOKE

twists around her like a rope. She lies on her side next to the simmering ashes and falls dead asleep.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. I.M.P.S. COMMAND CENTER - NIGHT

DALONEY

enters the conference room followed by Garnett.

OFFICERS

sit around a map table lighted by a Black Light. The map has been marked with Neon pens.

DALONEY

Ischia is burning. We're all gonna be scorched if we don't lid this quick to hide the smoke. We already lost Sawyer who tried to douse the fire. He ended up blowing the top off gawdam his dead corpse! Garnett! Give 'em the quick and dirty.

GARNETT

enters numbers into a keypad built into the table and the world map changes to show the Grecian Islands.

GARNETT

Ischia is a small island off the coast of modern-day Greece that was known as "Mezzavia on Pithekoussai" in ancient mythology three thousand years ago. For the last twenty years, four scientists have been living on Ischia of an Iron Age farm experiment.

DALONEY

punches numbers into another keypad and brings up the entire animated history for the Officers.

DALONEY

They have a cache of abandoned children they've been raising along with their own in the Age of Iron. Damn kids think the year is 897 BC!

GARNETT

Only one thing went wrong with their grand experiment in human evolution.

DALONEY

They lost their funding.

GARNETT

That's when we stepped up. Gave them computers and tracking equipment and other necessities in exchange for some rare access to information.

DALONEY

They're still studying the children's evolution, but we've added a series of tests to determine the children's adaptability to certain environmental wartime circumstances.

GARNETT

Only two of the four scientists know of our involvement in the project.

DALONEY

And today, one of them radioed us that Ischia was burning.

GARNETT

And that was the sacred code to kill the project.

DALONEY

"Ischia is burning" is the sacred code that something had gone irreparably wrong.

GARNETT

"Ischia is burning" is the sacred code that the project was about to burst out of the Iron Age and land on the rest of us here in the 20th Century if we didn't fight the Ischia fire with enough firepower to wipe it off the map.

DALONEY punches off the animation and the neon markings on the map disappear. The eerie black light humming inside the table map is the only light source in the room. The white in all their shirts glows.

DALONEY

We sent Sawyer to do the job and lost him.

GARNETT

We need another volunteer.

DALONEY

Ischia is burning in restricted airspace, so if you fly over and don't come back -- we don't know you and your family thinks you ran away from home. Well? Do I see hands?

CUT TO:

EXT. FUNERAL PYRE - NIGHT

KIRA

is surrounded by darkness as she awakens with a start. The funeral pyre has burned itself out. She rolls into the ashes and covers herself with soot.

KIRA

pulls her father's

WHITE SKULL

from the ashes. She caresses the skull and discovers

TWO HOLES

in the bone. One hole is at the base of the skull and the other is a bigger hole at the right temple. She pushes

HER FINGERS

through the holes. She's puzzled. She feels her head to see if she has the same holes.

KIRA

opens her apron and she pulls powdered red ocher from a secret pocket and smears the pigment across the forehead of the skull.

She fills the skull with her father's ashes by pushing them through the two curious holes.

ANKE

appears behind Kira holding a small torch.

ANKE

Kira? The time for mourning is finished when the night comes. You must go back to the smelting furnaces. Work will replenish your spirit.

Kira, caught with the skull, quickly hides it under her apron.

KIRA

I don't ever want to go back there.



ANKE

Your hands have been cut and  
callused by work. Now that your  
heart has been sheared, it too,  
will grow back thicker and  
stronger.

KIRA

Work was the cause of his death.

ANKE

No. His work was you. He lived  
for your beloved task.

Kira stands and faces Anke.

KIRA

Why haven't you wept for him?  
Will a single tear ever escape  
your eye on his behalf?

ANKE

My sorrow isn't a badge to be  
displayed in public.

KIRA

You're not in public now. Will  
you weep for him now?

Anke tosses her torch into the pyre ashes and brings  
Kira to her.

ANKE AND KIRA

embrace and Anke cries on her shoulder.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Crickets wail as we discover

SAWYER WEeping UPSIDE DOWN

and hanging by the twisted anchor ropes of his  
parachute from a tree.

SAWYER

cannot move.

His bloody body swings slightly in the night breeze  
like a ghost.

THE MOON

shines on him fully and illuminates his

CUT FACE

with a florescent intensity.

THE LANDING GEAR

from his jet is wedged into the tree next to Sawyer.

As we

MOVE IN CLOSER TO SAWYER

we can hear him weeping/singing to himself in a harsh  
whisper.

SAWYER

Sawyer and Sally sitting in a  
tree, k-i-s-s-i-n-g.

(MORE)

A bloody twist of drool drips from his mouth.

SAWYER (CONT'D)  
(gasping to sing)  
First comes love, then comes  
marriage, then comes Sawyer, in a  
baby carriage.

HIS EYES

open and the bloodshot cores smile with laughter.

SAWYER

opens his mouth to cough and we see he's now missing  
three front teeth.

HIS EYES

close, and his body goes limp as he passes out.

CUT TO:

INT. IRON SMELTING MIL - NIGHT

The factory is filled with all of the children in the  
village working on an iron smelting line.

THE MALE CHILDREN

struggle against hefting the weight of travioses laden  
with raw iron ore.

THE FEMALE CHILDREN

drop forge the molten iron into sand molds.

A sea of

FACES

are serious, intense and weathered beyond their years.  
The only sound is that of hot iron being dropped into  
water for tempering.

Torches, wood sparks and boiling, pearly-hot iron flickers in tubs inside this dismal mill.

STEAM

is everywhere.

LARS

shovels iron ore from his travois into a boiling cauldron of liquefying iron.

His clothes are black with ore dust. Sweat drops from the tip of his nose.

KIRA

enters the mill running. She gasps to regain her breath in the sweltering mill.

LARS

Kira! Your mother has searched for you here three times!

KIRA

She found me. I'm here now.

Kira takes a large pole from the dirt floor, picks off the mud and begins stirring a cauldron of hot iron.

LARS

Have you been crying still?

KIRA

Hot iron is one of only two substances in the world that hardens when submerged in water. The other substance is the Spirit -- which becomes stronger when tempered by tears.

LARS

I told your mother that you had the chills again and were outside letting the night air cool you.

Kira removes the pole and uses giant tongs to tilt the cauldron. Hot iron pours like a stream into several sand molds.

KIRA

I don't need your protection or interference.

LARS

I wasn't protecting you, Kira. I was protecting the others on the line here that depend upon you. We're four castings behind the others.

She stops pouring the molten iron.

KIRA

The castings were doubled again? Why do we need so many anvils?

She jumps off the production line and smashes open a cooled sand mold and plucks out a jagged dagger. She runs her fingers over the rough blade.

LARS

We're not forging anvils. We're making helmets. And cuirasses. And mesh for new trousers.

KIRA

And daggers?

She hands him the dagger. He turns it over curiously in his hands.

LARS

We need to cut our meat, don't we?  
Put it back before you get us all  
in trouble again. Father's  
coming. Quick!

Kira leaps back on the line and stuffs the dagger in her apron as Hans arrives.

HANS

The night isn't cold for long.  
The dark is best used for labor,  
not loving.

LARS

It was my fault, father. The  
steam burned by hands again and  
Kira was tending to me so I could  
continue working.

Lars holds up his

INJURED HANDS

for Hans to see. His hands are deeply burned, swollen and purple. Hans shakes his head.

HANS

That doesn't look like a steam  
burn, Lars. What else have you  
been doing?

LARS

Only working the ore, father. I  
only work the land with my hands.

HANS

Come to me with the dawn and I'll  
take a closer look.

LARS

Yes, father. Right now, it's back  
to work now, father.

LARS

dumps more raw ore into the fiery bowl.

KIRA

stirs the cauldron again.

HANS

eyes them as he continues his patrol.

KIRA

I told you I didn't need the  
protection of your lies.

Kira reaches out and takes Lars' hand.

KIRA (CONT'D)

But... thank you.

KIRA

smiles and caresses his hand with her fingers. She  
gently probes the tender purple areas marking his  
hands.

LARS

Meet me by the pond, later?

KIRA

Your hands are weeping and scarlet  
with bruises.

LARS

It's the result of hard work.

KIRA

But work makes the hand rougher,  
like scales on a fish. Your hands  
are soft and moist like dew on  
heather.

LARS

pulls his hands away from her.

LARS

My hands are thick enough and  
rough enough to do my work in  
addition to yours. Will you meet  
me by the pond later or not?

KIRA

No. Not tonight. Tonight, I bury  
my father.

LARS

Impossible! Your father has  
already been given back to the  
sky!

KIRA

No. My father lives with me.  
See?

KIRA

pulls out her

FATHER'S SKULL

still smeared with red ocher and presents it to Lars.



LARS

You stole Evan's skull from the fire? You've betrayed the village, Kira! The gods will fall to the earth and punish us all for your defiance.

KIRA

What would the gods think of these, Lars? Two extra holes in the skull where they don't belong.

Lars winces grandly and covers his eyes with his hands.

LARS

Oh, Kira! Your father thought too much and the gods cracked his skull to drain his thoughts! Now they'll pluck out my eyes for seeing the evidence of their wrath!

KIRA

Why do you fight the pain in your hands, yet you succumb to the fright of your mind?

HANS

plods by and calls out.

HANS

Lars! You are dismissed. Go to the hut and cry into your palms. The furnace is for workers not weaklings.

Lars drops his hands from his eyes.

LARS

No, father! Please. I am still able.

HANS

Leave.

LARS

Of course, father.

As Lars leaves, Kira defiantly stuffs the skull under her apron.

LARS (CONT'D)

Don't take up your father's  
foolish life, Kira, or his fate  
will become your own!

Kira calls out after him.

KIRA

Imagination is immortal! Let the  
gods tumble from the sky like  
rain! I shall catch them on my  
tongue and spit them back into the  
earth where they belong!

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

LIGHTNING

cracks the sky.

SAWYER

still caught in the tree, is finally able to summon  
enough strength to disengage the buckle tethering him  
to the parachute rigging.

HIS BODY

lurches from the tree and he falls only half-way to  
the ground.

## LIGHTNING AND THUNDER CLAPS

echo across the mountain range.

## SAWYER'S LEG

is tangled in the ropes. He struggles like a roped calf to free himself.

## SAWYER HANDS

blindly feel for the Bowie knife strapped to the thigh of his caught leg, but the knife is missing from its scabbard.

## LIGHTNING FORKS

the black horizon. Thunder shakes the tree and sets Sawyer to swinging again. He unzips the shoulder pocket of his flight suit and pinches the slick fabric to force out a cigarette lighter.

## SAWYER

sparks the lighter to flame and he manages to hold the fire against the nylon rip cord binding his leg.

## RAIN

softly filters through the tree leaves.

## SAWYER

C'mon, c'mon!

## A SINGLE DROPLET OF RAIN

douses the cigarette lighter's flame.

## SAWYER

frantically spins the flint wheel to ignite the fire again. No luck. Not even a spark.

Frustrated, Sawyer throws away

THE LIGHTER

and it CLANGS against a torn chunk of fuselage imbedded in a nearby tree. Sawyer turns to the sound and sees

THE SHEARED METAL

of his fuselage jutting out next to his caught leg. Sawyer thrusts his arms back and forth violently and soon his body begins to swing like a pendulum. The

RIP CORD

rips against the jagged metal fuselage and frays the nylon with each crest and fall of his body.

Finally, the

RIP CORD

breaks!

SAWYER

falls out of sight and hits the mud below with a soggy thud.

THE SKY

shatters: rain crashes down in sheets.

SAWYER

opens his mouth and the droplets land on his tongue.

CUT TO:

INT. KIRA'S HUT - NIGHT

KIRA

is awakened by a thunder blast.

LIGHTNING SEEPS

through the walls of her thatched hut.

KIRA

sits up and peers across the dark room at Anke.

ANKE

snores on her mat.

KIRA

wraps a blanket around her shoulders and checks to make certain her father's skull is still safely tucked into her apron. It is.

Kira pushes through the hut's door and races quickly across the muddy village compound.

CUT TO:

EXT. VILLAGE COMPOUND - NIGHT

KIRA

leaps in a futile attempt to avoid puddles of mud and

LIGHTNING

reveals

ANKE

standing with crossed arms in the doorway of the hut watching her daughter run against the forces of the night.

CUT TO:

INT. HANS' HUT - NIGHT

Rachel is in bed and watches Hans disrobe.

RACHEL  
Is Lars still bathing?

HANS  
Yes. He'll be back soon. There's  
work to be done in the morning.

RACHEL  
How are his hands?

HANS  
Not good. I made notes.

RACHEL  
What can we do?

HANS  
What we always do: watch.

RACHEL  
And do nothing.

HANS  
Correct.

RACHEL  
Are his hand killing him?

HANS  
Everything kills us every day.

ANKE

enters the hut and pinches the water from her clothes.

ANKE  
Excuse me, Hans. Hello, Rachel.  
I couldn't sleep.

HANS

Come in, Anke. You're always  
welcome here. How are you?

ANKE

I'm missing Evan.

RACHEL

Oh, we all miss him. He was our  
signpost and our daily  
inspiration.

HANS

We will all have to work harder to  
replace him.

ANKE

Yes. I suppose the cure to the  
misery is in the work.

RACHEL

Yes. We'll keep our bones to the  
grindstone.

ANKE

Do you think Kira will meet Lars  
at the pond tonight?

HANS

Let's hope so.

RACHEL

Do you think they'll ever bear  
children together?

ANKE

They aren't barren from a lack of  
trying.

HANS

Perhaps she's barren?



ANKE

Can all the children here be barren? We know several are mating, yet none bears the fruit of our first child of the experiment.

HANS

Oh, it'll happen. And once it does -- the true experiment can begin: we'll discover how thought and imitation in the second generation of Iron Agers will be passed along.

RACHEL

Yes! We'll see what rituals and superstitions guide them through the rearing of a child.

ANKE

So neither of you know what's happened?

HANS

No. Should we?

ANKE

No. If nothing's happened, nothing's happened. I was just curious if you'd noticed anything, that's all. Good night.

RACHEL

Good night.

ANKE

leaves and shuffles away.

RACHEL AND HANS

smile at each other.

RACHEL

pulls Hans into bed and they kiss and embrace as the rain drips through the holes in their roof.

HANS

Good night.

CUT TO:

EXT. VILLAGE POND - NIGHT

LARS

bathes in the pond. The rain splatters the water around him. His hands are plunged in the cold water. He withdraws his hands and sees

BLEEDING PALMS

punctuated with

ANGRY SORES

and he pinches his eyes closed to hold back the washing waves of pain.

LARS

Oh, the gods are furious with me.  
Punishing me for loving the rebel  
Kira.

Tenderly, he holds up his hands like a doctor who has finished scrubbing for surgery and walks out of the pond.

LARS (CONT'D)

(shouting to the sky)  
You'll have to punish me by  
killing me to make me stop loving  
her! Bring on your best  
punishments, for I am not weak and

I am not afraid to love her to my  
death!

LIGHTNING REVEALS

something golden and shiny on the muddy shore.

Thunderclap! Lars peers into the mud and strains to focus on the object in the dark.

A BLAZE OF LIGHTNING

provides him vision enough to see and nab the object:

A SINGLE DISCHARGED BULLET CASING

shines brightly.

As thunder reverberates about him, Lars picks up the casing and turns the casing over in his hands. He finally

BITES THE CASING

to test its mettle.

LARS

checks the depth of his teeth marks and frowns.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOOT OF THE MOUNTAIN RANGE - NIGHT

KIRA

frenetically digs with both hands into the soft, wet earth. She kisses her father's skull tenderly between the eye sockets: the red ochre transfers to her lips.

Kira quickly, but carefully, deposits the skull into the fresh grave.

THREE QUICK BURSTS OF LIGHT

flash fifty yards away from her up the mountainside.

KIRA

peers through the rain.

KIRA

That wasn't lightning.

She waits for another instance of the light, there is none. She goes back to her task: packing the earth down hard over her small, makeshift grave. Then,

THREE LONG FLASHES OF LIGHT

KIRA

instantly looks to the white light. She stands. She pauses to watch for another instance.

THREE QUICK BURSTS OF LIGHT

meet her eye again! Kira cautiously goes to the light.

THREE QUICK BURSTS OF LIGHT

THREE SLOW FLASHES

THREE QUICK BURSTS OF LIGHT

KIRA

I see you! I am here! I am coming!

The light source is growing fainter. The

DYING LIGHT

comes in a rapid, yet fading, series of three short flashes, three long flashes, and three short flashes.

KIRA

I cannot see for the rain and trees! Again! Keep up the brighter flashes!

ANGLE ON SAWYER

flat on his back and up the mountain from her.

SAWYER

furiously flashes his penlight at her as the batteries die in his hand. Sawyer flings the penlight in the air in disgust.

KIRA'S EYES

scan the mountain ahead of her as she runs up its slippery face.

KIRA

trips and slides in the mud. She struggles to her knees, wipes away the wet grass blinding her and

SWEEPS THE MOUNTAIN

with her gaze to relocate the origin of the light. She's lost and disoriented.

KIRA

scans the sky, but there isn't even lightning to help illuminate the landscape for her now.

KIRA (CONT'D)

Hello out there? Can you hear me?

A SOFT MOAN is barely audible in the distance. Kira cocks her ear to the sound.

KIRA (CONT'D)

I hear you! Again! Again!

She takes one step in the direction of the moan.

KIRA (CONT'D)

I can't see you! Keep calling me!  
(MORE)

Another MOAN trickles down the mountain to her. She takes another step in that direction.

KIRA (CONT'D)  
Yes, yes! Again! I am getting closer. Do you see me?

Kira listens for a response. Nothing.

KIRA (CONT'D)  
Once more! I'm here. I'm here!

One last QUIET GASP for air meets Kira's ear. She rushes to the sound.

KIRA (CONT'D)  
If you can hear me, give me a sign.

A BRILLIANT CRACK OF LIGHTNING

bright as the sun illuminates the entire area.

SAWYER

grabs Kira's ankle.

KIRA

looks down and sees

SAWYER'S BLOODY HAND

holding her ankle.

KIRA

screams and tries to run away, but Sawyer holds her there.

She's horrified by his bleeding leg and maniacal, burned, gap-toothed, yet grinning, face poking out from a mound of glistening mud.

SAWYER  
(gasping)  
Where have you been all my life?

SAWYER

laughs hysterically until he coughs.

KIRA

lets out another bloodcurdling scream of limb-shaking  
terror!

CUT TO:

INT. GENERAL WARNER'S DEN - NIGHT

DALONEY

sits alone in the den on an uncomfortable wooden  
chair. A halogen desk lamp illuminates his tired  
face.

The wind whistles outside.

GENERAL WARNER

Enters dressed in pajamas and an expensive Chinese  
silk bathrobe. He sits behind a carved mahogany desk  
in an overstuffed high-back green leather chair.

WARNER  
Only the headlines, Colonel. I  
want my head back on the pillow  
before the sheets are cold.

DALONEY  
Yes, General. Ischia is burning.  
And when we tried to cool it, we  
lost Sawyer.

Warner walks to the window and looks out the lead-  
glass window at the wind swirling the leaves across  
his picturesque lawn.



WARNER

My sheets are gonna get cold.

Warner wets his fingertips and smoothes back his thinning, snowy, hair.

DALONEY

Farns is going to put the finish on it. He flies out tonight.

Warner goes to the icebox built into his elaborate liquor cabinet and takes out two ice cubes. He places a cube on each of his hot temples.

WARNER

No. Not Farns.

DALONEY

He's volunteered, General. He understands the mission.

Warner tosses one of the ice cubes across the room past Daloney and into the fireplace. The

GLOWING EMBERS

sizzle as the ice melts into steam.

WARNER

I said, "Not Farns."

DALONEY

If not Farns, then who?

WARNER

You.

DALONEY

When?

WARNER

Now. That's an order.

DALONEY

Uh. Yes, General. It'll be my honor.

Daloney stands to leave and shakes Warner's hand.

WARNER

Don't come back if you don't finish or I'll have to finish you off myself.

DALONEY

nods and

WARNER

pops the remaining ice cube into his mouth and chews it down to slush.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. KIRA'S HUT - NIGHT

LARS

creeps along the outside wall of Kira's hut. After taking three carefully measures steps, he paws at the ground three times with his heel.

The mud muffles his signal.

Lars checks the

BULLET CASING

clasped in his hand and enters the hut.

CUT TO:

INT. KIRA'S HUT - NIGHT

LARS

sneaks into the hut and peers over at Anke's mat. There's no movement. He sneaks to Kira's mat and bends on one knee. He touches her softly.

LARS

(whispering)

Kira? I've found a most inexplicable treasure.

LARS' FIST

unclenches and he offers the bullet casing to Kira. Lars checks over his shoulder again for movement from Anke's mat: nothing. He turns back to Kira's mat.

LARS (CONT'D)

Kira?

He shakes her as the thunderstorm outside ceases. Lars tears away the blanket and reveals not Kira, but

ANKE

watching him from Kira's mat!

ANKE

What do you have for me, Lars?

LARS

screams and leaps back.

LARS

Wh-where's Kira?

ANKE

I thought she went to see you.

Anke jumps from the mat and grabs Lars' clenched fist holding the bullet casing.

LARS

My hands!

ANKE

Show me what you have, Lars. I'm certain I can identify it.

Lars spins and turns his back to Anke. Anke grabs his right hand and twists.

LARS

(screaming)

My hands!

ANKE

Give it over!

Lars tries to shove the bullet casing into his mouth, but Anke wrestles it from his hand.

ANKE (CONT'D)

An innocent man doesn't struggle.

Lars falls to the floor wheezing.

ANKE'S FACE

glow in the dark as she sees the bullet casing in her hand. She shoves it quickly into the folds of her skirt.

LARS

I found it! Dropped from the Heavens! It's a warning!

ANKE

It's nothing, Lars. Just some petrified iron, that's all.

LARS

I know iron ore, and that isn't iron. It's softer. I bit it. I know.

ANKE

I'll inspect it myself tonight. Let me see your hands.

LARS

presents his

WET HANDS

for Anke's inspection.

LARS

It's nothing. They're fine.

ANKE

The moon will judge.

Anke drags Lars outside into the moonlight.

CUT TO:

EXT. KIRA'S HUT - NIGHT

THE MOON

is bright in the sky. The sky is now clear of storm clouds.

As Anke inspects Lars' hands, her look of anger changes to concern.

ANKE

Your hands are swollen.

LARS

They won't stop throbbing. I can feel my heartbeat in my fingertips.  
I guess I work too hard.

ANKE

You'll have no more work until we find out what's wrong. For now, keep your hands above your heart and see if the swelling disappears.

LARS

I soaked them in the pond. They still hurt.

ANKE

You are not allowed to go to the pond alone.

LARS

I couldn't sleep. My knuckles feel like a funeral pyre is trying to burn its way out from within.

ANKE

Your hands will mend, Lars, but keep them out of the pond. The small things that live and breed in brackish water can pock the skin like a pick on coal.

She kisses his hands softly.

ANKE (CONT'D)

Now go home and be well.

LARS

grins leaves.

ANKE watches him trounce home across the muddy courtyard as she rolls the bullet casing between her fingers.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOUNTAIN - NIGHT

KIRA

races down the mountain away from Sawyer. Exhausted, she crumples to her knees and fights her lungs for air.

In the distance, we can hear Sawyer SINGING to himself. His gravely voice lilts down the mountain to Kira.

SAWYER (OFF)

(singing)

My bonnie lies over the ocean.  
My bonnie lies over the sea.  
My bonnie lies over the ocean.  
Oh, bring back my bonnie to me.

KIRA

shouts up at him with an angry fist.

KIRA

How do you speak with my tongue?

SAWYER (OFF)

(singing)

Oh, bring back, bring back,

KIRA

(shouting)

Have you molded me in your image?

SAWYER (OFF)

(singing)

Oh bring back my bonnie to me.

KIRA

(shouting)

How do you flash fire in your hands?

(No response)

Are you a god who has fallen?



(MORE)

KIRA (CONT'D)

Are you the one I saw diving from  
the sky?

(No response)

Answer me! Do not mock me with  
silence!

Kira sets her jaw and marches back up the mountain to  
face down Sawyer.

SAWYER (OFF)

(singing)

Bring back, oh bring back,  
bring back my bonnie to me.

CUT TO:

EXT. FUNERAL PYRE - NIGHT

ANKE

uses a long stick to scrapes together all of

EVAN'S BONES

for inventory.

ANKE

Femur. Second rib. Left hip  
bone. It must be here.

She goes to her hands and knees and sifts through the  
ashes.

ANKE (CONT'D)

Humerus. Clavicle. Scapula.

She wipes sweat from her upper lip.

ANKE (CONT'D)

Where is his skull?

(MORE)

ANKE

massages her throbbing temples with her fingertips and then continues her dig.

ANKE (CONT'D)

No. Flexor carpi ulnaris.  
Abductor digiti minimi. Where is  
it? Fourth, third, palmar  
interosseous. Transverse head of  
adductor pollicis...

ANKE

buries her head in the ashes.

ANKE (CONT'D)

Evan! Why must you hide from me  
even in death?!

Anke cries out and lathers the ash against her body like soap.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOUNTAIN - NIGHT

KIRA

arrives and discovers

SAWYER

stuck in the mud unable to move.

KIRA

I came back to defy you!

SAWYER

Ischia is burning.

KIRA

Which god are you? Why did you  
punish my father?

SAWYER  
Do you... understand?

KIRA  
Yes.

SAWYER  
Ischia is burning. Water?  
Please.

KIRA

kneels next to him.

KIRA  
You're bleeding? A god who bleeds  
like me?

SAWYER

gasps and grabs her face in his hands and squeezes  
gently.

SAWYER  
Be quick. Please.

KIRA

cups her hands into a deep puddle or rain, and  
releases the water into

SAWYER'S

open mouth.

KIRA'S FINGERS

touch the military emblems sewn into Sawyer's flight  
suit and on his shoulder.

KIRA  
Which god are you?

SAWYER

I am Sawyer. Not a god.

KIRA

Did you steal these stars as you fell? Did you save them to your shoulder for good luck?

SAWYER

I said... I told you I'm no god.

KIRA

But, we share common phrases... even though your symbols are foreign. Are you a god in disguise?

Kira unzips his flight suit a bit to reveal a deep puncture wound. She cleans his wound.

KIRA (CONT'D)

And only a god could wear metal forged brighter than the sun! Were you cast out of the heavens?

Sawyer looks deeply into her eyes: she's serious. He changes his attack.

SAWYER

Uh, yes. I defied the other gods and my punishment was to be cast down and banished.

KIRA

Why did you defy them?

SAWYER

Because they wanted to kill everyone in your village!

KIRA

They killed my father!

SAWYER

And you'll be next if you don't  
listen to me.

KIRA

I am listening.

SAWYER

The gods are angry.

KIRA

The gods are jealous! We work  
harder and longer than them -- and  
how can they allow that?

SAWYER

Yes, and other gods are soon to  
follow to punish me for telling  
you their secret and to punish you  
for listening!

KIRA

Then we must be quick and prepare  
to fight them back into the stars!

SAWYER

No. We must be smart and leave  
them nothing to fight.

SAWYER

kisses her hand.

SAWYER

Now, you must be strong.

KIRA

I am strong.

SAWYER

What's your name?

KIRA

Kira.

SAWYER

Kira, The Strong, Ischia is  
burning. Help me and your reward  
will be a new and unimagined  
world.

KIRA

nods and squeezes his hand.

KIRA

I will help you Sawyer: The  
Fallen God of Stolen Stars.

CUT TO:

EXT. KIRA'S HUT - NIGHT

ANKE

stands naked in the flickering mix of shadow and light  
from a small fire. She scrapes

DRIED ASH

off her arms and thighs and places the remains in a  
small goatskin satchel along with Evan's bones.

RACHEL

peaked and breathless, enters the hut.

RACHEL

Anke? I heard you crying.

Anke covers herself with a blanket and spins to face  
her.

ANKE

Evan's loss makes me wonder why  
we're all still here. Why is this  
worth it?



RACHEL

We are doing God's work, Anke. We are watching young lives and minds unfold centuries of learning before us.

ANKE

At what price? We owe them!

RACHEL

We owe them nothing but the right to be left alone to make their own triumphs and mistakes.

ANKE

We owe them the Age of Reason. We owe them the Industrial Revolution. We owe them what we know: They are owed the wounds of History!

RACHEL

The children of Mezzavia on Pithekoussai have evolved faster than any civilization before them.

ANKE

Because we helped them! We taught them English!

RACHEL

No! Hush! We only offered them nuggets for imitation. They cultivated their own clews for meaning, idiom, syntax and they even ended up constructing an idiopathic Germanic language on their own.

ANKE

The children have earned three thousand years of living, Rachel! Let's give it to them!

RACHEL

They're happy with their lives.  
Unlike our lives, theirs are  
historic and ingenious.

ANKE

But we're lying to them every day!  
Can we absolve our sins through  
their triumphs? We owe them the  
loss of their innocence!

RACHEL

Why? So they can set the world  
afire with hatred and revenge and  
betrayal? I wouldn't wish the  
naked errors of humanity on any  
civilization -- now even once!  
Now drop this foolishness, Anke.  
You drop it right now.

RACHEL

turns angrily to the door to leave. Anke calls her  
back.

ANKE

I'm sorry. I guess I'm still  
upset thinking about Evan.

RACHEL

I understand. We'll speak more  
about this in the morning.

RACHEL

flashes a quick smile and again turns to leave.

ANKE

Err, uh. Rachel?

RACHEL

Yes, Anke?

ANKE

Tonight, I collected Evan's ashes  
after they cooled and... his skull  
is missing.

RACHEL

What?!!

ANKE

You and Hans prepared his body.  
What happened?

RACHEL

It was there, his parts were  
whole! We'd better straighten  
this out with Hans right now.  
Come. We'll find him and find  
out.

ANKE

Give me a moment collect myself.  
I'll meet you on the lip of Butte  
Nine.

RACHEL

snaps her head in agreement and leaves.

ANKE

wearily rubs her hands over her face, pulls the ash-  
soiled dress over her head and douses the fire with  
two ladlesful of water from a wooden bucket. She  
pulls the glistening

BULLET CASING

she got from Lars out its hiding place in her coat and  
rushes out.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LARS' HUT - NIGHT

LARS SLEEPS

with his mouth cocked open. His hands are caked in two giant mounds of dried mud.

A HAND

clamps over Lars' mouth.

LARS SLEEPS

and does not respond.

THE INDEX FINGER AND THUMB

of

THE HAND

clamped over Lars' mouth now

PINCH LARS' NOSTRILS

closed.

LARS GASPS

for air, but cannot! His eyes open in fright.

KIRA SMILES

and raises one eyebrow.

LARS NODS

and Kira removes her hand.

LARS

opens his mouth to speak and

KIRA'S HAND

instantly re-covers his mouth. Kira motions toward the door with her head.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOUNTAIN RANGE - NIGHT

SAWYER

lashes a length of tree bark around his shin with the parachute's rip cord and fashions a makeshift splint.

SAWYER STANDS

and breaks off a low tree branch by hefting himself upon it.

SAWYER

uses the torn fuselage to scrape off the leaf buds and growth nodes.

Using the branch as a walking stick, he picks and plods his way down the mountainside.

CUT TO:

EXT. VILLAGE POND - NIGHT

KIRA

drags Lars along by the hand.

KIRA

Hurry with me to the pond. Why are your hands caked in mud?

LARS

I was trying to cool the fire in my knuckles. It helped.

KIRA

Good! Lars. I need your help.

LARS

You have it without forethought. You look frightened.

KIRA

Frightened? I can't stop my heart from bursting with promise.

LARS

Perhaps it's my own scared face casting back from your eyes.

KIRA

Tonight, I touched a new world! Tonight I discovered a god who tumbled to the earth.

LARS

Was he cast out of the Heavens?

KIRA

He is Sawyer: The Fallen God of Stolen Stars.

LARS

What does he want of you?

KIRA

He wants us to follow him out of  
the village and into a new world.

LARS

Foolish! A god would never  
welcome us in the realm of the  
Heavens!

KIRA

He is injured and I cannot carry  
him here alone.

LARS

Injured? He can't be god, then,  
for they are perfect and immortal!  
You have been tricked!

LARS

runs from her and dives into the pond.

KIRA

I have not been tricked! I have  
proof!

KIRA

unfolds a flight map.

KIRA (CONT'D)

He gave this to me. Look at the  
symbols. An arrow. A line.  
These are the same sort of  
markings your father draws in the  
earth to show us the way to the  
iron caves.

LARS

shields his eyes and refuses to look.

LARS

Take it away! It is the rancid  
fruit of temptation! A god needs  
no markings to remember the land,  
for he is the one who created it!

KIRA

folds the map, and drags Lars from the water.

KIRA

Lars! Look at the moon! So  
white. So far. Beyond our grasp.  
Only the eye can touch it.

LARS

I can see the moon.

KIRA

Good! Now, look here in the pond.  
Another moon. Another world  
reflects and ripples with  
anticipation at our feet.

Kira pulls Lars next to her and they kneel by the edge  
of the pond.

KIRA AND LARS

are now reflected in to pond along with the moon.

KIRA (CONT'D)

Look! Now we too are part of this  
new world! The moon begs us to  
warm it with our grasp.

KIRA

take Lars' arm and reaches it up to the moon in the  
sky above.



## THE MIRROR IMAGE

of Kira and the moon is reflected in the water makes  
an

## OPTICAL ILLUSION

that Lars is actually touching the moon.

## LARS

looks from pond to sky to pond.

## KIRA (CONT'D)

Together, Lars, we can comfort an  
untouched and unblemished world  
with an open, outstretched hand.

## LARS

pulls his arm away from her, grabs the flight map from  
her and tears it into tiny pieces.

## LARS

We don't need a new world, Kira.

He tosses the pieces of the map into the water like  
confetti.

## LARS (CONT'D)

We struggle enough in the one  
touching us now.

## THE FLIGHT MAP CONFETTI

lands on the water and shatters their reflections into  
rippling waves.

## LARS (CONT'D)

Your new world is only a ripple.

KIRA  
(wounded)

Don't you think there's the  
possibility of something more?

LARS

No. And you think too much.

KIRA

There must be more to a world than just drop-forging tools, Lars. I don't want to only touch the moon; I want to root my feet on it as well! One day I'll look down at you from up there on the moon -- see my reflection down here in this pond and be in two worlds at once!

LARS

I beg you, Kira. Be thankful for the life you are given. Don't bet your life against the impossible. Don't tempt fate with imagination. I had always hoped that the two of us could be a world of our own. You and me. Right here. Between our hands: A world within a world.

KIRA

Yesterday, that too, was all I desired. But you are no longer enough, Lars. Tonight, I learned there is more to need.

KIRA KISSES

him softly on the lips and runs away back up the mountain to Sawyer.

LARS WATCHES

her disappear in the shadows. He goes to the pond and re-packs his hands in fresh mud.

As he molds the mud around his fevered hands again, he pauses to gaze into the water and stares at his reflection.

LARS REACHES OUT

to his mirror image to wipe away a tear from the face  
of his reflection.

The instant his fingertips break the tension of the  
water,

HIS FACE DISAPPEARS

into pulsing waves.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. RUNWAY - NIGHT

DALONEY

dressed in an ill-fitting flight suit, runs across the  
tarmac to

A JET

primed with missiles.

SERGEANT SCOFOLD

chases after him.

DALONEY

Eggs candled, Sergeant?

SCOFOLD

Yessir, warheads are armed and  
ready to whistle.

DALONEY

Good. You're dismissed.

SCOFOLD

Err, sir. I need you to sign this flight plan first.

DALONEY

(snapping at him)

The pen stays capped on this one, Sergeant. No shadow to trace. We're staying dark.

DALONEY

pours himself into the cockpit.

SCOFOLD

No can handle, sir. I need a signed say-so before I can nod you off to cut foreign airspace with this unmarked blade.

SCOFOLD

holds out a pen and clipboard to Daloney.

DALONEY

takes the pen and tucks it into the pencil pocket of his flight suit.

DALONEY

Play it non-com, son. Anyone calls, you disconnect. I'll be home before they cock a finger to re-dial. Lose the chucks.

Daloney locks the canopy and the jet's engines roar to life.

SCOFOLD

pulls the wheel chucks and waves Daloney onto the runway.

DALONEY

pushes the thrusters full and disappears along the night horizon in a deafening blast of exhaust.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUTTE NINE - NIGHT

RACHEL

deep in thought, looks down from a boulder jutting out from the butte.

THE IRON MILL

stands fifty feet below her.

RINGLETS OF SMOKE

rise up from the mill and swirl around her.

ANKE

pulls through the smoke, jolting Rachel from her thoughts.

RACHEL

Quickly.

RACHEL

forces her shoulder against a embedded in the butte. The rock swings into the mountain revealing an aluminum tunnel.

CUT TO:

INT. BUTTE NINE - NIGHT

ANKE

follows Rachel and pushes a lighted blue button bolted to the aluminum structure.

THE ROCK

slides closed and Anke reaches into the crevices of the tunnel wall and flicks on flickering overhead incandescent lights. Together, they flow down the hallway.

CUT TO:

INT. BUTTE NINE READY ROOM - NIGHT

ANOTHER ROCK

slides open and Rachel and Anke enter together.

THE ROOM

whines with maps, dials and teletypes.

HANS

hunches over a pile of computer print outs.

ANKE

sees all the

MONITORING METERS

on the wall are not working -- each one is stuck and peaked out at 100%.

ANKE

What happened to the meters?

HANS

They're dead.

ANKE

Nonsense! I checked them all myself yesterday. Did you try jiggling the wires? Did you try monkeying with the dials?

HANS

Futzung is always first. The proof is all right here. Pages and reams and heaps of... nothing.

ANKE

Then all the meters'll have to be checked and recalibrated by hand.

HANS

I'll do it.

ANKE

No, I'll do it. I don't want this handled in the way you handled Evan's body for burial.

HANS

What do you mean?

RACHEL

gives

HANS

a look.

ANKE

spins some dials and stops.

ANKE

Hold on! The last live field reading I have is from the dew-point thermometer woven into the clover along Butte 28.

RACHEL

So?



ANKE

So, this is way out of scale.  
Peaked out at 100% for over three  
hours before it stopped  
responding.

HANS

What could run it up that hot?

RACHEL

Field mice. They chewed the  
cables again and we got fed  
another bad reading.

ANKE

Ridiculous. You're trained better  
than that. What's going on here?  
Are these broken meters related to  
Evan's missing skull?

ANKE

tosses the

BULLET CASING

on the steel work table and it clatters to a stop.

ANKE (CONT'D)

Does this spent casing have  
anything to do with either or both  
of those issues?

HANS

Where did you get that?

ANKE

Lars. The teeth marks are his.

HANS

Lars found this? Oh... that's not  
good.

ANKE

I guess he leapt three thousand years in about a second and a half when he discovered that gem, huh?

Rachel scoops up the casing and pockets it.

RACHEL

There was a breach. A betrayal of our entire system of living.

HANS

And that breach was named Evan.

ANKE

I don't believe you.

RACHEL

No one will survive the pierce of his betrayal.

HANS

He tried to end the experiment for us all.

ANKE

The experiment only ends with the death of all the children -- this experiment will outlive us that those who replace us. You know that.

HANS

That's precisely what Evan did, Anke. He stole the sacred code and called in our deaths.

ANKE

He called in what sacred code? To where?

RACHEL

Two years ago our funding stopped.  
Hans and I took care of it. We  
found new investors.

ANKE

Why didn't you tell Evan and me?

HANS

We were forbidden.

ANKE

And what did they get in return  
for their blood money?

RACHEL

They got the results of the lives  
of the children.

ANKE

You bartered their lives in  
exchange for... what? Pieces of  
silver?

HANS

No. In exchange for immortality.  
This project will outlive us all  
as it shrieks to a close!

RACHEL

Evan discovered out that the  
children had been... tested with  
radiation.

ANKE

Well! That at least explains  
Lars' hands!

HANS

Our job is only to watch.

RACHEL

It appears the iron mines are tainted with radiation.

HANS

And that contamination has run out-of-bounds. It has spilled into the valley and contaminated the water table. It burned up your meters.

ANKE

And you've done nothing for the children to cure this breach?

HANS

What's the difference between the children dying of radiation or a flood or a war? The result is the same.

ANKE

You are both truly... Neanderthals! Barbarians!

RACHEL

"Ischia is Burning." Evan sealed our death with a whisper.

ANKE

You didn't have to kill him!

HANS

Join us, Anke. We must hurry. We must arm the children, and bring them quickly to closure before we are finished by interference from the outside world.

ANKE

Tonight, I'm breaking the children out of here and into the light. I've got to get them all immediate

medical attention before it's too  
late.

As Anke tries to leave, Hans produces a nine millimeter pistol.

HANS

We must live without regret, Anke.  
The truth has no antidote.

HANS

shoots Anke.

ANKE FALLS

hard to the floor grasping her abdomen. A pool of warm blood grows around her while the new

BULLET CASING

smokes next to her head.

HANS

Prepare the children.

RACHEL AND HANS

join hands and run from the ready room.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - NIGHT

KIRA

races up the mountain to Sawyer with tears burning in her eyes.

SAWYER

calls out to her quietly from beyond a ridge of trees.

SAWYER

Kira.

KIRA

stops and looks for him. She wipes her face dry of tears.

KIRA

Yes. I am here. Take me away with you.

SAWYER

limps to her.

SAWYER

We have to get those folks out of your village first! It's going up in a fireball.

KIRA

No one will follow you.

SAWYER

They'll have to follow you, then. You will lead them to safety.

KIRA

They won't leave! They're too scared to move! They never wander beyond the proving grounds.

SAWYER

Then we'll make the option of staying even more frightening than following you. I have a plan. Help me.

KIRA

places her shoulder under his arm and together, they move down the mountain.

CUT TO:

INT. COCKPIT - NIGHT

DALONEY

grins as he pushes his jet to its maximum speed.

RED LIGHTS

flash on the control panel.

DALONEY

punches one of the red lights.

DALONEY

Tacit Phantom here. That you C-Com? Over.

GARNETT (V.O.)

Roger that, Tacit Phantom. This channel is confirmed secure and will remain open on Alpha priority. Over.

DALONEY

Roger. Keep supper warm. Over and Out.

DALONEY

pulls his jet into a dollop roll and dives into the familiar and yawning

ISCHIAN MOUNTAIN RANGE

spreading out before him.

CUT TO:



INT. IRON MILL - NIGHT

RACHEL

stands atop a stone work bench and addresses the toiling children as they work on the iron forging line.

RACHEL

Children of Mezzavia on  
Pithekoussai! Throw down the  
binding tools of your slavery!  
And take up the forged armaments  
of emancipation!

THE CHILDREN

stop working and fall silent.

ALL EYES

are trained on

RACHEL

with anticipation.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Construct two columns. Males  
arranged by height. Females  
arranged by age.

The children immediately divide and fall into the appropriate lines.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Swords, daggers and shields for  
the women. Spears, mesh trousers  
and helmets for the men.  
Commence!

(MORE)

THE CHILDREN

diligently dress and arm themselves for war.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Together, children, we shall  
parade to the proving ground and  
discover the true nature of our  
humanity.

For the first time we see

THE CHILDREN'S FACES CLOSE-UP

and each child has

RADIATION BURNS

swelling on their faces and sprouting from their  
weeping hands.

CUT TO:

EXT. LARS' HUT - NIGHT

LARS

is sprawled out flat on his stomach on the ground in  
front of his hut.

KIRA

rolls him over onto his back.

KIRA

Lars? Can you understand me?

LARS

Kira? The gods have singed my  
hands for loving you. I have  
betrayed my people by entertaining  
thoughts of entering another world  
with you.

KIRA

You must stand so I can help you walk.

LARS

holds up his

RADIATED HANDS

for Kira to inspect.

LARS

I warned you. I begged you not to tempt Providence. You have polluted our village with your contempt for the sanctity of the gods.

She cannot look at his hands.

KIRA

I'm sorry, Lars. Please stand. Stand and forgive me.

LARS

Don't turn away from the harvest of your betrayal, Kira. Look at me and the glory in the mutilation of my life!

KIRA

Lars. My hands have become like yours.

KIRA

shows Lars her hands have started to blister like his.

LARS

sighs and resigns himself.

LARS

The Innocent and the Wicked share  
strokes from the same rod.

KIRA

strokes his face softly. She kisses his fevered  
cheek.

KIRA

You're hot. Here. Stand. Let me  
walk you. You'll feel better if  
you could just stand and walk.  
You'll see.

LARS

No, Kira. I cannot. Your  
curiosity is a millstone I can no  
longer bear.

KIRA

Lars! We only have an instant to  
recover tomorrow!

LARS

This is where I belong. I shall  
stay and accept my fate willingly.

KIRA

Foolish boy! The life of a fresh  
world lingers for us beyond the  
horizon.

LARS

Why would I want another life,  
Kira, when the one I have is  
lethal enough?

LARS

groans in pain.

KIRA

kisses him again.

KIRA

I'll miss you every day. May your  
gods keep and protect you.

KIRA

stands as Lars' eyes close.

LARS

Every night, when dusk shades the  
sky sable, I'll scan the horizon,  
whisper your name, and remember  
that once... we touched the moon  
together.

CUT TO:

EXT. VILLAGE COMPOUND - NIGHT

RACHEL

leads the silent

PROCESSION OF CHILDREN

to the proving grounds.

THE CHILDREN

are dressed in their war regalia. They carry their  
weapons chest-high.

SEVERAL CHILDREN

carry torches that light up the sky.

CUT TO:

INT. COCKPIT - NIGHT

DALONEY

punches buttons on his control panel.

DALONEY

C-Com this is Tacit Phantom. You  
all still there? Over.

GARNETT (V.O.)

Roger, Tacit Phantom. This is C-  
Com and we copy on this open  
channel. You sneeze, we copy.  
Over.

DALONEY

Roger. ETA is seven minutes to  
drop. Over.

GARNETT (V.O.)

Copy that. Over.

DALONEY

shoves his aiming visor down over his helmet as he  
corkscrews the jet across the sky.

EXT. IRON MILL - NIGHT

KIRA

breathless, searches for Sawyer.

KIRA

Are you here? Lars won't stand  
and follow. I'm worried he'll be  
left behind.

HANS

steps around the side of the mill.

HANS

Where are you planning to go,  
Kira?

KIRA

Hans!

HANS

Did I scare you?

KIRA

No. I was looking for mother.

HANS

Your mother is with Rachel. And  
you're supposed to be on the  
proving grounds with the other  
children. Go. Get a sword and  
shield and join them.

KIRA

doesn't move.

HANS

steps to her.

KIRA

No. I can't join them. I will  
not go.

HANS

What's wrong, child? Tell me.  
What do you have to say?

KIRA

I have nothing to say.

HANS

You must have something to say to  
me, Kira. You've never kept a  
quiet tongue.

SAWYER

hidden in the outer thatching of the mill wall, steps out of the thatch and reveals himself to Hans.

SAWYER

I have something to say.

HANS

spins around to Sawyer and grabs Kira.

KIRA

Sawyer!

HANS

Who are you!

SAWYER'S MOUTH

twitches.

SAWYER

(whispering)

Ischia is burning.

SAWYER

sparks his

CIGARETTE LIGHTER

to flame and tosses it on the dried wall of thatch.

Instantly,

THE WALL

erupts in flame.

HANS

You're very stupid for being so clever.



HANS clamps one meaty hand over Kira's mouth, and pulls out the nine millimeter pistol with the other hand.

HANS

aims the gun at Sawyer.

HANS (CONT'D)

The Iron Age entombs the uninvited  
like dead men.

SAWYER

holds up his hands.

HANS (CONT'D)

Now, you too, shall belong to  
History.

At that instant, a voice rings out.

LARS (OFF)

Kira? Where has everyone gone? I  
changed my mind. I've come to  
fuse with you forever. I'm  
repulsed by the lonely, tattered  
life of a drop-forged heart.

LARS

turns around the opposite corner of the mill and  
discovers Hans holding Kira.

LARS (CONT'D)

Father? Let her go!

HANS

aims his pistol at Lars as he comes at him.

KIRA

back-kicks Hans and escapes his grasp.

THE PISTOL

fires!

LARS

yelps as the bullet rips his thigh.

THE BULLET CASING

discharges from the pistol

IN SLOW MOTION

and trails smoke as it tumbles in the air.

MATCH CUT TO:

THE MILL ROOF

trailing smoke as it collapses into the voracious flames that used to be the factory floor.

MOLTEN IRON

runs in rivulets across the earth in all directions.

KIRA

spins, pulls out the iron dagger she stole from the mill earlier, and stabs it deeply into Hans' skull between the eyes.

HANS

collapses into a quivering heap.

KIRA

pants for air, and touches the blood on the blade. She tentatively licks the blade to taste the blood and is horrified. She drops the dagger as if it had burned her.

LARS

whimpers as he picks up the spent bullet casing and holds it next to his thigh wound.

SAWYER

kicks his cigarette lighter out of the flames, picks it up and shakes it next to his ear to gauge the amount of butane left inside.

SAWYER

Go get the other children while I finish up here. Make them follow you out of here.

KIRA

(dazed)

What about Lars?

SAWYER

He's all mine. Go!

KIRA

nods numbly, and runs to the proving grounds.

LARS

weeps as Sawyer hefts him across a broad shoulder and carries him as he runs to set the next hut afire.

Lars bites the bullet casing, and stares in fear at Hans' corpse as it fades from sight.

LARS

Oh, father! What Evil you have begun!

From

LARS' BOUNCING POV

over Sawyer's shoulder,

HANS' CORPSE

burns and smokes as the molten metal from the diminishing mill swallows it whole and quickly hardens into iron in the cold night air.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. COCKPIT - NIGHT

DALONEY

breathes hard into his microphone.

DALONEY

Minus three minutes to fall down,  
C-Com. Over.

GARNETT (V.O.)

Copy that, Tacit Phantom. Over.

DALONEY

Sensors are locked, but I'll drop  
by hand. What remains of Sawyer?  
Over.

GARNETT (V.O.)

Satellite photos show pieces of  
his jet scatter the land like  
breadcrumbs cast upon trembling  
water. Over.

DALONEY

If he's still in one piece, Sawyer  
will cast his wishes from the  
fires of Hell in minus two. Over.

GARNETT (V.O.)

We'd better cut this channel.  
Good luck and God Bless. Over.

DALONEY

Roger. Here's the white noise.  
Over and Out.

DALONEY rips the communication headset off his helmet and static buzzes as the radio channel hisses out.

DALONEY'S JET

roars as it dips and disappears across a bank of trees.

CUT TO:

EXT. PROVING GROUNDS - NIGHT

THE CHILDREN

face each other from two lines. Shields are poised.  
Swords are aimed.

TORCH FLAMES

blow sideways in the wind.

RACHEL

parades down the middle of the opposing sides.

RACHEL

Children of Mezzavia on  
Pithekoussai! On my mark, you  
shall lift of your sword or dagger  
and strike the person across from  
you until the strength in you body  
is exhausted.

(MORE)

Rachel picks a Male from one line and a Female from the other and positions them face to face between the two columns.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Plunge the blade from tip to handle deep into his breast.

THE FEMALE

looks up confusedly at Rachel.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Keep the Faith, child. And savor, for the first time, the instinctual pleasure of your clenched fist.

THE FEMALE draws back her arm and stabs at the Male awkwardly.

THE MALE

doesn't move. He looks at a thin trickle of blood drooling from his chest.

THE FEMALE

gasps and the dagger slithers from her grasp and sticks in the earth.

THE OTHER CHILDREN

stare wide-eyed at Rachel.

THE INJURED MALE

looks up at Rachel.

TEARS

run silently from his eyes.

HIS HANDS

try to wipe the blood from his chest, but succeeds only in smearing the stream across his skin like war paint.

RACHEL

Good! Now you strike her back.  
Each of you! Strike!

ALL THE CHILDREN

reluctantly grasp and aim their weapons at each other when

ANKE

appears staggering onto the proving grounds and clutching her bleeding abdomen.

ANKE

Children, you must run! Drop your  
weapons and run to the horizon!

THE CHILDREN

freeze and stare silently at Anke.

ANKE

stumbles to her knees.

ANKE (CONT'D)

Mezzavia on Pithekoussai is  
burning!

THE VILLAGE HUTS

are filled with fire in the distance.

THE CHILDREN

stand numbly as

SMOKE AND ASH

choke the air thick.

ANKE (CONT'D)

Rachel craves darkness for you.  
Don't let your past be framed by  
your bitter ashes. Run to the  
light, children!

THE CHILDREN

look to Rachel for direction.

KIRA

races to the proving grounds.

KIRA

Mother! I am here! I will lead  
the children!

RACHEL

sees KIRA sprinting to Anke, grabs a spear from one of  
the children and knifes the blade into Anke's chest.

RACHEL

Now splinters a virtuous heart!

THE CHILDREN

are unmoved.

Silence.



RACHEL

tugs the blade out of Anke and raises it above her head in conquest.

RACHEL

The future, children, is a blaze  
fed with the desire of your  
regretless moments!

Silence.

KIRA

arrives at dying mother's side and cradles her.

THE CHILDREN

watch Kira in awe as she tries to revive Anke.

RACHEL

laughs.

THE MALE

who was stabbed earlier, steps forward and, using both hands, blindly swings his sword at Rachel.

THE BLADE

carves deeply into the meat of Rachel's calf.

RACHEL

shocked and surprised, shrieks as she plunges to the earth.

THE FEMALE

who stabbed the Male, picks her dagger from the earth and savagely digs the blade into Rachel's back.

One-by-one,

ALL THE CHILDREN

imitate and join in the vicious attack on Rachel as she pleads for her life.

RACHEL

You betray me with minds of your own.

THE CHILDREN

howl like animals.

ANKE

watches the children in resigned dismay.

ANKE

Now they've tasted blood. Look before you, Kira. And remember this scene as you leap three thousand years in the span of a single breath. Remember that this is your legacy.

ANKE

squeezes Kira's hand and dies.

KIRA

and hugs her mother.

SAWYER

appears with Lars still on his back as he runs to the proving grounds.

THE HUT FIRES

behind Sawyer have now spread to

THE TREES AND THE HEATHER

that ring the basin slopes.

SAWYER

Kira! Run! Lead them through the  
fire!

KIRA

kisses her mother's hand and stands.

THE CHILDREN

slow their attack on Rachel as they see

SAWYER

racing into their midst.

KIRA

Children! Follow me through the  
light!

THE MORNING SUN

cracks the Eastern rim of the village basin as

DALONEY'S JET

breaks the same horizon at the same instant at the  
same place with a deafening whoosh!

THE CHILDREN

cock their heads to the sky and are blinded by

THE SUN

and frightened by sound of

DALONEY'S CLOSING JET

bearing down on them.

KIRA

scoops the

SMALLEST CHILDREN

into her arms and runs across the proving grounds and into the

RAGING FIRE

enveloping the basin slope.

THE OTHER CHILDREN

drop their weapons and follow Kira running through the fire.

SAWYER

leaps through the flames with Lars heavy on his shoulder.

CUT TO:

INT. COCKPIT - DAY

DALONEY

sneers as he steers the jet into a dive on the village. The

HUT FIRES

pinpoint the location of his bomb drop.

DALONEY

Ischia really is burning!

(laughing)

Three! Two! One!

HIS FINGER

squeezes the missile trigger

HIS FACE

reddens with delight.

CUT TO:

EXT. MEZZAVIA ON PITHEKOSSAI - DAY

A FIREBALL

erupts and erases everything.

THE VILLAGE

is annihilated as a

FIERY WALL

of intense heat plows through every living thing in the basin.

CUT TO:

INT. COCKPIT - DAY

DALONEY

pulls the jet straight up and pulls on his headset.

HIS FINGERS

punch red and yellow switches.

DALONEY

C-Com. This is Tacit Phantom.  
You copy me on the re-connect?  
Over?

The radio headset cackles as it re-connects.

GARNETT (V.O.)

We read you, Tacit Phantom. Over.

DALONEY

Only thing down there now is ash.  
Over.

GARNETT (V.O.)

Come on home. Over.

DALONEY

For the record: Sawyer's jet went  
down on a training mission and  
blew him into the sky and his  
aircraft fireballed the land. You  
copy that? Over.

GARNETT (V.O.)

Copy that. We'll release it right  
now. Over.

DALONEY

And let General Warner know it's  
finished. Over.

GARNETT (V.O.)

Roger that. Will do. Over.

DALONEY

Good. Daloney Over and Out.

DALONEY

and his jet disappear along the horizon, leaving a  
cloudy and blue

EXHAUST STREAK

trailing behind like a ribbon.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MOUNTAIN RIM - DAY

SAWYER

and

ALL THE CHILDREN

stand on the rim of the valley basin and look down on the burning embers of what used to be their village.

KIRA

Mezzavia on Pithekoussai has vanished.

LARS

The thought is frightening.

SAWYER

I'll help you. Being frightened is a mark of being alive.

KIRA AND LARS

hold hands.

SAWYER

flashes them a gap-toothed grin and turns his back on the burning basin below.

SAWYER'S OPEN ARMS

arc across the

MOUNTAIN RANGE

of the horizon sprawling around them in all directions.

SAWYER (CONT'D)

Welcome to the new world.



SAWYER

trudges down the mountainside to a small town at the foot of the fertile valley.

LARS AND KIRA

turn and follow him down the mountain.

ALL THE CHILDREN

turn, clasp hands in pairs and march together into a new today.

FADE OUT

The End