

"CUT OFF"

Written by Connor Loando

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Fade In:

EXT. Empty Space

A lone ship in outer space, connected to an orbital facility. No lights are visible, looming the ship in darkness.

INT. Facilities Main Hallway/Airlock

Shrouded in darkness, stamping feet on the metal walkway is the only sound we hear. BAM BAM BAM. Blaster shots light up the dark hallway, revealing a team of three armored soldiers, SOREN, ADRIAN, and COLT, injured and weary, firing back. Colt carries a limp woman, VALE, with him.

SOREN

Come on, lets go!

Soren provides covering fire, as Adrian runs past, into the airlock.

SOREN

Get the ship ready, Adrian!

Colt is hit in the shoulder, he drops Vale. Soren looks over, a blast hits him, he drops, groaning in pain. Colt gets up, looks over at Vale then Soren. Blaster bolts get eerily closer, he reaches out. Soren pushes himself up, immediately being struck down by another blast. His helmet is thrown off as he hits the ground. Colt looks over in horror, Soren's face filled with pain.

INT. Airlock/Ship

The ship disengages with a loud THUD. Adrian turns around.

ADRIAN

Glad we all go...

He pauses mid sentence. SILENCE. Vale is laid on the ground, only Colt stands there, staring at her limp body.

ADRIAN

Where's Soren?

Colt doesn't respond, staying locked on the woman's body.

ADRIAN

Have you gone deaf?! WHERE'S SOREN?!

He pushes Colt, slamming him into the bulkhead. He looks up at Adrian.

COLT

I. .tried to help. He. .he's gone.

Adrian points his blaster at Colt. He closes the distance with ease.

ADRIAN

You should've tried harder!

We don;t leave anyone behind. Much less Soren.

He points his blaster in Colt's face.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)

I should kill you right now.
but I won't.

Colt's eyes are locked forward. He stares at the unconscious Vale. Colt begins to ramble.

COLT

You. .weren't out there.
You didn't see what I saw.

Adrian looks over at Vale. He lowers his blaster.

ADRIAN

That's for Vale's sake. .not yours.

He storms off.

INT. Station Interior

Soren's body lies on the ground, motionless. A figure steps over the body, removing their helmet, revealing a man's face. Suddenly, it begins to morph into an alien face.

He looks down at Soren, glimpsing a NECKLACE on his body. He picks it up, twirling it, revealing a symbol. Two curved diagonal lines. He crushes it in his hand, staring forward.

ALIEN

This galaxy will burn. . .they will all know fear.

He drops the necklace back on the body. We focus on one half of it.

FADE INTO:

EXT. DOLLOS SECURITY HUB- PRISON BLOCK

The necklace is around the neck of LEO, a young man in his late teens. Leo is in a cell, gripping the bars.

LEO

The Major, a PLUMP MAN with BROAD SHOULDERS, sits at a control center, eyes locked on the screen, playing a sports game. He gets up and walks towards Leo. HEAVY FOOTSTEPS are heard.

MAJOR

Then how do you explain the security footage, Leo.
That's clearly you with Garza.

LEO

Major, I was nowhere near that market,
I already told you.

MAJOR (sighing)

Look kid, I'd hate to see you waste potential
being a lowlife thief. You know, if you applied
yourself, maybe you could get into the academy,
enlist, you know do something more than commit
yourself to a life of piracy, with the likes of Garza.

LEO

Then what...I sit on some backwater planet like you?
Sorry Major, but no way. Garza is my best chance at getting out
of here, money too but. . .

MAJOR

You really want to be in and out of cell after
cell? If you're lucky, you might end up on a
labor planet. Go ahead and waste your life then.

The major shakes his head as he walks away.

LEO

Ain't the first time I heard that, Major. I'll be
fine thank you, I don't need no one pitying me.
All I need is me.

A YOUNG WOMANS VOICE is heard from the other room.

CASS

Major, release on that cell.

The major stops at the end of the hallway. He turns around.

MAJOR (laughing)

Heh, you're funny Cass. No one cares about this one. Who'd release him?

GARZA

I did.

MAJOR (keying in the cell)

Garza?!

Garza hands the major some CREDIT CHIPS.

GARZA

That should cover the bail.

GARZA (CONT'D)

(putting chips in the majors pocket) (smiling)

And that should keep you quiet.

Leo exits the cell and stares at the major.

LEO (smirking)

Told you I'd be fine.

Leo and Garza exit the facility and encounter ASH, a young PALE humanoid alien, leaning against a wall. Her eyes resemble a STARFIELD.

ASH

Did you enjoy your stay?

LEO

Pretty comfortable, actually.

GARZA

Let's not do that again, please.

LEO

Come on Garza. Isn't that fun for criminals?

They enter into a crowded MARKET, lined with vendors haggling prices. Large amounts of CHATTER are heard. As they walk through the vendors and patrons alike PRAISE Garza.

Leo

We're not criminals Leo. Look around you.
It's for the people.

Leo looks at Garza, reality suddenly begins to shift. Focusing on the swaying locket. Leo now runs through an alleyway, carrying a CREDIT CONTAINER, panicked as two men chase after him. The gravel CRUNCHES underneath his QUICK feet.

LEO (to himself)

For the people...yeah.
Where are you guys when I need you?

MAN 1

Just return what you took, and there'll be no problem, kid.

LEO (smirking)

Not a chance.

MAN 2

Wrong answer.

Leo rounds the corner as blaster bolts skim past him. He rounds the corner and is face to face with three more armed goons.

LEO (putting his hands up)

Whoa. . .guys can't we just talk it out?

The goons inch closer to Leo. He backs up as the other two arrive. He is trapped, and a punch is delivered to Leo's gut. THUD. He drops to the ground, spilling credit chips from the container on the ground. Kicks and punches are delivered to Leo on the ground. He CRIES out in pain.

A hooded figure drops QUIETLY behind the men, wielding a blade. The figure slashes out at two men in a fury. Leo takes the distraction to scoop up the credits and limps down the alleyway, clutching the box to his chest. He runs into two security guards at the end of the next alley. They turn to face him, raising their weapons.

LEO

You've got to be kidding. . .

VOICE

Get down.

Leo ducks down as blaster bolts strike the two guards. Leo looks up to see GARZA, his blaster smoking, a hand offered out to Leo.

GARZA

You want to explain yourself?
None of that was a part of the plan.

LEO (confused)

For what? That was all in the plan.
(pointing at himself and smiling)
My plan.

Ash arrives behind Garza, drawing back her hood. Blood drips from her blade as she cleans it off on her robe, sheathing it.

ASH

I think he means the whole running off on your own part.
We are a team after all.

LEO

It ain't my fault you guys got stuck back there.
Gotta be faster, like me.

Garza folds his arms and stares at Leo, Ash takes his side. Garza holds out his hand for the container, Leo reluctantly handing it over to him with a SIGH.

LEO

Fine, but I get a cut right?
It was my find after all.

Garza stares back at him.

GARZA

We'll see.

People begin to gather, as the trio walk out the alley. A TALL, THIN ALIEN walks towards the group.

ALIEN

Hey, Garza!

Garza looks over, bringing the alien into a hug.

GARZA

My friend. How are you?

Garza hands him the container of credits. The alien returns to the group, CHEERING amongst the crowd. Garza smiles. Leo looks on in shock.

LEO

But. .

GARZA

Let's get back to the cantina.

INT. Garza's CANTINA

Garza, Leo and Ash walk through the crowded cantina, as BUSTLING VOICES AND DRUNKEN LAUGHTER fill the air, towards the back rooms. Garza keys in a code in a nearby wall, a door opens.

INT. HANGAR BAY- CONTINUOS

They enter into a large hangar bay, bustling with members of Garza's crew. The group enter into a side room, away from the ears of the rest, shutting the door behind them. BEEPING monitors line the walls, showcasing areas all around Dollos.

Ash props herself on a table as Leo scans around the room, spotting a small picture. He picks it up, spotting a small blond woman.

LEO

Hey, Garza? Whos this?

Garza looks over, locking eyes with the picture, his eyes sorose and solemn. Shifting back to Leo, he glares, quickly grabbing the photo from Leo.

GARZA

She's my sister.

ASH

You have a sister?

GARZA

HAD a sister. She's long gone now.

ASH

(gasps) I'm sorry to hear that.

LEO

What was her name?

GARZA

Vale.

BEEP BEEP BEEP. An alarm goes off, Garza glances down at his wrist, and storms off to a sideroom. Leo glances through the door, spotting the credit container.

LEO

You ever wonder what he talks about in there?

Leo glares over at Ash, her eyes filled with a starlike void. He smirks and nods. She shakes her head.

ASH

I know what you're thinking.
Don't do it.

He creeps towards the room, revealing Garza at a projector table, a figure stands on it.

GARZA

I'll keep an eye on it. Just like I said I would.

The figures' response is garbled. Garza moves around the room and pulls up a hologram of the ship and begins moving it around.

GARZA

She's doing fine, a little rough on the edge, but she's holding up for now. A few more runs and I think it might be time.

Leo keeps his eyes locked on the container as he nears it, sneaking around Garza with LIGHT, QUICK FOOTSTEPS. As he nears it, barely grasping it, a hand swipes it from the darkness.

Leo GASPS, falling backwards with a loud THUD. He looks up to see Garza holding the container. Leo looks over at the hologram projector, Garza stands there as well.

LEO

How. . .

Garza presses a button on his wrist, the HOLOGRAM of Garza multiplies and spreads around the room. The BOOMING voice of Garza plays throughout the room.

GARZA

You're not in tune with your surroundings.

Leo looks around in disbelief. One of the holograms strikes out at Leo, but the hit connects with a metallic THUD.

LEO

Garza! What the

GARZA

You want it? Fight back. Fight for it.

Leo attempts to fight each hologram, choosing the wrong one each time. THUD. THUD. Battered, Leo collapses on the ground.

The holograms disappear, revealing metallic robots that power down with a WHIR. Garza steps from behind them.

ASH

I told you not to do it.

Leo looks back to see her standing in the doorway. The hologram in the center has been replaced with a large symbol.

INT. HANGAR - CONTINUOUS

GARZA

Go home Leo. You'll get the money later.

LEO

Garza. . . I didn't. . I need.

GARZA

YOU NEED? YOU? It's always about you, you're a damn selfish kid Leo. This isn't about street level thuggin, it's not about the money Leo! It never was.

LEO

Then what is it about?

GARZA (shouting)

You don't see what we're doing here do you?
Look around you Leo!

Garza's shout is heard across the room. The crew pauses to look over at the commotion. SILENCE.

GARZA (To crew)

Back to work everybody.

The crew resume their operations, loading crates and weaponry.

GARZA (Quieter yet stern)

We're not doing this for the money Leo.

We're doing it for the people.

LEO

But. .

GARZA

Stow it. We'll talk later.

Garza walks out the door, holstering his blaster as he walks out. Leo and Ash walk together, following him through the cantina. He's lost in the crowd, Leo swipes credits from the patrons seated as he passes. They exit the cantina, and head out on the street. He pauses, stuffing the credits into his pocket. Ash stares as he does.

ASH

Really? After all that?

LEO

I need it more than they do.

(he looks around)

I gotta go. See you tomorrow?

ASH

Hey!!

He runs off into the busy streets, leaving Ash behind.

ASH (Cont'd) (shaking her head)

(smiling) See you tomorrow.

INT. LEO and CORA's Apartment

Leo opens the door and walks into the apartment. Leo's sister CORA, a young blond woman stands in the kitchen, staring down at medical books that clutter the table, a full plate sits nearby. A monitor is on, distantly playing the news.

CORA

You're late. . .again.

(pointing towards the table)

Food's over there.

LEO

Hey. .this time it wasn't my fault. I got. .

CORA

This is the third time you've done this, Leo! Where have you ever been?

Leo drops the coins on the table.

LEO

I was working. That's more than enough to cover this week's rent.

CORA

(whirling around) (serious)

Where'd you get those? Both you and I know you aren't the 'working' type.

LEO

I told you, I found some work.

CORA (stern)

Would it happen to be with Garza?

She shuffles some papers, revealing the security images of Leo, Ash and Garza in the alleyway.

LEO (puzzled)

I. . .Cora, how did you?

CORA

I had the major keep me up to date with all the security information after I paid your bail last time. Notice how they 'haven't' caught you since. I promised him that I could get you to change. In fact, I had to practically force him to not arrest you!

LEO (quiet tone)

How do you know Garza?

CORA

Garza. The low-life pirate you've been running around with. He gave me a surprise visit a few weeks back, talking about his star prodigy,

you know how he loves to gloat.

LEO

Garza isn't a low-life, he's a. .

CORA

He's a pirate, Leo! You're just too stubborn to get it through to you. You're gonna find yourself on a labor planet if you keep running this game. .or even worse, get yourself killed.

Cora points to the monitor that is playing a news broadcast.

CORA (CONT'd)

Especially with all that going on.

NEWS HOST

Among the rising tensions and pressures from rebellion forces in the Dollos sector, we are seeing today the arrival of one Senator AILYN DALLO, to help mediate these tensions.

CORA (CONT'D)

It's not just the authorities you have to worry about Leo! The military is here now, and if they caught you during all this....I can't even imagine the things they'd do to you.

LEO

(stopping in the doorway) (snarkly)

I know what I'm doing Cora! I'm just trying to help us.

CORA

What're you trying to prove by doing all this? To who?

LEO

I'm not trying to prove anything. I'm trying my best.

CORA

Your best is practically killing yourself!

LEO

Cora. . .I. .Why do you think they abandoned us here?

CORA

(angrily) (tears begin welling in her eyes)
Don't do that. We promised to move past that, to just live our lives! And you're certainly not helping us by throwing yourself into a prison!

LEO (quietly)

Cora, I don't even know what our own parents look like! All I've had is me, you were always too busy to care. You know there are some days... that I wished we never were family.

CORA (shocked)

How dare you! I got us this place Leo! Look at how grateful you are! We're supposed to take care of each other and I'm starting to see how much you really care.

Leo whirls around to face Cora, anger in his eyes.

CORA

You know what...just go.
(picking up the container, she throws it at Leo)
Take your money and GO!

Leo picks up the container and walks towards the door.

LEO (whisper)

Goodbye Cora.

The door closes behind Leo, leaving Cora in silence.

Cora walks back into her room, the door shutting behind her, darkening the room. She walks over to her nightstand, pressing a button to open a drawer. Inside is a HOLOGRAM PROJECTOR. She removes it and sets it on the bed, sitting down beside it.

She activates the projector, taking a deep breath. The projector activates, revealing four figures, their parents and younger Leo and Cora. Their mother wears the one half of the necklace, the half that Cora wears now. She swipes through the photos, and their father disappears. A single name appears on the bottom... SOREN. She clutches the locket and a single tear rolls down her cheek.

CORA

I'm sorry Mom.

A BUZZ is heard faintly from the other room. The door chimes. Cora gets up to see who it is. She opens the door, no one is there. As she turns around, Garza is seated in a chair. She SCREAMS.

GARZA

Easy. I'm just here to talk.

EXT. ALLEYWAY

LEO walks along, flipping the coins in his hands. He shuffles through his pocket and pulls out the LOCKET.

FLASHBACK BEGINS

LEO is sitting down at a table, the apartment door opens with a HISS. He looks as CORA enters the room, clasping a small box to her chest. She opens the box and removes one half of the locket, placing it down besides LEO. Picking it up, he stares at it.

LEO

What's this?

CORA

That's for you to find out.

He stares at it momentarily. Turning it around in his hands, the symbol appears etched into it. His fingers graze over it.

CORA

One for you and one for me. Just me and you.

LEO

That's all we've had out here anyways. This wretched planet.
Sure seems like a death sentence to me..

Leo clenches the locket in his hand, shoving it into his pocket.
He turns around to look out the window.

CORA (Sitting down)

Leo..why do you always make it seem so bad here?
Come on there's so much opportunity here. I'm going
to the Medical Academy soon, and it isn't that hard
to find jobs here. The spaceports are always looking
for riggers..

Leo whirls around to face Cora, irritated.

LEO

That's just it Cora, a damn rigger. I don't want
to be here, on this planet at all. Each and every
day is a reminder that our own parents didn't want us..
now why I throw my already meaningless life being
a damn rigger.

CORA

Leo..I...

LEO (sharply) (CONT'D)

What Cora? I don't want to throw my
life away, like they thought they could. I want
to travel. (pointing upwards) I want to be up there,
actually living life.

CORA

And sitting here doing nothing is going
to get you there how?

LEO

Well nothing but this sure is...

LEO gets up and leaves the apartment.

FLASHBACK ENDS

That was before he started working for Garza. Falling to his
knees, he begins muttering to himself.

LEO

Damn it Cora, I was just trying to help...why couldn't you see
that? I'm trying...

BAM. A blaster goes off. LEO ducks back around the corner,
creeping up to look out. The alley way is empty. Leo's breathing
is rapid. He swallows and gets up, walking into the alleyway.
Walking along, he finds the body of a man, a blaster bolt
straight through the chest. His heartbeat grows louder in his
ears. Suddenly, the body begins to morph, changing from a human
form into an alien.

LEO (shocked)

What the...

In the distance, Senator Dallo's voice can be heard over the
speaker system. Leo runs out of the alleyway, until he is thrown
backwards toward the wall and is knocked unconscious.

EXT. CITY SQUARE

Crowds bustle around the square, now with a stage set up and
barricades all around. Captain ALDEN STRIKER approaches, with
JADE WYNN and EVERETT KENE, trailing behind him.

STRIKER

I want you two watching the crowds, nobody even gets close to the stage, including the media. The Senator is a high priority target here.

WYNN

Aye sir. Me and Kene got it.

KANE

Sir, if you don't mind, six soldiers doesn't seem like nearly enough...

STRIKER

We're the best of the best, Kane. Besides, this is a diplomatic mission. Any larger military presence in the sector and things could change real quick. We're trying to prevent a war, not start one.

Focusing on a glint in one of the higher windows, Striker waves.

STRIKER

How's the view up there, Tille?

ZENA TILLE, the marksman, sits in one of the windows. CADAN D'SECA stands nearby, his rifle at the ready. TILLE focuses her scope on Striker.

TILLE

Pretty good from up here, actually. It's a beautiful place. Might consider a vacation here soon, you know after all this blows over...

Approaching the stage, Striker sees Senator AILYN DALLO, a YOUNG PETITE BLOND HAIRE woman, preparing her speech, scrolling through her datapad. She looks up as Striker approaches.

DALLO

Captain! I apologize again for ending your vacation so early, I figured you'd be the best man for quelling a potential uprising. And when this mission popped up... you and your team were the first on the list.

Striker removes his helmet, revealing his face. A clean shaven man with blue eyes and brown hair, he smiles at the senator.

STRIKER

(laughing) That's perfectly fine, Senator. Especially after that incident on Maldora, me and my team are ever in

your debt. We'd be dead if you didn't authorize that exfil.

AILYN smirks and shakes her head.

STRIKER

So how's the prep going? (He points to her datapad). I'm sure they'd love to hear your voice, just as much as I do.

DALLO

(chuckling) Ever the charmer Alden...this isn't anything I haven't handled it before, but the tension is just...much higher. If Dollos goes rogue, a lot more on the outer rim could follow suit and join .

STRIKER

You got this Ailyn, like you said nothing you haven't handled before.

VOICE

Senator, you're needed!

DALLO

If you'll excuse me, I have a war to prevent.

**Striker smirks and walks away, putting his helmet back on.
Dallo steps up to the platform to begin her speech.**

DALLO

People of Dollos, the triumvirate has heard your pleas and cries, but it does not accept your terms of this secessionary act.

Striker eyes the crowd as Dallo continues. Numerous voices can be heard shouting.

DALLO

Earth is a planet of democracy, of unification for all species, this rebellion is intolerable! Never apart!

Screams of joy fill the crowd, Striker continues to monitor. He locks eyes with someone standing very far back.

STRIKER

(in his comm) Tille? (continuing to stare) I need an ID oversight. Two klicks back far left corner, white shirt.

Tille zooms her scope in on the suspect. He begins to charge forward, brandishing a weapon.

TILLE

I don't have a shot, sir. Weapon confirmed,
but I can't risk civvie lives here.

STRIKER

I'm on it, 3, 4, standby front.

Two "affirmatives" play over his comm. Locking eyes with the man, he pushes his way to the front of the crowd, hopping the barrier and pointing the weapon toward Dallo. Striker charges up the platform towards Dallo, tackling her as the man fires. Screams erupt from the crowd, people rushing away. The bolt hits Striker in the back, his armor taking the hit. They roll down the other side. Kene and Wynn rush forward, Kene rushing towards the man, tackling him to the ground. Wynn rushes over to Dallo and Striker. The crowd looks on in panic.

TILLE

You guys alright down there?

Striker gets up and responds, looking towards her.

STRIKER

Yeah, we're all good down here... situation contained.
Thanks for the assist.

Local enforcement pushes forward to take the suspect. Wynn gets a hold of Dallo and helps her up, brandishing her medical supplies.

WYNN

Senator, are you alright? Any pain?

DALLO

No no I'm alright, just a little shaken, that's all.

STRIKER

Senator, I think it's in our best interest to postpone the
diplomacy until a later time.

DALLO

No no, we need to do this now.

Dallo begins to walk back up the stage, Striker follows her,
grabbing her arm.

STRIKER

Senator...I really must insist.

D'seca's voice plays over Striker's comm.

D' SECA

Boss, we've got incoming! Multiple air units showing up on radar!

Before Striker can respond, an explosion ruptures from the buildings around the square, covering it in debris. The blast knocks everyone to the ground. Ships fly overhead, their bombing run complete. Striker flies off the platform, hitting the ground hard with a THUD.

Screams erupt all around. Striker's ears are ringing...his vision blurry. Spotting Dallo among the destruction, he crawls toward her. He struggles to speak.

STRIKER

(in pain) Ailyn...a..are

Dallo groans in pain, Striker's vision now fading again. He collapses inches away from Dallo, his vision turning black. The screams fade away.

FADE OUT

INT. CORA's Apartment

Cora coughs as she wakes up. Her apartment is bathed in sunlight, the far wall completely torn off. She groans in pain, blood pouring from a wound on her head. She attempts to get up, but immediately falls back down. Shrapnel is embedded in her leg.

CORA

Damn it.

She looks around. Gripping the broken wall, she forces herself up. Making her out of the apartment, only to face three aliens looming over her.

EXT. City Square Outskirts

Leo's ears ring as he regains consciousness. His vision unblurs. The buildings that once surrounded him are gone, sunlight shines through. The rubble on top of him, he coughs, the dust around him still settling. Pushing the rubble off, he gets up and looks around. The city square, now in shambles.

LEO

No...there's no way...

He looks around, bodies strewn about, making his way through the square. The sun darkens. He looks up and sees ships coming down from orbit. They begin landing, their bay doors opening, and out come the aliens, their armor seemingly morphing around themselves, armed with blasters. Leo ducks behind the rubble, his heart racing.

LEO

No...no..no. This can't be happening!

Rushing his way over the rubble, he sees smoke coming from Garza's cantina. He runs towards it.

INT. GARZA'S CANTINA

Leo enters the cantina, bodies strewn about the room. With QUICK, QUIET FOOTSTEPS he carefully makes his way towards the backdoor. As he nears, he hears blaster fire. Keying open the door, he sees Garza and a group of men behind cover. PEW PEW PEW. On the opposite end, Adrotoni soldiers fire at Garza and his men.

LEO

Garza!

Amidst the fire, Garza glances over, waving Leo over. Ducking behind cover, Leo crosses the room.

GARZA

Leo?!

LEO

I saw the flames. I came over as soon as possible.

Leo peeks his head over the crates. PEW PEW PEW. Blaster fire continues reigning down from both sides of the room.

LEO (Cont'd)

Who are these guys?

GARZA

You don't even want to know.

LEO

So you know them?

GARZA

In a way, yes. I'll explain it all later.

Garza fires back at the group, a blast hits him in the shoulder. Garza ducks back, groaning in pain.

GARZA

This is my fight, not yours. Here, take this.

Garza pulls out a small box, forcing it into Leo's hand.

GARZA (Cont'd)

Find your sister and get as far away as possible.

LEO

But I can't just leave you. What about Ash? Where's she?

GARZA

Don't worry about her. GO!

Pushing Leo, covering him as they run across towards the door. Leo ducks through the doorway, trunigin around to face Garza, as the Adrotoni get closer. Garza takes one last look at Leo, before the door closes.

Leo takes a breath, feeling a cold metal on his chest, he looks down, the locket swaying around his neck. Gripping the locket, the realization sets in. He runs back towards the apartment building, only to see it in shambles. Running into the building, Leo rushes up the stairs, towards Cora's apartment.

Unbeknownst to him, something comes from the shadows, an Adrotoni soldier, covered in black armor, its faceplate gleaming in the light. Seemingly turning invisible, it rushes up the stairway after him with LIGHT FOOTSTEPS.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING

LEO rushes up the final flight of the stairs, the roof crumbling in certain sections, exposing sunlight to the hallway, debris littering the floor. The end of the hallway is covered in rubble.

He reaches their apartment door, frantically typing in the code for the door; it beeps at him. He punches the wall.

LEO

I see you changed the code
already, Cora. Great.

He looks around for another way in, the next unit's door is partially open. Squeezing his way through, he spots a partial section of the wall collapsed. Getting a foothold, the wall crumbles more, sending him to the ground.

Directly face to face with the apartment's occupant, unmoving, covered in rubble. Shocked, he gets up again, forcing his way through. The empty apartment is covered in rubble. Frantically LEO begins to move the rubble aside, intent to find CORA.

LEO (moving rubble aside)
CORA! CORA! Are you here?!

He stops, his eyes lock onto a shiny object. The other half of the locket. He picks up the locket, and looks down at his own, matching the pieces together.

Leo stares at the locket. He shoves it in his pocket. He walks towards the bathroom. Looking into the mirror in front of him, visibly distraught. His breathing now shaking, he grips the sink, pulling out something else. The numerous coins...

Leo throws the coins, shouting in anguish. Removing the locket, he opens it once more, staring at it. The picture blurred from the tears streaming down. He stares into his mirrored reflection and strikes the glass, breaking it. He falls to his knees.

LEO (sniffling)
Cora I'm so sorry.

A woman's scream bellows from down the hall outside the apartment. Leo looks up, wiping the tears and shoving the locket into his pocket. He rushes towards the door peering outside.

LEO
Cora?

A young woman, resembling CORA, stands outside amongst the rubble. He rushes out the door towards the woman.

LEO (shouting)
CORA!

The woman is swept off her feet, a blade appears through her chest. The Adrotoni stealth soldier grips the other end.

LEO
NO!

The body drops and the soldier advances on Leo. He frantically searches around for a weapon. He grabs a nearby pipe, broken loose from the ceiling. He rushes forward, striking the soldier in the face.

The soldier takes a step back, the visor now cracked, an alien eye stares back at him, furious. The soldier rushes forward knocking LEO off his feet, the pipe CLATTERING beside him. The locket is knocked away from him. HEAVY FOOTSTEPS approach

The soldier unholsters his weapon and points it at Leo. He closes his eyes, preparing for the end. The blaster discharges, but LEO opens his eyes. The soldier appears frozen. It drops a blaster sized hole on the back of his helmet.

Leo looks up, two mechanical beings standing at the far end of the hallway. One has its rifle raised, it's barrel smoking; the shot he heard before. Ignoring them, Leo lunges up, rushing towards the woman's body.

LEO
Cora!

He flips over the woman's body, revealing it to not be Cora. Leo looks around for the locket.

STRIKER
Kid, are you alright?

He gets up and walks off in a trancelike state. Searching around for the locket. The voices grow distant.

LEO
Where is it?
I've got to find it.
I've got to find her.

STRIKER
What? Who do you need to find?

KOVA (irritated)
Hey Kid! Are you deaf?

Leo finally sees it. The locket tethering off the edge of some debris. His fingers graze it.

STRIKER
Kid, you alright?

KOVA
We gotta move, sir. Leave him. He's delusional
and will only slow us down.

STRIKER
I'm not leaving a civilian behind, Kova.
You know that. (reaching up to his helmet)
Tille, we've got a civilian here with us.

Strikers comm CRACKLES to life. Kene's voice plays through.

KENE
Boss, we have an issue.

STRIKER
Go ahead.

KENE
They found the ship. It's gone, boss.

STRIKER
Is everyone alright? How's the Senator?

DALLO
I'm fine, Alden. What do you suggest we do now?

STRIKER
(sigh) We're stranded here for now.
Make your back to us, we'll try to hail command
from here. Be careful, we don't know what's out there.

Kova looks over at Striker.

KOVA
Where are we going to find a comm signal
large enough to send a message out to command?

STRIKER

I don't know.

Leo stares down at the locket. The box Garza gave him bears the same symbol. What could it all mean? Leo shakes his head.

LEO

I know where you can find an array. But I'm gonna need your help first.

STRIKER (wary)

Sure. What is it?

LEO

My sister. She's out there. I know it.
I need to find her.

Striker speaks into his comm.

STRIKER

Kene, be on the lookout for any survivors.
We'll need all the help we can get at this point.

STRIKER (CONT'D)

Done. We'll help you find her, but get us to
that communications array first.

LEO

Deal.

The group makes their way out of the crumbling building. Tille meets them at the bottom. Striker walks alongside Leo.

STRIKER

Never got your name?

LEO

I'm Leo.

Striker extends his hand. Leo shakes it.

STRIKER

You can call me Striker.

LEO

Welcome to Dollos, Striker.

EXT. City Square Center

The group heads through the square, Leo trails behind them, taking in the carnage. He fumbles with the locket pieces as he walks. Striker stops to catch up with him.

STRIKER

First war torn battlefield?

LEO

Can't say I've been in many wars.
How many have you been in?

STRIKER

Too many. It gets easier over time.
The shock, the fear, what you're feeling now.

LEO

I don't plan on being in many wars.

STRIKER

I said that once too.

A loud WHIRRING breaks their conversation. Kova and Tille loop back around to regroup.

TILLE

Captain, look.

Looking up, a dropship begins landing at the end of the square. It begins dropping alien forces on the far edge, they begin to take their positions, clearing the square.

STRIKER (Cont'd)

Tille, overwatch. Kova, let's move. Leo, don't get shot.

Tille sets her rifle up on a plateau of rubble, Striker and Kova moving towards the enemy. Kova straggles behind. Leo finds cover behind some rubble.

KOVA

(irritated) Sir, are we really...they
outnumber us five to one.

STRIKER

Cowering out Kova? That's unlike you.

KOVA
N..no sir.

STRIKER (CONT'D)
We're engaging. Tille, watch our backs.

Moving alongside the central square, Kova and Striker take up positions, the aliens moving along. Striker and Kova begin firing at the aliens, falling one by one. More pour out of the dropship, one towering over the others, releasing a bellowing roar. It charges toward STRIKER, who puts it in a headlock, grabbing his knife to stab the alien, it strikes back, throwing Striker on his back.

Striker brings his blaster up and fires, two bolts hit the alien. Visibly burning through the armor, the alien continues marching towards Striker. Striker fired again, putting two more bolts into the alien, bringing it to a knee.

STRIKER
Not if I have anything to say about that.

Pulling his knife, he drives it into the back of the alien's neck. It finally drops. Hearing the commotion, the other alien's attention is drawn to Kova and Striker. Rushing towards them , Striker and Kova fire back, dodging the incoming bolts.

Tille's added fire from her rifle knocks down a few more of them. Soon, their numbers dwindle, with Striker putting a blast into the last one.

STRIKER
Alright, area secured. Let's draw them further away, this doesn't look like an isolated incident.

Looking back towards TILLE as she walks toward them, the air behind her shimmers. His motion trackers show nothing.

STRIKER (CONT'D)
Tille! You've got contacts! Watch it!

The air is filled by two figures, clad in black, their black visors reflecting the light. Whirling around, Tille throws her rifle back at the two figures, knocking one back. Drawing her pistol in one hand, knife in the other, she rushes both the figures.

Slashing at one, she puts a few blasts into its chest, it drops dead. The second figure, getting up, throws her blade right into its faceplate, shattering it; killing the figure. Kova and Striker make their way to her.

TILLE (picking up her rifle)

Thanks for the heads up.
Hey, Cap? Take a look at this.

Removing her blade from the figure's faceplate, it reveals a human face. It begins morphing, revealing another type of alien. Its red skin shines through. Leo walks up to the group.

LEO

What are they?

STRIKER

Shifters...

TILLE

I've never seen either species in my logbook.
They're both new. But look at this..

She moves over to the other, removing its helmet, a human face stares back, eyes glazed over.

TILLE (CONT'D)

...this one's human.

STRIKER

You're telling me, two unknown species are working with humans...jointly?

TILLE

Sure seems that way sir.

EXT. CITY STREETS

Adrotoni soldiers surround Cora and the group of prisoners. Cora looks at the group, weary humans and aliens alike. A small boy and girl straggle behind. They remind her of herself and. .
.Leo.

An Adrotoni soldier pushes the girl, motioning her to walk faster. She falls to the ground. The boy goes to her aid, pushing against the soldier. This results in a loud SMACK as the soldier slammed his gauntlet on the boys head, knocking him to the ground. The girl screams out as the boy hits the ground.

Cora rushes over to the boy, covering him as the Adrotoni soldier goes to strike again.

CORA

We don't any trouble.

The soldier mumbles something but moves past them. Cora picks up the young boy, a large gash on his head. The girl picks herself up, gripping on to the boys hand. Cora looks over at her.

CORA

Hello. I'm Cora. Whats your name?

The girl pauses for a moment, contemplating, then speaking in an alien language.

GIRL

Neera

CORA

That's a very pretty name.

Cora points at the young boy, as she takes a shred of her shirt, pressing it into the gash on his head, to stop the bleeding. Neera looks on in curiosity.

CORA (pointing at the boy)

Do you know him?

Neera nods.

NEERA

Kyia

CORA

Neera and Kyia. What a lovely pair.

I'm going to help Kyia

She points to herself and then to the gash on Kyia's head. Neera smiles. Looking at the group further ahead, and the rear soldiers slowly closing in, she props Kyia onto her shoulder and reaches out for Kyia's hand.

CORA

Come on. We have to catch up.

EXT. CITY OUTSKIRTS

Kene, Dallo, D'seca and Wynn look at the burning wreckage of their ship. The bodies of the two pilots lay outside, scorched by the flames. Wynn kneels by them, D'Seca by her side.

WYNN

They were executed. Look at the scarring on their heads.
They were pulled out of the ship.

D' SECA

Interrogation tactics?

WYNN

They're smart. Whoever they are.

Kene walks over, Dallo looking away from the bodies.

KENE (sighing)

They're tracking us now.

And our only escape plan gone.

We can't stay here, lets get moving.

The group ventures away from the wreckage, back towards the city center.

EXT. CITY CENTER

Across the courtyard, a group of alien soldiers emerge from between two buildings. This group however, has red markings on their armor, marking their status as an elite squad. The group separates and fans out among the courtyard. Two soldiers find the bodies of the others.

SOLDIER

Commander! We found something over here!

Commander KILLIAN leads the other half of the group, making their way over to the broken courtyard, their fellow soldiers' bodies strewn about it. Killian looks down at the bodies, focusing on the largest, kneeling down by it.

KILLIAN

A shame. . .

A soldier makes her way through the group. ZALI, wearing a fully darkened suit, red highlights marking her toned physique.

ZALI

I never liked him anyways.

The soldiers further spread through the courtyard, two, fully adorned in black, remain behind Zali, her honor guard. Killian shifts his attention toward her.

ZALI

It looks like your easy take, isn't so easy after all.

KILLIAN

There shouldn't have been this much resistance from the locals.
(he points to the body)

The blaster markings are too focused. They were trained.

Killian, Zali, and her honor guard make it over to the other bodies, their faceplates smashed open.

KILLIAN

I have no clue why you were sent here. The warzone is no place
for a girl like you.

Zali disengages her faceplate, revealing a red skinned alien, with dark hair.

ZALI

You know father only sent me to keep a handle on your leash for him. Besides he has his own plans for this place, things he would rather have me attend to...rather than your hot headed nature.

KILLIAN

And father should've put you on a leash.

Killian scoffs and storms off leaving Zali and her guard behind.

ZALI (to her guards)

We have a meeting to attend to.

She looks down at her wrist, revealing a picture of Dallo. Zali's faceplate closes, and the trio moves toward the far end of the courtyard, exiting it.

EXT. CITY OUTSKIRTS

Kene, Dallo, D'seca and Wynn are faced with high skyscrapers on either side of them. The debris still settles from the attack.

KENE

Eyes up, too many vantage points

here to let them get the drop on us.

He scans the buildings, spotting a skybridge connecting some buildings. He points towards them.

KENE

There. We'll be able to get a
better sense of where we are.

The group continues onward towards the buildings.

D'seca and Wynn walk along, Kene and Dallo slightly behind them.

D'SECA (in native tongue)

This world...it's beautiful.

WYNN (speaking his native tongue)

Well it was...before all this.

She waved her arm around, showcasing the carnage and wreckage around them.

WYNN

Such a beautiful gem of a planet, it's a shame.

D'SECA

I must attest Lady Wynn. Certainly if you look hard enough, even
beauty can be found in the darkest of places.

Wynn looks at D'seca, as he scribbles in a small black book.

WYNN

(attempting to peak over his shoulder)
What's that?

D'SECA

(closing the book and shoving it in a pouch)
Just...admiring the beauty.

KENE

Let's admire the beauty elsewhere.
We got a mission to finish.

The group arrives at the skybridge, overlooking the streets below.

INT. GARZAS CANTINA

Broken glass litters the floor, crunching underneath the group's feet. Bodies strewn about the cantina, Leo looks around in shock. The only home he knew, destroyed. He walks around to the back exit, as Striker, Kova, and Tille follow him.

LEO
Over here!

He presses the door release. The door starts opening, but gets stuck halfway, jammed. Striker moves up behind him, gripping the door frame and pulls it through. The team enters

STRIKER
We can't stay here! We gotta move.
(Looking to Leo) Go!

The team moves further into the tunnel, under fire.

LEO
Over here!

Going through another door, they find themselves in the back end of the security hub. STRIKER aims at the tunnel supports, collapsing it behind them.

STRIKER
That'll hold them for a bit.

LEO
Not forever though.

STRIKER
It'll have to do for now. Tille,
Find a comm panel. Get word out to Command
about what's going on. Kova, make sure
no one gets through.

Leo walks into an adjacent room, weapons lining the walls, crates litter the far wall. He walks over, brushing the debris off of it. A symbol shows something he'd seen before. He pulls out the box Garza gave him in his last moments. The same symbol.

He pulls out the locket halves, putting them together. Twirling it in his hands, he presses the locket into a small depression on the box. It clicks, and opens. Items drop out. Papers, and a small metallic object. Picking up the items, he scours

through them. Pictures of him and Cora, much younger, among others. He'd recognize those eyes anywhere.

FLASHBACK BEGINS

LAUGHTER echoes as a younger Leo and Cora run through a small field. A young woman and man, sit on a small blanket. The woman's voice is GENTLE and SWEET.

WOMAN

Don't go too far, you two.

The man's voice is soft.

MAN

Let them explore, Kate.
They're young.

KATE

So carefree with your children, Soren.
I'll never understand what made me fall for you.

As Cora and Leo run through the field, Leo trips over a branch, sending him to the ground. Cora rushes over to help him up. He grabs Cora's hand, pulling her to the ground beside him. She lets out a small YELP as she falls beside him. LAUGHTER ensues

CORA

Ouch.

Leo smirks.

LEO

Tricked ya.

Leo and Cora stare to the sky, the bright sun suddenly blocked out by darkness. Leo looks over for Cora, but she was nowhere to be found. Leo sprung up to his feet.

LEO

Mom? Dad? Cora?

Leo begins to run back to where they were. He trips once again. As he falls he comes face to face with Cora.

LEO (EXCITED)

Cora!

She doesn't respond. Her eyes are glazed over.

LEO (Worried)
Cora?

Her body remains motionless. Tears well in Leo's eyes.

LEO
It's funny enough Cora. The jokes over.

He grips her hand, it was icy cold.

KATE
LEO? Where are you Leo?

LEO
Mom? I'm over here! Come quick.

Kate's voice seemingly gets farther away, echoing his name.

KATE
Leo. Where are you?

The tears fall from his eyes. He looks back towards Cora, as it shifts. Cora begins to morph, one of the aliens herself.

Leo SCREAMS, falling backwards.

FLASHBACK ENDS

Leo catches his breath, holding his head. The locket is gripped tightly in his hand, digging into his skin. LIGHT FOOTSTEPS approach. Striker stands in the doorway, walking next to LEO and sitting down, setting his helmet down beside him.

STRIKER
Who is she?

LEO
My sister...I haven't seen her since all of this started, we didn't exactly part on the best terms.

STRIKER
Sorry to hear that.
Got any other family?

LEO
All I've ever had has been her

...and I failed her. I don't even know if she's still alive.

STRIKER

I'm certain she is and we'll find her. We'll get you back to her. I promise you that.

LEO

STRIKER

Ever used a weapon before?

LEO

Never had a need to.

STRIKER hands over the butt end of his pistol. Leo cautiously takes it, tucking it into his pocket.

STRIKER

Well that changes today, we need all the help we can get if we want to survive this.

TILLE (From central room)
Captain! I've gotten through!

Leo gathers the belongings and shoves them into his pocket. Getting up and walking back into the communications room, he sees a hologram of three people. Rear Fleet Admiral JACQUELINE KOTORA, Premier MIRIA NALLE, and Chief Commander of Intelligence MAXIM HARKUSS. They look over as Striker enters the room.

HARKUSS

Captain, status report.

STRIKER

The talks were interrupted by an invasion force. By these readings (looking at a monitor) it looks almost planetwide.

NALLE

An invasion force? That's impossible. We've been at peace for hundreds of years now. Despite the rouge militias and planetary tensions, we've had no enemy for almost a millenia.

STRIKER

Madam Premier, this is unlike anything I've ever seen. Being this far on the Rim, it's not

unlikely to be a new threat. This invasion, it involves multiple species aiding, humans included. They're wiping out the population...

NALLE

Senator Dallo? How is she?

STRIKER

I split my team when the invasion first hit. She's with them. Although it's unknown if they made it to extract. We're making our way over to them shortly.

HARKUSS

We'll assume that they didn't make it. Find them Captain. Then we'll work on getting you out of there.

TILLE

Apologies, but you all might want to see this.

Tille pulls up a camera feed. Multiple cameras show the Adrotoni Soldiers rounding up civilians.

HARKUSS

This just became a rescue mission.

STRIKER

Tille, that feed (he points) can you enhance it?

STRIKER

I think we just found them. Where did they take them?

STRIKER

Not if we have anything to say about it. Madame Premier, permission to request reinforcements?

NALLE

Unfortunately Captain, I don't believe we can do that. Any presence of forces in that sector may lead to a full secession of those planets. We cannot allow that to happen.

STRIKER

So what? We're going to let the population die out just like that? A whole system?

NALLE

Unless Admiral Kotori says differently, I'm afraid it's the only option, yes.

KOTORA

We wouldn't even have the forces available to mount a rescue effort nearby. It'd be many rotations before a fleet is even assembled. I'm sorry Captain.

HARKUSS

Our hands are tied Captain. It's up to you to get off the planet.

NALLE

No reinforcements will be sent and that is final, Captain. I wish you luck...

The hologram fades out.

STRIKER

Madame Premier...Madame. What happened, Tille?

TILLE

I'm guessing a Signal Damper...no transmissions are getting through.

STRIKER

Damn it. There goes the only chance of help. Not like they were willing to help anyways.

Kova enters the room, walking towards the far end, staring at one of the monitors. Profiles of the team appear. One name catches his attention, underneath his profile. COLT

A large EXPLOSION erupts from outside. The side door blasts open and Adrotoni soldiers pour through.

LEO

Striker! We've got company!

Kova brings up his weapon and begins firing, Adrotoni soldiers firing back. The soldiers continue through the door, pushing the group back. Leo looks around, focusing on a floor panel.

LEO

Over here!

Leo rushes over to the floor panel, pulling it and revealing a large tunnel beneath. Striker, Tille and Kova fire back at the advancing soldiers.

STRIKER

Go Leo! We're right behind you!

Leo jumps down into the dark cavern, followed by Tille, Kova and then Striker. As Adrotoni soldiers loom over the hatch, Striker shoots the supports above, knocking rubble down closing off the hatch.

Once the dust settles, he activates his flashlight, illuminating the tunnel. PLOP. PLIP. Water droplets fill the silence.

KOVA

Where to now?

Striker looks over at Leo.

STRIKER

Your turn to lead.

LEO

Follow me.

The group continues down the dark tunnel.

EXT. STREET

Cora walks along, Neera and Kyia hand in hand. Kyia has a rag tightly wrapped around his head.

EXT. CITY CENTER (Continuous)

As the group enters the city center, with high buildings adorning both sides of the street. As they round a corner, One of the Adrotoni soldiers is sent flying backwards. A white armored blur appears, slashing at the soldier. The prisoners scatter, as the Adrotoni take on the threat.

Cora covers Neera and Kyia from the battle, as the figure slashes at each of the soldiers, taking them down one by one. Wrist mounted blades drive into each of the soldiers. The last soldier catches one of the figure's arms, driving them backwards. Flipping on top of the soldier, driving both blades into his neck, the soldier falls.

The prisoners make their way from their hiding spots. The figure looks over at Cora, the faceplate sliding upwards, revealing Ash. Cora looks at Ash with caution. Her eyes trace the armor, spotting a symbol. Garza's symbol.

Cora
You're one of Garza's goons.
ASH (questioning)
Goons? That hurts.
Who do you think sent me to rescue you?

Ash turns towards the prisoners.

ASH (Cont'd)
Gather their weapons. We're fighting back.

As they collect the weapons, she notices that some also share Garza's symbol tattooed in areas. The prisoners make their way through the rubble.

CORA
You weren't sent to rescue me.
You were sent here to get their help.

ASH
Fine. You're right. But you're the cherry on top. Leo sure would like to see his sister again.

CORA
Leo? You know where he is?

ASH
No. But I can find him.

Ash makes her way around the street, perching on top of some rubble. Cora looks back to Neera and Kyia, smiling.

CORA
Great. Then take us to him.

SILENCE fills the air. Cora whirls around in anger.

CORA
I said. .

Ash is gone. No one is there. They left Cora, Neera and Kyia alone.

CORA (sighing)
I promise to take care of you guys.

Cora leads the two children down the city center.

EXT. SKYBRIDGE

Dallo sits on some rubble, deep in thought. Kene approaches, offering her a ration.

KENE

Here. Keep your energy up.

Dallo takes the ration, taking a small bite.

DALLO

Thank you

D' SECA

Kene! We got something.

Kene and Dallo make it over to the broken edge of the skybridge, where D'seca and Wynn sit, overseeing the street below with binoculars.

KENE

What do we have?

Wynn

Survivors. Look

She hands her binoculars to Kene, who looks into them. On the street below walks Cora, Neera, and Kyia. He hands them back to Wynn and looks over at Dallo.

KENE

You wanted something to happen?

There you go. We got friends.

Dallo smiles and looks below.

KENE

Let's go say hello.

The group gathers and begins making their way off the skybridge.

EXT. CITY CENTER

A small doorway opens and Leo, Striker, Tille and Kova exit from the tunnels.

EXT. Lower City Center

Cora, Neera, and Kyia continue walking along the street. Kyia runs into a small shop. Neera follows close behind her brother.

CORA

Neera. Kyia. Don't get hurt now.

She cautiously enters into the shop, the glass CRUNCHING beneath her feet. She spots the pair in the far corner, giggling amongst themselves. She walks over to the pair, who

CORA

Come now. We have to keep moving.

As they exit the store, Cora runs face first into armor. Knocking her to the ground with a small YELP, she looks up and spots three armored individuals. Not Adrontoni soldiers. They're different. Dallo appears from behind them

DALLO

It's alright. We're here to help.**/*

DALLO

Striker. . .

He turns around to see Dallo, seemingly frozen in place. A knife wavers in front of her throat, floating in the air.

ZALI

Hello Senator. . .

Striker is the first to react, raising his weapon towards the senator, as Zali disengages her cloaking technology, gripping onto the senator. The rest of the team follows suit, with Leo and Cora looking on in shock.

ZALI (taunting)

And you must be the famous Alden Striker.

STRIKER

Don't act like you know me,

ZALI

You'd be surprised. I know more than you think.

In the intact remains of the skyscraper, Adrotoni soldiers appear, encircling the group and surrounding them instead. Killian leads a group of soldiers to reinforce Zali on the ground.

ZALI (Cont'd)

I've always been one step ahead of you humans.

Wynn, Tille and D'seca focus their aim on Killian and his forces. Kova moves, refocusing his aim to Striker instead.

KOVA

Don't make me do this Captain.

The group is shocked. Kene aims his weapon at Kova. The thoughts click inside Leo's head. He looks over at Kova.

LEO

You've been working with them this whole time.
That's how they always knew where we were
...You've been with them the whole time

Leo looks towards Cora, giving her a smile. Easing her cautious nerves, he sees her relax.

KILLIAN

ENOUGH OF THIS!

Killian and his soldiers raise their weapons at the group, readying themselves to kill the group.

A loud CRACK fills the air. A sniper shot from one of the buildings, taking down one of the Adrotoni soldiers. More and more suddenly drop as more shots fill the air.

INT. SKYSCRAPER (1)

The Adrotoni soldiers come under attack from Garza's forces, led by Ash. She leads the group, slashing her way through the Adrotoni in a blur, using two wrist mounted blades. Her white armor is tainted with alien and human blood alike.

EXT. STREET

Others come from above, hovering on jetpacks, suited up in armor. The two groups scatter. Parting the street, Zali takes Dallo as Killian and his men provide cover, seeking refuge in

the second crumbled skyscraper. In the ensuing chaos, Kova grabs Cora, making his way towards the Adrotoni. She fights against Kova, but his grip is too strong.

Striker, Kene, Tille, Wynn, and D'seca use the cover to retreat back towards the first skyscraper, where Ash clears the Adrotoni forces.

CORA
LEO!

Leo looks over and sees her being dragged into the second skyscraper. He starts to run towards it but a hand pulls him back. One of Garza's men holds him back. The faceplate slides up revealing a familiar face.

GARZA
Don't

Kene stands at the end of the hallway, firing a shot at Killian. It strikes Killian in the shoulder, however it doesn't phase him. Brushing it off, Killian turns and locks onto Kene, spotting the red glimpse on his shoulder. A small red figure painted on the armor. He drops his weapon to the ground.

KILLIAN
The demon. ..you. YOU!

Killian charges towards Kene, pulling his blade, Kene raises his weapon to fire, Killian is too fast and knocks Kene to the ground, driving the blade towards his head. Kene strikes Killian, knocking his helmet off. Killian and Kene face each other, Kene readying his fists, Killian twirling his blade.

KILLIAN
You are the demon, you killed Tsavar, and you will pay with your blood.

They grapple, Kene blocking all of Killian's jabs. Kene knocks the blade out of Killian's hand.

KENE
Don't bring a blade to a fist fight, you want honor, then fight like it.

KILLIAN

You know nothing of honor, demon.

KILLIAN charges towards Kene, knocking him aside. In a fury, Killian smashes into Kene's helmet, shattering it in one blow.

KILLIAN

I get to see your eyes beg for mercy.

Killian punches Kene, beating past Kene's attempts to block. Kene is weakening, his blocks not working.

A single shot fires, striking Killian in the side, and sending him flying towards the wall, knocking him unconscious. Kene looks up, seeing Kova, holding Killian's weapon. Kene gets up, Kova pointing the weapon at Kene.

KOVA

Don't think I did that for you. Go.

Kene picks up his weapon, and looks at Kova.

KENE

YOU didn't have to do this Kova. You're an enemy now.

KOVA

I didn't have a choice. I hope you all will understand that.

Kova moves to Killian, crouching near his limp body. Kene turns, and walks away, stopping and looking back, as Kene picks up Killian.

KOVA

For your sake, I sure hope so. Striker saw something in you, just know that.

KENE

It wasn't enough, it never is.

Kova takes Killian's limp body, back towards Zali and her men. Kene goes the opposite way, back to Striker and the rest.

The group makes their way across the scattered landscape, under heavy fire.

Zali walks out of the courtyard, two elites in stride with her, their capes flowing behind them. Kova approaches them with Killians limp body, the two elites gather Killian from Kova, returning to the courtyard. Zali looks at Kova, annoyed.

KOVA

Look, He was in over his head, I know that team better than anyone here. That's what happens.

ZALI

Well then how do you suggest rid ourselves of these pesky bugs?

KOVA

I'll handle them, trust me.

Zali approaches him, tracing her finger lightly on his helmet.

ZALI

Cute, but you know I can't do that.