

BRIDGE KEEPERS
1X01: SUMMUM PRETIUM

TEASER

EXT. ARCTIC - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING SHOT

It's an endless, snowy plain that's untouched by humanity itself. A camp made of nothing more than a few thick tents spots the horizon.

EXT. CAMP - SAME

A VILLAGER, alien and bright white in color, stomps out the last of the fire. He looks out into the horizon, sees nothing, and steps into the --

TENT

There's a group of VILLAGERS huddling together, scared. Each hold their life's possessions. There's a pile of stuff covered in furs pushed off to the corner.

EXT. ARCTIC - NIGHT

A RUNNER breathes heavy, making his way to the camp. He looks behind him frantically with every-other step. From his bag, he digs out a horn and BLOWS.

INT. TENT - SAME

The horn BELLOWS and the Villager corrals the others, herding them from the tent. They take off running. He steps back out into the --

CAMP

The Runner cuts into the horizon -- but he's followed by a RAIDING PARTY, all on their alien mounts, all with weapons they love to use. WAR CRIES grow louder as they close in on the camp.

The Villager lingers, but follows the other Villagers. The party redirects and chases the Villagers, leaving the Runner alone to fall into the --

TENT

Where he throws the furs off the pile of junk, revealing scientific equipment, a toolbox, journals. The Runner grabs what he can until --

A RAIDER crashes through the tent and throws the Runner into the snow. The hood falls off to reveal a purely human face, BENSON FINKFINNEGAN, 40's, haggard and fighting for his life. There's a wildness in his eyes.

The Raider overlooks Benson and rejoins his party.

Benson watches as the Villagers get torn apart, one after the other. He can't look away, even if he wants to.

Something in the tent catches his eye. A bundle tied precisely with twine and carefully packed sits in the snow, and he grabs for it.

They Raiders are coming back. He hurries. Inside the bundle is a broken communicator, not unlike a walkie talkie. He sends out a silent prayer before closing his eyes and flipping the switch.

War cries get closer. More prayer. Eyes still closed.

A Raider swings out his spiked mace, closing in.

Benson opens his eyes just as the MACE comes swinging down.

The communicator flares a bright red --

CUT TO BLACK.

END TEASER

ACT ONE

EXT. LANDFILL - DAY

In a sprawling sea of trash, GARBAGE MEN wearing biohazard suits shovel debris into trucks.

NEWCASTER (V.O.)

-- what a massive success today. A team of scientists have anchored another ten Bridges in just the last year, leading the Council to approve a rise in Keeper missions. Although, some of us remember the war when we think about inter-dimensional travel, and the losses we suffered.

A gust of wind throws up a pile of old fliers.

ON THE FLIER is army enlistment propaganda, "WE NEED YOU TO FIGHT FOR YOUR PLANET".

NEWCASTER (V.O.)

But thanks to the World Defense Corps, the war is a thing of the past, not to be repeated with these new Bridges. I'm with Captain Broga, a commander of Team Epsilon. Commander, what does this rise in activity mean for the planet?

BROGA (V.O.)

It means we can do more of what we do best.

The crest of the landfill comes up quick to reveal a massive metropolitan at the height of modern technology: NEW DENVER.

BROGA (V.O.)

We rebuild.

EXT. NEW DENVER - DAY

An endless cityscape with crystalline clusters of skyscrapers lords above the darker streets.

It's busy with too many people, all hurrying to get somewhere else. There's a monstrous TV screen playing an interview with the NEWCASTER, the type for flashy celebrity gossip, and BROGA, 40's, who's eyes never seem to match his smile.

BROGA

It's been an honor working with some of the best Keepers the Academy has to offer, and for good cause.

A crosswalk sign turns green, flooding the street with pedestrians. Among the crowd is MONA KRUGER, late 30's, straight-backed and efficient: a true commanding force.

NEWSCASTER

Isn't it a gamble, jumping just any Bridge? You could end up in space!

BROGA

It's a thrill. Sometimes, we're the first human beings to step foot over some of those Bridges. Other times, yes, it can get dangerous, but where else would we get wood, or water?

NEWSCASTER

(joking)
Or moisturizer that takes the years right off! So, tell us what kind...

The interview bleeds away as Mona climbs the stairs to an official-looking building: pillars, suits. The Council Hall.

INT. PETERSON'S OFFICE - SAME

Peterson's office has only two things in it: a desk and a dead plant. PETERSON, an ancient pawn of the government, sits in front of a glaring military insignia for the WORLD DEFENSE CORPS. There's a motto at the bottom: Summum Pretium.

Mona stands rigid like the soldier she is.

PETERSON

Your reputation should've kept you out of this room for the rest of your natural life.

MONA

From the message you sent, you need my help, ma'am.

Peterson clicks a remote and a translucent projection screen lights up between them with Benson's picture. It's old, but flattering despite his bow-tie.

PETERSON

A satellite fluke found this radio transmission a few hours ago.

She clicks the remote again and a grainy voice track plays. It's eery.

BENSON (O.S.)

-ello? -- one out there -- please -- son Finkfin -- under attack.

(beat)

Tell my mother -- love her. Please.

The voice stops abruptly, cut off.

MONA

Is that all you have?

PETERSON

It's more than we've had for the last three years.

(off her look)

Professor Benson Finkfinnegan was the Bridge Theorist for the Academy, but when he jumped a Bridge for his research mission, there were complications and it had to be cut short. The professor was not in the return party. He's been presumed dead since then.

MONA

And you want me to go find him? After three years in a Hostile zone?

PETERSON

Retirement hasn't dulled your sharp sense, Mrs. Kruger--

MONA

Commander.

PETERSON

Commander Kruger. There's a pre-assembled team of available jumpers for you to lead.

MONA

What if I don't want the mission?

Peterson did not expect that.

PETERSON

This is your last chance, call it a redemption if you want. If this mission is a success, you get reinstated, you get your career and reputation back. Or do you want to be remembered as a murderer?

(beat)

What will your children say about you? What'll they think in ten years?

Peterson sets an ID badge on the desk. Mona steps up and takes it.

MONA

Who's on this team?

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

A small apartment, packed wall to wall with books and organized mayhem. It's the lair of a genius. There's a chalkboard COVERED with complex designs and equations.

A touch-screen watch is stuck to the wall with a throwing knife through the band. The screen FLARES to life.

An EXPLOSION of smoke floods the apartment. From it stumbles CASSANDRA STAVROS, 20, a walking all-night cram study, coughing up a lung. She pulls out a pencil and starts writing her bomb-testing equations and conclusions right onto the wall.

PETERSON (V.O.)

Cassandra Stavros is the prodigy of yesterday. She's been on the radar since childhood with test scores we haven't seen in a hundred years, but her social decline has kept her off a working team.

MONA (V.O.)

Social decline?

Cassandra crosses out her previous theory and starts working on a new one - but the watch catches her eye.

PETERSON (V.O.)

No one likes her, but she just needs a little discipline.

(MORE)

PETERSON (V.O.) (CONT'D)
If you can reign in Cassandra
Stavros, that alone will guarantee
you a career, Commander. It's not
an easy task.

She pulls the watch free of the wall.

EXT. NEW DENVER - DAY

Among a busy street is RENO LIAM, 22. He's ravenously
watching the interview in the middle of the sidewalk,
blocking the way for commuters.

PETERSON (V.O.)
Reno Liam, a recent graduate from
the Academy. He passed with good
marks, but not great. If you give
him a good first mission I'm sure
his family and their huge fortune
will appreciate it.

He looks at his watch, secured on. It's flashing red and he
shows an indifferent passerby. He jumps excitedly and runs
off.

INT. TRAINING ROOM - DAY

A group of STUDENTS surround a training dais - and dodge just
in time to avoid a flying body. ON THE DAIS is BRIAN MCKEE,
28, a human superhero with a perpetual smirk. He summons
another student to the stage with a flick of his hand. The
Student picks up a staff. Brian stays unarmed.

PETERSON (V.O.)
The last one is Brian McKee, a
legacy. His father, mother, and
his sister were all elite in their
fields, and he's no different. You
and your team will be perfectly
safe with him.

Brian expertly disarms the Student, takes the staff, and
throws the Student from their feet. He aims the staff right
at the throat. He hears something and looks to his pile of
clothes on the floor. On top is his watch, flashing red.

He summons the next student. The watch flashes again.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. CHECK UP - DAY

An explosion red flames ON THE SCREEN of Cassandra's handheld shooting game.

CASSANDRA

Damn.

Cassandra starts another round on the game, spinning on a stool in what's no more than a stall with an examination table and a desk. She's dressed in her uniform, a simple coverall, and a tactical vest. On the table is Brian, being prodded by Doctor KAJAL BADAL, 30's, who wears a hijab and her heart on her sleeve. Reno is studying a pamphlet off to the side, also dressed.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

(to Reno)

You pregnant?

RENO

What?

She points to the pamphlet and he notices it says "PREGNANCY: A GIFT". Reno puts it back. The door opens to Mona, striding in.

MONA

Good, you're all here.

CASSANDRA

Mission team for Bridge 32, Dock P.
Where else would we be?

BRIAN

That rhymes.

Mona sees Kajal looking confused over the charts.

MONA

Nurse, is something wrong?

KAJAL

Oh, um, I'm a doctor -- it's just
these charts are, uh, incomplete --

BRIAN

(easy; charming)

I told you not to worry about them.
I'm all good to go, got all my
vaccinations, I'm in tip-top shape,
Doc.

He takes out a piece of hard candy and eats it.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
Never been better.

KAJAL
There are missing records, I can't
do my job if I don't know your
medical history --

MONA
McKee was cleared by the Council
for active duty: he's up to code.

Kajal goes to put the file away, but puts it away separately,
off to the side. Brian jumps off and makes room for Mona.
Kajal pulls out her file.

MONA (CONT'D)
(listing)
Kruger, Mona. ID number; 54-R4-
F77. Blood type O, one-hundred and
sixty inches, sixty-eight
kilograms.

Kajal nods along with her. To the side, Brian is putting on
his gear, strapping on what's essentially an armory attached
to a tactical vest.

KAJAL
No family history of heart disease,
no blood diseases or cancer, no
tumors. Wow, not even chicken pox.
Very impressive.

CASSANDRA
The military knows how to pick 'em.

Mona chooses to ignore her, instead looking to Reno. Kajal
slides a blood pressure sleeve over Mona's arm. The pressure
increases the longer Mona talks, and Kajal gets more worried.

MONA
Private Liam, when did you
graduate?

RENO
(beat)
Three weeks ago.

CASSANDRA
Fresh meat.

MONA
 (ignoring her)
 And you're aware of your position
 on the team?

CASSANDRA
 Yea, stay out of the way when shit
 goes up.

RENO
 Hey, I can fight for myself.

They're about to start arguing like children, but Mona steps
 in.

MONA
 Enough. The sooner we get out of
 check-up and across the Bridge, the
 sooner we can complete the mission
 and get onto better assignments.

CASSANDRA
 Yeah, I think we have a
 comprehensive idea of how time
 works, thanks.

Mona takes some settling breathes.

BRIAN
 (lightly)
 So, this guy we're trying to find?
 Adorable. And have you heard his
 full name?

CASSANDRA
 Benson Laurby Hotepsikemway
 FinkFinnegan.

BRIAN
 Yes.

CASSANDRA
 But it's just a search-and-rescue --
 shit! I lost.

She pockets her game.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)
 (to Mona)
 So, what's your deal? Compared to
 us, you look like you're actually
 worth something - no offense, kid.

RENO

(beat)

Am I the kid?

CASSANDRA

Coming out of retirement for some sad idiots like us? It's not that sweet of a mission.

MONA

A valuable member of the Academy is missing and in danger. This is not a "sweet" mission, it's an important one.

Mona slides the pressure sleeve off and jumps from the table. Time for business as she slips on her vest and holsters.

MONA (CONT'D)

They sent me because I was - am - the best at what I do: completing missions.

CASSANDRA

(with a snort)

You're a babysitter.

With obnoxious, jerky spurts Cassandra rolls to the door. Reno stands awkwardly, not knowing what to do, and follows Cassandra.

BRIAN

Don't worry, Commander, she might seem like a huge pain in the ass now.

MONA

But?

BRIAN

Hm? Oh, no, it doesn't get better. Candy?

Mona just walks out. Brian stands silent for a beat.

KAJAL

Are you nervous?

BRIAN

You're really quiet, doctor.

KAJAL

What's it like? Jumping the Bridge?

BRIAN

Dangerous.

KAJAL

There's danger everywhere.

He grins. It's a hollow smile.

BRIAN

If that ain't the truth.

Popping the candy into her mouth, she stares after him. The candy wrapper she puts in his medical file, bookmarking it.

INT. DOCK - DAY

The DOCK is a hard, unfriendly hangar made of concrete and machinery. A line of circular landing pads on one side and a system of industrial elevators on the other. From some of the landing pads sprout pillars of tangible light, BRIDGES, and lumbering forklifts move in and out of them.

The team surround one particular, unlit, landing pad. On it is marked "32 P", their Bridge. Mona is at a control board, starting the activation codes.

Cassandra wears a woven bag that stands out against the rest of her equipment.

MONA

(to Cassandra)

That bag isn't military issued.

CASSANDRA

I'm not military.

(off her look)

One of the gifts of the gifted is being so good that you can work independent of the government. I'm a free agent, baby.

A FLOPPY DISK pops up and Mona slips it into her pocket.

RENO

What's that? Looks old.

MONA

The locator. This is programmed with the specific wave signature we need to find our way back. Without it, we're stuck --

CASSANDRA
 Blah blah blah, Bridge Theory 101.
 Let's get this thing started.

She can barely keep from bouncing up and down.

MONA
 (to herself)
 What've I got myself into?

She twists a heavy lever and a ceiling hatch powers up and unleashes a MASSIVE burst of light that SLAMS down into the pad. It pushes out a wave of air, making Reno fall back into Brian's arms.

RENO
 Sorry, I've just never... it's really impressive in person.

BRIAN
 I know, I have that affect on men. And women. And everything in between.

He winks.

MONA
 Get set, team.

Each take a ready stance.

CASSANDRA
 Let's find this old man and get our lives back.

BRIAN
 Bonus, he's super cute.

CASSANDRA
 You would.

Mona jumps through the pillar and disappears. Cassandra, right behind her, jumps --

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)
 Yippee-ki yay mother --

And she's gone. Reno doesn't move.

RENO
 (quietly)
 I'm scared.

Brian smiles at him before shoving Reno through the Bridge.
The smile falls.

BRIAN
You should be.

He steps up to the landing pad like walking the plank, and
takes the dive.

EXT. CAMP - DAY

A new layer of snow has settled on the ruins. The tent and
supplies are smashed and in pieces, and it's silent like only
death can be until --

A BEAM of light almost solidifies from the air and SLAMS down
into the snow, pushing it out into a crater. Under the snow
is a landing pad, identical to the ones in the hangar, and
from the light, Mona appears.

She lands on her feet, but she's promptly knocked over by
Cassandra falling out of the light, and Reno right behind
her. Brian steps through, sure-footed. He picks Cassandra
up.

CASSANDRA
Snow?

MONA
This has to be at least thirty
below. We have to get the right
equipment --

CASSANDRA
You don't want to go back with your
tail between your legs because of a
little cold, do you?

Mona holds her look. Challenge accepted.

MONA
McKee, Liam: recon.

Brian and Reno spread out, eyes open and guns drawn.

BRIAN
Where did the last communication
come from?

MONA
I don't...

Cassandra pulls up her sleeve to reveal a forearm-length, wearable terminal that's the marriage of sleek machinery and post-apocalyptic. There's a stenciled "SIMN" on the side.

CASSANDRA
(to SIMN)
Simon: mission files 32-P.

A screen is projected into space with a complex, coded file system that Cassandra manipulates with ease. One file takes over the screen.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)
Within the kilometer.

There's nothing around they can see.

MONA
But from where?

BRIAN
Hey, Commander? Cass?

Brian picks a microscope from the snow.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
It looks like there was a camp here. Maybe a lab? But whoever was here is gone now.

RENO
We have bodies over here.
(checking)
Indigenous, not the professor.

They're all seeing the big picture. Mona sees the glasses sticking up from the snow and she picks them up, brushing snow aside.

MONA
Dammit.

The snow below is red with blood.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. ARCTIC - DAY

The team is going through the debris, trying to find a lead. Cassandra swipes a sample of the blood onto SIMN. It beeps green and Benson's picture comes up.

CASSANDRA

It's definitely his blood.

Mona's impressed.

MONA

What is that?

CASSANDRA

Simon: Synthetic Intelligence Memory Navigator. Basically a digital, voice-controlled filing cabinet.

MONA

A filing cabinet doesn't match DNA.

CASSANDRA

Okay, so I vamped it up a bit. That's what happens when you're bored out of your God-damned mind with too much time.

MONA

Can it tell us where the Professor went?

CASSANDRA

No, Simon is a machine, don't be ridiculous. But I can.

She walks off, engrossed in SIMN.

MONA

(to Brian)

Find anything?

BRIAN

Well, the Professor has definitely been here. There're journals here from years back documenting the Indigenous and resources, I think, but it's hard to make out.

MONA

And his conclusions?

RENO

He calls it a "snowy hell", and some of these swear words I don't know.

MONA

Well, he's Scottish. They have a special way with words.

BRIAN

And drawing.

Brian uncovers reams of paper, all covered with charcoal drawings of the same mountain peak from the same angle. Brian holds the drawing up to the peak in the distance. It's the right mountain, but the wrong angle.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Hey, Cass?

She pops up out of nowhere.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Can you use these? He's drawn the same peak from an Eastern angle.

She takes the papers and studies them. She's in her element, her mind racing faster than the rest of her body could follow.

CASSANDRA

(mumbling)

Drawing the same thing every day, no other angle. Fixed point. Eastern. A place without snow to keep paper and dry charcoal or maybe it's burnt wood.

MONA

What?

CASSANDRA

This is at a higher altitude angle than we could possibly get at this level.

(beat)

From this... there's a cave, that way, where the Professor built a lab.

RENO

You got that from drawings?

CASSANDRA

I got that from my mind, from not
being an idiot, like you! God! I
feel so damn alive! I'm the best.

Mona, swept up in the progress, gives Cassandra a pat on the
shoulder, stunning her speechless.

MONA

Good job, we might just find the
Professor. Let's go.

Reno and Brian follow, but it takes Cassandra a second to
catch up with a small, humble smile.

INT. CHECK UP - NIGHT

It's late and no one else is working in her wing. There's a
CHILD sitting on the table with a thermometer, her MOTHER
stands to the side chewing her nail. They both look rough
and hungry. Kajal takes a thermometer from the Child's
mouth.

KAJAL

(forced cheer)

Looks like you are getting better,
sweetheart. Very strong.

She helps the Child from the table and hands the Mother an
unmarked pill bottle wrapped in a \$20 bill.

KAJAL (CONT'D)

Give her a pill once a day for
three weeks, with a meal, and then
bring her back for a check up.

The Mother hugs Kajal tightly with tears in her eyes. She
shuffles off quietly with the Child, shrugging away from the
NURSE who passes Kajal's stall.

NURSE

You handin' out meds again?

(beat)

It ain't legal yet, you'll get
fired.

Kajal tidies up, planning for home.

KAJAL

The World's Health Act will pass.
It is inhumane to refuse help to
those you have the power to save.

NURSE

(bitterly)
Such a saint.
(then, quietly)
Freak.

She leaves. Kajal's about to draw the curtain when she sees Brian's file. She tucks it under her arm with the other files.

INT. MEDICAL ADMIN - NIGHT

At midnight, the admin building isn't popular. She cruises the hallways and puts file after file back in its place. She gets to Brian's file and stalls. She lingers.

Suddenly, the lights black out and Kajal's PUSHED against the wall. A MAN in black goes through the file wall and picks out specific files, including Brian's.

Kajal grabs his leg, but she's kicked once, twice, but she doesn't let go. A DOCTOR comes in, turning the lights back on.

DOCTOR

Hey!

The Man drops the files he's holding and runs. The Doctor runs to Kajal, but she's too busy looking at the files. Mona, Reno, Cassandra, Brian -- all their files.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Are you alright --

KAJAL

Someone tried to take these files,
erase these people. Why?

The Doctor takes Kajal by the arm when she tries to leave.

DOCTOR

You have to go to the police, or
something!

KAJAL

I will not let this happen to
someone else.

She runs.

INT. CHECK UP - NIGHT

Kajal pulls her stall's curtain closed and powers on her computer. In the SEARCH BAR she types names.

STAVROS, CASSANDRA O. Kajal skims the first article link.

KAJAL
(reading)
Sexual advances on commanding
officer...

LIAM, RENO.

KAJAL (CONT'D)
(reading)
Attacked superior officer with
lethal intent...

KRUGER, MONA L.

KAJAL (CONT'D)
(reading)
Dishonorably discharged for the
murder of a teammate, oh no...

MCKEE, BRIAN M. Kajal stares at the screen, close to tears.

ON THE SCREEN there are no results matching that name.

KAJAL (CONT'D)
He doesn't exist.

ON THE SCREEN an alert blinks and her computer crashes. The curtain draws back. Kajal turns right into the smack of a gun.

She sags, unconscious. The same black-clad man steals the files.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

The team navigates through the forest on high alert, guns drawn. Cassandra is leading them with the map, but they've been at it for a while.

RENO
Ha-how much f-further? It's f-
freezing.

MONA

Keep quiet, we don't know if the Hostiles are still watching.

CASSANDRA

I doubt it.

MONA

Is that a guess?

CASSANDRA

I never guess.

BRIAN

Yes you do.

CASSANDRA

But with intelligence. I'm the best at what I do, so chill. Up here.

Mona gets slapped in the face with a snowy tree branch. She shivers, but shakes it away.

RENO

If you're so sure of yourself, and if you really are the best, why aren't you on a team --

CASSANDRA

Let me give you some advice, kid. Just stop talking.

For a beat, Reno walks in a dejected silence until -

RENO

The Council said you had personality issues --

She charges him.

CASSANDRA

I have personality issues?!

Mona pulls her back.

MONA

As if you don't?

CASSANDRA

What's with the bee in your underpants? I've done my job so far!

MONA

While being an ultimate pain.
You're so self-assured and think
your damn ego is omnipotence. Some
day it will get you and your whole
team killed, you selfish little
savant.

CASSANDRA

I gave everything to my team!

Mona shoots her with a knowing look.

MONA

You did, didn't you?

Cassandra's in her face now.

CASSANDRA

What the hell is that supposed to
mean?

MONA

We all know what you'd do to get
onto a team --

CASSANDRA

At least I didn't kill my own
teammate, unlike some of us.

Mona's growing smirk is gone now.

MONA

That case was thrown out.

CASSANDRA

So was Morris, wasn't that his
name. Yeah, you threw his body to
the sharks after shooting him in
the head. You're not the only one
with Google, Grandma.

She pushes Mona's shoulder for just that more of an impact.

MONA

I was ordered to, it was for the
mission's success --

CASSANDRA

What a shitty excuse.

MONA

What's your excuse for sleeping
with a Commanding officer? Was it
for rank?

CASSANDRA

Shut your mouth.

BRIAN

Commander, stop.

She ignores him and goads her on.

MONA

Or maybe it was for fun. Did you
enjoy ruining his life?

Cassandra POUNCES for her, savagely, but Brian holds her
back.

CASSANDRA

Let me go! Lemme go!

Mona stands in a fighting stance.

MONA

Come on, McKee, let her go.

BRIAN

This is for your own good,
Commander.

MONA

I have twenty years of martial arts
and all my life on the streets. I
think I can take her.

BRIAN

Commander, she's the only thing
keeping me back.

Mona sees Brian for the first time. He isn't the lovable,
smiling idiot. He's a conscious weapon.

BEHIND, Reno SHRIEKS and falls away as an ARROW shakes in the
ground at his feet. Brian drops Cassandra and cocks one of
his pistols, aimed at the ARCHER hiding in the forest.

MONA

Wait!

Brian moves just quick enough for the bullet to miss the
Archer's head and splinter the nearby tree. Mona creeps
closer with her hands out.

MONA (CONT'D)
Professor? Brian, get him.

Brian pulls the Archer out of the forest and his hood falls down revealing BENSON with a makeshift bandage on his head. His face is sunken with dread.

MONA (CONT'D)
Professor, we're from the Dock.
The Council sent us.

BENSON
So many.

MONA
Professor?

BENSON
They sent so many people to kill me.

They share looks between each other.

MONA
The Council sent us to bring you back.

Finally, he looks up. He's silent, confused.

BENSON
What?

CASSANDRA
We're here to rescue you. To bring you home? You sent a distress call.

He shakes his head.

BENSON
That's impossible. No, it doesn't make any sense. The Council left me here to die.

The CLICK of a GUN makes them turn to see --

RENO holding Brian at gunpoint.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Reno presses the gun tight against Brian's temple, keeping Mona and Cassandra at bay. Benson is muttering a prayer.

MONA

Liam - uh, Reno? What're you doing?

RENO

I'd like to think it's obvious. Holding this big dog hostage so you don't -- don't move!

Cassandra, mid-step, stops. He points his gun harder into Brian's temple, forcing her to step back.

CASSANDRA

This is your first mission, and it's a kill-order. Is this really the path you want to take?

RENO

Better than being a slut.

CASSANDRA

You're such a fucking weasel.

RENO

A weasel with a gun though. Get on your knees.

They do.

MONA

Whoever you're doing this for, they'll drag you down. You might think they'll make you a hero, that you'll be rewarded for doing what they've asked, but it's not true. For the rest of your life, you'll be a villain.

RENO

Give me the locator.

CASSANDRA

You can't leave us here!

RENO

The deal was to make sure you didn't get back, I could shoot you now, if you want to die sooner.

MONA

I'm not giving you the locator.

RENO

You don't, and I'll kill him. And then you.

Her resolve doesn't shake.

BRIAN

(to Reno)

Shoot me. Do it.

(beat)

Do. It. Didn't you hear me?

Brian is stone-cold challenging Reno, daring him.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Shoot me.

CASSANDRA

Brian, buddy, be brave --

BRIAN

How can I be brave when I'm too coward to pull the trigger myself?
(to Reno)

You wanna do this? Take my advice and do it quick. It'll give you less nightmares. Take it from someone who hasn't slept in twenty years.

It's too intense, Reno can't keep the gun steady and Brian takes the chance.

He SLAMS his head back into Reno's nose and twists the gun from his hands to press it against Reno's temple. Brian's almost disappointed.

RENO

I'm sorry - I didn't want to do it, really -- my dad was going to kick me out of the program if I didn't do this favor -

Mona furiously punches him across the face.

MONA

Favor?!

Her composure drops as she pummels Reno into the snow. He tears at her vest and the LOCATOR falls out.

He grabs for it, still fighting, and smashes it in half against a rock.

They all eye the broken disc.

MONA (CONT'D)

What've you done?

RENO

I did my job. You'll never get back now.

Benson crawls over and cradles the pieces, crying.

BENSON

None of us will.

Reno's face fills with realization.

He's pulled from the ground and Brian slams the butt of the pistol against his head.

CUT TO BLACK:

INT. DOCK - DAY

Kajal walks the hangar like a ghost in a hollow stone. Everything is powered down, unnatural in such a busy world and Kajal knows it. Something's wrong.

KAJAL

Thirty two... thirty two...

She finds the landing pad marked "32", but it's marked off with glaring, yellow construction tape. A hanging sign reads "Scheduled for Destruction".

KAJAL (CONT'D)

What? No.

An ELEVATOR spreads open and HORATIO, thick and generally unfriendly, waves his flashlight like a search beacon and spots Kajal.

HORATIO

Hey! What're you -- no one's allowed down here right now.

KAJAL

What is happening? Why is this
marked off?

He gently herds Kajal into the elevator, treating her like a
lost child.

HORATIO

It's going down tomorrow. Come
back and watch it with everyone
else.

He leans in and pushes the button for her, blocking the door.
Kajal stops the door with her hand.

KAJAL

There are people on the other side,
I am sure of it this time.
Something is wrong.

Horatio snorts like it's impossible to even imagine.

HORATIO

Every month it's something new with
you. Stumblin' around the docks
with some half-baked conspiracy.

KAJAL

(weakly)
Horatio, this time --

HORATIO

Goodnight, Doctor.

The doors close on her.

INT. ELEVATOR - SAME

Kajal stares at the floor with her fists clenched, her face
unreadable. She unfurls a fist to REVEAL the candy wrapper.
She holds it tight, again, like a lifeline.

Her face stones with resolve.

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY

With the sun setting fast, the air gets colder and it shows
as Benson leads the team to his laboratory. Brian carries
Reno over his shoulder like he weighs nothing.

Benson kicks aside a dead bush to reveal a large, metal door
frozen shut. The handle and padlock are covered in hard ice.

Benson picks up a nearby rock and slams it against the lock. It's not the first time he's tried to break it.

Brian tosses Reno off his shoulders unceremoniously into the snow, walks up to the door.

BRIAN
Excuse me, Professor.

With Benson to his side, Brian VIOLENTLY KICKS the door. In a shrapnel cloud of ice, the door swings open like a beaten opponent.

ALL look on, impressed - maybe slightly scared. Cassandra drags Reno inside like a bag of trash.

INT. LABORATORY - DAY

The inside is stale and unwelcoming as they pile in. Mona tries to close the door against the cold, but the lock's broken.

BRIAN
Sorry about that.

MONA
(giving up)
Don't worry. How's your leg?

BRIAN
Still attached, so I've had worse.

Benson collects mechanical debris from around the abandoned lab and tinkers in the corner.

BENSON
Your leg's come off?

BRIAN
Not all the way. Just, almost.

MONA
Oh that's nasty.

CASSANDRA
(shivering)
That's what you get for trying to sneak up on a saw-toothed seagull.

Brian takes off his coat to bundle Cassandra with it. He's so large, his clothes dwarf her.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

It's freezing, how are you so warm?

Benson turns around and presents his invention: a double-coil heater. It burns bright and everyone huddles closer for warmth.

BENSON

How can you stand it?

BRIAN

Oh, the cold's never bothered me --

BENSON

No, the injuries and the pain. How can you stand it again and again?

BRIAN

It's what I'm for. I mean, being a shield, a weapon, and back-up all in one leaves the body sore and a little cut up, but if you get the job done, it's satisfying.

BENSON

That sounds horrible. All that for the glitz and glamour of being a Keeper?

BRIAN

The stuff that comes with it, the rockstar stigma, I couldn't care less about. I do what I do so the smart people can work in the field and stay alive.

BENSON

You'd rather walk with a limp, or go blind or deaf for the rest of your life then, what, let some doctor or engineer get shot?

Cassandra looks at Brian, asking the same question.

BRIAN

(beat)

Eh, I'm already deaf in one ear, half blind in my right eye, I can't feel my hands most of the time, and I'm pretty sure I've got a bald spot right here.

BENSON

Oh Jesus.

BRIAN

Yeah, I'm not even thirty I should
have a full head of hair.

They all stare at Brian, but he's flippant and in an easy
mood.

CASSANDRA

You should just retire.

BRIAN

I'll retire, one day. Everyone
retires.

They silently warm their hands over the heater.

MONA

What you do, McKee, what every
Guard sacrifices, is more than I
could ask of anyone.

Brian gives her a quiet, thanking nod. Cassandra fidgets and
rifles through her bag, bringing out the broken locator. She
lays it out on the floor. Benson is drawn to it.

BENSON

Doesn't look good.

CASSANDRA

No. It'd be easier to fix if the
damn circuit wasn't in half. Those
take time and tools we don't have.

BENSON

(quietly)
The battery's gone.

Her head snaps up at that.

CASSANDRA

What?
(looking)
No, no, no - shit. Well, what've
you got here? The heater --

BENSON

What's left of the solar power
storage.

CASSANDRA

(reaching for the heater)
Then let's use it.

BENSON

It wouldn't be any use, the storage was enough to heat the coils, but we need enough of a kick to get a signal across the dimensional waves.

CASSANDRA

How much is that? Bridge Theory isn't my strong point.

Brian's head shoots up.

BRIAN

Doth my ears deceive me? The Cassandra Stavros saying she doesn't know?

Benson shoots her a look of confused recognition.

BENSON

You are Cassandra Stavros?

CASSANDRA

And?

She's challenging him to say something, and a tense beat passes.

BENSON

When I left, you had some of the best scores I've ever seen. We might just get out of this, if we put our heads together.

(still amazed)

Cassandra Stavros. I never thought...

(normal)

Let me get my things here.

He goes through his own bag and lays out his communicator. After a thought, he paces the room and collects every bit and piece of tech he finds.

CASSANDRA

(re: his communicator)

Nice work, Prof.

BENSON

I'd been trying to send a signal for the last three years, and nearly given up hope, but then a thought hit me.

(MORE)

BENSON (CONT'D)

The flexibility principle! The idea that it's not a straight line -

-

CASSANDRA

The what?

Benson deposits the tech in the growing pile and starts drawing in the dirt. Two circles connected by a waving line.

BENSON

One circle is the Dock, our home, the other is wherever we are, be it a new dimension, an alternate reality, or some parallel universe.

MONA

Wait, which is it?

BENSON

No one knows. That's the beauty of Bridge Theory, it's all just theory.

CASSANDRA

And the line? What's that?

BENSON

Whatever energy or power that creates the rift. We detect it, capture it, and tether it to the Dock, and call it the Bridge. It's unstable, but flexible - there is no way to predict or control where it goes, only that it will land on the pads when the pad is activated from the Dock.

MONA

It's not a power we can control?

BENSON

Only harness. If I were to use an analogy, we are children who've simply found a gun. Time will tell when we accidentally shoot ourselves with it.

MONA

And without the locator to signal the Dock, the gun's pointed in the wrong direction.

BENSON

There's no way the Bridge will find us if we don't have the signal.

BRIAN

So how do we fix this? What kind of power do we need?

Benson has an answer, but doesn't like it.

CASSANDRA

What is it?

BENSON

Before they left me here, my team built a transmitter to communicate with the Academy directly.

CASSANDRA

(getting excited)

We can use the signal anchor from the transmitter. This is great! This is -- why aren't you -- this is great why aren't you celebrating?

BENSON

Because it's across the valley.

MONA

Then we'll go and get it.

BENSON

It's across the valley because the Raiders stole it six months ago.

Oh no.

BRIAN

I'll get it back.

Brian stands up and puts his tactical vest back on.

BENSON

You can't be serious, they have huge numbers this time of year.

BRIAN

We can't wait them out. How long will the Council keep that Bridge up? There's nothing here, no resources and full of Hostiles, what'd be the use?

The reality is hitting them all. They're fighting two fights.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

I'd say we have, at most, the next twenty-four hours to get back or there won't be a Dockside anchor to send the signal to.

Mona gets up and shakes her hands out.

MONA

Then I guess we have no other choice.

BRIAN

Commander?

MONA

We're getting that transmitter back, we're fixing the locator, and we are going home because I am not going to die like this!

BENSON

Now, hold on. We can't jump ahead of ourselves.

MONA

We don't have the time to sit here and plan.

CASSANDRA

And we don't have the resources to go in head first. Trust me, I'm always the first one in, but we need a plan, an outline of a plan at least! I'm impulsive, but I'm not stupid.

MONA

I am the Commander, if I say we go, we go.

CASSANDRA

At least I'm trying to keep us all alive --

Mona slams Cassandra against the wall.

MONA

I went into the military to get off the streets, dedicated my life and body to the Council and maybe not every order was a cake walk, but I did it for the good of the planet. Summum Pretium, right? What's it mean?

CASSANDRA

(bitterly)
The highest price.

MONA

And that sometimes means doing things you don't like. It's about time you learned --

Cassandra pushes Mona off her.

CASSANDRA

You think you're the only one who's been loyal to the Council? Think you're so high and mighty? We trusted them too, once. All my life I'd been trying to be the best, just so I could help, but when I tried to keep my fucking integrity, I was just someone to slander and throw aside. Brian's the last of his family because they all gave the highest price, every single one of them! The Professor's been here, alone, for three years and left to die like the rest of us. Your allegiance doesn't make you untouchable because they threw you away too!

Brian puts a heavy hand on her shoulder.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

Simon will find us a path to take.

Shrugging off Brian's hand, she turns away to work on SIMN, leaving an awkward silence behind.

INT. LABORATORY - NIGHT - HOURS LATER

They all huddle around the heater, but dressed and ready. Brian watches the last of the sunset.

MONA

You're sure the night will give us cover?

BENSON

The raiders move in the day, they don't have any defenses against night stealth because no one tries to sneak up on them. It's a death sentence.

BRIAN

So was this mission.

He walks over and kicks Reno awake.

RENO

Wha -- ow! My head.

BRIAN

Get up, we're leaving.

RENO

What? I thought we were stuck here?

BRIAN

Just get up.

He pulls Reno to his feet as they all leave the cave. Reno follows out into the --

FOREST

Where they navigate the dark rocks and snow.

RENO

Where are we going?

MONA

Keep quiet or the Raiders will hear you.

Mona leads them out and they line single-file onto a --

CLIFF'S EDGE

With Mona at the head, Cassandra, Reno, Benson, and then Brian. Reno whimpers in fear with just the idea. Cassandra catches Bensons' eye and they share a sly look.

CASSANDRA
 (messing with him)
 Sh, or the Raiders will find us.
 You don't want that, Reno.

BENSON
 (going along)
 They'll scalp you after chopping
 off all your limbs because they
 love to hear their victims scream.

CASSANDRA
 Huh, the same thing I had in mind
 for him.

BENSON
 Yes but they kill their victims
 after that.

CASSANDRA
 Oh, see that's where I'd get
 inventive.

He's too terrified to say anything. Brian just chuckles.

MONA
 Keep. Quiet.

Cassandra giggles quietly, but suddenly --

An ARROW lodges into the mountainside right in front of her
 face.

A RAIDER SCOUT has seen them, and he BLOWS A HORN to alert
 the others. Soon, a small gang of horn-blowing SCOUTS are
 shooting arrows.

The team runs along the cliff edge and dive out onto --

THE VALLEY

Where high, white grass keeps them hidden. They crouch and
 run, but they can't keep sight of each other. Three Raider
 Scouts wade through the grass with bows and spears pointed.

Benson stumbles blindly in the grass, reaching out, but
 there's nothing until --

He's pulled aside into a

DEN

It's just a small dirt cave, with abandoned feathers and fur debris. Benson can't move, until,

BRIAN (O.S.)
It's just me, calm down.

He turns to see Brian.

BENSON
You scared the hell out of me, ya damned wallaper.

BRIAN
Aw, it's so cute when you talk Scottish to me. Should I sweet talk you, too?

BENSON
(flustered)
I am a grown man.

BRIAN
And I'm single.

The GRASS RUSTLES and Brian turns Benson into the cave, putting himself in front. They stay quiet, the FOOTSTEPS are heavy, Raider steps, and it gets closer, closer. No one breathes as the Raider Scout passes the den.

After a beat, Benson takes his iron-grip from Brian's arm, a little embarrassed. Brian's all charm as he says,

BRIAN (CONT'D)
Don't worry, Professor. You're safe with me --

A SCREAM interrupts them.

The color washes from Brian's face.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
Cassandra.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. VALLEY - NIGHT

Cassandra is RIPPED from the grass by a gnarled, gloved hand. She pulled into a caravan of Raider Scouts and passed between them.

Each have their say about what to do with her, picking at her vest and gear, confused. One takes out a knife and holds it to her face --

But he's SHOT in the shoulder. They all turn to see MONA striding up to them with her GUN pointed and trained on them. She takes another shot and one Scout falls dead.

The others get mad. Cassandra is held fast by one of the Scouts and the rest charge Mona. She can't shoot them all, and empties her clip before they get to her.

She kicks out, fighting desperately, but they overwhelm her and tie her hands behind her back. The Scouts tie her and Cassandra together and start walking.

CASSANDRA

(whispering)

What were you thinking?

MONA

That they'll take us right to the transmitter.

Cassandra's impressed, but they're tugged violently along and off the Valley. She casts a look behind.

Brian watches as they disappear from the grass, with Benson holding him back. Brian punches the ground.

BRIAN

Dammit!

He gets up and stalks back and forth like a pacing tiger.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

What do we do? How do I fix this?

(to Benson)

Do you have a plan?

BENSON

I... I don't. This is too much, we have to call for reinforcements --

BRIAN

Are you even hearing yourself?
Reinforcements?

BENSON

I mean, we could go get the
transmitter, find it, fix the
locator - I still have it - and
convinced them to --

BRIAN

Go home? Even if it were easy, if
home was just three steps away, I
would never just leave them out
there.

RENO (O.S.)

Don't you care about your own life?

Reno comes limping from the grass.

BENSON

Where the hell were you, ya bawbag?
Hiding under a rock?

RENO

(yes)

No! I vote for just going home.

BRIAN

If you can manage it, fix the
locator and go home. I don't care,
because the only thing I care about
I just saw taken by some Hostiles
and she needs my help, she trusts
me.

(to Benson)

I could use your help to find the
way.

Brian offers his hand, but Benson doesn't move.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

How can you stand it? The guilt?

Brian stalks off, checking one of his guns, preparing it.
Benson watches him go.

RENO

What a damn patriot, makes me sick
thinking how much of a tool he is.
Summum Pretium, he's the damn
poster boy, right Professor?

Benson watches Brian leave, but starts walking through the grass towards him. Like he doesn't even realize, he makes a choice and starts to run.

BENSON

Wait!

He catches up to Brian.

BRIAN

Professor?

BENSON

You're right. We can't leave them.

Brian wraps his arm around Benson's shoulder.

BRIAN

Looks like I got to you.

BENSON

You'll literally be the death of me.

BRIAN

Aw, you're safe with me, Professor. Let's go get our girls back. Not implying they're damsels in distress, though.

BENSON

God help us if they ever heard you say that.

Reno doesn't know what to do, so he follows Benson and Brian.

EXT. ARCTIC - NIGHT

Among the icy desert stands a well-built system of huts and tents. A large fire burns in the middle with the other Raiders around it. They perk up with the sound of a horn. A scout horn.

The group of Raider Scouts tug Cassandra and Mona through the camp. Hands grab out at them, but don't pull.

Something catches Cassandra's eye. A big piece of tech sits off to the side.

CASSANDRA

(to Mona; whispering)
The transmitter.

She's knocked on the head by one of the Scouts. She stays silent.

They're thrown into a well-made cage meant for an animal of half their size. One Scout stays to watch them.

INT. CAGE - SAME

They rub at their wrists, still tied.

MONA

Maybe I should start hitting you,
to get you to shut up.

That breaks the tension.

CASSANDRA

You already know that doesn't work.
The transmitter looked in one
piece, so finding what we need
won't be hard.

MONA

Except we're in here.

CASSANDRA

I don't think for long. Brian will
find us.

MONA

I didn't peg you as the faithful
type.

CASSANDRA

Not faith. Fact. I'm a scientist,
and I know Brian will come from
tested hypothesis. He's saved me
before, he'll do it again.

Beat.

MONA

So, you were on a team before?

CASSANDRA

It's not in my file, I know. A lot
of stuff isn't. It was only for a
year, and it ended... badly, so
they just expunged it all.

MONA

Long enough to need saving.

CASSANDRA

It was never on a mission.

Awkward silence floats between them. The camp grows in activity around them.

MONA

What do you think's going on?

CASSANDRA

They're probably going to eat us tomorrow. Why else keep us alive?

MONA

For someone so young, you're spectacularly bitter.

CASSANDRA

What can I say? I've always been ahead of my age group. That's in my file.

Mona watches the camp, sees her own, eventual, death. She takes a long breath.

MONA

I didn't kill him.

Cassandra stares at her like a deer in headlights.

MONA (CONT'D)

The reports said I did, I said I did, in the trial, but I didn't really. I know what the Council's like, even if I defend them. They told me that the mission was so important that I had to do whatever was called for to finish it. It was maybe seven years ago --

CASSANDRA

You don't have to tell me.

MONA

I want someone to know the truth. Please.

(beat)

It was seven years ago and I was leading a team through swamplands with some important treaties. They were settling some lumber company across the Bridge. So, really important, you know?

(MORE)

MONA (CONT'D)

But, we were attacked by some kind of crocodiles, and they were bullet proof and - sorry - and they got Morris, they got my Guard. I didn't want to leave him. He knew I wouldn't. We went through the Academy together he knew I wouldn't leave him as long as there was a chance to get him back alive.

CASSANDRA

So he shot himself, to keep you from making that choice.

Mona stares at her.

MONA

How did you --

CASSANDRA

Brian would do the same thing. You had one hell of a friend. But why tell everyone you did it?

MONA

He was Islamic. If his family knew he committed suicide, they would hate him for it. I couldn't let that happen.

CASSANDRA

So you rather they, and the world, hated you instead?

Mona holds her knees to her chest. She's scared, and alone, with so many secrets weighing her down.

Cassandra watches her with empathy, and they sit in silence until she reaches out and touches Mona on the hand.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

Thank you for telling me, even if it was only because we're gonna die.

MONA

I haven't told anyone. It's almost a relief.

Cassandra chews her lip for a beat.

CASSANDRA

I was raped.

Now Mona stares at her, incredulous.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

That's why they kicked me off the team, and why I can't get another job.

MONA

Because it'd bring bad press?

A beat, then,

CASSANDRA

Because it was my Commanding officer, and I didn't want him to get away with it.

Mona doesn't have anything to say. She doesn't have to.

Another RAIDER comes over to the cell and RIPS it open. He pulls Cassandra from the ground by the hair. Mona tries to fight him, but he slaps her aside and INTO the bars.

He drags Cassandra, kicking, into the camp and out of sight.

END ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

EXT. ARCTIC - NIGHT

Brian, on his knees, strikes a pile of dry tinder and breathes into the sparks, making fire. Benson nearly pushes Brian aside to put his hands out, almost touching the small flames. Reno sits beside him. They're both freezing.

BENSON
(shivering)
I'm sorry --

BRIAN
Don't worry about it, Professor.
We can afford a little stop so you
don't freeze to death.

BENSON
Please, sit with us.

Brian sits on a rock, looking into the distance. The bonfire of the Raider camp is just a small dot ahead. He unwraps a piece of candy and pops it in his mouth.

BRIAN
I'll keep watch.

A long, somber beat passes before the faint sounds of Brian's song starts. It's a sad sound.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
(faintly)
"...my only sunshine/You make me
happy/when skies are grey."

Benson and Reno share a look. Guilty.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
(faintly)
"You'll never know dear/how much I
love you/Please don't take my
sunshine away."

Reno stands up and leaves.

RENO
I'm going to take a piss.

BRIAN
Let's hope some snow dog gets him.

BENSON
There aren't any snow dogs here.
Just regular dogs.

BRIAN
That's always good news. Three
years is a long time to be alone.

A quiet beat.

BENSON
Yeah.

BRIAN
Were you lonely?

BENSON
I'm only human.

Brian slides down and joins Benson.

BRIAN
Did you know any of the Indigenous?

BENSON
They were the closest things I had
to friends, to family, for the last
few years.

BRIAN
Were you, uh, involved with any?

BENSON
I am a man of observational
science, I don't get involved.

BRIAN
Sorry, right.
(then,)
What about, uh, Dockside? Any
special lady waiting for you? For
the good news of your return?

BENSON
No one's back home waiting for me.

BRIAN
Oh, good, because it'd be really
awkward to ask you out if you were,
like, married, or something.

BENSON
This isn't the time for jokes.

BRIAN

It was a suggestion. I don't joke about these things.

Benson looks into the fire, and then to Brian. Their eyes linger.

BENSON

I'm sorry, I don't think anything between us would ever work.

BRIAN

What, do I remind you of an ex or something?

(off his look)

What? Really?

Beat.

BENSON

So far, you're a better.

Brian laughs.

BRIAN

Just wait until you get to know me -

-

RENO rushes in, barely zipping up his pants. His face is sallow.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

He points over to an approaching duo of RAIDERS, jogging towards the camp. They're talking between each other and haven't noticed Brian, Benson, or Reno.

Brian smothers the fire and herds the other two behind him, waiting, watching the Raiders pass.

They keep talking as they pass the makeshift camp. Benson gasps -- and they're caught.

Brian lashes out, striking with an inhuman force. One Raider slams his spear over Brian's head, but it cracks in half and Brian has his arm around the Raider's neck, instantly snapping it to the side.

The other Raider tries to run, but Brian catches him, tosses him down to the ground and takes the spear-head of the broken spear to PLUNGE it into the Raider's heart.

Brian stands, the classic victor with blood shot over his face and breathing heavy from the adrenaline. Reno is impressed.

RENO

Damn.

BRIAN

(to Benson)

What's wrong?

Benson's terrified of Brian, shaken and horrified, but he swallows it down.

BENSON

The women are in trouble. They were talking about it, before --

Without a word, Brian takes off running, Benson and Reno behind him.

EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

Cassandra is being thrown from one Raider to the next. It's almost a game to them, watching her fight.

INT. CELL - SAME

Mona bites the ropes that hold her wrists bound tight, but when the Guard sees, he slams his hand against the cell bars.

THROUGH THE BARS she sees Cassandra fall to the ground. The Raiders surround her again. Another SCREAM.

Mona watches the Guard, engrossed with the Raiders play their game. Her wrists are still knotted together. She threads her hands through a gap in the cell, over the Guard's head.

She throws her hands over the Guard and mercilessly chokes him. He struggles, his hands slapping the bars, his throat giving squeaks when he wants to shout -- Mona pulls him tighter and tighter against the bars.

Gradually, he stops moving and falls limp. Mona unhooks her arms from his throat and grabs for the knife he wears. She cuts her ties and turns the rudimentary lock on the cell door. It's for pigs, not people with thumbs.

She keeps the knife close and creeps into the camp. From the corner of her eye, she sees the transmitter, left alone and ready for the taking. Cassandra screams again.

Mona picks up a discarded sword and rolls her shoulders before --

She BOUNDS into the camp with her teeth bared and the sword swinging. The blade cuts across a throat and lodges into another body, stuck. She drops it and starts to stab with the knife.

They swarm her in an uneven fight --

A GUN POPS and Raiders go down with headshots. Brian comes barreling into the camp with a gun in each hand, his marksmanship is unnaturally perfect.

Benson runs around him and picks Cassandra from the ground.

BENSON

Are you okay?

CASSANDRA

The transmitter. It's that way.

He helps her walk as she guides the way, through the camp, to the transmitter.

BENSON

Yes. Yes!

He picks out a piece of the circuitry and fishes out the locator from his bag. Cassandra pries out a battery and hands it to him - only to grab his gun and shoot quickly over his shoulder.

A Raider slumps dead with a shot to the chest. Benson works on with a small soldering iron.

BENSON (CONT'D)

This is it. I think this will work.

CASSANDRA

I wanna celebrate, but let's get the hell out of here first.

BENSON

Right.

He packs up the locator and stands. Cassandra puts two fingers in her mouth and whistles shrilly, twice. It doesn't take a second for Brian, Reno, and Mona to show up.

CASSANDRA

We got it.

MONA

Then what the hell are we waiting
for? Come on.

They take off running towards the anchor. Brian turns back just enough to toss a grenade into the camp. He walks away and doesn't turn back for the explosion. Badass.

INT. DOCK - DAY

Unlike before, the Dock is SWARMING with people, but they aren't dressed as personnel. A MOB of civilians, from the elderly to children on shoulders, they stand opposite the landing pads behind a blockade. One of the pads, 32-P, is marked off with a monster of a bulldozer beside it.

Kajal makes her way to the front of the crowd. She's stopped at the blockade.

A MAN with his SON stand beside her.

MAN

This is exciting, I haven't seen a
Bridge demolished since I was your
age.

SON

Dad, no one's on the other side,
right? How would they get home?

MAN

The Council would never do that.
Look, the countdown's starting.

A DIGITAL CLOCK is brought out and the half hour countdown starts.

Kajal grips the candy wrapper, worried.

EXT. ARCTIC - NIGHT

The team, exhausted, runs to the anchor, lead back by SIMN. Benson's eye catches on the destroyed tent, and just beyond it, the bodies, but he doesn't have time to mourn.

Brian, Mona, and Reno are shoveling new snow away from the landing pad. Benson kneels in the snow and paws at the frozen control pad.

BRIAN

Excuse me, Professor.

He KNEES the pad door and it bends just enough for him to pull it back. Benson gets to work unplugging and re-assembling.

BENSON

What's the energy level on the other side?

Cassandra brushes the snow and sees the low energy levels.

CASSANDRA

Not good. It's at 13.

BENSON

Outdated piece of pissing jobby.

MONA

Is that bad?

BENSON

(still working)

I have to use the reserve power to get the signal strong enough to cross.

CASSANDRA

I'd say you're trying to kill us if I didn't know better.

(off Mona's look)

That'll use all the power we have and our chance of survival goes from slim to absolute zero if this doesn't work.

They all stop and look to Mona, waiting for her order.

MONA

Keep working. One good chance is better than a thousand bad ones.

BENSON

(back to work)

If this signal reaches, we'll have about a minute of power for someone to activate the Dock.

RENO

That's not a lot of time.

MONA

Don't worry, traitor. You'll get across.

RENO

And my career will be over--

MONA

You're lucky your life isn't over.

But it is, to him.

He sees Mona's knife and grabs it. He tries to stab her, but BRIAN steps between them in time to take the knife to the chest.

Reno balks, steps away, and runs. No one goes after him.

Brian falls into the snow, but Cassandra's there to catch him. Benson watches.

CASSANDRA

Hurry - keep working! He needs medical attention.

(to Brian)

Hey, you'll be alright --

A LONG BEEP comes from the landing pad.

MONA

What was that?

BENSON

I... I'm sorry... but there's no signal from the other side. We were too late.

Beat. All hope is gone.

BRIAN

(dying)

Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing's going to change. It's not.

Cassandra slaps his cheek.

CASSANDRA

Come on Brian, stay with us.

BENSON

If someone were to activate the Bridge from the Dock, manually, we might have a chance.

CASSANDRA

Who would be that stupid?

INT. DOCK - SAME

Kajal is a face of worry among a crowd of celebrating sheep.

The countdown reads "00:30". Thirty seconds.

She reaches in her pocket and glances at Horatio, but he's watching the clock. The crowd roars for the FOREMAN as he steps up and waves to the crowd.

FOREMAN

Citizens! If you will please watch
your step, we're going to start the
machines!

The roar of the machine matches the roar of the bulldozer as it groans to life. Kajal watches the clock.

6

It's now or never. She jumps over the blockade --

5

-- and throws a smoke grenade from her pocket. It explodes --

4

-- the fire sprinklers rain down and the alarm BLARES --

3

-- she's at the landing pad and grabs the switch --

2

-- Horatio, grabs her shoulder and she turns to him, her eyes wet and pleading.

1

-- he lets her go and she PULLS the lever, restarting the Bridge --

FOREMAN (CONT'D)

That should be disconnected!

The pillar of light slams down and pushes the smoke away. Everyone waits for something to happen.

Nothing.

FOREMAN (CONT'D)

Someone turn that off --

A body materializes from the light and falls to the Dock floor. Mona. Another body, Benson, jumps out followed by Brian and Cassandra.

Brian, absent of the knife, bleeds out onto the wet, cement floor. The crowd looks on, horrified into silence--

CASSANDRA

We need a medic! Now!

Kajal answers the call and rips the last of Brian's clothes off, exposing the wound. Horatio totters to her side with the first aid kit. They share a look. Understanding.

More MEDICS flood the scene. They help Brian onto a gurney. Kajal and Cassandra follow it, leaving the scene of a very different show.

INT. PETERSON'S OFFICE - THE NEXT DAY

The tense politeness from before is gone as Mona leans against the credenza, arms crossed. There's a newspaper under her arm. Peterson can't meet her eyes.

PETERSON

I didn't mean to have you killed.

MONA

'Quietly disposed of' is the preferred phrasing of the Council.

Mona tosses the newspaper onto Peterson's desk. The headline reads "COUNCIL CALLED FOR DESTRUCTION OF ACTIVE BRIDGE".

MONA (CONT'D)

There's nothing quiet about it now.
Your name's all over that.

PETERSON

What do you want from me?

Mona leans on her desk, narrowing in on Peterson.

MONA

What you promised me. For them all.

Peterson finally looks her in the eye.

PETERSON

Welcome back, Commander.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Kajal stands at the open door of a dull hospital room, unseen by Cassandra who reads from a book. Her feet are propped onto the hospital bed where Brian's asleep and hooked up to an EKG.

CASSANDRA

... if you've been up all night and cried till you have no more tears left in you - you will know that there comes in the end a sort of quietness. You feel as if nothing is ever going to happen again.

She sets the book down, on top twenty more, and watches him sleep.

There's a knock on the door and Mona comes in. Kajal follows.

MONA

How is he?

Cassandra picks another book, Dr. Suess, and opens it.

CASSANDRA

The mission's done, you don't have to pretend to care.

There's nothing in the room save a single "get well soon" card on the night table. Kajal sets a bag of hard candy beside it.

BRIAN

(waking up)

Thank you.

KAJAL

Oh, it's no problem, they were selling them downstairs I just thought --

BRIAN

No, thank you for saving them.

CASSANDRA

Don't you mean for saving you?

He just holds her hand. He notices Mona.

BRIAN

Commander, I didn't think I'd see you so soon.

MONA

I wanted to deliver this news in person.

CASSANDRA

What news?

KAJAL

(then,)

I should go.

Mona stops her.

MONA

This concerns you too. Our team needs a doctor, I thought you were the best choice.

That shocks everyone.

CASSANDRA

Team?

Just then, Benson comes in, newly shaved and groomed to a handsome perfection, with a large "get well" teddy bear in his arms. He stops when he sees the gathering. Mona gives him a smile.

MONA

Team Delta. Bridge Keepers.

Benson closes the door.

SHOW TITLE

END ACT FIVE