

EGO, OR THE LAST FIGHTER FOR FREEDOM

Written by

Lou Drangi

lou.drangi@pm.me

EXT. HOUSE IN FLAMES - NIGHT

A two-story brick building in a quiet night.

Dark, until flames rise behind the first floor windows, and soon engulf the whole place.

Two indistinct figures come out of the burning building, each carrying a body. In a rush, they disappear into the night.

From the shadows, a third figure emerges. It rushes through the ablaze wooden door, and disappears inside. After a long few seconds, it comes out, carrying a child.

A few feet away from the flames, it drops to its knees and starts sobbing quietly.

EXT. BUSY STREET - DAY

A packed pedestrian street. Aligned on each side, brick buildings exactly like the one we saw burning, all falling into ruin, eaten up by ivy and thorn-trees.

In the middle of the crowd a man stands out in his blue jeans and red shirt. Unlike other passersby, he walks like he's got places to be and business to deal with - this is ANT (20s).

He passes a long line of people waiting by the side of the road, and slows down to take a look at what's happening:

The first person in line, ROSH, an ageless man in a dirty tank top, steps forward. He is greeted by a twenty-something in a purple uniform, TARIK.

TARIK

How may I help you?

ROSH

I pulled out some weed. It was in the middle of the road, someone could've tripped on it.

He hands Tarik a ridiculously small weed. Tarik takes it, and throws it over his shoulder on a large pile behind him.

He grabs a small red token from a purse full of them.

TARIK

Five credits.

Rosh seizes it, puts it in his pocket and leaves, smiling.

Tarik steps aside to address everyone waiting.

TARIK (CONT'D)

We only have fifteen credits left to distribute today! People who stay in the queue will be served first tomorrow.

Nobody moves, except Tarik who steps back to his place.

TARIK (CONT'D)

Next!

The next person in line steps forward, as Ant shakes his head and leaves the scene.

EXT. JENNY'S - DAY

A dried up fountain on a small but busy square.

One building stands out, shaped just like the others but painted bright red, with its name spelled out in white letters - Jenny's, the most popular bar in the neighborhood.

Ant climbs down a ladder leant against the red wall, a can of paint in his hand and a paintbrush between his teeth.

He reaches the ground and contemplates his work, satisfied.

LUCY, a athletic woman a bit older than Ant and wearing the same purple uniform as Tarik, arrives jogging.

LUCY

Ant!

ANT

Hey Lucy! You're in a hurry?

LUCY

Yeah, I cover someone's shift at the Tower this morning. But I still had to bring you your payment.

She takes a black token out of her pocket and throws it at him.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Here. Five hundred credits.

ANT

Wasn't it supposed to be a thousand?

LUCY

Well, let's just say I kept my well-deserved share.

She winks at him and walks away.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Bye! I'll be at the Warehouse later if you need anything else!

Ant frowns, but a look at the fresh paint job cheers him up.

At least until the wall of a nearby building crumbles down and he gets covered by a cloud of dust.

INT. JENNY'S - DAY

Inside the bar, the morning sun shines bright through what used to be the roof of the now open-top building.

The place is packed - people play cards, chat, and all of them drink the same green liquid from worn-out glass bottles.

From behind the counter, JENNY, a blonde built like an ox, grabs a bottle and hands it to a dust-covered Ant.

JENNY

On me. For the paint.

He gently rejects it, and buries his face in his hands.

ANT

I'm fine, thanks.

JENNY

You sure look fine...

She leans closer to him.

JENNY (CONT'D)

You know, there are a few fresh faces back there today. Maybe you could give them your little speech.

He lifts up his head. She smiles at him, encouraging.

ANT

What's the point? They won't care. They never do.

JENNY

You can't know if you don't try.

Reluctant, Ant turns around to face the patrons. Sitting closest to him is Rosh, Rosh the weed-puller from earlier - he sips the drink his five credits got him.

As soon as he notices Ant, he gets up with a smirk, walks to him and puts a hand on his shoulder.

ROSH

Hey Ant. Not gonna give us that pep talk of yours today?

Ant casts a black look at him.

ANT

Why? You wanted a good laugh? You'd ruin it again.

ROSH

I don't think you need my help for that.

He takes the bottle Jenny offered Ant.

ROSH (CONT'D)

Can I?

Ant shrugs. Rosh downs it.

ANT

It's important to me, you know. I can't just sit here all day doing nothing, like you do.

ROSH

Well, maybe you should give it a try. Have fun, enjoy life. That's what everyone is doing, and I'd say they're doing pretty well.

ANT

And how I am supposed to *enjoy life* while the whole city collapses? While people are left without a home, and--

ROSH

--Hey, hey, don't try that bullshit on me. Don't tell me you care about anything else than that girl of yours in the Tower.

As he finishes his sentence, the wooden door cracks open and HELEN, an exhausted-looking woman in worn out clothes, collapses in the bar.

All eyes are on her, as she slowly crawls on the ground. Each of her spasmodic movements comes with a METALLIC SCREEEEEECH, like a broken automaton.

She stops moving, and talks in a faint voice:

HELEN
Please... Elixir...

Ant studies the patrons' reactions - they either look away or demonstrate a sudden interest in the etchings on the tables and the bottom of their bottles.

He takes a red token out of his pocket, and slides it to Jenny, who doesn't take it but still gives him a bottle.

He then gets up, approaches the immobile woman, gently lifts her head, and brings the liquid to her lips.

She takes a few mouthfuls of the Elixir, and moves again - smoothly, without screeching.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Thank you. Thank you so much. I...
I thought I was lost. I thought I
was Broken.

Ant assists her to stand up.

ANT
It's alright. You're gonna be
alright.

He brings her to the counter.

ANT (CONT'D)
Jenny's gonna take care of you,
okay?

Helen nods. Ant takes his black token out of his pocket, hands it to her. She takes it, stunned.

ANT (CONT'D)
(to Rosh)
See? I care.

Rosh rolls his eyes as Ant leaves the bar, contemptuous, under the dumbfounded stares of the crowd.

EXT. THE TOWER - DAY

In a quiet street of the city, WANDA walks briskly. Late 40s, tall, redheaded, eyes assorted to her purple uniform - she gives off a motherly yet terrifying charisma.

She passes a few of the usual brick buildings, until she reaches a more unusual sight: a steel, windowless building, that rises on dozens of stories. This is the Tower.

Wanda takes a magnetic card out of her pocket, swipes it in a slit on the wall - a sliding door swooshes open.

INT. THE TOWER/FIRST FLOOR - DAY

In the Tower, Wanda walks in a dark and narrow corridor. The lights gradually turn on, and reveal her surroundings.

On each side, large glass cylinders, tanks filled with the same greenish liquid people were drinking at Jenny's.

And, in each tank, a body, unconscious. Some in casual clothes, others in the same purple uniform as Wanda. But all wear a headset connected by wires to the top of their tank.

Wanda reaches the end of the corridor - in front of her, the doors of an elevator open. She gets in and presses the last button, to the 70th floor.

INT. THE TOWER/LAST FLOOR - DAY

The last floor of the Tower is a large circular room, empty except for a single tank in the center.

A STUNTED OLD MAN floats in it and in a three-piece suit. GREG, a grizzled man in his fifties and in the same suit as the old man, stands next to the tank.

The doors of the elevator open and Wanda comes out of it.

GREG

Wanda, thank you for coming on such short notice.

WANDA

Is everything alright sir?

He shakes his head, takes out a small piece of paper from his pocket and hands it to her.

GREG

Not really, no. I received this tip
this morning.

Wanda looks at the paper: drawn on it, a simplistic portrait
of a familiar face with a name written below it. Ant.

She turns it over - on the back, the words "Not an EGO" and
"Search at Jenny's". Wanda loses composure for a second.

WANDA

Who gave you that?

GREG

Do you doubt its credibility?

WANDA

Of course not. It's just that I...
I thought I got them all.

GREG

Apparently not. I hope you will do
your best to correct that mistake.

Wanda puts the paper away in her pocket.

WANDA

Yes sir.

Greg firmly grasps her arm.

GREG

Right. You wouldn't want something
to happen to her, would you?

EXT. ANT'S HOME - DAY

Back in the brightness of the city, Ant arrives at a building
in much better shape than its neighbors - no climbing plants
in sight, no holes in the walls, and a door good as new.

He pushes it and gets inside.

INT. ANT'S HOME/FIRST FLOOR - DAY

The first floor of Ant's home is filled to the ceiling with
canned food and bottles of water, empty for the most part.
Ant passes them and takes the stairs to the second floor.

INT. ANT'S HOME/SECOND FLOOR - DAY

The second floor is scarcely furnished - a large wardrobe, and two mattresses laid directly on the ground.

Ant takes a few red tokens out of his pocket, throws them on a tiny stack on a mattress, then goes straight to the stairs that lead to the rooftop.

EXT. ANT'S HOME/ROOFTOP - DAY

On the sun-drenched rooftop, JUNE, a young adult with sky blue eyes and dirt under her nails, tends a large vegetable garden - tomatoes, zucchinis, potatoes...

She picks up a watering can, goes to fill it from a rain barrel, but it's empty. She sighs.

As soon as she hears Ant coming, she drops the watering can and wipes the dirt from her hands.

JUNE

Hey!

ANT

Hi June! I didn't think you'd be back already.

Ant stands at the edge of the rooftop as June sits on a large stone, further back.

For a while they observe the city - the endless rows of brick buildings form an immense grid that stretches for at least a mile in all directions. Most of them have lost their roof or even a floor or two to time and weather.

The only breaks from this monotony are the Tower, at the center, and, to the west, an immense Warehouse. Whatever lies outside of the city is hidden by a Wall higher than any of the buildings - except the Tower.

JUNE

You're early too.

ANT

Yeah, I thought it'd take me longer to finish the paint job.

JUNE

How much did you get?

ANT

Five hundred, but--

JUNE

--That's bullshit! It was supposed to be a thousand!

ANT

I know, but it doesn't matter. I didn't keep them.

JUNE

What?

ANT

A woman came in the bar almost Broken, she needed those credits.

JUNE

And so did we! Why do you always do that?

ANT

Because I have to set an example! I need to convince people it's important to follow us.

Annoyed, she gestures at the garden - or maybe at the city.

JUNE

Yeah, 'cause that worked out well in the last ten years.

Ant doesn't respond, eyes fixed on the Tower. June lays her hand on his shoulder.

JUNE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. Don't worry, we'll get in the Tower, sooner or later. And, actually, I--

ANT

--I feel a bit guilty about all that.

JUNE

What?

ANT

Even if we manage to get in the Tower, and get her out of it, then what?

JUNE

Then what? Then we we'll finally leave this city!

ANT

But what about the people we'll
leave behind?

JUNE

Don't tell me you've started to
believe in what you preach?

ANT

I don't know. Maybe. When I see
people in distress like that woman
I helped, I think that maybe it's
not fair to involve people in our
little scheme without caring about
the consequences for them.

JUNE

Then, I reckon you might be
interested in this little thing.

With a large smile, she reaches for a pocket of her jacket,
and takes out a magnetic card - the same Wanda used earlier.

Ant grabs it, studies it under every angle - he almost drops
it in his excitement.

JUNE (CONT'D)

Careful!

ANT

Is that...?

JUNE

Yep. That's a key to the Tower.

ANT

Where the hell did you get that?

JUNE

Menahem gave it to me.

ANT

Menahem? And why would he do that?

June takes a few steps back.

JUNE

I might have told him about your
whole rescuing-someone-from-the-
Tower plan...

ANT

June! We're supposed to keep a low
profile!

JUNE

Says the guy who exposes his plan weekly at the local bar...

Ant can't help but smile.

ANT

Fair point. But you didn't tell him who this was about, right?

JUNE

Of course I did, I'm that stupid.

ANT

Alright, alright, sorry.

JUNE

So, what do you think we should--

--She's interrupted by a GUNSHOT - distant, but still too close for comfort. They fall silent, focused.

A few seconds pass. Then another shot rings out. And another. As more and more shots are fired, June points to the east.

JUNE (CONT'D)

It's coming from there.

Ant's face drops; he turns around, rushes to the stairs. June grips his arm and stops him in his tracks.

JUNE (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

ANT

To Jenny's. It might be where it's coming from.

June tightens her grip.

JUNE

Then that's definitely not where you should be going! What are you supposed to do there if there's a gunfight?

ANT

I don't know. But I have to do something.

JUNE

Ant, we have the card, we can head straight to the Tower, we don't need them anymore!

ANT

We'll go next, I promise. But I've spent months at Jenny's telling anyone who would listen how important it was to help each other. I'm no hypocrite - if they're in trouble, I have to do something.

She lets go of his arm, hesitates, but finally picks up a large green backpack lying on the ground.

JUNE

Fine. Let's go.

ANT

You don't have to come with me.

JUNE

I know. I'll be careful.

Ant smiles at her, thankful, and they leave the rooftop.

INT. JENNY'S - DAY

The interior of Jenny's bar, dark for a moment as a cloud obstructs the sun. Silent. Ant and June, in shock, stand at the broken-open door.

They face a scene that feels straight out of a painting: every patron is immobile, frozen in their movement, their terror-filled eyes wide open.

Each of them has a bullet hole piercing through their skull - but there isn't a single drop of blood in sight. Instead, each hole reveals an intricate assemble of wires and motherboards protected by a layer of silver-like metal.

Ant and June slowly make their way between the tables.

He caresses a few hands, making sure there's no reaction, while she studies the bodies almost scientifically and stops to take a look through several ripped open heads.

Ant arrives next to Helen, the woman he saved earlier. In her clenched hand is the black token Ant gave her. He retrieves it, surprised - whoever did this didn't do it for the money.

June goes to the counter, observes Jenny. Unlike the others, she isn't scared. Her unmoving hand points straight at the door, menacing.

JUNE
I liked her...

ANT
Everyone did.

JUNE
Then why would someone do that?

Ant shakes his head. Clueless.

June wrinkles her nose.

JUNE (CONT'D)
Something's burning.

She goes to the very back of the room, and crouches next a body resting against the wall.

JUNE (CONT'D)
Ant! Come here!

Ant walks to her, and immediately recognizes Rosh. His head is intact, but his torso is burnt and the shredded flesh reveals the layer of silver-like metal underneath.

ANT
Rosh!

He kneels next Rosh, who blinks slowly and recognizes him.

ROSH
You shouldn't be here...

ANT
I heard the gunshots, I thought I could do something, but I'm here too late. I'm so sorry.

ROSH
You shouldn't be here... She's after you...

June and Ant exchange a concerned look.

JUNE
What do you mean?

ROSH
I told them not to say anything..
But someone led her to your home...

ANT
Who is she?

ROSH
I... I don't know... But she's with
the Tower...

With a chilling CREAK, Rosh puts his hand on Ant's shoulder.

ROSH (CONT'D)
Help me... Please...

ANT
Of course! What do you need?
Elixir?

Rosh shakes his head with a squeak. June takes off her
backpack, goes through it.

ANT (CONT'D)
What then?

Rosh points at what June took from her bag and now holds in
her right hand - an eight-inch long silver blade.

ANT (CONT'D)
What? No, no!

JUNE
It's the best thing we can do. We
can't leave him Broken like that.

ROSH
Thank you...

Ant grabs June's hand to stop her.

JUNE
What? You'd rather leave him in
this deathless agony? No one
deserves that.

ANT
I... I don't know.

JUNE
Well I do. So let me do it. Unless
you'd rather...?

She hands him the knife, but he stands up, steps back, and
turns away from Rosh, helpless.

June lifts her blade, and stabs Rosh right through his
temple, leaving him still, his eyes closed and a light smile
on his face. He's serene, as we--

CUT TO:

INT. THE TOWER - DAY

One of the tanks filled with Elixir, in the Tower. Inside that tank, a YOUNG MAN opens his eyes.

Terrified, he struggles, but the tank won't open. The wired-headset stays strapped to his head. A ROBOTIC VOICE emits a pre-recorded message.

ROBOTIC VOICE

Do not panic. A new EGO will be assigned to you shortly.

The young man falls unconscious.

ROBOTIC VOICE (CONT'D)

Do not panic.

INT. THE TOWER/BODIES ROOM - DAY

A gigantic room below the Tower.

Thousands of immobile bodies, EGOs, all dressed in white and aligned in a grid that starts in the middle of the room.

The first EGO in line, a woman in her thirties, opens her eyes. She looks around her, lost and confused. On her chest, a small badge reads : "EGO #13,145 - Name: ALORA"

On the other side of the room sits Lucy, the woman who gave Ant his credits. She stands up from her chair, surprised.

LUCY

(to herself)

Damn, nineteen in one day. That's got to be a record.

She walks to the awoken EGO to greet her.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Welcome back...

(looking at the name tag)

Alora.

ALORA

Where am I? What happened?

LUCY

You have been reborn, and you may now continue your life as the EGO you've been assigned, Alora.

She clearly knows her speech by heart. She pushes Alora's forward toward the exit, next to where she was seated.

ALORA

What? No, no... I'm Rosh!

LUCY

I understand it might be difficult at first, but you will get used to your new EGO. Any mention of your old one will be highly punishable. Please report anyone who doesn't respect that rule, and you will be highly rewarded.

Alora doesn't respond, still confused, as they arrive at a door. Lucy opens it to reveal a flight of stairs.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Go on!

Hesitant, Alora climbs the steps. Lucy closes the door.

Alora reaches another door, pushes it open and gets dazzled by flooding sunlight.

She steps outside.

EXT. JENNY'S - DAY

Ant and June get out of Jenny's in an awkward silence. In front of the bar, an agitated crowd is standing at a reasonable distance, not daring to get too close from the shooting scene.

June makes her way through the crowd, determined. A few steps behind, Ant follows her.

ANT

June! Wait!

He catches up with her.

ANT (CONT'D)

Where the hell are you going?

JUNE

To the Tower. I thought it was pretty obvious.

He gets in front of her, stands in her way. She has to stop.

ANT

You're not even gonna take a minute to think about it? Maybe we should head back home first, and take some time to--

--He lifts his head to see a column of dark smoke rising to the west, behind June. She turns around to follow his gaze.

JUNE

We're definitely not going home.

ANT

But we're not going to the Tower either. You heard Rosh, she works for them.

JUNE

Yeah, and she's after us. She probably won't expect us there.

ANT

But we can't just barge in there without knowing what to do once we're inside. What if there are guards? Armed, like that woman?

June takes a second to think about it.

JUNE

I guess that's a possibility. But what do you suggest then?

ANT

Well, I know a place where we could at least get some answers.

June recoils.

JUNE

Oh no. Don't tell me you're thinking of--

EXT. MATT'S PARADISE - DAY

ANT

--Matt's Paradise! Where you'll get anything you wish for - as long as luck's on your side!

June and Ant stand, tiny, in front of the so-called Matt's Paradise, a white marble architectural masterpiece.

Two stories high, but as wide as twenty brick buildings, it's the only place that looks like it was inaugurated yesterday.

On the frontispiece, the word "Casino" is written in golden letters, just above a large glass door that lets passerby glance at the crowd inside.

JUNE

I really don't think this is a good idea.

ANT

Why? We've never been there, people don't know us. It's safe.

JUNE

I'm not sure... Menahem warned me not to get too close to Matt. He told me he's dangerous.

ANT

Oh come on! Menahem's the one who taught you how to kill an EGO like you did to Rosh, right? Isn't it a bit ironic of him to call someone dangerous?

JUNE

He taught me how to defend myself, that's all.

ANT

Then you'll know what to do if we get in trouble. And I'll do my best to make sure that doesn't happen.

JUNE

You really think this is the best thing to do?

ANT

One hundred percent.

She sighs.

INT. MATT'S PARADISE/LOBBY - DAY

Inside the marbled lobby, Ant goes straight to the front desk, while June strolls towards the main room, attracted like a moth to a flame by the beauty of what is facing her.

Behind the lobby, with its gold-plated walls, the main room is a gigantic pit where hundreds of people play all kinds of games: poker, blackjack, craps, slot machines...

In the middle stands a large bar made of precious wood, and tens of paintings are hung on the golden walls, except on the back one, occupied by a large mirror.

At the reception, a CLERK in a suit good as new greets Ant.

CLERK

Hello and welcome to Matt's Paradise. How may I help you?

ANT

I'd like some change please.

He takes his black token out of his pocket. The clerk eyes it, envious, then pulls herself together.

CLERK

So, five hundred credits.

ANT

Yeah. I'll take, um, ten purple, ten blue, and twenty red.

CLERK

Right away, sir.

She smiles, and leaves with the black token to a room behind the reception, as June comes back next to Ant.

ANT

So, first impressions?

JUNE

This... This isn't what I expected. It's stunning.

ANT

I knew you'd like it.

The clerk comes back and hands Ant a small bag of tokens.

CLERK

Here you go. Have fun!

ANT

Thank you.

They move away from the front desk, and face the crowd of gamblers.

JUNE

So... What do we do now?

ANT

We need to find Matt. People come here all the time to ask him for favors. I mean, at least that's what I heard.

JUNE

And how do we find him exactly?

ANT

No idea.

JUNE

What?

ANT

Well, he owns the place, it shouldn't be too hard, right?

JUNE

Right... Give me some tokens, I'll go at the bar and try to learn something.

ANT

Alright. I'll be at the poker tables if you need me. And remember: keep a low profile.

She grabs a handful of tokens and leaves without responding.

INT. MATT'S PARADISE/OFFICE - DAY

In a poorly lit small office at the back of the main room, a shadowy silhouette seated on a throne-like armchair observes the gamblers through a one-way mirror - this is MATT.

He scans the beehive facing him, and nonchalantly lifts up a gold-plated walkie-talkie.

MATT

Wanda? He's here.

INT. MATT'S PARADISE/POKER TABLES - DAY

Ant makes his way between the poker tables as a brawl breaks out in the center of the room, near the bar.

He finds an open seat at a table with only two players, and takes it, across from a neat and tidy man in his forties wearing a tailored black suit - PAUL.

On his right is Tarik, the young Tower guard who was distributing credits in the street earlier this morning, and now gambles the tokens he kept for himself.

Ant nods at the two men, and puts his chips in front of him. Paul reaches out to shake his hand.

PAUL

Hi, I'm Paul. I don't believe we've met before.

ANT

I don't think we have.

He shakes Paul's hand but keeps him waiting for a name.

TARIK

And I'm Tarik.

Ant eyeballs the purple uniform, then the large stack of tokens in front of it.

ANT

Yeah. I know.

The croupier deals the card, a new hand starts.

PAUL

That's a lot of credits you've got here.

ANT

Yeah. Took me quite a lot of work.

PAUL

But it's never enough, is it? Greed is such an exquisite poison.

ANT

Is that why people come here?

PAUL

Why else would they be here for?

He calls the big blind, and so does Ant.

TARIK

To be honest I'm just here to have some fun.

Tarik checks, and the croupier reveals the flop.

ANT

Well, actually, I came here wondering if there was any way I could meet Matt.

He bets, Tarik calls.

TARIK

The subject requests an audience with *His Majesty*.

PAUL

I'm afraid that might be difficult. What do you want from him?

Paul raises, and is called by Ant then Tarik.

ANT

A favor--

TARIK

--Like everyone else--

ANT

--Or rather an answer.

The croupier reveals the turn, the fourth common card.

PAUL

An answer?

ANT

Yes. I've grown worried recently. I wonder if my... body is really that safe in the Tower?

He bets a large stack of chips, and Tarik calls instantly.

TARIK

Of course it is!

PAUL

No one asked you.

Paul hesitates a while, observes Ant, but finally calls. The river, the fifth and last card, is revealed.

ANT

But maybe he could answer me. You mean it's well guarded, right?

Once again, he bets, and, once again, Tarik promptly calls.

TARIK

No, not really. But there's no need to, because only three people have a key to get inside - Greg, Wanda and Matt.

PAUL

Maybe we don't need to dive in the details like that.

Paul counts his chips, hesitant.

TARIK

(aside, to Ant)

Paul used to have a key too, but Greg gave it to Wanda.

ANT

Who's Wanda?

PAUL

She works for the Tower. It's all you need to know.

Paul raises - he's all-in.

TARIK

She usually guards Hell's Gate. You know, the door that leads Outside.

PAUL

Tarik. Stop that.

TARIK

But today she had something else to do, so I have to cover her post this evening. Which sucks.

Ant examines Paul's stack of chips, and pushes all of his own forward.

ANT

But let's say someone, somehow, managed to get in the Tower. Does that mean they could free anyone they want?

PAUL

We actually call that murder.

Tarik folds, suddenly quite somber.

TARIK

And it's even worse than that.
There's a... I don't know, an urban
legend or something. It says that,
in the last room of the Tower,
there's a lever, a kind of switch,
that could shut down the whole
Tower, and every single EGO with
it.

PAUL

Tarik, will you shut up!

TARIK

No, I won't shut up! I have a duty
to reassure my fellow citizens!

PAUL

Yeah, and you're obviously great at
it. But I don't think you need to
reassure him.

(to Ant)

You're bluffing, aren't you?

Paul reveals his cards - he has a straight.

Ant smiles, and calmly reveals his - a flush. He wins.

TARIK

Looks like he wasn't.

ANT

Sorry. I got my answer, so I guess
I'm gonna leave.

He slides the tokens to him.

PAUL

You're not going anywhere.

Paul stands up, reaches for a pocket inside his jacket, but
is interrupted by a powerful voice that brings silence to the
whole room.

MATT

Paul!

Behind Paul, Matt stands tall, fierce, his freshly-shaven
beard contrasting beautifully with his splendid pearly silk
dress and his red stilettos.

MATT (CONT'D)

You are *such* a sore loser.

PAUL
But, Matt, he--

MATT
--You.

He points at Ant.

ANT
I wanted to see you, sir.

MATT
I know, I know. Come with me.

INT. MATT'S PARADISE/BAR - DAY

We're back a few minutes earlier, with June who stands a few feet away from the bar, in the center of the main room.

She can't get any closer, as the barman struggles to bring their order - always the same greenish Elixir - to the dozens of patrons agglutinated all around him.

She observes the scene for a while, until a brawl breaks out over spilled Elixir, and she leaves to the slot machines.

INT. MATT'S PARADISE/SLOT MACHINES - DAY

Row after row of flashing lights and gamblers hypnotized by the cherries and the bells rolling in front of them.

June roams for a little while before she's able to find a vacant seat, and sits down next to a man who grumbles and punches the machine in front of him.

JUNE
Not much luck today, eh?

He doesn't even glance at her.

She sighs, and puts a token in the slot of her own machine.

The barrels roll for a while, then stop, one by one--

Cherry.

Cherry.

Cherry.

DING DING DING! The machine rings loudly and the word JACKPOT lights up in large letters.

A cascade of tokens falls from the machine, and June awkwardly tries to catch them under the jealous stares of the people around her.

Some of them get up, try to get a better look. Some step closer, menacing.

June stands up, puts the credits in her pockets, and is ready to leave when a hand lands on her shoulder.

MENAHM

June?

She turns around to face a man in his fifties with a sharp but tired eye and a forgettable outfit - this is MENAHM. Her face lights up, relieved.

JUNE

Menahem!

Menahem pushes her away from the crowd gathered around them, and they weave in and out between the gamblers.

MENAHM

What the hell are you doing here?

JUNE

Some crazy stuff happened, so we thought we should try to meet Matt and--

MENAHM

--I thought I told you to avoid this place! There are some disreputable people around here!

He says, as he picks the pockets of the people they pass by.

JUNE

I know... But there's a killer after us! What else could we do? Plus, you're here too, so it can't be that bad!

Menahem shakes his head.

MENAHM

Why couldn't you just follow our plan?

JUNE

I couldn't simply leave Ant alone!

He shushes her.

MENAHEM

Not so loud! And why not? He can go to the Tower by himself, you know.

JUNE

Well, yeah, but what would be the point?

MENAHEM

What do you mean?

JUNE

I mean that, maybe, I haven't really told you the whole story... Ant wants to get in the Tower to free someone, that part is true. But... I'm going with him, because... well, he's gonna escape the city with me.

Menahem is taken aback.

MENAHEM

What? Why didn't you tell me that sooner?

JUNE

Because of what's happening right now! You're getting mad, because you don't trust him!

MENAHEM

Of course I don't trust him, he brought you here! And you just followed him! What were you thinking?

JUNE

I thought he had some convincing arguments. Unlike you, who's spent the last ten years telling to never ever try to escape, and now tells me to just go to Hell's Gate by myself and kindly ask to be let out, without even telling me why you changed your mind!

Menahem grabs her hand. Calms down.

MENAHEM

Listen, right now is the best time, you need to trust me on that. It's too dangerous for you to stay in the city anyway.

MENAHM (CONT'D)

Let me go with Ant to the Tower,
and he'll join you outside once
he's done. I'm sure he'll be okay
with that.

JUNE

Yeah, you've definitely never met
him...

MENAHM

Then introduce me.

She takes a few seconds to think about it.

JUNE

Fine. He's at the poker tables. But
I'm still going with him to the
Tower. And you have to promise me
you'll be nice with him.

He smiles at her.

MENAHM

I promise.

INT. MATT'S PARADISE/POKER TABLES - DAY

Next to the poker tables, June and Menahem scan the place.

JUNE

He told me he'd be here.

MENAHM

Maybe he left. And maybe that's a
good thing, you know, he--

JUNE

--There!

She rushes through the crowd. Behind her, Menahem follows her
with a limp, and struggles to keep up with her pace.

June arrives next to Ant, escorted by Paul and Matt.

JUNE (CONT'D)

Ant!

The three men turn to face her.

ANT

June!

MATT
Do you know her?

ANT
Yes, she's a friend of mine.

PAUL
Now that's interesting. I don't think I've seen you here before either.

JUNE
Yeah, it's my first time.

Menahem finally arrives behind June.

MATT
Menahem?

MENAHEM
I'm with her.

PAUL
Now that's even *more* interesting.

JUNE
Wait, you know Matt?

MENAHEM
Kind of. We--

--Matt claps his hands.

MATT
Alright, follow me! The three of you.

Matt leads them to his office - on his way he trips and almost sprains his ankle, but proudly recovers.

Behind him, June takes Ant aside.

JUNE
So... Did you learn anything?

ANT
Actually, yes. Apparently we only have to worry about that woman after us - once we get inside the Tower, we shouldn't face anyone.

JUNE
That's good to know.

ANT

And I see you've found Menahem.

JUNE

Yeah, he was not happy to see me here...

ANT

He's a bit controlling, isn't he?

June frowns as they arrive at the door to Matt's office.

INT. MATT'S PARADISE/OFFICE - DAY

Paul holds the door open to Matt, Ant, June and Menahem, who get inside the office. He stays outside and closes it.

Matt stands in front of the large one-way mirror and addresses his guest without even deigning to look at them.

MATT

So, you're Ant, right?

Ant comes next to him, while June tours the paintings and Menahem stays behind, leant against the door.

ANT

I don't recall giving you my name.

MATT

Indeed. But news travel fast in this city, you know.

His walkie-talkie lies on a desk in the middle of the room.

MENAHEM

And that's why coming here was a terrible idea.

Matt finally turns around, faces Menahem.

MATT

Speaking of which, I'm surprised to see you here, Menahem. You disappear for ten years and then resurface two days in a row. You'll admit that's odd.

MENAHEM

Yeah, I thought I had something to celebrate. But apparently I was mistaken.

He glances at June, who's still absorbed by the paintings.

MATT

So you all came here together,
right?

ANT

Actually, just June and I.

MENAHM

Yeah, I've never met this guy
before.

He points at Ant.

ANT

But I've heard a lot about you.

MENAHM

Same.

The two men gauge each other in silence.

Matt goes to his desk, takes a seat and invites Ant to do the
same - he doesn't take it.

MATT

What did you want from me anyway?

ANT

If you know who I am, you must know
we're on the run. We thought coming
here would be a good idea to rest a
while, and maybe get some answers.

MATT

What kind of answers?

ANT

We'd like to know more about the
woman who's after us. I think her
name is Wanda.

Menahem takes the seat that Ant refused.

MENAHM

And her name is all there is to
know.

ANT

You know her too? Is there anyone
in this city that you don't know?

MENAHEM

I *used* to know her. And I'm telling you, you don't need more than her name.

Ant turns to Matt, who shrugs.

MATT

She works for the Tower. She's the one who chased down the last humans, and made sure only Egos lived in this city. But that task was completed five years ago. Allegedly.

He nods towards June.

MATT (CONT'D)

Now, it's my turn to ask a question. What's the girl's deal?

ANT

The girl's name is June.

Matt stands up and walks to her. He takes a look at the painting she's examining - a romantic landscape.

MATT

It's beautiful, isn't it.

JUNE

Where do you get them?

Matt clears his throat.

MATT

They have a collection, somewhere in the Tower. When I... help them, they lend me one.

JUNE

So you were just gonna sell us out for a painting?

He's taken aback.

MATT

What? What kind of accusation is that?

JUNE

You already told Wanda we were here, didn't you? Information travels fast, that's what you said.

(MORE)

JUNE (CONT'D)

You knew she was after us, so you called her as soon as you noticed Ant. I get it, this place could use a bit more decoration.

MATT

It's far more complicated than you think. I'm trapped here, under direct surveillance from the Tower. One wrong move, and I'm dead.

JUNE

And? Is that supposed to convince me you're the good guy? You're not risking much, are you?

MATT

Of course I am! I've spent seventy years building this place. If something happens to me, I'll have to start back from nothing. That's the rule. I'd say I'm risking quite a lot.

He turns back to face Ant and Menahem. June takes her eyes off the painting.

ANT

Do you even know what she has against us?

MATT

I don't think I would be wrong if I guessed she's still following the order she received ten years ago.

JUNE

Then why waste your time talking with us? You could simply lock us in here and wait for her outside.

Matt remains silent. Menahem stands up and walks to him.

MENAHEM

Because he owes me one, and he doesn't know what to do.

Matt faces him, defiant.

MATT

I have paid my debt.

MENAHM

No you haven't. I didn't get that card for free.

JUNE

Wait, the card you gave me was Matt's one?

Menahem nods.

MATT

What more could you want from me?

ANT

Wanda has a gun, we need one too if we wanna be able to defend ourselves.

MATT

Oh, yes, because my office is actually a secret armory! How could I forget that!

JUNE

Can't we get guns at the Warehouse?

MATT

You can. But that's gonna cost you a lot.

MENAHM

That's where you come in handy.

Matt takes a few seconds to gauge the trio he's facing.

MATT

What's your endgame anyway?

ANT

What do you mean?

MATT

I mean that even if you get rid of Wanda, you will always be on the run. They'll send others after you.

ANT

It's okay, because soon we'll be out of the city. We just have to recover someone from the Tower first.

Matt is disconcerted.

MATT

(to Menahem)

Is that why you wanted my card? I thought you needed it for yourself. I... I have to admit you lost me there.

MENAHM

What would it have changed if you had known?

A beat. Matt observes June.

MATT

I wouldn't have made you pay for it.

MENAHM

Well, what's done is done.

ANT

What's going on here exactly?

MENAHM

Nothing you should worry about.

Matt goes to his desk.

MATT

Alright, fine. I'll help you.

He opens a drawer, and takes two golden tokens out of it.

MATT (CONT'D)

Twenty-five thousand credits each. More than most people in this town have ever seen. It should be enough to get you a useful weapon.

He throws them at Ant - June grabs them before him.

MATT (CONT'D)

Just promise me you'll stop them from doing anything stupid.

MENAHM

Of course. I'll go with them.

ANT

You really don't have to, you know. We're doing pretty well on our own.

MENAHM

I'm not so sure about that.

MATT

Alright, we've wasted enough time. I'll go to the front with Paul to wait for Wanda. As soon as we leave, go to the door on the other side of the mirror. It'll lead you to the backrooms. Menahem, you remember the way out from there?

MENAHEM

Kinda, yeah.

Matt gets closer to June, holds her chin up to observe her face. She backs up, uncomfortable.

MATT

It was nice meeting you, June.
(to Ant)
And you too, I guess.

He goes to Menahem. They hug, briefly but tightly.

MENAHEM

Thank you.

They let go. Matt opens the door and gets out.

INT. MATT'S PARADISE/MAIN ROOM - DAY

Matt finds Paul waiting outside his office.

MATT

Wanda will be here soon, we should go welcome her.

PAUL

You want to leave them alone in there?

MATT

I told them I would help them. They won't leave.

PAUL

Your call. Just make sure you don't upset Wanda.

MATT

I will try not to.

They cross the main room, which becomes silent as the gamblers notice the presence of Matt. All eyes turn to him and Paul as they climb the stairs that lead to the lobby.

At the back of the room, Ant, June and Menahem cross the large mirror and pass a small red door.

INT. MATT'S PARADISE/LOBBY - DAY

As Paul and Matt reach the lobby, a familiar silhouette enters through the glass doors - Wanda, a gun with "ANTI-EGO" engraved on it on her hip.

MATT

Wanda. It's been a while.

WANDA

Where is he?

PAUL

If you mean Ant, he's in Matt's office. But he's not al--

MATT

--Actually, I think they might have gotten away.

Paul grabs his arm, worried. Wanda draws her weapon.

PAUL

What did you do Matt?

MATT

I told them I would help them, so I did.

PAUL

That decision wasn't yours to make.

WANDA

I'm asking this once last time.
Where is he?

She points her gun at Matt. He doesn't flinch - Paul does.

MATT

No idea.

PAUL

I think he wanted to go to the Tower. He might be headed there with the girl.

WANDA

The girl?

PAUL
Yeah, Ant is not alone. And Menahem
is with them too.

The last piece of information deeply troubles Wanda.

MATT
You didn't have to say that.

WANDA
And you didn't have to hide it.

She pulls the trigger. CLICK. Nothing.

WANDA (CONT'D)
Shit.

She takes out an empty cartridge. Paul relaxes, relieved.

WANDA (CONT'D)
I'll come back for you.

MATT
I'm sure you will.

She promptly turns around and walks away. Matt tries to share a nervous laugh with Paul, but is met with a serious face.

MATT (CONT'D)
What? We both know that wouldn't
hurt me.

PAUL
I'm not as sure as you are.

A beat.

MATT
So, what do we do now?

PAUL
You? You stay here. I'm going after
them.

MATT
So that's why you didn't tell her
they were in the backrooms. You
want to take care of it yourself.

PAUL
It's the only thing I can do if I
don't want you to end up with a
bullet through your eyes.

MATT

Oh come on! Don't act like you care about me! All you want is to get Wanda's post back.

PAUL

Does it really change anything?

Matt goes to take Paul's hand - Paul repels him.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Wait here. I'll come back, and everything will go back to the way it was before.

MATT

Maybe I don't want that.

PAUL

Maybe. But I do, so I will make sure that's what happens.

Paul goes down the stairs to the main room, leaving a distraught Matt alone in the lobby.

INT. MATT'S PARADISE/BACKROOMS - DAY

Ant, June and Menahem are in what Matt called the backrooms - basically an endless motel corridor with numerous junctions.

Ant and June almost jog, but, every few steps, they look behind their back to see Menahem limping a few feet behind.

They pass door after door, slow their pace, frustrated, as Menahem tries his best to follow their rhythm.

Far away, the door they came from opens loudly. They make a quick turn in a perpendicular corridor.

JUNE

If Wanda's after us, we can't outrun her. Not like this.

MENAHEM

Then go ahead, I'll catch up!

JUNE

We're not letting you here!

MENAHEM

It's either that or we all get caught.

Ant observes the doors they go by.

ANT

There might be another option.

He stops abruptly in front of a door. Room 442. June stops a couple steps further. Menahem catches up a few seconds later.

JUNE

What the hell are you doing?

Ant examines the handle of the door; next to it is a slot, like you could find on an arcade game or a vending machine.

He takes a single purple token out of his pocket, slides it in the slot. CLICK. The door unlocks, and Ant opens it.

ANT

After you.

INT. MATT'S PARADISE/ROOM 442 - DAY

June and Menahem get inside the small motel-y room. Decrepit yellow-brown wallpaper, a king-size bed with stained sheets - we're far from the grandeur of the main room.

The only noticeable item in the room is high wooden shelf with a built-in gramophone, a vinyl already loaded on it.

Ant gets in and closes the door behind him.

JUNE

Now what?

Without responding, Ant goes to open the heavy curtains, and reveals the window - the barred window.

ANT

Shit!

Menahem and June stare at him.

MENAHEM

You really thought it would be that easy?

ANT

I don't know... I thought we could sneak out of a window or something...

June can't help but let out a light laugh.

JUNE

Oh Ant, you poor naive child.

Ant smiles, Menahem goes to the window. The only sight is - what a surprise - a brick wall.

MENAHM

That said, it wasn't such a terrible idea. We could stay here for a while, they'll probably think we left and look for us somewhere else.

JUNE

Yeah, I'm exhausted, I could definitely use some rest.

She lies on the bed, notices a large green Elixir stain next to her head, and gets straight back up.

JUNE (CONT'D)

Or maybe not...

Ant tinkers with the gramophone. The record starts spinning. He sets the needle down on the vinyl.

Music starts playing - a sad ballad, slow but rhythmic.

Menahem leans with his back against the wall, Ant faces June.

ANT

May I have this dance?

JUNE

I would be honored.

She holds his hands, and they start dancing slowly.

Intimate.

Chest against chest.

Menahem watches them. Relaxed, for the first time.

Ant and June dance for a while together, then separate.

He sits on the edge of the bed. She grabs Menahem by the arm.

JUNE (CONT'D)

Come on!

Pretendingly reluctant, he starts moving to the slow rhythm.

Close to June, though not as close as Ant. Almost paternal.

He closes his eyes, lost in the music, as we--

FADE TO:

INT. MATT'S PARADISE/ROOM 442 - DAY/FLASHBACK

The same room, though the wallpaper is in better shape, the sheets not as dirty. The same music playing.

SUPER : 10 YEARS EARLIER

Menahem, in a brand new purple uniform, is dancing with a brown-eyed elegant WOMAN in her late thirties. After a few dance steps, they kiss passionately.

Until -- KNOCK. KNOCK.

The door opens wide to reveal Matt, in a more casual outfit than we last saw him in - jean shorts and tank top.

MATT

Menahem, it's time to go.

The dancers separate, with a longing smile.

WOMAN

I don't think I'll ever get used to that name.

Menahem shrugs.

MENAHM

I like it. It's fancy.

INT. MATT'S PARADISE/BACKROOMS - DAY/FLASHBACK

Menahem and the woman follow Matt in the corridors of the casino's backrooms.

MATT

Are you nervous?

WOMAN

Kinda. What will we do if they refuse?

MENAHM

They won't. They put me in there, no reason they can't do it for you. Plus, we already have Matt's support. Right, Matt?

MATT

Of course. I'll do as much as I can.

They reach a door that leads them outside.

EXT. THE TOWER - DAY/FLASHBACK

Matt, Menahem and the woman arrive at the Tower.

WOMAN

Should I wait outside?

MATT

Yeah. Greg doesn't want anyone... like you inside.

MENAHM

We'll try to be quick, don't worry.

They exchange one last kiss as Matt swipes a card and opens the door.

INT. THE TOWER/FIRST FLOOR - DAY/FLASHBACK

Matt and Menahem walk side by side, along the dark corridor bordered by tanks filled with Elixir and humans.

MENAHM

Do you think they might refuse?

MATT

I think you should have a backup plan.

INT. THE TOWER/ELEVATOR - DAY/FLASHBACK

Matt, followed by Menahem, gets inside the elevator, and pushes the last button, to the 70th floor.

The shaft begins to rise.

MENAHM

I don't get why they'd refuse. Usually they just force people in here, don't they?

Matt doesn't respond.

MENAHEM (CONT'D)

That's what happened to me. That's how they deal with... *uncooperative people.*

MATT

That's how they *used* to deal with them, yes.

MENAHEM

What do you mean?

MATT

I mean that if she had come one year ago, like you, that's what would have happened. But now...

MENAHEM

What now?

Matt rubs his hands, uncomfortable.

MATT

There is no room left.

MENAHEM

No room left?

MATT

In the Tower. There's no free tank left. The last one was taken two months ago.

MENAHEM

But, you said that you could--

MATT

--I said I could not denounce you for staying in contact with her after you became an EGO. That's already a lot.

Menahem grabs Matt by the collar.

MENAHEM

That's not what you said!

MATT

What I said doesn't change a thing. Greg wants to get rid of the remaining humans, because they're the ones causing troubles. Even as a friend, I'm afraid there's not much I can do.

Menahem crouches against the wall, head in his hands.

MATT (CONT'D)

But, maybe you could do something.

He takes out a large knife out of his pocket - the same blade June used earlier with Rosh. He hands it to Menahem, who seizes it with a questioning look.

MATT (CONT'D)

Maybe you can make a little room for her.

The doors of the elevator ding open. Matt gets out.

With Menahem still inside, the elevator starts its descent.

INT. THE TOWER/LAST FLOOR - DAY/FLASHBACK

On the last floor of the Tower, the circular room with only one tank in the center, Matt meets Greg, the man in the three-piece suit who started the hunt for Ant.

GREG

Good to see you Matt.

MATT

Hi Greg. I thought Paul would be here.

GREG

He shouldn't be long. It's quite a long way from Hell's Gate to here. How are things at the Casino?

MATT

Pretty well, apart from a few *troublemakers*.

GREG

Always the same, I guess. Don't worry, soon you won't have to worry about them.

INT. THE TOWER/ELEVATOR - DAY/FLASHBACK

In the elevator, Menahem slowly stands up as the shaft reaches the first floor. The doors open to let Paul in, in his usual tailored suit.

PAUL

Hi, Menahem. It's good to see you.

He shakes his hand, and simultaneously presses the 70th button. Menahem keeps silent.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I thought you worked at the Elixir
brewery, what are you doing here?

Menahem is caught off-guard. He looks for something to do, finds it - he presses a random button, to the 15th floor.

MENAHEM

Matt let me in. He... He wanted me
to get him something he forgot
here.

PAUL

Oh, okay. Good to know you're still
his personal courier even as an
EGO.

INT. THE TOWER/15TH FLOOR - DAY/FLASHBACK

Menahem steps onto the 15th floor as the doors of the elevator close on Paul behind him. It's exactly the same as the first floor, two seemingly endless rows of tanks.

He stops in front of the fifth tank on the left. Inside, a woman in her sixties, and in a purple uniform.

Shaking, Menahem takes Matt's knife from his waistband.

A deep breath.

He gets closer to the tank. Presses a small red button on the side of it.

With a loud splashing noise, the Elixir inside almost instantly empties.

The woman opens wide eyes, terrified, as one half of the glass cylinder opens.

She stares at Menahem, clueless, as he brandishes his knife.

INT. THE TOWER/ELEVATOR - DAY/FLASHBACK

Inside the elevator, Paul suddenly presses the emergency button. The lights turn off, then back on.

He presses the button to the 15th floor.

INT. THE TOWER/15TH FLOOR - DAY/FLASHBACK

The doors of the elevator open. Paul gets out, and reaches to an inside pocket of his jacket to grab an ANTI-EGO gun.

He takes aim at the scene he's facing--

Menahem, bloodied hands and knife, stands next to two open tanks, next to two corpses. The old woman and a younger man, both bathing in their blood.

PAUL

Drop that!

Paul holds his gun firmly, aimed right at Menahem's head.

After a few seconds, the silence is broken by a loud--BANG!

CUT TO :

INT. MATT'S PARADISE/ROOM 442 - DAY

We're back at Matt's Paradise, in the room with the old wallpaper and the dirty sheets.

The music stopped; the dance stopped. Ant is holding June's hand by the window, facing the door. Menahem stands between it and them.

MENAHM

Stay behind me!

Ant leaves June to position himself next to Menahem.

A second BANG and the door breaks open -- Paul gets in.

A moment of tense silence, interrupted by Menahem.

MENAHM (CONT'D)

Where's Wanda?

PAUL

Don't worry about her, I'm here to finish her job.

ANT

How did you find us?

Paul points to the Gramophone in a disdainful head gesture.

PAUL

No one listens to those things anymore, you know.

He reaches for an inside pocket of his jacket, and--
--takes out a knife out of it.

Menahem gives him a mocking smile.

MENAHEM
Lost your gun, eh?

PAUL
Shut up! I'll get it back once I
get rid of you.

He glances at June behind the two men.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Why so cautious girl? You need
these two big guys to take care of
you?

June takes that as a challenge. She steps forward, between
Ant and Menahem, and stands in front of them.

JUNE
I can take care of myself.

ANT
June, step back.

Without taking her eyes off Paul, who carefully studies her
doings, June opens her backpack on the bed.

She takes her blade out of it - Paul recoils.

PAUL
Where did you get that?

JUNE
It's a gift.

Paul's glances erratically at June and Menahem. Trembling, he
points his knife at the latter.

PAUL
Does she know what you've done with
that blade?

Without letting time for an answer, June lunges forward, so
fast that Paul has no time to react.

In less than a second, her blade goes through his right arm
and leg - slashing through the artificial skin and the wires
beneath it.

He drops his knife and falls to his knees with a scream.

She's about to stab him through the temple, when a hand stops her arm - Ant.

JUNE

What is wrong with you?!

ANT

You don't have to do that.

MENAHM

And you don't have to tell her what she can do.

Menahem gets closer to Ant, forces his hand off June's arm.

ANT

I think I know what's best for her better than you do. And cold-bloodedly killing people isn't part of it.

MENAHM

Cold-bloodedly? Really? He came here to kill us!

ANT

And now he's not a threat anymore. There's no need to go further.

JUNE

You know what? Fuck both of you. You deal with him. I'll wait for you at the Warehouse.

She steps back, but Paul, in a last burst of energy, grabs his knife from the ground and plunges at June--

--he is about to stab her in the chest, when Menahem stops the blade with his bare hands. He shouts in pain as his flesh is torn apart, revealing the silver metal underneath that barely gets scratched.

Paul lets go of the knife, and falls to the ground, sobbing.

Without a glance at Ant or Menahem, her chin up, June gets her backpack, skirts around the corpse and leaves the room.

ANT

Wait!

She's gone.

With grunts of pain, Menahem brings Paul's knife to Ant's throat.

MENAHM

What's wrong with you?

ANT

I-I just don't want anyone to die because of us.

MENAHM

Us? You're the one who brought June here, the one who caused this in the first place!

ANT

What was I supposed to do? Let her roam the city with Wanda on her trail?

MENAHM

Wanda was after you, not her.

ANT

If she's after me, then she's after June too.

Menahem backs off.

MENAHM

If you ever put her in danger like that again, I swear I'll fucking kill you.

He is about to leave the room when Matt appears at the door.

He gets inside the room and notices Paul, still lying on the ground. Menahem hands him the knife. He takes it.

MENAHM (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

MATT

Go away.

Ant gets out of the room. Menahem follows him, but turns over as he's about to pass the door.

MENAHM

He isn't--

MATT

--Just go!

Menahem leaves. Matt steps towards Paul, pick him up from the ground, lays him on the bed.

PAUL

I'm sorry... I-I couldn't even do that right.

Matt caresses his face.

MATT

I'm glad you didn't.

He brings the knife to Paul's throat, presses it against his skin, as we--

CUT TO :

EXT. MATT'S PARADISE/BACKROOMS - DAY

Menahem, June and Ant come out of the marble walls of the casino through a small red door. Without saying a word, June walks ahead of him.

Behind them, Menahem peels the flaps of skin off his hands, and can't help but let out grunts of pain as the silver-like metal replaces the flesh up to his wrist.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

The Warehouse. As large as Matt's Paradise, with high walls of corrugated iron.

In front of it, June stands tall. Menahem and Ant shortly join her. In silence. A long, awkward silence - they clearly haven't talked since they left the casino.

That silence is broken when Lucy, behind a kind of counter in front of the building, lifts her head and notices them.

LUCY

Hey, Ant!

With a embarrassed glance at the other two, Ant goes to her. June and Menahem stay behind.

JUNE

Are you okay?

MENAHM

It hurts like hell, but I'll be okay.

A beat.

MENAHM (CONT'D)

So. You're still not leaving? Even after what he's done?

JUNE

He had good intentions. He just doesn't want anyone to suffer because of him.

He raises his silvery hands.

MENAHM

You wouldn't call that suffering?

She doesn't respond.

MENAHM (CONT'D)

Why is it so important for you to go with him?

JUNE

He'd be mad if I told you. But as soon as we're done in the Tower, I promise we'll be out of the city. You can trust me.

MENAHM

I hope so. But if you change your mind, I can still go with him and--

--She rolls her eyes and leaves before he can finish. She walks to the heavy door as Lucy opens it to let Ant inside.

INT. WAREHOUSE/APPAREL AISLE - DAY

June joins Ant and Menahem inside the Warehouse. Lucy closes the door behind them and the warm sunset lights give way to the cold and weak neon lights.

Before them, aisle after aisle of shelving units that rise up to the ceiling, with ladders to reach the top shelves. All filled with items in large ripped open cardboard boxes.

Everything, from pillows to TVs to books to water to paint and mortar, carefully organized by category.

Ant enters an apparel aisle, and gestures at Menahem and June to follow him.

ANT

It should be this way.

MENAHEM

Did she ask why we needed a gun?

ANT

No, we're lucky it was Lucy on duty. I think she likes me.

JUNE

She likes that she can rip you off so easily.

June stops to go through some brand new clothes folded on a shelf. She picks up a sweater, checks the size. A few feet further, Ant stops to face her.

ANT

What are you doing?

JUNE

Well, while we're here, I might as well get some new stuff.

ANT

We can't really stay for too long.

JUNE

Then go on. I'll catch up with you.

ANT

Fine... We should be in one of the last aisles on the right.

She's only half listening to him.

JUNE

Okay, okay...

Ant leaves and catches up with Menahem, who didn't stop.

June strolls along the alley, picks up clothes that catch her eye - a green T-shirt and hoodie, underpants and socks - and starts getting changed.

INT. WAREHOUSE/CENTRAL CORRIDOR - DAY

Ant and Menahem arrive at a large central corridor that divides the single room of the Warehouse in two, opening the way to every single aisle.

They take right in that corridor, and read the signs hung above the shelves: canned food, personal care, silverware...

They reach one that reads "weaponry" and step into the aisle.

INT. WAREHOUSE/APPAREL AISLE - DAY

June, in her brand new outfit, picks up a few other pieces of clothing and shoves them in her backpack.

She is ready to leave when something heavy falls to the ground, in another aisle.

She stands still for a few seconds, focused on every noise she hears, then carefully crosses the central corridor.

INT. WAREHOUSE/WEAPONRY - DAY

Knives, machetes, swords, tasers- every item in the weaponry is locked behind a thick glass panel, each with a price engraved on it and a slot next to it.

Ant and Menahem arrive at the guns - small Glocks 17, for twenty-five thousand credits, and a single larger ANTI-EGO handgun for fifty thousand credits.

ANT

Which one should we get?

MENAHM

The ANTI-EGO. Smaller ones would be useless.

ANT

You're sure? Because I feel like we could use two of them.

MENAHM

Yeah, I'm sure, the smaller ones are useless. At least unless you can aim straight through the eye.

ANT

Alright, fine. But I keep it.

Ant reaches for his pocket - his empty pocket.

ANT (CONT'D)

Oh...

MENAHM

What?

ANT

I think June kept the tokens.

MENAHM

It's okay, she shouldn't be long.

ANT

I'm gonna check in on her.

MENAHEM

Can't you leave her on her own for
five minutes?

Ant leaves without responding.

INT. WAREHOUSE/METALLURGY AISLE - DAY

June progresses in an aisle full of blowtorches and sheet metal when a fabric scratching close to her makes her stop.

Only a few feet away, behind her, Wanda approaches. She holds her gun firmly, pointed straight at June.

After a few seconds, June finally turns around, and the two women face each other.

As soon as she sees June's face, Wanda's hands start trembling.

WANDA

June?

June feigns to reach for her backpack, but stops when Wanda takes another step forward.

JUNE

Do I know you?

A beat. Tensed.

WANDA

Menahem told me... He told me you
didn't make it.

JUNE

I didn't make it? What do you mean?

WANDA

He said he couldn't save you from
the flames.

JUNE

Why would he say that?

WANDA

He wanted me to suffer, to think
that I had left you to die.

JUNE

Who are the hell are you?

WANDA

I am so glad to see you're well,
sweetie.

June recoils at that last word.

JUNE

What? No. No, no, no, no!

WANDA

Now everything's gonna be okay. Now
I know I did nothing wrong. I'm
gonna bring you to the Tower, give
you an EGO. Everything's gonna be
alright, sweetie.

Wanda takes a step towards June.

JUNE

Don't you fucking dare! Why did you
think you left me for dead?

Wanda stops. Hesitates.

WANDA

They... They were going to kill
her. The Elixir was the only thing
that could save her.

JUNE

So you abandoned me.

WANDA

I had no other choice! I thought I
could come back for you, but
Menahem told me it was too late!

JUNE

And you spent the next years
working with Matt to eliminate the
remaining humans from the city.

WANDA

If I had refused, they would have
killed her! I had no other choice,
it wasn't my fault. I've really
missed you, so will you please come
give your mother a hug. It's been
too long.

She opens her arms. June walks to her, slowly--

JUNE

Did you know Leah was in the Tower?

Wanda frowns - she didn't know.

JUNE (CONT'D)

That's what I thought.

--Just before reaching Wanda, June seizes a small blowtorch from a shelf.

--She lunges at Wanda, grabs her by the throat and throws her to the ground.

--Wanda struggles, and manages to gain the upper-hand. She's now on top of June. She chokes her until--

--A pickaxe stabs Wanda through the shoulder. With a scream of pain, she lets go of June - and Ant of the pickaxe.

Wanda tries to stand up, but falls to her knees, her back bent backwards by the weight of the pickaxe.

June stands up, turns on the blowtorch, walks to Wanda as Ant takes some distance, horrified by the scene.

WANDA

(faintly)

Please, sweetie... Would you kill your own mother? I can save you, you know...

JUNE

I'm not gonna kill you.

She brings the blue flame to Wanda's face, who screams, both in fear and in pain as the fire melts her artificial skin.

When the silver metal beneath it is uncovered, June focuses the burn on the lips. The screams become muffled, as the mouth is sealed tight by the melting metal.

ANT

What is wrong with you!

She doesn't answer, but grabs her knife from her hoodie and approaches Wanda, whose muffled screams still echo through her sealed lips.

June holds her knife to Wanda's throat, and slices it open.

Elixir flows from the wound. The screaming stops. Wanda stays still - but her eyes are still moving, filled with terror.

ANT (CONT'D)
June, end this!

JUNE
You almost got me killed so I
wouldn't finish off Paul.

ANT
It's... It's not the same! Paul
wasn't in such pain!

JUNE
How would you know?

Ant picks up Wanda's gun from the ground. Aims for her head.

ANT
I... I've got to do it if you
won't.

JUNE
She doesn't deserve it. You have no
idea what she did.

ANT
Tell me then.

JUNE
I shouldn't have to. You need to
trust me, Ant.

ANT
I can't let her like this. You said
it yourself this morning, no one
deserves to stay Broken!

JUNE
Well I was wrong! She deserves it,
she--

--BANG! Ant takes the shot, it echoes through the Warehouse.

Wanda's purple eyes are now still too, below the large hole
in her skull.

The recoil makes the gun slip out of Ant's hands. He picks it
up as June leaves, furious, then lifts Wanda's stiff corpse
and carries it over his shoulder.

INT. WAREHOUSE/WEAPONRY - DAY

June runs into Menahem as she enters the weaponry aisle. He
holds her by the shoulders.

MENAHM

June! I heard the gunshot, I was so worried.

JUNE

I'm alright. It was Wanda.

MENAHM

Oh. I'm sorry.

June collapses next him, leans against a shelf.

JUNE

Why did you tell me mom died?

MENAHM

The same reason she told you your father died. To make it easier for you to leave the city. I didn't think you would have to meet her.

JUNE

You didn't have to lie to me.

MENAHM

I know. I'm sorry.

JUNE

I... No, I'm the one who should be sorry. I lied too. I should have told you who Ant wants to free.

MENAHM

Why would it matter?

JUNE

Because it's Leah.

Menahem stares at her, confused. He's about to say something when Ant enters the aisle, still carrying Wanda, and interrupts the conversation.

As he steps towards them, Lucy appears behind him.

LUCY

What the hell happened in here?!

June gets up, and the trio turn to face Lucy.

MENAHM

Not much. We were just getting ready to leave.

LUCY
Did you... Did you kill Wanda?

JUNE
She attacked us first.

LUCY
That... What? That doesn't change anything!

Menahem seizes Wanda's weapon from Ant's hand, aims it at Lucy. She recoils.

ANT
Don't do that!

MENAHM
She's gonna get the whole Tower after us! What other brilliant idea do you have?

ANT
I... I don't know.

June knows - she takes the two golden tokens out of her pocket, steps towards the Glocks behind the glass cases.

She takes one token, puts it in the slot. The door opens, and she gets hold of the gun.

MENAHM
June!

ANT
Why did you do that?

June goes to Lucy, hands her the second token.

JUNE
Here. Take this, and don't report us before tomorrow morning. Alright?

Menahem lowers his gun.

Lucy's eyes shine. She grabs the token without hesitation, but June doesn't let go of it.

JUNE (CONT'D)
Deal?

LUCY
Deal.

Lucy puts the token in her pocket, and points at Wanda.

LUCY (CONT'D)

But you've got to bring her to the Scrapyard, we can't just let her here. I mean, it's not like a lot of people come around. But still.

JUNE

Where is it?

LUCY

Just behind the Warehouse. There's a door at the end of this aisle that leads to it. Here, take my key. I... I'll just tell them Wanda asked for it and never came back, so put it on her.

JUNE

Alright, we'll do that. Thank you.

LUCY

Yeah. See you later Ant. I guess.

She leaves, and June turns back and faces Ant and Menahem.

ANT

What was that?

JUNE

What? We already have Wanda's ANTI-EGO gun, we don't need another one.

ANT

But why did you get a smaller one? We could have at least bought more ammo for the one we have.

JUNE

We already got rid of Wanda, we won't need more ammo once we're outside. But having a gun each could prove useful.

Ant shakes his head, snaps the key out of June's hand, and leaves for the door at the back of the aisle.

Menahem pats June on the head.

MENAHAM

You did great. Keep the Glock, it might come in handy once you're outside. On your own. While I escort Ant to the Tower.

She looks dagger at him, and follows Ant.

EXT. SCRAPYARD - DAY

The small door at the back of the Warehouse shines in the last lights of the day. It opens to let June, Ant and then Menahem out of the building.

Flanked by several large hills, they squint, while their eyes adapt to the light of the setting sun facing them.

After a few seconds, they realize what really surrounds them; the hills are actually amalgams of corpses, thousands of EGOs, stockpiled on top of each other - this is the Scrapyard.

Ant is shocked, Menahem not so much. He grabs Wanda from Ant's shoulders and goes to lay her on a pile of EGOs.

June examines another pile, where lay the patrons killed at the bar earlier - she closes Jenny's eyes, next to Rosh.

Ant finally snaps back and comes up to Menahem.

ANT

Are they all... dead?

MENAHAM

Not necessarily. I'd even say that most of them are simply Broken.

ANT

So they can still see and hear what's around them?

MENAHAM

Depends how long they've been here. You can't move after a month without Elixir, but you can still see for at least a year, and hear for five years or so.

ANT

And then?

MENAHEM

Then? Darkness and silence, I guess. They can still think, of course, since thoughts come from your human, but for the rest... nothing.

ANT

And no one does anything about it? Wouldn't Elixir repair them?

MENAHEM

I don't think it could. Once they're this far gone, the only way would be to end their agony--

--He takes aim at the closest EGO.--

ANT

--Or to free their human.

Menahem lowers his gun.

MENAHEM

Yeah, or that. But you'd have no way of knowing who's in this pile.

ANT

Then we'd have to free everyone at once.

MENAHEM

I guess so. But I don't think that's possible. You'd have to find a way to shut down the whole Tower.

ANT

There is one.

June comes back to them.

JUNE

What do you mean?

ANT

There's a way to free everyone at once. A switch, on the last floor of the Tower. Tarik told me about it.

MENAHEM

Well, Tarik is full of shit.

June notices something on top of the EGO's pile, starts climbing it.

JUNE

And even if that were true, that doesn't change anything for us. Freeing everyone could jeopardize our escape plan.

ANT

Then maybe we shouldn't escape.

June stops dead in her tracks.

JUNE

Excuse me?

ANT

I... It's just that I don't think it's fair to leave everyone behind.

JUNE

You wanna stay in this city?

ANT

Maybe. Maybe we can truly restore it, once we've freed everyone.

JUNE

So you're really buying into your own bullshit.

ANT

Yes, I am. And I know you can understand it too. Look around you, at all thos about e people, forced to spend eternity in broken shells! Don't tell me you don't think we should do something it.

JUNE

Honestly? I'm not sure.

ANT

Well, you have until we reach the Tower to think about it.

He starts leaving, followed by Menahem. June jumps down from the pile, looks at them walking away.

JUNE

We told Lucy we would put her key on Wanda's body.

Ant throws the key at June.

She leans over Wanda, opens a zipper on her uniform, and slides the key in the small pocket. She's about to close it when she notices something inside - a small piece of paper.

She picks it up, unfolds it, and gasps. This is the drawing of Ant, the one Greg gave to Wanda this morning.

June gets back up in a flash and shouts--

JUNE (CONT'D)

Menahem!

The two men stop, turn over.

JUNE (CONT'D)

Where did Wanda get this?

ANT

What is it?

Ant gets closer to study the paper, while Menahem stays behind, petrified.

JUNE

It's a drawing I made. Menahem wanted to know what you looked like, so he'd know to help you if he ever saw you in trouble.

Ant turns to Menahem, menacing.

ANT

Did you give it to Wanda?

MENAHM

Well, no, I gave it to Matt, who gave it to Greg, who gave it to Wanda...

JUNE

Is that why you said today would be the best day to escape? Because you used Ant as a bait for the Tower's appointed killer?

MENAHM

June, listen, I just wanted you to be safe--

JUNE

--And you were ready to risk Ant's life for it?

MENAHEM

Of course I was! I hadn't even met him before today!

JUNE

You shouldn't have to meet him not to gamble his life. I told you how much I care about him!

MENAHEM

I know, and that's the problem! You wouldn't leave the city because you won't leave him alone! I thought getting rid of him would solve the issue!

June takes a few steps back.

JUNE

I... I can't stay here. I can't stay one more hour in this city. If any of you want to come with me, I'd be more than happy. But if you don't, then I'd be better off leaving now.

ANT

So you really don't care about the people stuck in here.

JUNE

Of course I don't care, Ant! I don't care about this city, and I don't care about its people. Because they've brought nothing to me but pain!

ANT

June, I know you don't mean--

JUNE

--I know what I mean and I know what I want, okay? You can't decide that for me. And if you can't understand that, then we've got nothing more to say to each other

A beat.

ANT

Then maybe you should be leaving.

June doesn't respond, but walks away.

A few steps. Then she stops.

Takes a deep breath. Tears in her eyes.

But doesn't look back.

JUNE

I'll really miss you, you know.

ANT

June, I--

JUNE

--Take care of each other.

She leaves.

Ant and Menahem stand side by side until she's out of sight.

ANT

I hope she'll be okay.

MENAHM

Don't worry about her. She'll be fine.

ANT

I'm not worried, it's just... they call it Hell's Gate, it has to be for a reason.

MENAHM

But they never said on which side Hell was supposed to be.

A beat.

MENAHM (CONT'D)

Listen, about Wanda... I'm really sorry.

ANT

I know. I get it.

MENAHM

You do?

ANT

Yeah. I would have done the same to protect her.

They exchange a smile.

ANT (CONT'D)

Now, let's go to the Tower.

MENAHAM

You want me to go with you?

ANT

That's what June wanted. For once,
let's do things her way.

Ant glances one last time at Wanda's corpse, lying on the pile of dead and Broken Egos, and they leave the Scrapyard.

EXT. QUIET STREET - NIGHT

As the night falls in the city, no street light shines. In the twilight, Ant and Menahem walk in a quiet street.

Around them, people prepare for the night. Most lie on the ground, some already asleep - immobile, as if they were dead.

A few lucky ones get inside a home where the lights are still working, and shut the door behind them.

MENAHAM

Do you need to rest?

ANT

I'm fine. Isn't it crazy that EGOS
still waste so much time sleeping?

MENAHAM

Well, sleep isn't for the body.
It's for the brain.

ANT

Yeah, I know. It's just... weird.

They pass a long line of people sleeping while standing, waiting patiently to get credits in the morning.

EXT. THE TOWER - NIGHT

In the night, Ant and Menahem arrive in front of the Tower.

Ant takes the magnetic card out of his pocket, unsure what to do with it. Menahem grabs it, slides it. The doors open.

MENAHAM

After you.

Ant takes one last look around him, at the ruined rows of buildings, and gets inside.

INT. THE TOWER/LAST FLOOR - NIGHT

In the last room of the Tower, a red light flashes on a monitor. Greg stands up from an armchair and gets closer.

He takes a walkie-talkie from his belt. Turns it on.

GREG
Greg for Wanda.

He waits a few seconds, but all he gets in response is the radio's static.

He switches the frequency.

GREG (CONT'D)
Greg for Matt.

Still no response.

He puts it back to his belt, gets a large ANTI-EGO gun out of its holster, and sits back in his chair.

INT. THE TOWER/FIRST FLOOR - NIGHT

Menahem joins Ant inside the Tower. The doors slide closed, the neon lights turn on and progressively reveal the long corridor flanked by the rows of tanks.

MENAHEM
Follow me.

They walk between the tanks - Ant glances at the bodies floating in the greenish liquid. Menahem notices it.

MENAHEM (CONT'D)
It's always a weird sight the first time, isn't it?

ANT
So I take it you've already come here?

MENAHEM
Yeah. Not a very good memory.

ANT
What happened?

MENAHAM

They caught me stealing from the Warehouse, so they forced me into one of those tanks.

ANT

When was it?

MENAHAM

About eleven years ago. I was one of the last ones.

They arrive at the end of the corridor. The doors of the elevator open and they get inside.

INT. THE TOWER/ELEVATOR - NIGHT

In the elevator, Ant takes a look at the control panel.

MENAHAM

Do you know which floor you're heading to?

ANT

I think so.

He reaches to press a button. 15th floor.

MENAHAM

I always wondered why June wouldn't tell me more about how you two met.

ANT

She never told me how she met you either.

The elevator starts its ascent. As the floors go by on a small monitor, both Menahem and Ant grow anxious.

MENAHAM

Maybe that could have solved a lot of issues.

ANT

Maybe. But I guess she liked to keep her secrets. Not letting people know too much about you is a matter of life or death around here.

Menahem stares at him, intense.

MENAHM

You're here for Leah, aren't you?

Ant is taken aback.

ANT

How do you--

--The shaft stops. The doors ding open.

MENAHM

Go on. Let's keep your questions
for later.

INT. THE TOWER/15TH FLOOR - NIGHT

On the 15th floor, Ant slowly makes his way along the
corridor. He examines each glass cylinder he passes.

Menahem follows him from a distance, and points at a tank.

MENAHM

There she is.

Ant stops in front of it.

ANT

It's been so long.

Next to the tank is a small red button.

Ant hesitates, a short instant.

Then presses it.

In a loud wet splash, the tank empties almost instantly.

One half of the glass cylinder opens. The girl inside opens
her eyes - it isn't the woman Menahem led to the Tower.
Younger than June, the same blue eyes - this is LEAH.

She takes off the wired helmet from her head, and steps down
in front of Ant.

She takes him in her arms, holds him tightly, and whispers in
his ear--

LEAH

Thank you.

Gently, she grabs him under the arms, and lays him down on
the ground, where he rests, immobile. She caresses his face,
and finally closes his eyes.

Leah looks at her hands, and starts crying. Menahem a few feet away, does his best to stay stoic.

She finally gets up, wipes her eyes, and faces him.

LEAH (CONT'D)
You don't seem surprised.

MENAHM
I'm not. I've missed you so much,
pumpkin.

LEAH
Dad?

He smiles, and she throws herself into his arms.

He holds her as she cries on his shoulder.

She finally lets go, wipes her eyes.

LEAH (CONT'D)
But how? Mom told us you died!

MENAHM
I know. We thought it was the only
way you and June would accept to
leave the city.

LEAH
So June didn't know either?

MENAHM
She did, actually. I guess she kept
it from you for the same reasons.

LEAH
Of course I would have stayed! But
why didn't you leave with her? You
always wanted to get out of the
city.

MENAHM
I guess once you've been given an
EGO, it's hard to go back. People
don't give up that easily on
eternal life.

LEAH
I did.

MENAHM
I know. But what's the point if not
to leave the city?

LEAH

It's the only way to make things change. The Tower controls the Elixir production, and with it how much people can accomplish each day. As humans, we'll be able to provide for ourselves. We'll work together, and we'll rebuild the city. I can already feel that things are gonna work out.

MENAHM

You really sound like your mother.

LEAH

Yeah, that's the speech she used to give at Jenny's.

MENAHM

And you know where that lead her.

LEAH

I think she'd be proud to see where I am today.

MENAHM

Maybe you should try to ask her about that directly.

Menahem points at something behind Leah.

Confused, she turns over, goes to the tank next to her own.

In the greenish liquid floats ELISA. She's the woman Menahem brought to the Tower ten years ago.

Leah puts her hand against the glass.

LEAH

Did June know about her too?

MENAHM

She guessed it. Not so long ago.

Leah brings her hand to the red button.

LEAH

But... how is that possible? I thought I saw her die, she was losing so much blood...

MENAHM

The Elixir's keeping her alive.

Leah takes a look at Elisa's stomach, where crimson stains darken her clothes.

She takes a step back, away from the button.

LEAH

Does that mean that if we free her,
she will...

MENAHEM

Yeah. That's why you shouldn't do
it. But don't worry, I'll do it for
you. For June.

He presses the button - Leah doesn't have time to stop him.

The tank empties, half of it opens, and Elisa immediately
falls to her knees - blood drips from her stomach.

LEAH

Mom!

Leah holds her up.

ELISA

Leah?

LEAH

Mom! You need to get back inside!

ELISA

You shouldn't be out of your
tank... It's too dangerous...

She pushes Leah away and crawls towards Ant. Menahem stands
next to her, lifts his foot, ready to stomp her--

LEAH

--What are you doing?

MENAHEM

We need to end this.

LEAH

Don't touch her!

MENAHEM

You have no idea what she did. She
was ready to sacrifice you to save
herself!

Elisa reaches Ant's body.

LEAH
But she's still my--

--From Ant's clenched fist, Elisa retrieves the ANTI-EGO gun.
She aims at Leah--

LEAH (CONT'D)
--Mom!--

--and presses the trigger. The large ammunition pierces a
wide hole through Leah's stomach.

She stands there, shell-shocked, blood pouring from her
wound, as we--

CUT TO:

EXT. THE TOWER/15TH FLOOR - NIGHT/FLASHBACK

10 years earlier. Menahem, covered in blood, stands in the
very same spot as Leah.

Next to him, two empty tanks and two human corpses.

He stares blankly at Paul, who holds him at gunpoint.

PAUL
What the hell happened here?

MENAHEM
You can't... You can't kill them.

Menahem takes a step towards Paul.

PAUL
Don't come any closer! Drop your
knife and walk to the stairs.

Menahem obeys, in a daze. Paul steps over the corpses, picks
up the knife and follows him.

INT. THE TOWER/STAIRS - NIGHT/FLASHBACK

Menahem goes down the stairs of the Tower. Paul follows him,
his gun pointed at his head.

PAUL
I don't get why you would kill two
of them...

MENAHEM
Because you interrupted me.

A beat.

MENAHM (CONT'D)
You can't kill them.

PAUL
What do you mean them?

MENAHM
You don't have to kill them. There are two free tanks now.

PAUL
That doesn't change anything. Greg can't know about this, and if he decides that's the best thing to do, then we can't let her live.

MENAHM
If you kill them I'll--

PAUL
--Listen! Matt and I didn't denounce you even though you broke one of the most important rules by staying in touch with her--

MENAHM
--You have no idea what I sacrificed.

PAUL
It's not easy for me either, you know. I'm not sure I can do what Greg expects from me.

They go down the last flight of steps.

INT. THE TOWER/FIRST FLOOR - NIGHT/FLASHBACK

Menahem and Paul come down from the stairs, right next to the Tower's entrance.

Paul slides his card. The doors open.

PAUL
If I were you, I wouldn't give her any false hope.

EXT. THE TOWER - NIGHT/FLASHBACK

In the twilight, Menahem joins Elisa outside the Tower.

She notices the blood he's soaked in. Recoils.

ELISA
What the hell happened in there?

MENAHM
You can't stay here...

ELISA
Did they refuse? What happened!

He violently pushes her away.

MENAHM
You can't stay here! You have to
leave! Take them with you and leave
the city!

She stumbles, glances one last time at him, and runs away.

EXT. QUIET STREET - NIGHT/FLASHBACK

Elisa runs in a quiet street. She passes by a long queue of people waiting in line.

She stops for a few seconds, to catch her breath, then starts running again.

After a while, she takes a sharp turn in another street, and bumps into someone - Rosh. He loses his balance and falls to the ground.

ROSH
Watch it!

Elisa doesn't look back. Rosh stays on the ground.

EXT. ELISA'S HOUSE - NIGHT/FLASHBACK

Elisa arrives in front of her house, opens the door and gets inside.

EXT. THE TOWER - NIGHT/FLASHBACK

Greg, Paul and Matt get out of the Tower.

GREG
(to Matt)
You stay here. We'll handle it.
(to Paul)
Paul, you've got your gun on you?

PAUL

Yeah.

GREG

Great. Follow me.

Gregs runs away, but Paul pauses to hand Matt his knife.

PAUL

(softly)

Why did do that?

MATT

I promised I would help him. I had to.

PAUL

You knew that wouldn't change anything.

Paul catches up with Greg and leaves Matt alone in front of the Tower, until he's joined by Menahem who emerges from the shadow of the Tower.

MATT

Menahem, I'm so sorry, I--

--Menahem sucker punches him. Matt falls to the ground.

MENAHEM

I'm going after them.

MATT

And what are you supposed to do exactly? They're both armed.

Menahem grabs the knife from Matt's hands.

MENAHEM

So am I.

EXT. QUIET STREET - NIGHT/FLASHBACK

Rosh slowly gets to his feet when Paul and Greg arrive, running.

GREG

Where is it now?

PAUL

I don't know exactly. But it's somewhere around here

They stop. Greg points at Rosh.

GREG

You!

He walks to him, grabs him by the collar.

GREG (CONT'D)

Do you know a human woman who lives
around her?

PAUL

Elisa.

Rosh nods, sheepishly.

GREG

Do you know where we can find her?

ROSH

I... Yes, I think I do.

GREG

Then lead us there.

EXT. ELISA'S HOUSE - NIGHT/FLASHBACK

Greg and Paul, led by Rosh, arrive at Elisa's house.

They walk to the door, as Rosh stay further back.

As Paul kicks the door open and lets Greg inside. Outside,
Rosh is joined by Matt and Menahem, who arrive running.

Matt stops next to Rosh, as Menahem rushes to one of the
first floor windows.

INT. ELISA'S HOUSE - NIGHT/FLASHBACK

Greg and Paul carefully progress on the first floor of the
building.

Precipitated footsteps on the first floor catch their
attention - Elisa comes down the stairs.

She faces the two men.

GREG

You must be Elisa.

ELISA

Greg.

GREG
Are you alone in here?

ELISA
Yes.

GREG
No children?

ELISA
No.

A beat.

ELISA (CONT'D)
What do you want from me?

GREG
Not much you can do, I'm afraid.

He takes out a Glock from the holster on his belt. Aims at Elisa. She recoils, terrified.

ELISA
What's happening? You're not
bringing me to the Tower?

--He presses the trigger. The gunshot echoes in the house. The bullet hits her in the stomach. She falls to the ground, and presses the wound, out of breath.

Behind the window, Menahem lets out a silent scream, covered up by Matt's hand over his mouth, as Rosh restrains him.

GREG
Believe me, if there was a way to
avoid this, I would have taken it.

Greg approaches her, aims for her head. He is about to shoot when a mass hurls itself at him - Leah.

Greg stumbles, but quickly regains his balance and hits Leah right in the temple with the grip of his gun. She falls unconscious.

Paul cowers in a corner, petrified.

ELISA
Leah!

Greg kicks Elisa in the ribs and walks to Leah as Elisa shrivels in pain on the floor.

GREG
No child, eh?

ELISA
(breathless)
Get... away from her.

He aims for Leah's head.

ELISA (CONT'D)
No!

PAUL
Wait!

Greg gives Paul an inquiring look as he steps forward.

PAUL (CONT'D)
There is a way to avoid this. There
are two free tanks in the Tower.

GREG
How so?

PAUL
Menahem - he killed two humans. So
we don't have to kill these two. We
can bring them in.

Greg shakes his head.

GREG
That's what I thought, Paul. You're
too weak for this.

ELISA
(whispering)
Please, please...

She manages to get to her knees.

ELISA (CONT'D)
(louder, imploring)
Please! Don't let me die! Please...

Greg snickers, crouches next to her.

GREG
How interesting... Scared of death,
aren't we?

ELISA
Please, I will do anything... Save
me...

GREG
Anything?

ELISA
Anything... Please...

She falls unconscious. Greg gets up.

PAUL
What do we do?

GREG
We bring her to the Tower. And the
daughter too, she'll give us
leverage.

Greg takes a flask out of a pocket, empties it on the ground,
covering it in Elixir.

Paul grabs Leah and puts her over his shoulder. Greg does the
same with Elisa, then shoots his gun at the puddle of Elixir.

It bursts into large flames that quickly spread to the whole
floor, as Greg and Paul get out of the building.

EXT. ELISA'S HOUSE - NIGHT/FLASHBACK

In the light of the blaze, Greg and Paul get out of Elisa's
house. They don't notice Menahem, hidden in the shadows by
the window, restrained by Matt and Rosh.

EXT. THE TOWER - NIGHT/FLASHBACK

Greg and Paul arrive at the Tower, still carrying Leah and
Elisa.

INT. THE TOWER/ELEVATOR - NIGHT/FLASHBACK

Greg and Paul get inside the elevator.

GREG
Which floor?

Leah briefly opens her eyes as Paul presses the 15th button.
Greg hits her with his gun, and she passes out again.

GREG (CONT'D)
I can't believe you let Menahem do
this.

PAUL

He said Matt let him in. I couldn't suspect he would do... that.

GREG

Matt... He probably told Menahem the Tower was full, because he knew he was still in touch with his girl. He never told you that?

PAUL

Never.

INT. THE TOWER/15TH FLOOR - NIGHT/FLASHBACK

The doors of the elevator open on the 15th floor. Greg and Paul come out of it, and walk towards the two empty tanks.

Greg throws a disgusted look at the two corpses still bathing in their blood.

Paul puts Leah in the first tank, straps the headset on her head, and closes the tank.

He's about to press the red button when Greg stops him.

GREG

Let's take care of the mother first.

Paul nods, and Greg installs Elisa in her tank.

He then takes a walkie-talkie from his belt, turns it on.

GREG (CONT'D)

Lucy?

LUCY (IN THE WALKIE-TALKIE)

Yes sir?

GREG

An EGO is going to awake. I want you to bring it to my floor, okay?

LUCY (IN THE WALKIE-TALKIE)

Yes sir.

INT. THE TOWER/LAST FLOOR - NIGHT/FLASHBACK

On the last floor of the Tower, the doors of the elevator ding open to reveal Lucy and Wanda, in white clothes.

Lucy pushes her forward, and Wanda walks towards Greg and Paul as the doors of the elevator close.

GREG

Welcome... Tell me your name, my child.

WANDA

Wanda.

No hesitation.

GREG

I see you've accepted it already.

Wanda nods.

GREG (CONT'D)

Come closer. You said you would do anything, right? Apparently, Paul over here is too weak to take care of my most important business.

PAUL

What's that supposed to mean? I've never--

GREG

--Quiet! From now on all I want you to do is to make sure Matt cooperates with us. Any wrongdoing on his end, and I'll send Wanda to get rid of him. Is that clear?

PAUL

Y--Yes sir.

GREG

Then give me your gun and your card.

Paul doesn't move.

GREG (CONT'D)

Now!

Paul hands him his items, and Greg gives them to Wanda.

She gets the gun. Immediately points it at Greg. He snickers.

GREG (CONT'D)

You know what would happen to her if you did that, right?

She lowers her aim.

He grabs her by the neck and lifts her up.

GREG (CONT'D)

That's better. Now, let's bring
peace back in our city.

He lets go of Wanda and she falls to the ground.

INT. THE TOWER/15TH FLOOR - NIGHT

We're back 10 years later, on the 15th floor.

Elisa falls dead, the fuming gun still in her hand.

Leah's legs fail her, and Menahem leaps to catch her before
she falls to the ground.

He presses her wound, tries to stop the bleeding, but he's
quickly soaked in her blood.

MENAHM

We have to put you back in there.

LEAH

I... I am not... like her.

MENAHM

I know pumpkin. But I can't let you
go like that.

LEAH

No...

MENAHM

I'm sorry.

He lifts her up, straps the wired-headset on her head, and
puts her back in the tank.

She tries to step out of it, but is too weak to move.

Menahem closes the half-open glass cylinder, and presses the
red button next to the tank.

It fills with Elixir and, inside, Leah passes out.

On the ground, Ant opens his eyes.

He slowly gets up, and presses his hand against the tank.

ANT

I'm not like her.

MENAHEM

I know. You're not taking anyone's place.

ANT

I have to put an end to this. Where can I find him?

MENAHEM

Greg?

Ant nods.

ANT

Everything that happened was because of him. Where is he?

Menahem points up to the ceiling.

INT. THE TOWER/ELEVATOR - NIGHT

The elevator rises to the last floor with Ant and Menahem inside.

MENAHEM

Are you going to kill him?

ANT

I'm gonna try to. For what he did to mom. To June.

MENAHEM

Your mother brought it upon herself, you know. We had a plan - find a way to get a shift at Hell's Gate, and lead you out of the city safely, no matter the consequences for her or for me. But she decided to sacrifice you to save herself.

ANT

I'm not sure I can blame her for that. Giving up eternal life for your ideals isn't an easy decision to take.

MENAHEM

I know. But you were ready to take it. And so was June.

The shaft stops, the doors open.

Menahem passes them. Ant follows him.

EXT. ELISA'S HOUSE - NIGHT/FLASHBACK

We're back at Elisa's house, set on fire by Greg.

Menahem frees himself from Rosh and Matt's hold and rushes to the door.

INT. ELISA'S HOUSE - NIGHT/FLASHBACK

Menahem, frantic, steps inside. He looks around, then sprints across the flames to the stairs.

INT. ELISA'S HOUSE/SECOND FLOOR - NIGHT/FLASHBACK

On the second floor, filled with smoke, Menahem goes straight to a large wardrobe. He opens the doors, and seizes what he finds inside, before rushing back to the stairs.

EXT. ELISA'S HOUSE - NIGHT/FLASHBACK

Menahem comes out of the burning house, limping - part of his leg has burnt, revealing the metal underneath.

He falls to his knees next to Rosh and Matt, and starts sobbing tearlessly, holding in his arms a young June, unconscious but breathing.

Matt crouches next to him, caresses June's face.

MATT

You had two daughters? Why didn't you tell me?

MENAHM

What would it have changed?

A beat. Matt stands back up.

MATT

If you ever need me, you know where you can find me.

He grabs Rosh by the arm.

MATT (CONT'D)

Come on.

The two men leave Menahem, who still holds June tight.

EXT. HELL'S GATE - NIGHT

A much older June stands in front of the fifty feet tall brick Wall that surrounds the city.

She observes the single spot on it that is lit - a large metal door, fifteen feet wide and high.

She scans her surroundings. Doesn't see anyone.

She walks to the door, studies it for a moment, then pushes a ridiculously small handle. It opens, easily.

June gets inside.

INT. HELL'S GATE - NIGHT

The door leads to a large corridor, a kind of airlock, with a similar door on the other side.

The one behind June closes by itself, and a bright red light illuminates it. A similar light shines on the other door, and reveals a man who sits on a chair and in his purple uniform - Tarik.

He stands up, intrigued, but friendly. On his hip, a gun glows - a Glock, not an ANTI-EGO.

TARIK

May I help you ma'am?

June puts her hand on her own Glock lying in her pocket.

JUNE

Are you in charge here?

TARIK

I guess so, at least until Wanda comes back. But I'm glad you're here, it gets quite lonely in there.

JUNE

Not a lot of people wanting to get out, right?

TARIK

Is that why you're here?

JUNE

Why? You would have to stop me?

Tarik snickers.

TARIK

No, that's not really my job. I'm here to make sure no one comes in. But you're free to go if that's what you want. Come, I'll show you.

June, unnerved, follows him to a small machine on the wall.

TARIK (CONT'D)

It's quite easy, really. All you need to do is put a drop of blood in there, and the door will open. Quite easy, if you forget the fact that EGOs can't bleed, of course.

He forces a smile and walks backwards to where June came from, as June studies the machine - her hand leaves her Glock, goes to her other pocket to take her knife out of it.

She raises the blade under Tarik's curious eyes. Lifts the tip to her thumb. Pricks it.

A small blood drop drips from her finger. She brings it to the machine.

The red light next to her turns green, and the door loudly unlocks.

She turns to it, satisfied, and pushes it - it opposes more resistance than the other one, but the opening is soon wide enough to let her pass.

On the other side of the room, in the red light, Tarik draws his gun, trembling.

TARIK (CONT'D)

Wait!

JUNE

What? You said I could get out if I wanted to.

TARIK

I... I know... I just didn't think you actually could.

JUNE

Does it change anything?

TARIK

If Wanda learns about this, I... I don't know--

JUNE

--She won't know about it.

TARIK

I'm not gonna lie to her.

JUNE

You won't have to. Wanda's dead.

Tarik frowns.

TARIK

You're lying.

JUNE

I'm not. But even if I were, you wouldn't have to tell her anything. Killing me will change nothing for you.

She takes a sidestep towards the door.

TARIK

But what if you come back? What if you bring people from outside?

JUNE

Then you'll stop me. Isn't it why you're here?

She turns to the exit.

Takes a step towards freedom, as we--

CUT TO BLACK

OVER BLACK

A single gunshot. A death sentence.

INT. THE TOWER/LAST FLOOR - NIGHT

The last room of the Tower. Ant holds in his hands his ANTI-EGO gun, still fuming. Next to him, Menahem.

On the other side of the room, Greg, seated in his armchair, a large grin on his face. A bullet ripped the skin off his forehead - but the metal underneath is barely scratched.

GREG

To what do I owe this honor?

ANT

I'm here to kill you.

GREG

Yes, I saw that. But people usually start with their names.

MENAHAM

You know who we are.

GREG

Oh, I didn't notice you there, Menahem. Are you here for the same *purpose* as this gentleman?

MENAHAM

Let's say I wouldn't mind if he got rid of you.

GREG

But the tragic thing is, he can't. You see, I forged my own EGO, and I took extreme care to make sure nothing could break it.

He stands up.

GREG (CONT'D)

Unlike you, Ant. So fragile. So short on time. So... human.

He aims at Ant, who doesn't flinch.

ANT

I'm no human.

GREG

What? But, the tip said--

ANT

--I'm an EGO. You've trapped me in here, like everyone else.

GREG

Trapped? If anything I've freed you! Just like I've freed everyone else from a life of fear, the fear of death, of the unknown. I've answered their prayers and blessed them with eternal life!

ANT

An eternal life in a city that's falling to pieces, spending their days doing nothing for fear of running out of Elixir, because you decide how much people can get each day? I really don't think it's an eternal life worth living.

Ant raises his gun.

GREG

So what? You want to try again? I told you, I can't die, I--

--Ant switches his aim to the stunted old man floating in the only tank of the room--

GREG (CONT'D)

--Wait!--

--He presses the trigger.

The tank shatters.

A mix of Elixir and blood flows to the ground.

The old man, his face ripped open, hangs from the headset strapped on his head.

Greg is still now.

MENAHAM

He cared so much about his EGO he forgot about his self.

ANT

I wasn't sure I you could do it.

Menahem puts his hand on Ant's shoulder.

MENAHAM

Me neither. But I'm proud of you, pumpkin.

ANT

Did... Did I do something wrong?

MENAHAM

Of course not, quite the opposite! Believe me, you've done everyone a big favor. Now come on, let's leave this death trap of a building.

Ant doesn't respond, eyes fixed on something on the wall--
--A large lever with a red light shining next to it.
He walks to it without saying a word.

MENAHM (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

ANT
This is what Tarik told me about.
This is the switch that will free
everyone.

He reaches for it--

MENAHM
--Stop!

Menahem grabs the ANTI-EGO gun from Greg's immobile hands.

ANT
You've seen the Scrapyard, the
people stuck there forever in
broken shell, the people starved
for Elixir, fighting for it. Now I
have the power to change things, to
stop this. I have to do something.

MENAHM
Because you really believe
everything will magically change
once you pull that lever? You
idealize life as a human, but it
will be the same as it is as EGOS.
Resources will still be scarce.
People will still fight for them.
This city won't change just because
EGOs are no more.

He takes aim at Ant.

ANT
I think it's worth a try. At least
they'll have a choice, they'll be
free to do whatever they want with
their lives. That's the most
important part. They'll be free.

MENAHM
I can't let you do that. I promised
Matt I wouldn't let you do anything
stupid.

(MORE)

MENAHEM (CONT'D)

And I promised June I would look after you. After Leah. If you pull that lever, it will kill her.

ANT

I know. But I care about this city. About its people. So it's the only choice I have.

Menahem lowers his weapon.

MENAHEM

There's always another choice. We can find a way to work together, and--

--Ant raises his own gun, aims at Menahem--

--and takes the shot - at the stomach, not the head. The bullet pierces Menahem's abdomen.

Elixir spurts from the wound. Ignites--

Menahem bursts into flames.

They engulf his whole body, slowly melting his clothes, fusing them with the artificial skin.

He falls, writhes in pain on the ground. Screams. A scream that turns into nothing more than a blood-curling robotic shriek as chunks of melted skin fall from his metal body.

Ant drops his gun to the ground.

ANT

I'm so sorry. It'll be over soon.

Turns to the lever.

Puts his trembling hand on it.

Closes his eyes.

And pulls it.

The red light turns green.

Menahem finally becomes still - but a low rattling still echoes through his body.

A deafening and repetitive CLANK-CLANK-CLANK fills the room.

Ant opens his eyes.

All around the circular room, metallic blinds are opening.
From behind them, the first glow of dawn lights the room.
He walks to the windows.
Puts his hand against it.
Notices a small scratch that reveals the metal underneath.
His face drowned in sunlight, he starts sobbing.

EXT. OUTSIDE - DAY

Outside the city, June walks in the wilderness.

In the rising sun, everything around her is of a beautiful green that wouldn't even be conceivable to those stuck in the city.

As she reaches the top of a small slope, she sits down on a large rock, and contemplates the scenery.

On her left, a stream runs in a small valley between two verdurous hills.

On her right, the edge of a forest.

She takes a look at her thumb: a single drop of blood drips from a light wound.

She stares at it, then at the marvelous nature she's facing, and a bright smile lights up her face.

THE END