

KILLZONE

Episode I: Kin

by

Joseph Bologna

EXT. SPACE - NIGHT

The screen is black.

SCOLAR VISARI (O.S.)
My people... Sons and Daughters of
Helghan...

A bright red light shines in the middle of the dark abyss.

SCOLAR VISARI (O.S.)
For many years, we have been a
broken nation.

More red lights blink on sporadically around the first.

SCOLAR VISARI (O.S.)
Shunned, oppressed, and conquered
by those we sought to escape.

The lights grow closer, the original source comes into view
as a massive spacecraft.

SCOLAR VISARI (O.S.)
Ten years ago, I asked for time,
and that time was granted by you.

The first shuttle passes by the frame, which turns with its
path to reveal a planet: Helghan. Its surface is divided by
sickly brown land masses and dark seas, which are suffocated
by widespread storm vectors.

SCOLAR VISARI (O.S.)
You: The strength in my arm, the
holders of my dreams.

The armada of ships approach the planet's fraught atmosphere.

SCOLAR VISARI (O.S.)
Our forefathers embarked on the
greatest exodus in the history of
all mankind.

One by one, the ships disappear beyond the clouds.

SCOLAR VISARI (O.S.)
An exodus for freedom. Helghan
became that freedom.

Text types onto screen, first in Helghan letters:

Planet: HELGHAN

System: ALPHA CENTAURI

The frame behind the text fades to black.

SCOLAR VISARI (O.S.)
 Our new world changed our bodies.
 At first, it weakened us..

A lightning strike brings a stone mural into view. It depicts a series of people in motion similar to the Evolutionary Chain. The furthest figure to the left is on their knees, crawling on thin arms. Their sunken, sickly face is downward.

SCOLAR VISARI (O.S.)
 But, in fact, we were growing
 stronger.

The figures on the mural gradually move into an upright stance. Each figure grows larger in stature than the previous. The second figure, pushing upward from the ground the first is crawling on, is wearing a gas mask. The next is leaning forward on a shovel. They are wearing a more elaborate mask apparatus. Finally, the furthest right figure stands proudly, their masked face upward toward the sky.

SCOLAR VISARI (O.S.)
 In the time you have given me, I
 have rebuilt our nation, I have
 rebuilt our strength, and I have
 rebuilt our pride!

The mural rests in the middle of a large courtyard. Brutalist cement architecture stretches far above the monument. A red Helghan flag hangs over the statues from a tall pole, a three interconnecting black arrows stretch out in the shape of a wide "Y" in the middle of the cloth as it waves in the wind.

SCOLAR VISARI (O.S.)
 Our enemies at home have been re-
 educated; We have given them new
 insights to our cause.

Two pairs of legs hang from above the frame. Between them is a poster which reads "LOYALTY ABOVE ALL."

Several propaganda posters are plastered around the courtyard among widespread graffiti. The art depicts high-tech soldiers of the Interplanetary Strategic Alliance (I.S.A.) cowering beneath the Helghan symbol and an Earth-like planet, Vekta, floating beneath a black-gloved hand.

SCOLAR VISARI (O.S.)

On this day, we stand united once
more. On this day, we stand united
once more.

Storms engulf the depiction of Vekta. Through them, bright red lights emit before Helghan war ships burst from the clouds. The spacecrafts are bulkier and heavily armed, much more imposing than the ships that arrived to Helghan before.

SCOLAR VISARI (O.S.)

On this day, those driven to
divide us will hear our voices! On
this day, we shall act as one, and
we shall be ignored NO MORE!

An entire fleet of war ships leave Helghan's atmosphere.

SCOLAR VISARI (O.S.)

Defenders of the Helghast dream,
NOW IS OUR TIME!

The Helghast warships strike into space.

Title card:

KILLZONE

EXT. VEKTAN FIELD - DAY

A cherry blossom tree stands on its own in the middle of a far-stretching field. A dreary gray sky looms over it.

Text types onto screen:

VEKTA

As we pull back, more of the field comes into view. Mounds of displaced dirt and grass lie around fresh craters, every other tree in sight is charred or burning.

BOOM! The last remaining tree explodes, leaving a new crater among the rest.

Helghast Overlord dropships ZOOM over the field, followed hastily by ATAC fighter drones as they approach a ruinous city. The distant buildings are crumbling beneath multiple columns of black smoke suffocating the skyline.

EXT. VEKTAN CITY - CONTINUOUS

The same dropships and drones fly over the demolished rooftops of the city street.

Below them, several ISA SOLDIERS flee deeper into the city; Their bulky gray armor coated in dirt and the orange visors of their helmets are cracked and smudged.

Bullets WHIZ past them in both directions as EXPLOSIONS send hunks of debris into the air. SCREAMS are muffled by the sounds of war while distant ISA soldiers fire at unseen foes.

An ISA PRIVATE falls into frame on his back. He SCREAMS as he grips a bleeding hole in his abdomen. A hand PRESSES a med-pack onto the wound.

KRYSTYNA

Hold on!

KRYSTYNA CHAPEL (30) drops to her knees beside the fallen soldier as she applies pressure to his wound. She wears similar armor with a red cross signifying her role as a medic. She looks just like Jessica Henwick, go figure.

Krystyna frantically applies her medical tools to the wound as her patient WRITHES and YELLS.

A wall across the street from them CRUMBLES as a Helghast tank breaks through. Its treads grind the bricks beneath them into dust as the hulking vehicle climbs over the mound and SLAMS down onto the street. The front of the vehicle unhinges and a ramp falls outward like a draw-bridge.

Krystyna freezes in motion as she stares into the vehicle's dark hull. Several pairs of glowing red eyes gaze back.

INT. KRYSTYNA'S BUNKER - DAY

Krystyna SHAKES awake, her eyes wide as an alarm BEEPS beside her. She reaches over and hits the digital clock. It reads "05:00 AM." We don't see this room just yet.

INT. KRYSTYNA'S KITCHEN - DAY

A cabinet stands along the wall, dividing the kitchen from the living room. Behind the glass are several framed photos. One depicts a much younger Krystyna candidly posing with another similar-looking young girl. Beside it, that same girl but much older poses with a man. They are dressed for their wedding.

Most prominently, Krystyna and the same woman again pose alongside a squad of ISA soldiers, all dressed in fatigues. Printed over the image is "REMUS SQUAD." A Purple Heart medal is propped up beside the framed photo along with a Remus Squad patch, which depicts a wolf howling at two moons.

The kitchen is largely contemporary to our standards; The wooden floor and marble counter-top gleam with the early morning light that shines through the window.

Krystyna rubs her face as she walks into the room. She is wearing a tank top. We can see a large circular scar between her shoulder and collar bone. As she enters, the refrigerator emits a holographic image on its surface: A circular logo which depicts the sun halved by a crescent moon. The brand beneath it reads "SIBYL."

SIBYL AUTOMATED VOICE (O.S.)
Good morning. Krystyna.

KRYSTYNA
Good morning, Sibyl.

Krystyna continues to a coffee pot on the counter.

SIBYL AUTOMATED VOICE
It is. 62 Degrees. In. Vekta.
Today. Sunny. With a high of. 65
degrees. Would you like to hear.
The rest of the forecast?

KRYSTYNA
No, thank you.

Krystyna pours herself a cup of coffee.

SIBYL AUTOMATED VOICE
Okay. Thank you! You have. 15.
New. Messages. The I.S.A. Veterans
Associa-

KRYSTYNA
Filter spam.

SIBYL AUTOMATED VOICE
Okay. Thank you! You have. One.
New. Message.

KRYSTYNA
Display.

Krystyna takes her cup to the fridge but halts in place.

The holographic message reads "Message From: JED."

Krystyna sighs.

KRYSTYNA

List trains into Vekta City.

Krystyna walks out of the kitchen.

SIBYL AUTOMATED VOICE

Okay. Listing trains into. Vetka
City.

EXT. KRYSTYNA'S HOME - DAY

Krystyna exits her front door before shutting and locking it.

She reaches the edge of her porch and looks down. Her right hand trembles and her breath grows stilted. Krystyna closes her eyes and breathes in deeply. She opens her eyes and exhales while clenching her right fist.

She steps off her porch. Her modest countryside home looks as contemporary as its interior. Small hints of far-future technology dot the structure with solar panels and delivery drones that fly overhead. Two moons rest in the sky.

The neighborhood is rural. Futuristic wind turbines spin in the distance behind Krystyna's home. Neighboring houses are adorned with blue ISA/Vektan flags. Krystyna's is not.

INT. TRAIN CAR - DAY

Krystyna holds onto a pole as she stands in the packed elevated train car. VEKTAN CITIZENS fill the cramped space, many wearing the same colors of the ISA and Vektan flags.

Sunlight erupts into the train as it comes out of a tunnel. Krystyna gazes out the windows to her left.

The train speeds along the track hundreds of yards in the air, stacked above multiple other tracks and parallel to another series of tracks with trains speeding in the opposite direction. Krystyna's train approaches Vetka City.

Mammoth skyscrapers tower above the high-tech city. The glass, steel, and marble of Vekta's capitol stand in sharp contrast with Krystyna's modest home. Warm morning light dances along the stylish architecture and patches of greenery built into the clutter of structures. A wide river sits at the edge of the city.

EXT. VEKTA CITY STATION - DAY

The crowd piles out of the train onto the station's platform. Krystyna waits for the rush to finish before stepping out herself. She scans the crowd.

ISA recruitment posters and holograms clutter the platform, intermittently placed between advertisements.

Krystyna walks to a staircase that reads "Memorial Square."

EXT. MEMORIAL SQUARE ENTRYWAY - DAY

Krystyna ascends the stairs leading to Memorial Square, an open courtyard built into the roof of one of Vekta city's tallest skyscrapers. A large stage stands before a massive screen erected in front of the building's spire which continues upward above the open space. The screen displays an image on loop: "Memorial Square Grand Opening" with two spinning ISA logos on each side of the phrase. Twelve wide rows of folding chairs, divided down the middle by a walkway, sit between the stage and a crowd of standing guests. Cherry blossom trees line the sides of the courtyard.

She approaches a security point. ARMED OFFICERS line the entryway to the courtyard. They wear similar armor to ISA soldiers. Krystyna pulls a ticket out of her pocket.

OFFICER

Ticket and ID, please.

She holds them out to him.

OFFICER

Oh. Sergeant. Thank you for your service.

Krystyna averts her eyes from his and nods as she moves on.

EXT. MEMORIAL SQUARE - CONTINUOUS

A large crowd is already present. Like on the train, many GUESTS wear Vektan colors. Krystyna walks past a line of ISA recruitment tents. At one, an ISA SOLDIER dressed in fatigues hands a small device emitting a hologram of an ISA dropship to a child. They are both smiling. Krystyna rolls her eyes.

Krystyna settles at the edge of the crowd near the trees. She studies the crowd and spots an older man wearing a black "ISA Veteran" cap above a patch over his right eye.

Patriotic music swells from the stage, the crowd focuses.

A WOMAN walks onto stage followed by a dozen ISA REPRESENTATIVES dressed in formal military uniforms. REPRESENTATIVE SLOANE (40) approaches the podium.

SLOANE

Good morning and thank you for being here today. On this solemn day, we commemorate this space so generously provided by our partners at the UCN and the Vektan Memorial Fund to the brave men and women who laid down their lives for the nation and ideals they swore to protect and defend.

Krystyna looks around the crowd again.

SLOANE

Three months ago, while our incredible partners at Hurst Construction put the finishing touches on the courtyard we stand in today, we commemorated the two year anniversary of the invasion of our home. Although we lost much in those three months, the brave men and women of the ISA fended off the cowards who waged war on our sovereign lands and sent them back to their home.

The crowd cheers. Krystyna's head droops downward.

PROTESTOR (O.S.)

They were here first!

The voice cuts through the cheers. Krystyna searches for the source as the cheers dwindle.

A PROTESTOR stands near the middle of the crowd holding a sign that reads "HELGHAN AMNESTY NOW" high above his head.

PROTESTOR

They built this city!

The crowd erupts into BOOS and JEERS. Officers push through the mass of people toward the Protestor.

PROTESTOR

Your stage is built on stolen land!

Members of the crowd PUSH the man and SWAT at his sign as two Officers arrive and grab him. They pull him away.

SLOANE
We must not forget.

A member of the crowd retrieves the Protestor's sign and TEARS it in half.

PROTESTOR
Imperialists!

SLOANE
We will not forget.

Krystyna watches the Officers drag the Protestor to and down the stairs. She looks aside, then back to the podium.

SLOANE
We must remember all of the lives
lost defending our great nation.

On the screen behind Sloane, over a hundred portraits of fallen ISA soldiers appear in a collage. Krystyna centers in on one: The same Private from the opening act she attended to. Her breathing becomes uneven again and she averts her eyes and clenches her right fist. In the crowd, she sees a man holding a small child, both of them crying.

SLOANE
And we must seek justice for all
of the mothers. The fathers. The
brothers and sisters. The children
left to mourn every soul stolen by
the Helghan extremists.

A CIVILIAN next to Krystyna murmurs under his breath:

CIVILIAN
Fuckin Higs.

SLOANE
Under Operation Archangel, it is
our vow to you that Scholar Visari
will be brought to justice.

The screen behind Sloane displays a series of portraits. Among the ISA COMMANDERS is the same woman from the framed photos in Krystyna's home.

SLOANE
As we mourn here today, the brave
men and women of the ISA near the
end of their two week journey to
Planet Helghan where they will
avenge our fallen and bring a
swift end to the Helghast regime.
(MORE)

SLOANE (CONT'D)

The effort is being spearheaded by the very heroes who defended our home in its darkest hours. We thank them, along with their loved ones in attendance here today.

The crowd breaks into APPLAUSE, but the noise drowns out as Krystyna's focus narrows in on the familiar face on display. Her breathing worsens. She RUSHES away.

EXT. MEMORIAL SQUARE ENTRYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Krystyna pushes through the edge of the crowd and reaches a row of the cherry blossom trees. Holding her chest with her right hand, she tries to control her breath as she overlooks the city. She steadies herself.

ROOK (O.S.)

Sarg?

Krystyna turns to the source. ROOK (45) approaches her. He was one of the soldiers in the Remus Squad photo. Rook is seated in a sleek but comparatively low-tech wheelchair. His hair is unkempt and the beard on his face is patchy and uneven. He wears a military jacket over an old shirt, the jacket adorned with a Remus Squad patch on the shoulder. The pant legs on his slacks are rolled up to his knees without any legs to fill them.

ROOK

I thought that was you. You good, Sarg?

KRYSTYNA

Yeah, yeah, just... taking in the view. How are you?

ROOK

Good as can be, all things considered. Surprised to see you here.

KRYSTYNA

I was invited. Showing up is the least I can do.

ROOK

Hm.

Rook turns his head to the stage.

ROOK

Higs don't know what's coming for'em. They could've just sent Cap on her own and we'd have Visari in chains before holiday.

Krystyna's demeanor changes.

ROOK

She say anything about the op before liftoff? Boys on the comms only get bits and pieces. Merc's are trying to get coordinates to join'em too.

KRYSTYNA

No, we uh... didn't talk about it.

ROOK

Damn. Guess we gotta watch from the cheap seats.

KRYSTYNA

Well, nobody's holding a gun to your head anymore.

Rook looks at Krystyna. Her eyes trail to his. She sighs.

KRYSTYNA

We're out. Maybe we should just go live our lives.

Krystyna walks toward the exit.

ROOK

Easy for you to say.

She HALTS. Rook's wheelchair swivels to face her.

ROOK

Some of us didn't get to walk away. You might not care, but it kills me that I can't be there with'em. If the choice wasn't made for me I'd be there right now, and if that was MY sister heading into that shithole planet I'd sure as hell be by her side.

Krystyna head JERKS toward Rook, her brows are furrowed and her lips pursed tightly.

JED (O.S.)

Krys?

Krystyna's eyes remain locked on Rook's.

JED (O.S.)

Krys?!

JED (35) touches Krystyna's arm with his left hand; He is the same man posing with Krystyna's sister in the framed photo. The hand on her arm is adorned with a wedding band. He is dressed well, his clothes more expensive than most of the crowd's. Krystyna turns her head to meet his smiling face.

JED

Hey.

KRYSTYNA

Hey, Jed.

JED

Glad I caught you, I got held up at the office-

KRYSTYNA

Yeah-

Krystyna looks back to see Rook wheeling back to the crowd.

JED

You heading in? I'm not sure which side we're on.

Krystyna looks back at Jed. She is silent for a beat.

KRYSTYNA

Yeah, sorry, um... I think we just missed the friends and family shout-out.

JED

Damn. Guess we have to settle for the photo ops.

They both chuckle.

JED

Hey, about last week-

KRYSTYNA

Oh-

JED

If you want to just-

KRYSTYNA

No, I'm sorry. I'm just... I'm figuring some stuff out.

JED

I get it, bad timing.

KRYSTYNA

Yeah.

JED

Look, there's no model or time frame to follow. I just want to be sure you know you have somebody who understands.

KRYSTYNA

I already have monthly meetings with a 'somebody who understands,' but I appreciate the offer.

JED

You just can't resist throwing punches. You and your sister.

KRYSTYNA

Well we chose the right profession, didn't we?

Jed snickers.

JED

Speaking of, I have something if you're still looking for work. We just got the all-clear to start bulldozing Diortem to get reconstruction underway. I'd love to have someone on my team who's familiar with the area.

KRYSTYNA

Familiar with what's left of it, you mean.

JED

I get if you don't want to dig those memories back up, but it's an easy gig and good money. We both know you could use it right now.

Krystyna snickers and looks away.

JED

Just think about it. Better yet,
why don't you come by tonight? We
can hash out the details, write up
the contract-

KRYSTYNA

I... I got a thing tonight,
actually.

JED

Oh. Okay.

KRYSTYNA

And I have an interview tomorrow
morning, anyway.

JED

Good. Well, I'm... glad you're
getting out.

KRYSTYNA

Yeah. Look, I'm gonna go. Thank
you, really.

Krystyna walks toward the staircase.

JED

Krys.

She HALTS, then turns halfway to facing him.

JED

Just... call me if you change your
mind.

Krystyna's face softens. She nods, then heads to the stairs.

Jed SIGHS. He looks to the stage. His head droops.

EXT. VEKTA CITY STATION - DAY

Krystyna slumps down onto a bench and leans her head back
onto the wall she is seated against. She looks to her side.

Further along the platform, two TEENAGERS, hooded and dressed
in baggy clothes, spray paint an unfavorable caricature of a
Helghan woman cowering under a lit torch. She has cartoonish,
emaciated proportions and pale skin. Thin strands of hair
fray out from her balding scalp and her agape mouth houses
very few yellow teeth.

Two VEKTAN SECURITY OFFICERS approach them. They both laugh.

SECURITY OFFICER 1

Less teeth.

The Officers continue walking, chuckling to each other, as the Teenagers laugh and continue spraying.

Krystyna SIGHS. She rolls her head along the wall to face forward. We pull back to see she is seated beneath a massive ISA recruitment projection. Holographic fighter jets fly outward beside the words "ENLIST TODAY."

HARD CUT TO:

INT. KRYSTYNA'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Krystyna sits alone at a small table in the same position she sat in on the bench. A half-finished dish of a microwave dinner and an empty beer bottle sit before her. The cabinet of wartime artifacts and photos looms behind her.

Krystyna throws the rest of her meal into the trash. She exits the kitchen.

INT. KRYSTYNA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Krystyna stands in the doorway to her bedroom. The lights are on. Everything is neat and tidy. Another photo of her and her sister stands on a modest cabinet along the wall where an ISA W1 Combat Medic certification hangs. She looks around.

Krystyna switches the lights off and walks away.

INT. KRYSTYNA'S BUNKER - NIGHT

Krystyna opens the door to her cellar and stands at the top of the stairs. She walks down into a modest bunker.

A bare mattress lies on the floor against the side wall, a pillow and blanket are strewn on top. The same digital clock she struck before is on the floor beside it.

On the opposite wall, a well-used punching bag hangs from the ceiling beside a wooden Wing Chun training dummy.

Near the foot of the "bed," a tall metal shelving unit stocked with canned goods stretches to the ceiling. On the opposite side, along the staircase, another shelving unit stores rations and equipment; Knee pads, a bullet-proof vest, and a combat knife line a shelf on top of some kind of radio.

Krystyna kneels before the radio and turns it on. Static BUZZES as she turns the dial. A voice comes in:

ACE (O.S.)
 -reported at oh-four hundred,
 confirming prior leaks of activity
 near the eastern front.

Krystyna sits on the mattress, wrapping herself in the blanket as pulls her knees in toward her chest.

ACE (O.S.)
 Touchdown onto planet Helghan
 remains on schedule, all figures
 predict modest resistance from
 Helghast forces amassing near the
 capitol. The size of Visari's
 forces have fallen into question
 as reported in-fighting among
 Senate parties have risen in the
 years following his failed
 invasion of Vekta.

Krystyna leans her head down onto her knees.

EXT. KILLZONE - NIGHT

A pitch-black night coats the battlefield in sheer darkness which the two moons in the sky barely shine through. Sporadic fires and BOOMING muzzle fire allow splotches of light to reveal a series of trenches swarming with ISA SOLDIERS.

Krystyna, wearing fatigues, stands up from under a trench and FIRES her assault rifle into the darkness. The same red eyes from before shine out, bright muzzle flashes among them give only glimpses at the HELGHAST SOLDIERS firing from the opposite end of the killzone. Muffled, almost bestial screams and snarls echo out beneath the GUNFIRE.

Krystyna DROPS back down to reload. ISA SOLDIERS clutter the deep, muddy trench. Some lay still in the muck. Others FIRE and reload. Further down the CAPTAIN KARRALYNE CHAPEL (31) fires over the top of the trench. It's Krystyna's sister.

Karra kneels down to reload. She looks up to Krystyna. They lock eyes. Karra nods. Krystyna nods back.

Krystyna readies her weapon and stands. She FIRES into the darkness. She hits a target, one pair of eyes falls back into the shadow with a muffled YELL. A PLUME of dirt kicks up in front of Krystyna from a bullet and she DUCKS.

She kneels down behind the trench and reloads again. She looks up to Karra who continues firing over the trench.

Suddenly, a pair of red eyes glow from above the trench behind Karra. They are fixed on the back of her head.

Krystyna frantically reloads her weapon as Karra's muzzle flashes splash light onto the figure's arm raising a pistol to the back of her head. Krystyna COCKS her weapon ready and aims the muzzle at the eyes. She freezes.

Krystyna's eyes widen, she shakes as she looks down to her finger on the trigger. She strains to pull, but her finger won't move. She looks back up.

The red eyes turn toward her.

INT. KRYSTYNA'S BUNKER - DAY

Krystyna GASPS as she jolts awake, her face coated in sweat. She frantically reaches around the edges of the mattress as uneven breaths escape her mouth. She swivels to lean against the wall, clutching at the wound near her shoulder as her legs stretch out past the side of the mattress. She brings her hands up to her face and weeps.

THERAPIST (O.S.)

How are you feeling this morning,
Krystyna?

HARD CUT TO:

INT. KRYSTYNA'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Krystyna wears a wide smile as she sits on her couch.

KRYSTYNA

I'm good. I feel good.

THERAPIST (O.S.)

Good.

Krystyna nods as she looks at her THERAPIST (60). She is well-dressed and seated in an expensive-looking chair. The wall behind her appears different than Krystyna's home. Muted, calming colors adorn the space and its furniture.

THERAPIST

Have you experienced any episodes
since our last session?

KRYSTYNA

No, not that I can think of.

THERAPIST

Good, I'm glad to hear that.

The Therapist smiles as she looks down to write in a notepad in her lap. She seems to freeze in place for a moment.

She looks back up.

THERAPIST

Have you found our breathing exercises helpful?

KRYSTYNA

Yes, whenever I- I mean, when I needed them, they were very helpful. Yes.

THERAPIST

Good, I'm glad to hear that.

She looks down again, once more appearing to freeze before looking back up to Krystyna.

THERAPIST

I see you haven't refilled your prescriptions in some time. Did you want to order more-

KRYSTYNA

No. No, thank you. I think I'm ready to move past this. I feel- I am ready.

THERAPIST

I'd like to remain on-task for now, it that's okay with you.

The facade of Krystyna's smile is gone.

KRYSTYNA

Yeah. Okay.

THERAPIST

Thank you.

The Therapist looks down again, then back up.

THERAPIST

In the last three weeks, have you experienced shortness of breath?

KRYSTYNA

... No.

THERAPIST

In the last three weeks, have you experienced a sense of numbness?

KRYSTYNA

No.

THERAPIST

In the last three weeks, have you felt an overbearing sense of loneliness?

Krystyna's face tightens.

KRYSTYNA

Pause!

The Therapist freezes. A digital window opens in front of her. It displays the SIBYL logo at the top and a small inbox on the bottom. Krystyna leans back into her couch.

A device rests on the coffee table in front of her, projecting a holographic screen of the Therapist.

ARTIFICIAL VOICE (O.S.)

You have used. One. Of your three allotted pauses this session. We encourage you to answer the provided questions immediately and honestly in order to allow our diagnostic system to most suitably adjust to your needs. Would you like to continue your session?

Krystyna leans forward and looks at the screen. The bottom inbox reads "Two New Messages - JED."

She sighs.

EXT. DIORTEM CITY - DAY

The city of Diortem is left largely in ruin from the Helghast invasion that ravaged it. Crumbled mounds of concrete and steel stretch for miles. Storm clouds loom in the distance.

Large construction vehicles and mechanical exoskeletons resembling the ISA's LS209's, but with arms, haul hunks of debris down a long dirt road. CONSTRUCTION WORKERS patrol the town in bright yellow helmets and harnesses.

Krystyna, wearing the far-future equivalent of a flannel shirt, working pants, and hefty boots, approaches a tent branded "GUERRILLA CONSTRUCTION."

HERM (40) stands at a table under the tent, going over schematics. He is tall and built, wearing the same helmet and harness as the other workers. He sees Krystyna approach.

HERM
Can I help you?

KRYSTYNA
Yeah, hi, Jed's expecting me.

HERM
Krys?

KRYSTYNA
Uh-huh.

HERM
Herm.

Herm reaches into a bin beside the desk and pulls out a harness and helmet. He hands it to Krystyna.

HERM
We're setting up shop around the corner there.

He points toward the nearby junkyard.

KRYSTYNA
Thanks.

Krystyna walks away while putting on the harness.

EXT. JUNKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Krystyna adjusts the vest to her size as she approaches the fence surrounding the junkyard. Mounds of wrecked and rusted steel tower alongside hills of dirt and rubble.

Three WORKERS lounge beside boxes of equipment. ED (35), EDD (40) and EDDIE (40) each wear dirtier and less pristine uniforms than Krystyna. Ed and Eddie talk while Edd fiddles with his equipment. A series of sledgehammers line the fence.

EDDIE
You're crazy, man, I think the Cobras are taking it.

ED
There's no way.

Eddie notices Krystyna approach and slaps Ed's arm. Ed turns.

KRYSTYNA
Hi. Krystyna. I'm a friend of
Jed's.

She holds her hand out to Ed, who shakes it.

ED
That's too bad. Welcome to the
graveyard.

EDDIE
Real nice. I'm Eddie.

Eddie pushes Ed to the side and extends her hand to Krystyna.
Krystyna forces a smile as she shakes Eddie's hand.

ED
I'm not wrong. How many Higs did
Jed say they dug outta here?

EDD
That's a slur.

EDDIE
It wasn't just Higs.

ED
Oh what, you care all of a sudden?

Krystyna adjusts the forehead strap inside her helmet as she
turns to face the fence. She looks up and into the junkyard
behind the chain links. Among the wreckage, parts of Helghast
dropships and tanks stick out from within the jagged piles.
Graffiti on the hull of a tank reads "ROT IN HELGHAN."

EDD
You know Eddie lost her uncle in
the invasion.

ED
She doesn't care!

EDDIE
That's 'cause he was an asshole!

ED
Yeah, well, I lost people too but
you don't see them getting fancy
high rise memorials. You know what
(MORE)

ED (CONT'D)
brother's getting? Maybe a bench
whenever this park gets finished,
and I had to haggle for even that.

Ed stomps over to the equipment boxes beside Edd.

EDDIE
Sorry about him.

KRYSTYNA
I get it.

EDDIE
Hm. Did you lose anyone in the
invasion?

Krystyna sighs.

JED (O.S.)
You made it!

Krystyna looks over to Jed as he approaches.

JED
And already getting acquainted?

KRYSTYNA
Just about.

JED
Great.

Jed CLAPS his hands together as Ed and Edd walk over.

JED
All right crew, this is Krys.
She'll be giving us an extra hand
today. Might've already been
mentioned, but she passed through
here during her service in the
ISA. She knows the area we're
going to be clearing out, so any
questions can go above me today.

Ed, Edd, and Eddie's eyes all widen at the revelation. They
look at Krystyna then each in different directions.

KRYSTYNA
Anything before we head out?

Ed avoids eye contact as Edd and Eddie shake their heads.
Krystyna looks at Jed. His eyebrow rises.

JED

Okay then.

EXT. RUINED STATION - DAY

The group approaches the entrance of a badly damaged subway station. Hunks of the roof had been blown out and many of the entrance columns have fallen over. Eddie and Ed are holding the front and back of a large equipment box.

KRYSTYNA

Iquor Station seized and utilized as a command center by Helghast forces before being flushed out. They did not take the eviction kindly. Tried and failed to bring the place down on the squad that liberated it.

ED

Typical Higs. No respect for fine Vektan architecture.

EDD

Helghan, actually.

The group turns to Edd. He clams up.

EDD

Or, the Helghan Corporation technically. The first settlers built most of the cities on the planet before... you know.

ED

Well, the trains still don't run on time anyway.

Ed YANKS the flashlight off of his belt and heads inside. Krystyna looks at Jed. They all follow Ed.

INT. RUINED STATION HALL - CONTINUOUS

Diffused sunlight bleeds in through the ceiling's wounds, casting splotches of soft light into the dark grand hall.

The crew's flashlights scan around the area as they walk.

JED

ISA cleared out all the equipment and, uh, personnel left behind. Building's mostly still in one

(MORE)

JED (CONT'D)
 piece, so the city wants an
 estimate on whether they can
 salvage the place or not.

EDDIE
 Why not just bulldoze the whole
 thing and start from scratch.

JED
 They said it'll be part of their
 "Cultural Revival" program.

ED
 You mean cheaper to keep'er.

JED
 Why start from scratch when bells
 and whistles are easier?

EDD
 A little morose.

Eddie and Ed DROP the box they've been carrying as they reach the middle of the hall. Edd opens it as Jed and Eddie provide him with light. Ed scans the far wall with his flashlight.

Krystyna scans the floor with her flashlight. Hunks of rubble and debris lay in her path. Her light catches on the face of a fallen statue and she JUMPS in place.

KRYSTYNA
 Shit.

She steps back, bringing more of the fallen figure into light. The figure was sculpted in smooth metal, subtle details and angular proportions appear feminine. It is only the top half of a statue; The torso of a woman holding the sun above her head. The sun is hollow and flat, appearing like a backward "C" with waves of "light" stretching out along its shape. The end of the figure's torso is coated by scorch marks around the jagged break.

EDD
 And on the first day, he said...

An "AEOS" branded drone rises from the box to the domed ceiling. It hovers at its highest point and emits a strong light, illuminating most of the massive hall.

Krystyna looks up to the rest of the statue standing tall above the enclosed information desk in the middle of the hall. The lower half of the fallen statue stands behind and beside another full figure; A woman holding two flat,

slightly overlapping moons above her head. She faces the opposite direction of the pair of legs by her side.

Krystyna squeezes her eyes shut as she droops her head. She looks to her side where Ed is watching.

JED

All right, this way.

INT. EAST TRACK - CONTINUOUS

Jed leads the crew into the tunnel as the AEOS drone follows them overhead, keeping their path lit and projecting lasers that scan up and down the tunnels walls as it goes.

JED

We'll make our way through and scan the tunnels' integrity. We come across anything, we determine whether or not it's a patch job.

They cross the intersection of a maintenance tunnel and the drone's scanning laser pulses red as it stretches down it. The drone stops moving and hovers in place, sending more laser pulses as it floats.

EDD

Just couldn't upgrade to the new model this quarter.

He sneers at Jed. Jed shakes his head.

KRYSTYNA

Why don't I scout ahead?

ED

I'll join you.

Krystyna looks to Ed. He shrugs.

EDDIE

Suit yourselves. I don't do dark tunnels.

JED

Okay. Don't veer too far and watch your step.

KRYSTYNA

Sir, yes sir.

Krystyna and Ed take out their flashlights and head into the tunnel beyond the drone's light.

ED
 Hey, um, I'm sorry for what I said
 earlier.

KRYSTYNA
 It's fine.

ED
 I just don't want you to think-

KRYSTYNA
 I don't.

The two scan the tunnel as they walk.

ED
 My dad was ISA. Just glorified
 cops in peacetime. Got sick years
 before the invasion anyway.
 Billions of dollars to blow on
 dust-covered tanks and heaves but
 not a cent for one of their own.

Krystyna looks over to him as he comes to a stop.

ED
 I guess, I mean... You forget about
 the people, you know? In a
 different sense than they do. So,
 I don't know. Thank you for your
 service?

Krystyna scoffs and trudges ahead with a smirk.

KRYSTYNA
 You should've been a poet.

ED
 Yeah, well, I think they get paid
 even less than I do-

Ed takes a step and K-CLINK!

Krystyna FREEZES in place. She peers over her shoulder.

Ed's flashlight shakes in his hand as it illuminates his left
 foot standing on a circular mine.

INT. WARZONE - DAY

Harsh sunlight blows out the building through the roof.

Back in ISA fatigues, Krystyna peers over her shoulder in the same position. She is positioned in formation with an assault rifle lifted upward in her grip.

Behind her, BOOMEY (24) is frozen in formation while he stands on the same kind of mine. Krystyna looks to her side where Karra looks back at her. Remus Squad holds position.

INT. TUNNEL - DAY

ED
I don't- What do I do?!

INT. WARZONE - DAY

BOOMEY
Captain, what do I do?!

KARRA
Just. Relax. And-

INT. TUNNEL - DAY

KRYSTYNA
-stay still.

Krystyna slowly positions herself in front of Ed.

INT. WARZONE - DAY

Karra slowly positions herself between Krystyna and Boomey.
The mine beneath Boomey's foot BEEPS.

INT. TUNNEL - DAY

ED
What was that?

KRYSTYNA
Don't move.

Krystyna squares herself up with Ed.

The mine beneath Ed's foot BEEPS a higher pitch.

INT. WARZONE - DAY

BOOMEY

Captain?

Kneeling beside Boomey, Karra looks up at Krystyna.

The mine under Boomey's foot BEEPS at an even higher pitch.

KARRA

Cover!

The Remus Squad troops LEAP away from Boomey as Karra LUNGES at Krystyna, shoving her away as the mine EXPLODES.

INT. TUNNEL - DAY

Krystyna rushes and TACKLES Ed off of the device, sending them both several feet away as the mine EXPLODES.

INT. WARZONE - DAY

Krystyna falls through the floor and out of view.

INT. TUNNEL - DAY

The explosion plunges a hole into the tunnel floor. The track shifts and crumbles, sending Krystyna into the crater.

INT. CAVERN - CONTINUOUS

Present Krystyna PLUMMETS into a dark cavern.

KRYSTYNA

Shhhhhhit.

She touches a fresh scrape along her temple as she lies on the ground. Krystyna sits up and notices her still-lit flashlight on the ground a few feet away. She pushes up.

Krystyna stumbles over to the flashlight, brushing dirt and dust off of herself as she reaches down for it. The radio on her belt BUZZES.

JED (O.S.)

-Krys-... you-...in?

She holds the radio up.

KRYSTYNA

I'm all right. Ass broke my fall.
Do you read me?

Static.

KRYSTYNA

I must've fallen into a deeper
track. You read?

Static.

KRYSTYNA

Great.

She scans the area with the cone of light and pauses over a huge concrete symbol on the wall; The encircled shape is reminiscent of the sharp Helghast logo, but the three outward arrows are replaced by three arms intersecting in the middle with their hands clasped over each other's wrists. The old Helghan Corporation. Krystyna sighs.

A muffled YELL calls out from behind her, Krystyna JUMPS at the noise and twirls around to the dark tunnel.

KRYSTYNA

I'm here! Stay put, I'll come to
you!

Krystyna heads into the dark tunnel, her flashlight barely piercing into the seemingly endless abyss. She scans the ground and follows the path with careful steps as she controls her breathing as before.

A crumbling THUD echoes behind her. She TWIRLS-

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

Krystyna TWIRLS around in a dark cavern, now dressed in her ISA fatigues with her flashlight replaced by a pistol affixed with a light. She is beneath the room Karra pushed her from.

She peers into the dark boiler room behind the sights of her weapon. Suddenly, the rumble of a Helghast dropship bellows overhead. Muffled yells echo out, followed by GUNFIRE.

Krystyna TWIRLS around and sprints to the source of the sound until she TRIPS and FALLS face-first.

INT. CAVERN - DAY

Present Krystyna falls face-first into the ground.

She braces herself up on her elbows, the flashlight in her hand illuminating the ground to her side. Her glance is met by a Helghast mask staring back at her.

She GASPS and PUSHES herself up and away from it.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

ISA Krystyna frantically BACKS into a wall as she extends her weapon in front of her.

The light cast from her pistol shines on a HELGHAST SOLDIER trapped under debris from the waist down. The right eye of his mask is cracked and does not emit light. He is also holding a pistol at Krystyna.

His armed hand twitches. The Helghast THROWS his weapon to the side and extends both of his hands upward.

Krystyna keeps her gun trained on the trapped soldier. She looks down the tunnel, back to him, then holsters her pistol.

KRYSTYNA

Okay... okay.

She slowly approaches the pinned Helghast and takes hold of the rubble on him. She PULLS as he PUSHES, her stifled grunts rumble beneath the reverberated cries of anguish escaping the inhuman helmet beside her.

Their combined effort is enough to free him and he PUSHES away from the debris and to his feet. Krystyna backs away, placing her hand on the grip of her holstered pistol. They stare each other down for a moment until he limps away into the dark tunnel.

INT. CAVERN - DAY

Present Krystyna looms over the Helghast helmet on the ground. She pulls the sledgehammer from her belt.

INT. HIGHER SUBLEVEL - DAY

ISA Krystyna's pistol extends out from the staircase leading up from the boiler room. She steps into another dark level of the ruined building. A doorway at the far end flickers with red light from within a thick haze of smoke.

As she approaches the light, a silhouette takes shape from within the smoke. Krystyna FREEZES and holds her aim.

An ISA SOLDIER steps out.

ISA SOLDIER
Sergeant?

Krystyna SIGHS as she drops her aim.

ISA SOLDIER
Oh thank Chri-

BOOM! Blood ERUPTS from the soldier's chest. Krystyna stumbles backward as the soldier twirls around to face the smoke he just stepped out from. He is RIDDLED with automatic fire as Krystyna falls to the ground. A figure steps out of the smoke and continues firing into the ISA Soldier as he falls backward. A Helgast Soldier stands over his fallen enemy and looks up to Krystyna.

The right eye of his helmet is cracked and doesn't emit light. Krystyna's eyes widen and her face begins to shake.

INT. CAVERN - DAY

Present Krystyna SCREAMS in rage as she brings the sledgehammer over her head and DOWN onto the helmet beneath her. She continues smashing it into pieces.

She pants as she backs away. As she attempts to control her breath, she looks to the side to see Jed. She drops the hammer, her empty hand shaking by her side.

INT. JED'S HOME - NIGHT

Krystyna clenches her same hand in a fist as she holds her wrist with the other hand. A medical patch covers the cut on her temple. She leans forward on the couch in Jed's living room as she stares at the framed portrait of Jed and Karra on their wedding day. Steady rainfall taps on the windows.

Jed's city apartment is much more sterile in design than Krystyna's home, but much messier with clutter. Two mostly-finished plates rest on a coffee table in front of the couch beside two half-empty glasses of wine.

Jed walks into view with a SIBYL-branded phone to his ear.

JED
That's great. Okay. Yeah, I'll...
I'll let her know. All right, keep
me updated. Okay. Bye.

Jed SIGHS and plops down onto the couch.

JED

Well, he's a little banged up but they released him. He's on the way home now.

KRYSTYNA

Good.

JED

He told me to tell you... You know what, forget it, you want more?

Jed reaches for her plate.

KRYSTYNA

What'd he say?

Jed stops and sighs.

JED

He told me to tell you that... you are a hero-

Krystyna snickers and leans back into the couch.

JED

Not knowing, like I do, that you would respond to that very true statement like this.

KRYSTYNA

Like what?

JED

Like taking a compliment the way most people would take a brick to the face. You saved his life.

KRYSTYNA

I pushed him.

JED

Off of a fucking land mine.

Krystyna SIGHS.

JED

Come on, just take some praise for once in your life. Can you imagine what your sister would be saying right now?

KRYSTYNA

No, I can't, because THAT hero
fucked off to go blow up a planet.

Jed's smile disappears.

JED

Right.

Jed collects the dishes from the coffee table and takes them
to the sink behind them. Krystyna SQUEEZES her eyes shut.

She stands up and approaches the sink as Jed washes.

KRYSTYNA

That was, uh... a little harsher
than intended.

JED

I knew better than to expect a
real apology.

Krystyna SIGHS as she takes a towel off of the counter and
stands to Jed's side. She holds out her hand. She looks at
her, then hands her a wet plate. She begins to wipe it.

JED

You cut deep, you know that?

KRYSTYNA

Yeah, well, you know where I got
it from.

Jed laughs. A relieved smile creeps onto Krystyna's face.

KRYSTYNA

I'm sorry. I shouldn't have said
that. These last couple of weeks...
I just wish she called before she
left. I should have called.

JED

We, uh... actually got into an
argument about.

Jed holds the second plate over to Krystyna. She places the
dry plate down and takes the wet one.

KRYSTYNA

Yeah?

JED

Oh yeah.

Jed washes his hands in the sink.

JED

Tried convincing her that she'd regret it, that shutting you out for two years was already a mistake, and-

Jed holds his hands near his head and extends his fingers while mouthing "boom." He continues washing.

JED

You know her. No changing that mind. Felt like you two were already living on different planets before she went up.

KRYSTYNA

Yeah. At least she talked to you.

Jed SHAKES his hands over the sink and looks to the side. He walks back to the couch. Krystyna finishes drying the plate and turns as he sits down and takes a glass of wine.

JED

After the invasion, after you... I don't know, she was just... different.

Krystyna crosses her arms and leans back on the counter.

JED

It's like she never came back, you know what I mean? Like the last time I saw her, REALLY her, was right before you both got shipped off to the frontlines. When they left, she just kept going. She was colder, disinterested. Whatever we did, she was focused on something else; Training, orders, the counter-invasion. Felt like I was living with a stranger wearing my wife's face.

Krystyna hesitantly joins him on the couch.

KRYSTYNA

I wish you told me.

JED

Yeah, your plate really wasn't full enough already.

Krystyna takes a deep breath.

KRYSTYNA

When I, uh... When we... I'm pretty sure that was the first time we actually fought.

Jed looks to her.

KRYSTYNA

We disagreed a lot, obviously, but... Most of my life, I just stayed out of her way and fell in line behind her. I listened to the music she liked. I played the same sports she did. I went to the high school she picked. I followed her into the ISA because I couldn't afford VCU and they covered my degree. Then, wow, invasion. Who'd have think it? She was the leader, I was the follower. Just how it shook out.

JED

That's gotta leave some regrets.

KRYSTYNA

Honestly, not really. Well... no, it's stupid.

JED

No no, go ahead.

Krystyna snickers and reaches for her glass of wine.

KRYSTYNA

I actually wanted to ask you to junior prom, but SHE had dibs.

Krystyna SWIGS her wine.

JED

Oh yeah?

KRYSTYNA

Mhm.

JED

I mean, it was her senior prom that year. That would've been messed up.

KRYSTYNA

That was her reasoning, yes.

JED

Wow. Well, if it's any consolation, no amount of smuggled alcohol could've saved that girl's rhythm. A truly terrible dancer.

KRYSTYNA

Horrendous.

The two laugh.

JED

Anything else or just a truly mediocre high school dance?

KRYSTYNA

No, I think that's it.

JED

That's a pretty big one.

KRYSTYNA

Yeah.

The two stare into each other's eyes. Krystyna leans toward him and he meets her. They kiss.

INT. JED'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Stronger rainfall accosts the bedroom window as streaks of water project into the room from the outside light.

Krystyna lies awake in Jed's bed as she stares directly up to the ceiling. Clothes are strain around the room. Jed is laid on his side facing away from her. His shoulders quiver as he cries, but our focus remains on Krystyna as she lays still.

Krystyna finishes dressing as Jed is asleep. She catches her own reflection in another photo of him and Karra beside the window before she leaves the room.

Thunder CRACKLES.

EXT. KRYSTYNA'S HOME - NIGHT

The same thunder crack rumbles as Krystyna storms toward her home. She is soaking wet in the heavy downpour.

INT. KRYSZYNA'S BUNKER - NIGHT

Krystyna storms into the bunker, throwing her soaked *future flannel* shirt onto the cement floor as she rushes to the radio. She turns it on and kneels down to untie and throw aside her shoes. Static.

She kneels in front of the device and meticulously turns the dial, frantically wiping water and hair from her face.

ACE (O.S.)
 ...arrival... planetside... heavy Helgh-

The choppy transmission is broken up by heavy static.

KRYSZYNA
 Damn it!

Krystyna drops backward, sitting onto the hard floor and buries her face in her hands.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

Krystyna DROPS down onto the floor of the dark room we last saw her in while wearing ISA fatigues. The red light emits from the smokey doorway behind her.

BOOM!

She TWIRLS around to see the one-eyed Helghast soldier RIDDLING the ISA soldier again. Krystyna HOISTS her pistol up toward the killer. He looks up at her. She CLENCHES her hand, but nothing happens. Her finger strains over the trigger.

The Helghast soldier aims at her and PULLS his trigger. CLICK. His weapon is empty. Krystyna strains to pull hers.

The Helghast soldier TOSSES his weapon aside and unsheathes a knife. He stalks toward her as she fails to fire.

He is directly above her. He HOISTS his knife into the air.

BOOM! Blood erupts out of his chest and onto Krystyna. Karra hooks her arm around the Helghast and TOSSES him to the ground, firing more shots from her pistol into his chest.

Krystyna's arm finally drops to her side. Karra looks at her.

KARRA
 How could you?

Karra aims at Krystyna and FIRES.

INT. KRISTYNA'S BUNKER - DAY

Krystyna JOLTS awake SCREAMING. She RUSHES to her feet from the small mattress, gripping the scar on her shoulder and she stumbles and braces herself against the far wall.

She deeply exhales and gently presses her forehead against her arm as she leans onto the wall.

Chatter from the radio breaks through static:

ACE (O.S.)
 ... in a crippling blow to the
 invading ISA forces. There
 continue to be reports of
 experimental armaments within the
 Helghast's sizable planetary
 defense forc.

Krystyna turns back to the radio and stalks toward it.

ACE (O.S.)
 The number of casualties remains
 unclear. Remaining forces that
 made landfall are expected to have
 met comparably heavy resistance.
 Callsigns Bravo, Indigo, and
 Foxtrot last sounded off at oh
 three hundred Vektan Standard.

Krystyna braces herself against the shelf.

ACE (O.S.)
 Callsigns Nora, Phoenix, Saturn,
 and Remus last sounded off at oh
 five hundred-

KRISTYNA
 No...

The mention of "Remus" staggers Krystyna, her legs wobble as she struggles to hold herself upright.

ACE (O.S.)
 Helghast chatter implies the
 capture of high-ranking ISA
 leadership. Names appear to be
 veiled under Helghan code-

A sharp RINGING in Krystyna's ears drowns out the transmission. She lurches away from the radio and grabs her chest, heaving between stifled breaths. She falls backward onto the far wall and sinks down onto the floor.

INT. KRYSTYNA'S KITCHEN - DAY

Krystyna STUMBLES into the kitchen and swipes the holographic SYBYL logo on the refrigerator with a trembling hand. The logo SWIPES and appears above a device on the counter.

She HUNCHES over it and opens a holographic contact list. She scrolls to JED and reaches for it-

A message BLIPS over the menu:

"One Day Ago. Subject: ISA Veterans Fund"

Her hand lingers over the message. She stares into it. Her face tightens and her hand clenches into a fist as the ISA logo spins in a circle beneath the subject line.

FORM CUT TO:

EXT. ROOK'S HOME - DAY

An ISA flag is flung back and forth under heavy rainfall as it hangs over the door of a lower-level Vekta City apartment. Heavy rainfall has turned the narrow pathways between buildings into rapid streams as the sky-scraping towers of the higher skyline loom far above.

INT. ROOK'S HOME - DAY

The cramped abode is made all the smaller by clutter. Furniture is haphazardly displaced between the army regalia-covered walls. A bucket to the side of the front door catches a steady drip of rainwater from a crack in the ceiling.

Rook is seated in his wheelchair as he leans onto a small, round table. He is staring into a holographic projection of the ISA's ill-fated invasion. It is mostly indiscernible; Bright flashes of explosions blow out the unfocused image.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

Rook SHAKES in his seat as he turns his head to the front door. In the window beside it, Krystyna peers in under a rain-soaked hood. They lock eyes.

Krystyna holds a full cup of coffee between her hands on the small table. The mug bears an ISA Interplanetary Guard coat of arms. She stares down into it. Rook sits across from her.

ROOK

Cap's a force of nature. I'd put money down that she's hot on Visari's heels this very moment.

KRYSTYNA

And you still haven't heard anything? Nothing from your contacts?

ROOK

My network's a bit more up to snuff than your rinky-dink setup, but things still tend to err on the cryptic side. I wouldn't have even said anything. Little did I know you were plugged in.

Rook takes his mug and rolls over to the sink.

KRYSTYNA

At the memorial... you mentioned mercenaries trying to get planet side.

ROOK

No disrespect, Sarg, but I don't think you could afford them.

KRYSTYNA

What about a seat on the bus?

Rook FUMBLES the mug in his hand and turns back to her.

ROOK

You serious?

Krystyna shrugs.

ROOK

They don't typically do civilian ride-alongs for unsanctioned interplanetary espionage.

KRYSTYNA

Would they like the purple heart collecting dust in my cubbard as down payment?

ROOK

I'm sorry. You chose the sideline, Sarg. This is what it feels like.

Rook returns to his mug.

Krystyna SLAMS her fists down on the table and stands.

KRYSTYNA

You know what, fuck you. I get it. I left. I 'GOT' to walk away. I'm sorry, and I'm sorry I wasn't there to help you, but we both know that turned into something it shouldn't have. Not all of us wanted a goddamn body count to tally how much we love freedom.

She stomps over to him.

KRYSTYNA

What was it you told me? If it was YOUR sister you'd be there. Well you can't be there, can you?

She stands over him.

KRYSTYNA

I won't lie to you. I could give a shit about the ISA. What have they done for either of us? They'd have cared more if we were in the ground. At least then we wouldn't be asking for compensation. Or medication. Or legs.

Rook averts his eyes from hers. She kneels down beside him.

KRYSTYNA

She's still alive. I believe that, and like hell am I going to let them puppet my sister's corpse around for sympathy donations or a recruitment campaign. But you want dead Higs? I'll take down every last one of them that gets in my way. You know I can.

Rook looks back at her.

KRYSTYNA

You gonna get me on that planet or what?

JED (O.S.)

Can you trust him?

INT. JED'S HOME - DAY

Krystyna and Jed stand near the sink, divided by the counter between them. He leans back onto the sink, his arms crossed as she leans on the counter. A travel bag is on the floor.

KRYSTYNA

I trust how much he cares about Karra. He would have followed her into Helghan if he could.

JED

She certainly has that effect on people.

Krystyna sighs.

JED

How do we even know it's accurate?

KRYSTYNA

It's a network of hackers, inside informants, contractors.

JED

All well-to-do individuals with no ulterior motives.

KRYSTYNA

Just say it.

JED

This is insane.

KRYSTYNA

Thank you, suddenly I realize.

JED

So, you fly through space for two weeks, invade a hostile planet currently in the midst of war, and then what? Search for clues? Follow her footprints?

KRYSTYNA

It's a little more complicated than that, but-

JED

Jesus, Krys.

Jed buries his face in his hands.

KRYSTYNA

Do you have another idea? Should I just sit here and wait.

JED

Krys, we're military family. Most of what we do is wait. And hope. Some of us even pray. We're helpful like that.

Krystyna scoffs and pushes away from the counter.

JED

I'm just saying, we don't KNOW anything. Shouldn't you wait to be sure?

KRYSTYNA

The longer I wait the more time she has to die.

JED

If she isn't already.

She turns back to him. He sighs.

JED

She made her choice. And we respected it. When you two first enlisted, I never would have thought this would happen. The longer the invasion went on, the more I thought she'd never come back. But then she did, only to spend the next two years planning to leave. I spent all that time preparing myself for this moment. No resentment; Her life, her choice to make. I just...

He looks down, then back up to her.

JED

I don't want to lose you both.

Krystyna looks away. She picks the bag off the floor.

KRYSTYNA

I shouldn't have come. I'm sorry.

She heads to the door.

JED

So, what? You're just going to follow her into whatever the hell is waiting there for you? Again? Do you even want to do this? Or are you guilting yourself into it?

Krystyna's hand hovers over the doorknob as she stands still. She looks over her shoulder back to Jed.

KRYSTYNA

Anything else?

Jed's shoulders droop as he stares at her.

She nods, then leaves through the door.

INT. DOCKYARD - DAY

The skyline of Vekta City stands several miles upriver from rusty metal hangar built beside a small dock.

A high-tech seaplane about the size of a Helghast dropship rests on the water under the metal hangar's cover. The ship is adorned with the name "ROSSO" on both sides.

Krystyna cautiously walks into the hangar with her bag strapped over her shoulder. Three MERCENARIES stand at the edge of the dock alongside the Rosso a respectable distance apart. BALE (40) is fit and bald. He is scanning the mammoth vessel before him. RUSS (60) is knelt on the dock, trifling through her bag. CHITI (30) sits on a crate, reading from a tablet. He looks just like William Jackson Harper, go figure.

CHARR (50) steps out from the side door of the cockpit. He is dressed casually and wears a wide metal bracelet on his left wrist. The top is smooth like a screen.

CHARR

All right, make yourselves comfortable. I'd like to be up in a point so long as... ah, here she is. Our last passenger

Everyone looks at Krystyna.

RUSS

You said there was only three of us yesterday.

CHARR

And now there's four of us today. That brings your ticket price

(MORE)

CHARR (CONT'D)
down, you're welcome. More
economical.

BALE
Economic.

Charr walks over to Krystyna as the three board.

CHARR
Got your code?

KRYSTYNA
Eleven. Zero Two. Zero Four.

CHARR
Ten-four. I have to check your
bag.

Krystyna hands him the bag. He unzips it.

CHARR
I don't typically take on prudes
such as yourself last minute, but
you come highly recommended.

KRYSTYNA
I'm flattered.

CHARR
AND she's funny! 'Kay, you're
good. Lockers are in the back,
you're number four. Same as the
one you just gave me.

He hands the bag back and they walk to the Rosso.

INT. THE ROSSO - CONTINUOUS

Charr steps into the cabin of the ship and extends his hand
to Krystyna. She takes it and steps in, stumbling as the
Rosso sways on the water.

CHARR
Whoa. Imagine zero g. You've never
been under stasis, right?

KRYSTYNA
No.

CHARR
Well, you've got the best night of
sleep in your life ahead of you.
Right back here, don't get lost.

Charr gestures toward the open cabin as he steps into the cockpit. The open space extends to a doorway leading into the cargo hull in the back. The door is flanked by two lockers on both sides. Four stasis beds rest in the middle of the cabin in a circle, each clear plastic dome opened above the bed.

Bale is sitting down onto one of the seats that line both sides of the interior. Russ SLAMS the door of her locker shut, causing Chiti to JUMP in place as he puts his belongings away. Krystyna approaches.

Russ eyes her up and down as she walks by. As Krystyna reaches her locker, Chiti turns away to the seats. He reads off of his tablet as he goes. She shoves her bag into the locker and shuts the door. An electronic lock pings.

CHARR (O.S.)

If you'd all strap yourselves in,
I'll get us into orbit and on our
way to Pyrrhus momentarily.

The ship SWAYS as it starts to head out of the dock. Light begins to creep into the cabin through windows along it. Krystyna braces herself along the wall as she heads to her seat. Chiti is seated on the furthest spot toward the front of the opposite wall. Bale is seated at the furthest place away from him in that row. Russ is in the middle seat on Krystyna's side. Krystyna sits one seat away from her.

She buckles her seat belt as the Rosso begins to ascend off of the water. She looks out the window to her side. The sun is setting behind Vekta City's distant skyline. She smiles.

Krystyna's gaze turns to Russ at her side. The old woman is staring her down. Krystyna's smile fades.

BALE

What is it you're reading, there?

Krystyna and Russ turn to Chiti as he looks at Bale. Chiti looks down at his tablet and places his palm on the screen. He PULLS up and the image is projected from it. A series of Helghast letters hover over his device.

BALE

Helghast.

RUSS

What're you doin' reading Hig-Latin?

CHITI

I though it might be helpful
considering where we're going.

Russ grunts.

KRYSTYNA

How recent is that? We only ever got...

They all look at her.

KRYSTYNA

I've only ever seen half-finished translations.

CHITI

Just this year, actually. I mean, it's unsurprising given how new the language still is. Visari only created it, what, less than a decade ago? Good old-fashioned repatriation.

RUSS

Any useful phrases in case I need to ask for directions?

CHITI

I wouldn't say any of these words out loud unless instantaneous execution is on your to-do list.

BALE

Well what if you get captured? What's "Fuck the ISA" in Hig?

CHITI

I doubt you'd get the chance to say considering, well...

The setting sun's light fades into darkness as the Rosso exits Vekta's atmosphere. The cabin is lit by red light.

CHITI

They don't have a word in their language for "surrender."

The cabin lights flicker on. Charr enters from the cockpit.

CHARR

Okay, unless you enjoy staring into the endless vacuum of space, I suggest we call it a night.

Charr goes to the center console between the stasis beds and presses buttons as the passengers each stand up and approach their beds. Russ stands along a bed next to Krystyna.

RUSS
Who's your mark?

Krystyna stares at her. Charr interjects.

CHARR
Come on, Russ, you know we don't
kiss and tell here. Go on, you
could use a head start on these
few hundred hours of beauty sleep.

Charr approaches Krystyna.

CHARR
Want some help here?

KRYSTYNA
Sure.

Krystyna sits on her bed as the other three passengers lay down and close their capsules. She unties her boots while Charr adjusts her amenities.

CHARR
Sorry about he. I try to be the
chattiest one in here. If she
wanted to gossip, she can call my
associates. Less everyone knows
about each other's job, the
better. Now you can just rest easy
knowing that I'll get you there in
one piece so you can pop whichever
Hig or Vek is on your list and get
squared away to payday.

Krystyna's eyes widen.

CHARR
Forgive me, I'm sure what you're
doing is much more altruistic than
that. Look kid, you want my
advice? This is work. Do your job,
bury it in booze, then move on to
the next.

KRYSTYNA
That's a hell of a way to live.

CHARR
It is. The more lines you draw in
the sand, the less beach you get
to enjoy. Life's a beach. Ain't my
fault the life guards are letting
people drown.

KRYSTYNA

You wouldn't swim out to save them?

Charr steps away from Krystyna's bed.

CHARR

And lose my spot? I won't make that mistake again.

Krystyna snickers.

KRYSTYNA

Thanks.

CHARR

Don't mention it. No, really, I don't want to be implicated in whatever you're doing here.

Krystyna pulls the plastic shell above her downward as Charr turns back to the cockpit. He hesitates, turning back for a moment before leaving.

She stares upward at the ceiling through her pod. She controls her breathing and closes her eyes.

INT. HIGHER SUBLEVEL - DAY

The one-eyed Helghast soldier stalks toward Krystyna as she lies on the ground. He brings his knife up.

BOOM BOOM BOOM

Karra stands over the fallen Helghast. She looks down at Krystyna. Karra extends her hand to her.

KARRA

Come on.

Krystyna takes her hand and is HOISTED up.

EXT. SURFACE - DAY

Karra leads Krystyna out of the ruined building and onto the street where the bright sunlight BLOWS OUT Krystyna's vision.

As the scene fades into view, Krystyna sees that Remus Squad is holding up five HELGHAST SOLDIERS, each kneeling on the ground in a line with their hands on their helmets. Another medic approaches her with bandages.

KRYSTYNA
I'm fine, thank you.

Kara stomps over to the lineup of Helghast. Rook approaches her and whispers into her ear. She nods.

KARRA
Gentlemen. I think.

Some ISA Soldiers laugh. Kara paces along the lineup.

KARRA
You may notice that you are still alive. You may also want to keep it that way. Here on Vekta, we have something called a free market system. In such a system, goods and services are exchanged for prices determined by supply and demand. I am in the market for information. Information I believe you can supply. The price is your life.

As Karra crosses Krystyna's view, she sees that the Helghast soldier at the start of the line has a cracked right eye.

KARRA
You were given rendezvous coordinates pertaining to your mass exodus back to Planet Helghan. I would like those very much, please.

She looks up and down the lineup. Some Helghast soldiers look at each other to their sides. The one-eyed Helghast notices Krystyna. They stare at each other.

KARRA
Let's try again.

Karra unholsters her sidearm.

KARRA
Anyone?

The Helghast remain silent.

KARRA
Okay.

Karra GRABS the Helghast at the end of the line and THROWS him forward onto the ground. She kneels on his back and holder her pistol to the back of his head.

Krystyna JOLTS a step forward as Karra's eyes dart to the rest of the lineup.

KARRA

No one?!

The one-eyed Helghast frantically looks to Krystyna.

Karra PUSHES off of the fallen Helghast and stomps toward the middle soldier, pointing the gun to his mask.

KARRA

You?

He stares up at her. Krystyna looks at the one-eyed soldier.

Karra drops her weapon and shifts to the one-eyed Helghast. She points the gun at his mask.

KARRA

How about you?

The Helghast's gaze darts between Karra and Krystyna.

KRYSTYNA

Karra...

Karra sighs.

BOOM! Karra executes the one-eyed Helghast.

KRYSTYNA

NO!

Karra steps back, wiping the blood off of her cheek. She looks down the remaining lineup.

KARRA

Who's it gonna be?

INT. THE ROSSO - DAY

Krystyna's eyes flutter open as her pod FIZZES. The lid above her bed tilts upward.

The passengers each slink out of their beds. Krystyna rubs the scar near her shoulder, grimacing as Charr enters.

BALE

This place have coffee?

RUSS

I'll take a Bloody Mary.

Bale and Chiti laugh. Charr's face remains still.

KRYSTYNA

What?

We cut to Krystyna holding a tablet. A Vektan news report shows footage of Pyrrhus City decimated over the headline "VISARI DEAD - Helghan Capital Devastated By Nuke."

Russ and Bale sit beside each other on the opposite side of the cabin, each looking into their own tablets.

RUSS

Says here Visari dropped the bomb.

BALE

Higs are saying it was ISA.

RUSS

Oh, whoever do we trust?

Light shines in from the windows. Chiti walks over to the port on Krystyna's side and peers through.

CHITI

Huh.

Krystyna stands to join him. As far as they can see, the ruinous city is coated in a white powder.

CHITI

Should've packed a heavier jacket.

KRYSTYNA

It isn't snow.

Krystyna walks to the cockpit as Chiti stares into the void.

INT. COCKPIT - DAY

Krystyna climbs into the cockpit, where Charr is piloting and scanning the land before him. He glances at her as she learns onto the center console, peering out through the windshield.

She sees a wider view of the devastation. The top of the city's capitol building juts out from a thick gray haze of ash and fog. The planet's sun barely bleeds through the suffocating clouds, dyed red under its gaze.

KRYSTYNA

Jesus.

CHARR

It went off a few clicks out.

KRYSTYNA

Any intel?

CHARR

Not much. ISA cruiser went down, one of 'em blew the payload. Some meathead from Alpha Squad went AWOL, executed Visari.

KRYSTYNA

Shit..

Krystyna steps away, rubbing her forehead.

CHARR

Any chance of a warm welcome got flushed right down the drain with 'em. I'm gonna shack up at a market up the coast. Got a contact there to take us in. Stay if you want, I'm getting out before nightfall.

KRYSTYNA

Any word on survivors?

CHARR

Let me guess: You want to know if I heard anything about Remus Squad?

He looks back at her over his shoulder. Her eyes widen. She turns to look at him. Through the windshield, Krystyna sees a bright light HURTLING toward them.

KRYSTYNA

MOVE!

She points to it, Charr TWIRLS around and YANKS on the pitch. BOOM! The bolt of energy hits the wing. The Rosso SHAKES.

CHARR

The fuck?!

Krystyna CRAWLS up the front panel, gazing out the windshield again. A massive hole torn into the thick fog is closing over an obscured massive mechanical weapon. It's moving.

Charr HITS a button above him and red lights SPARK on, flashing throughout the ship. Russ rushes up.

RUSS
The hell is going on?!

CHARR
We're going down, you need to
bail.

RUSS
Shit.

Russ rushes back into the cabin. Charr turns to Krystyna.

CHARR
Listen to me. Parachutes are under
the seats. You land, you head
northeast, you don't stop until
you reach the Stacks. Look around,
find a guy named Blackjack. It'll
be easy, he is not subtle. Give
him my name.

KRYSTYNA
You gonna be there?

CHARR
If I'm lucky, yes. If karma is
real, no. Now go!

Krystyna nods then BOLTS for the cabin.

INT. THE ROSSO - CONTINUOUS

Krystyna STOMPS down onto the deck where Russ SLAMS her
locker shut next to Chiti and Bale. Bale finishes putting his
chute on while Chiti gets his belongings together. Russ
SHOVES Bale aside as she rushes toward the back with her bag.

Krystyna reaches under her seat. Nothing. The Rosso SHIFTS to
the side. Another energy blast FOOMS by, emitting a burst of
bright light into the cabin. The brief light illuminates a
parachute under the seat Russ was using.

The passengers collect themselves and Russ SLAMS her fist
into a button on the wall. The back of the Rosso opens to a
ramp. She RUSHES and LEAPS out. Krystyna YANKS the chute out
from under the seat as Bale straps his tight.

BALE
See ya in hell, kid.

Bale RUSHES to the back as Krystyna BRACES against her locker
to Chiti's side. He very carefully straps his chute on.

Krystyna forcefully presses her code into the locker's pad. It BLINKS red and beeps. Locked. She tries again. Nothing.

CHITI

You coming?

KRYSTYNA

Right behind you, go!

Chiti frantically nods, then takes his bag and goes.

Krystyna tries again. It fails. She PUNCHES the locker.

KRYSTYNA

Damnit!

She PUSHES away, strapping the parachute to herself as she makes for the back. She holds onto the side wall as she inches to the edge. The light blows out her vision to the hazy Helghan sky. She JUMPS.

EXT. HELGHAN SKY - CONTINUOUS

Krystyna HURTTLES through the air, tumbling and flipping around before steadying herself on her back. She looks to her sides, then FLIPS over to her stomach.

Below her, Bale and Russ are pulling on Chiti between them. He is limp. Krystyna narrows herself and catches up to them.

KRYSTYNA

Is he okay?!

She is YELLING through the air loudly WHIZZING by. She pats a closed fist on the top of her head.

BALE

Passed out!

Krystyna presses her fingers to the side of Chiti's throat. Russ frantically looks around.

RUSS

Shit!

Russ PUSHES away and pulls her chute. She is YANKED up. Krystyna and Bale watch as floats above them.

FOOM! Russ is VAPORIZED by an energy bolt. Krystyna and Bale are FLUNG away from Chiti. Krystyna tumbles around again before steadying herself once more. She scans around her and sees Bale tugging on Chiti again. She soars over to them.

She GRABS hold of Chiti as Bale shakes his head.

BALE

I'm sorry!

Bale PUSHES away and PULLS his chute. He is YANKED upward. Krystyna SMACKS Chiti's face.

KRYSTYNA

Come on!

Bale's parachute banks to the side away from them. FOOM! Another energy blast just catches the top of his parachute. It BURSTS into flame, sending Bale SCREAMING past Krystyna as he plummets into the fog. Miles away, their attacker steps slightly into view: A massive walker, a MAWLR.

Krystyna PULLS Chiti closer and YANKS his chute open. He is FLUNG upward as she enters the fog. Krystyna TWIRLS back onto her stomach and PULLS her own. The parachute opens and she is YANKED up. She TUGS on the right side and just narrowly misses debris reaching out from the fog.

Krystyna HITS the corner of a building and begins to SPIN, sending her backward into the side of another structure.

CUT TO BLACK.

EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

Krystyna comes to, hanging from her parachute. A copious amount of ash has collected on her hair and clothes.

As her vision fades in, she is face-first with a huge masked figure. She YELLS and squirms in the air. The figure is the statue from the opening montage. Krystyna SIGHS.

KRYSTYNA

Shit.

She looks around the devastated courtyard. The statue mural has been nearly destroyed, leaving only one figure remaining. Krystyna hangs from a crooked flag pole. She grabs at her straps and DROPS to the ground sending a plume of ash upward.

Krystyna COUGHS as she swats the ashes away and brushes herself off. She takes in her surroundings.

BOOM BOOM BOOM! Nearby gunfire makes Krystyna JUMP in place. She REACHES for her holster but realizes nothing is there.

She SIGHS, then moves out.

EXT. PYRRHUS STREET - DAY

Krystyna peers out from behind rubble. Three HELGHAST are stationed outside a ruined bank. A plume of black smoke climbs out from a gaping hole on the side of the roof.

A SCOUT and COMMANDO stand by the entrance while a RIFLEMAN aims down the opposite end of the street.

RIFLEMAN

I swore I saw one.

SCOUT

Give it a rest. Probably another cadaver beetle looking for a fresh meal.

RIFLEMAN

Our orders are shoot on sight.
Just doing by due diligence.

A SHOCK TROOPER exits the door.

SHOCK TROOPER

Life form detected, one aboard.

The troops fall in.

COMMANDO

We taking him in?

SHOCK TROOPER

Waste him. The log will tell us everything once we slice in.

SCOUT

Less hassle breaking those,
anyway.

Krystyna watches as they funnel into the building. She sees a shattered window to the side of the door with a convenient pile of rubble beneath it. She PUSHES forward.

INT. BANK LOBBY - DAY

Two HELGHAST, CUTTER and SPOTTER, slice into the Rosso's battered hull with a laser tool. The Shock Trooper, Scout, Rifleman, and Commando join them. They are halfway done.

SHOCK TROOPER

How much longer?

CUTTER

Just a minute, sir.

On the balcony above, a GRENADIER sits on a stool in front of an office door. He holds a pistol in his hands, folded in front of a bandoleer of grenades across his chest.

Krystyna's arms reach out from the dark room behind him. She holds a shoelace taught in both hands. Yes, like The Raid. She HOOKS the Grenadier with the string and PULLS him back.

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Krystyna CHOKES the Grenadier out on the floor and rolls him off of her. She stands up, revealing one of her feet to be socked. Her discarded shoe is off to the side.

She takes the pistol off the floor and looks at his bandoleer of grenades. Krystyna gazes out the door.

INT. BANK LOBBY - DAY

Cutter is nearly done slicing into the Rosso.

SHOCK TROOPER

Ready.

The Helghast ready their weapons. Cutter completes his path he was slicing along the hull and pulls his tool away.

THUNK. Grenadier's bandoleer plops onto the floor and a distinct ticking sounds off. The Helghast look to see one of the grenades about to blow.

SHOCK TROOPER

Cover!

The Shock Trooper YANKS Cutter in front of him just as the grenade EXPLODES! The blast blows Scout and Cutter away and sends the Shock Trooper back into the Rosso's side, knocking over cut wall. Rifleman, Commando and Spotter leap away.

Krystyna LEAPS up from behind the balcony and FIRES! She hits the Shock Trooper and Spotter. Rifleman FIRES at her, causing her to duck and allowing Commando to run for the stairs.

She FIRES again at Rifleman, but misses. She drops to reload as Rifleman rushes for the opposite set of stairs. Commando peers up from the stairs on her right with his shotgun. Krystyna FIRES and hits the rail, forcing him back.

She FIRES again as Rifleman storms around the corner directly behind her. Krystyna DUCKS to the side as he FIRES, dodging the bullets and grabbing his rifle. She THROWS Rifleman against the rail, sending the gun over the edge. They trade blows as Commando approaches. Krystyna SPINS Rifleman around and KICKS him into Commando. She vaults over Rifleman to send Commando back with a thunderous kick from her booted foot. It's all very Hong Kong action stylized instead of being cut like Liam Neeson climbing a fence in Taken 3.

Rifleman forces himself to his feet and unsheathes an impressive knife. He slices at Krystyna, who dodges the first but catches the second swipe on her forearm. She catches a third swing and disarms Rifleman with an elbow crack as Commando gets to his knee. Krystyna slices down into Rifleman's leg and then brings the knife back up, stabbing right into his dick. Yes, right into his dick.

Commando takes aim. Krystyna KICKS Rifleman over the balcony with the knife still in his dick, sending herself back into the office as Commando BLOWS a chunk out of the wall.

Commando approaches the door from behind his shotgun. He sees a shoe poking out from his side of the door. He STORMS in.

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Commando TWIRLS in, FIRES and PUMPS his weapon. Nothing stands where the discarded shoe was placed. Krystyna LEAPS onto his back from behind, sending them both into the wall with a heavy THUD. Commando PUSHES off the wall and SLAMS Krystyna into the side of the door. She is able to hold onto the weapon to keep it in front of them.

The larger Helghast DRIVES his elbow into her side, loosening her grip and allowing him to TWIRL around and face her. Krystyna BRACES the weapon upward and they struggle to the opposite wall. Commando FORCES her against it and FIRES the upright shotgun into the ceiling, blowing a chunk out of it.

Commando PULLS her away from the wall, but Krystyna uses the momentum to spin him onto the floor. The shotgun's pump COCKS back in her grip as she lands on top of the Commando. She JERKS her head up to his, the barrel is directly at his mask. She lets go, allowing the pump to load the next round.

BOOM! The blast blows the Helghast's mask off in a bloody burst as Krystyna averts her face.

She rolls off of the Commando and lies on the floor. Krystyna wipes the blood from her face.

INT. THE ROSSO - DAY

Krystyna steps into the ship with her booted foot first. She holds the unlaced boot in one hand and the shotgun in the other. She looks around and gazes at her locker.

Charr COUGHS from the cockpit.

INT. COCKPIT - DAY

Krystyna cautiously enters the dark cockpit.

Charr is braced against the panel beside his chair. He is holding a wound on his thigh as he sits in a pool of blood.

Krystyna looks around and spots a small first aid cabinet to the side of the door. She opens it.

CHARR

Don't bother.

He moves his arm to the side, revealing a huge shard of broken glass lodged into his upper abdomen. Krystyna takes the first aid kit in her hand and droops her head.

CHARR

Take it for yourself. Just you?

KRYSTYNA

Just me.

CHARR

I sorta hoped it'd be you to come back for me. Doubt there were any other medics aboard. Let alone a purple-hearted one.

KRYSTYNA

Thought you didn't kiss and tell.

CHARR

Yeah, well, looks like curiosity gets to claim another cat. Pretty ballsy, hitching a ride to the most hostile planet in the solar system to save someone you're not even sure is still alive. Ballsy or stupid.

KRYSTYNA

Well, if you're one you're typically the other.

Charr laughs, then winces. He hunches as he holds his side. Krystyna kneels down to him.

CHARR

Listen. I sent out an SOS. Didn't get anything back but I picked up some chatter. Sounded Vektan. I traced it out to the Kaznan wilds, southeast of here. They might be camped out in the jungle. That's Door Number One, and I'd open that one if I were you.

KRYSTYNA

What's behind number two?

Charr sighs. He grimaces as he sits up.

CHARR

Helghast comms have been frantic about relocating high-value POWs. One such in particular they're calling "Wolf." Referred to as "she."

Krystyna lets out an exhausted gasp.

CHARR

Obviously can't confirm, but you seem like a gambler anyway. A few units are amassing at a mobile command center out west to sit out the power vacuum and await orders. Sounds like they're bringing captives there. Makes sense, plenty of room considering how few they take alive.

KRYSTYNA

You said it's mobile, do you know where it's headed?

CHARR

Not a clue, but a hauler that big's gotta eat up fuel and if it's out west that means it's heading to or from the refinery. If they're filling the tanks, it should be there another couple days.

KRYSTYNA

Can I make it?

CHARR

That sounds like a you question.
It's a doable distance for a
speed-walker, but there's more
than just tough terrain out there.

Krystyna sits back along the wall to Charr's side and begins lacing the boot in her hand.

KRYSTYNA

Not my first saunter through a
warzone.

CHARR

But your first on Helghan. Kid,
this ain't Vekta. They sort of
pride themselves on that. The
goddamn wind will try to kill you
if it can. Things were bad enough
under Visari. Might be even worse
now.

KRYSTYNA

I get it, no place for a hero.

CHARR

Oh no, this is the perfect place
for a hero. This is where heroes
come to die.

Charr COUGHS again. Krystyna rises to her knees beside him. He waves her away and fiddles with the bracelet on his wrist.

CHARR

I'm not naive or sentimental
enough to wish you luck, but I
hope you find her.

He hands her the bracelet and powers it on. The screen at the top of it glows a bright blue.

CHARR

And I hope you... get the fuck out.

Charr COUGHS again before leaning his head back on the panel. He breathes heavily, his eyes are closed.

CHARR

This fight... started long before
you... and it'll keep going when
you're gone. It's like an
heirloom. Passed to Visari... now
passed to his... his kids.

An exhausted laugh dribbles out from Charr's mouth.

CHARR

God... what's the poin-

Charr's face softens. His head rolls to the side as he slinks against his chair. Krystyna places a hand on his shoulder.

INT. MEDICAL TENT - DAY

Warm light leaks into the ISA medical tent where several SOLDIERS lay in and sit on slender beds. They are all bandaged in varying places, some are hooked up to IV's and machines. Krystyna, in ISA fatigues still dirty from her fall into the ruined building, is resting a hand on the shoulder of a sleeping patient.

She leans back in her chair and takes off her right boot, then shakes rocks and pieces of debris out of it.

Karra enters the tent. She stands in front of Krystyna and crosses her arms behind her back.

KARRA

Sergeant.

Krystyna stares at her for a beat.

KRYSTYNA

Captain.

KARRA

What's the damage?

Krystyna looks around.

KRYSTYNA

All pretty banged up. Nothing major, but a couple discharges.

She looks at Karra as she digs more rocks out of her shoe.

KRYSTYNA

Morale's a different story, I imagine.

KARRA

Come again?

KRYSTYNA

Karra, it's over. Helghast are retreating, they're evacuating the

(MORE)

KRYSTYNA (CONT'D)
planet. We should be sending them
home. WE should be going home.

Karra stares at Krystyna.

KARRA
Step outside with me, Sergeant.

Karra storms out of the tent. Krystyna sighs. She pulls her boot on and stands without tying it.

EXT. MEDICAL TENT - CONTINUOUS

Karra stands at attention outside the tent. A small village of ISA tents stretches a hundred yards in every direction.

Krystyna trudges out of the tent.

KRYSTYNA
Yes, Captain?

KARRA
Another outburst like that and I'll have you written up for insubordination. You don't get preferential treatment.

Krystyna's face tightens.

KRYSTYNA
Permission to speak plainly? Sir?

KARRA
Permission grant-

KRYSTYNA
What the FUCK was that back there? Huh? We're executing people now? Torturing for information? You want any of my sterile reserve for some light waterboarding?

KARRA
People? What home exactly is it you want to go back to? The one these mutants burned to the ground? They invaded our home. Our neighbors are dead, and the ones who made it don't have homes to go back to. Why should they get to go back to theirs?

Krystyna scoffs and turns away.

KARRA

A slap on the wrist, a kick in the tail, and send them back just so they can come do it again in a few years? I get that you don't want kids, Krystyna, and I respect that, but what kind of future is that for your niece or nephew?

KRYSTYNA

Theoretical niece or nephew. You and Jed aren't getting any younger.

Karra STEPS in front of Krystyna.

KARRA

All the more reason to end this here and now. I'm sorry you don't like what I've done, what I have to do, but I'd be doing a hell of a lot more if it was for you. I know you know that.

Krystyna sighs.

KARRA

Just one more push. Krys, I need you by my side, but I also need you to fall in line.

KRYSTYNA

Sir, yes sir.

KARRA

Good. Now tie your shoe.

Karra marches away. Krystyna looks upward and groans. She looks down at her shoe then kneels. She takes her lace and-

INTO. THE ROSSO - DAY

Krystyna ties the lace of her boot TAUGHT as she sits in the Rosso. The bracelet Charr gave her is on her left wrist and she is wearing the tactical gear we saw on the shelf in her bunker. She grabs her bag and stands, walking past her sliced-open locker, still burning from the Helghast laser tool left on the floor beside it.

EXT. HILLTOP - DAY

A hilltop stretches a few stories high a mile away from Pyrrhus City. A wide view of Helghan's terrain can be seen from the top.

Krystyna clammers up the hill. Her bag is strapped to her back and the Helghast shotgun hangs on her chest. She gazes out to the landscape. A massive storm looms over a rough and barren climate in front of her.

She holds her new bracelet up and TAPS it. A holographic map emits from it and she holds it in front of her face. It projects the area she is facing. A mostly barren wasteland with a settlement labeled "Tharsis Refinery."

Krystyna looks behind her. A vast jungle of jagged, alien plant life looms several miles away. Her right hand trembles.

EXT. BASE - DAY

ISA Krystyna packs her equipment onto an ISA hauler. Several TROOPS and vehicles are traveling in uniform the opposite direction. She gazes out to the Vektan city.

KARRA (O.S.)

Krys.

Krystyna turns to face her. Karra stands to the side of the ISA Troops marching along.

KARRA

You coming?

Krystyna looks back to the city behind them.

EXT. HILLTOP - DAY

Krystyna stares into the jungle. She clenches her right fist.

KRYSTYNA

Hold on.

She turns around and begins her march to the refinery.

CUT TO BLACK.