

FROZEN LAKE

Written by

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## SCRIPT NOTES:

All of the main characters are of different ethnicities and races. Though they all generally speak English to one another they occasionally speak in their native tongue, usually to their families or themselves.

When they speak their own language it will be written in italics, where they speak English it will be written in non-italics.

Afon, Katya, Alla = Russian

Lao = Chinese

## SETTING / RULES OF THE UNIVERSE:

Frozen Lake takes place in the dystopian future of 2075, where radiation covers and infects the earth due to a nuclear blast in 2045. Only 60 000 of the human population remain and they live underground in Karamay, China in a poorly built facility known as the Sanctum. Within the Sanctum live three groups of people: the Pure, the Touched and the Tainted. The Pure are those who were lucky enough not to be infected by radiation. They are given the highest privileges and powers and are kept furthest underground and separate from the others within the Sanctum. The Touched are those who have some form of radiation poisoning however it doesn't affect them mentally or physically, they live in the middle tier. They are the slave workers of the Sanctum and make it possible for the Pure to live comfortable lives. The Tainted are those who have been heavily infected by radiation, but instead of it destroying their bodies and minds, the radiation has given them unique powers - including the power of being immune to radiation sickness. The Tainted are forced to become Sanctum Soldiers and venture outside of the Sanctum and protect it from radiation and from the Transformed. The Transformed are a fourth group of human beings, who are excluded from the Sanctum and deemed monsters. They are those who have been exposed to so much radiation that they have lost all memories and all aspects of their personality. They wander the earth in a daze, infecting any creature they meet, including other humans. When confronted by a human, they mindlessly grab at them, desperately seeking for help. The Transformed do not age nor die of natural causes - to destroy them, they must be killed. The Sanctum teaches 'normal' humans to fear the Transformed, and have even used them as an escape goat for the cause of radiation. The Sanctum passed a law where only the Tainted may venture outside and only to kill the Transformed.

TITLE CARD: LISTVYANKA, RUSSIA. 2045

EXT. OUTSIDE WOODEN CABIN IN LISTVYANKA HARBOUR TOWN - DAWN

ALLA's (6) tiny hands shove open the oak door of her cabin. She hops down the large wooden steps and her red boots splash into a muddy half-frozen puddle.

Her father, AFON (24), follows closely, pulling her long scarf tighter and pushing her red woolen hat down closer to her brow.

Alla tugs at the scarf, loosening it to watch her breath mist in front of her.

She lifts her head and grins at Afon, barely able to see his face towering over her.

She grabs his over-sized hand and tugs him towards town.

ALLA

*You promised! You promised!*

Afon rushes forward, sweeping her off her feet and planting her small body on his broad shoulders. She kicks her legs, squealing and giggling.

AFON

*Stop your fussing, child. I haven't forgotten.*

Afon holds onto her short stumpy legs, racing forward and bounding over the ice on the path with his rangy legs.

He misjudges a jump, slips and falls onto his backside.

Alla, unharmed, laughs loudly and pats the back of Afon's blonde hair.

Afon gets up and races on.

EXT. FISH MARKET - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Afon slows his pace as he enters the outdoor fish market. The burly FISHERMEN shout loudly to one another, as they set up their stalls, heaving weights of fish over their broad shoulders.

Afon nods politely at the fishermen as he walks, Alla burying her face into his hair as each fisherman smiles at her.

EXT. LAKE PATH - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Afon steps onto the lake path, walking past a lone bench and staring at the sun rising on the frozen lake's horizon.

ALLA  
*Daddy, look!*

Alla thrusts her body forward, nearly toppling, to point a chubby finger at the lake. Afon raises his hand to his brow to squint against the morning sun light.

On the frozen lake, TWO OVERWEIGHT FISHERMEN smash hammers onto ice-picks sticking out of the lake's solid thick surface. Their rolls of fat vibrating through the force of their blows. Alla pats Afon's head.

ALLA (CONT'D)  
*If you were that fat, you could  
 just fall over and break all of the  
 ice!*

Afon's shoulders shudder.

OVERWEIGHT FISHERMAN  
*Keep calling people fat, Alla, and  
 we'll use you to crack open the  
 ice!*

The two fishermen walk forward, holding buckets of ice, pretending to throw them at the duo.

Alla and Afon scream playfully and run from the two grinning fishermen.

EXT. ROAD FORK - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Alla and Afon arrive at a road that forks into two; one way leading to the play park, the other leading to the church.

Alla tries to steer Afon to the church but he heads in the other direction.

EXT. PLAY PARK - CONTINUOUS

Afon bounds over the play park's rotten wooden fence, almost losing his footing.

As he gains his balance, Alla wriggles free from her perch and climbs down.

She pouts.

ALLA  
*Daddy, you promised we'd go.*

Afon strolls through the park looking for a distraction.

AFON  
*Maybe tomorrow, child.*

Alla's eyes prick.

ALLA  
*You promised.*

Afon arrives at his daughter's favorite swing and wipes the snow off the seat with his bare hands.

He takes a mock bow, and gestures towards the swing.

AFON  
*M'lady!*

Alla claps several times, forgetting the promise, then jumps on the swing.

She dangles her legs whilst her father pushes gently.

ALLA  
*Want higher!*

Afon pushes slightly harder.

ALLA (CONT'D)  
*Want higher again!*

Alla holds onto the chain, her plastic red flower bracelet rattling on the metal as Afon pushes her higher.

ALLA (CONT'D)  
*More!*

He pushes her higher again.

ALLA (CONT'D)  
*Higher!*

Afon gives her one final large push.

Alla goes high up in the air, revealing the view of the frozen lake to Afon. He sees a mushroom cloud rising in the distance.

CUT TO BLACK

TITLE: FROZEN LAKE

TITLE CARD: UNDERGROUND, THE SANCTUM. 2075.

INT. CORRIDOR TO THE SANCTUM'S PRISON - AFTERNOON

*Smack.* MAYA (15) punches GUARD #1.

GUARD 2# grabs her. She bites his arm.

GUARDS #2, 3# and #4 pin her against the dirty chipboard wall.

Maya thrashes as she's tied and gagged.

CEDRIC (19) rings his pasty, boney hands, hovering behind the tussle.

CEDRIC  
Please, don't hurt her!

He takes a meek step forward but immediately retreats as Guard #1 glares a warning.

Maya screams into the cloth, thrashing her legs. Her knee connects with Guard #3's spleen.

Cedric flaps, eyes wide.

CEDRIC (CONT'D)  
Don't fight them!

GUARD #5, taller and more dominant, thunders past Cedric, elbowing him out the way.

Cedric flails to the floor like a bag of bones.

GUARD #5  
You've done your part, boy. Now  
piss off!

Maya wriggles free of the Guards' grips, lowers her head and rams the closest in the stomach.

She is pulled by her brown hair. The gag muffles her cries.

Four of the mammoth guards pin down the short teenager and drag her across the dirt floor to the prison compound. Silent tears wet her olive face.

Guard 5# screeches the door open, letting the dull light pierce the darkness.

INT. THE SANCTUM PRISON - CONTINUOUS

Maya is shoved to the ground. The door slams behind her.

Alone.

She thrashes side to side, pulling her arms free of the ropes binding her wrists.

She wrenches out the gag, before spitting red blood.

Facing the door, she pounds it with her fists, screaming at the metal.

Her punches stop. The echoes of her screams fade away.

Cedric's voice emerges from the other side of the prison door.

CEDRIC (O.S.)

Maya?

Maya forces her mouth into the edge of the door.

MAYA

What happened!?

She clenches her jaw at the sound of Cedric shuffling his feet.

CEDRIC (O.S.)

I told you not to --

MAYA

I told you to keep watch! Now look where the fuck I am!

She slides down and slumps to the floor.

CEDRIC (O.S.)

There's only a certain amount they will tolerate.

MAYA

And you?

CEDRIC (O.S.)

Hm?

MAYA

How come you're not in here?

INT. CORRIDOR TO THE SANCTUM'S PRISON - CONTINUOUS

Cedric leans his back against the door and closes his eyes.

CEDRIC

Attempting to stop you?

MAYA (O.S.)

Nagging isn't stopping.

CEDRIC

I suppose not.

Pause. Cedric opens his eyes and cocks his head.

CEDRIC (CONT'D)

I think tha--

MAYA (O.S.)  
Get me out.

CEDRIC (O.S.)  
What?

INT. SANCTUM'S PRISON - CONTINUOUS

MAYA  
Get me out!

Maya bangs the door with her fist.

INT. CORRIDOR TO THE SANCTUM'S PRISON - CONTINUOUS

Cedric flinches at the blow to the door and pushes off it. He paces back and forward.

CEDRIC  
How?

MAYA (O.S.)  
Get my parents to get me out.

CEDRIC  
They can't.

MAYA (O.S.)  
Can't or won't?

Pause.

CEDRIC  
They might kill you.

MAYA (O.S.)  
They'd kill me over anything.

CEDRIC  
I mean The Sanctum.

INT. SANCTUM'S PRISON - CONTINUOUS

Maya draws her knees to her chest.

MAYA  
I didn't actually escape.

CEDRIC (O.S.)  
You might one day.

Maya pushes her knees away angrily.

MAYA

Rather be shot like a deer, than  
strung up as a pig.

CEDRIC (O.S.)

Both die in the end.

MAYA

At least one of them gets to die  
outside.

CEDRIC (O.S.)

Is leaving the Sanctum worth your  
life though?

MAYA

The fact I'm in here suggests it  
is.

CEDRIC (O.S.)

You're here for disobeying.

MAYA

Disobeying?

CEDRIC (O.S.)

Only the Tainted can leave.

Maya rolls her eyes.

MAYA

Whatever. I have the right to go  
outside. To see the sky. To smell  
the ocean. To breathe the fresh  
air.

CEDRIC (O.S.)

It's not exactly fresh.

MAYA

Can't be any worse than  
regurgitated air down here.

CEDRIC (O.S.)

We have a better life down here  
than some.

MAYA

So that justifies being imprisoned  
underground forever?

She thwacks her heel into the ground.

INT. CORRIDOR TO THE SANCTUM'S PRISON - CONTINUOUS

Cedric stops pacing and stares at the door.

CEDRIC

I meant--

INT. SANCTUM'S PRISON - CONTINUOUS

Maya twists her head back towards the door's seal, shouting at Cedric through it.

MAYA

Because the Touched are treated like shit, that means it's okay for us to be treated a little less like shit?

INT. CORRIDOR TO THE SANCTUM'S PRISON - CONTINUOUS

Cedric shrugs exasperatedly.

CEDRIC (O.S.)

Of course not, I --

INT. SANCTUM'S PRISON - CONTINUOUS

Maya folds her arms.

MAYA

Whatever.

CEDRIC (O.S.)

I'm sorry.

MAYA

Snitch.

CEDRIC (O.S.)

I didn't tell them anything.

MAYA

Why else am I here then?

CEDRIC (O.S.)

Disobeying.

MAYA

Snitching.

CEDRIC (O.S.)

I didn't--

MAYA

Didn't keep watch.

INT. CORRIDOR TO THE SANCTUM'S PRISON - CONTINUOUS

Cedric faces the door, leans his head on it and takes a shaky breath.

CEDRIC  
I'd be in there with you if I did.

MAYA (O.S.)  
So it IS your fault?

He clenches his fist and grits his teeth.

CEDRIC  
No.

MAYA (O.S.)  
Snitch.

CEDRIC  
I didn't--

INT. SANCTUM'S PRISON - CONTINUOUS

Maya closes her eyes and hisses:

MAYA  
Snitch.

INT. CORRIDOR TO THE SANCTUM'S PRISON - CONTINUOUS

Cedric shoves his body away from the door and storms away up the corridor, body visibly shaking.

INT. SANCTUM'S PRISON - CONTINUOUS

Maya hears Cedric's footsteps echoing away from her.

MAYA  
Cedric?

She jumps up and faces the door.

MAYA (CONT'D)  
Cedric?!

She claws at the edges of the door with her broken, and missing, fingernails.

MAYA (CONT'D)  
Wait! Come back!

The footsteps echo further away.

MAYA (CONT'D)  
Come back! I'm sorry! Don't leave  
me! Come back! Come back!

Maya crumbles into a heap, breathing heavily, clutching her chest.

MAYA (CONT'D)  
Come back.

Her eyes dart around the darkness. Her breath quickens.

MAYA (CONT'D)  
(whispers)  
Come back.

She spots a pinhole of light. She gasps, her breath catches.  
She blinks, ensuring its reality.

Turning to the door and she puts an ear up to it. Nothing.

Facing the pinhole light again, Maya pushes herself off the door, tenderly takes a step forward.

Several small footsteps follow before she rushes forward, hastily scrambling towards it

Her bare foot trips over something wet.

She spirals to the floor.

She spins around, crawls backwards away from the obstacle, closer to the safety of the light.

She looks to her foot: blood, red with black spots - not her own.

*Cough. Cough.*

Maya's head snaps up.

A PAIR OF DAZED AND BLOODSHOT EYES appear out of the darkness. They meet Maya's eyes.

BLUE-EYED MAN  
*Child?*

Maya screams.

The eyes widen, life sparking into them. They suddenly shoot up into the air.

AFON (54), the owner of the blue eyes, yells in surprise and runs, tripping over and falling like a new born fawn, towards the light.

He finds a dirty bottle and holds it in front of him like a weapon.

AFON  
*Who's there!?*

Maya's eyes widen at Afon's body. Only wearing shorts, she eyes his scarred, veiny skin. She trembles.

MAYA  
A Transformed.

Afon drops his pathetic bottle, eyes in search of the girl's voice.

AFON  
*No, child.*

Maya holds her chest again, breathing raggedly.

AFON (CONT'D)  
(in Russian)  
*No, chil--*  
(in English)  
*No, child. I'm--*

Maya jumps to her feet, hands on hips.

MAYA  
Child!?

Afon takes a step back and loses his footing on the bottle.

He falls back into the darkness, yelping.

Silence.

Maya edges into the light, her eyes focusing on the patch of darkness Afon fell back into.

She shuffles closer and leans in.

MAYA (CONT'D)  
You okay?

*Grunt.*

Maya jumps back into the safety of the light.

Her eyes flicker the stain of blood on her foot; red speckled with black dots. She frowns.

MAYA (CONT'D)  
You hurt?

Maya hears Afon shuffling.

MAYA (CONT'D)

Oi!

AFON

Do not worry, I do not bruise easily.

MAYA

You talk weird.

AFON

I am still learning English.

Afon emerges from the darkness and shuffles forwards, Maya barely able to see his face towering over her.

She flinches away from him, eyeing his horrifically scarred body.

He stops, crouches to Maya's height and stretches out his long, muscular arm - offering his hand.

AFON (CONT'D)

It is very pleasant to meet you.

Maya's eyes flicker to his hand, then back to his face. She scowls.

Afon waggles his hand.

AFON (CONT'D)

My name is Afon Volkov.

MAYA

You're a Transformed.

Afon drops his hand.

AFON

Net, child.

MAYA

You look like one.

AFON

Have you seen one before, child?

Pause.

AFON (CONT'D)

Well?

MAYA

No.

AFON

Then why do you--

MAYA  
I've read about them.

AFON  
However it is--

MAYA  
I've seen pictures of them.

AFON  
If that is--

MAYA  
You look like one.

AFON  
I am not a Transformed.

MAYA  
But you DO look--

AFON  
I am a Tainted.

MAYA  
Don't interrupt.

Afon's frown deepens.

MAYA (CONT'D)  
You have the grey skin.

AFON  
There is small chance of getting a  
tan down here!

MAYA  
You have the blood shot eyes.

AFON  
Sore eyes.

MAYA  
"There is small chance" of having  
sore eyes down here.

AFON  
Not if you stare at sun for too  
long.

MAYA  
You're not funny.

Afon smiles, then points with his eyes towards the pinhole  
light.

Maya's eyes follow.

MAYA (CONT'D)

Sun?

AFON

Moon.

She raises an eyebrow at Afon. He raises his in return.

Her eyes widen.

She throws herself at the tiny hole, embedding her face into the dirt. Her eyes dart back and forward, attempting to see the outside world.

She tears at the splintered wood surrounding the hole.

Afon edges towards Maya.

AFON (CONT'D)

You should not do that, child.

Maya digs harder. Pebbles of soil and chunks of wood drop to the ground.

AFON (CONT'D)

It is not safe to venture outside.

Maya throws handfuls of soils to the ground.

AFON (CONT'D)

The radiation--

MAYA

Be quiet.

AFON

You may get infected, child.

MAYA

Don't call me child.

AFON

You have yet to give me a name to call you.

Afon looks at the ever-growing hole.

AFON (CONT'D)

I hope that walls do not collapse upon us.

MAYA

Then there will be nothing between me and the sky.

AFON

Have you ever seen the sky?

Maya dumps an armful of soil too close to Afon. He brushes off the dirt.

AFON (CONT'D)  
In books and pictures?

MAYA  
Why do you care?

AFON  
I do not. I am just enjoying using my English again.

MAYA  
You don't say.

AFON  
Are you sure you want to venture outside?

MAYA  
I have to go outside.

AFON  
Why? I thought you afraid of the Transformed?

MAYA  
They're dangerous.

AFON  
Are they?

MAYA  
The Sanctum says so.

AFON  
The same Sanctum that imprisoned us both?

Maya stops digging.

MAYA  
Why haven't you escaped?

AFON  
Hm?

MAYA  
Don't like the Sanctum, then leave.

AFON  
You make that sound so easy, child.

MAYA  
I'm managing.

AFON  
Maybe that is why I am in here.

MAYA  
What?

AFON  
Maybe I am in here for attempting  
to flee.

MAYA  
Liar.

AFON  
Rude.

MAYA  
You'd have dug your way out.

Afon leans back onto his elbows, closing his eyes.

MAYA (CONT'D)  
Right?

AFON  
Hm?

MAYA  
Right!?

AFON  
Hm.

Maya scowls. Afon smiles to himself.

AFON (CONT'D)  
Maybe I should finally go home...  
to the Frozen Lake.

Maya grabs one of the broken bits of timber and uses it as a  
shovel.

MAYA  
Don't need you or your company.

AFON  
You would like it.

MAYA  
Can't be any worse than down here.

AFON  
I would love looking at the ice on  
my way to work.

MAYA  
Don't you ever stop talking?

She jams the wood into the soil, it breaks.

AFON

It was very magical.

Maya grunts, then raises her leg high to kick the dirt. The soil loosens and a big chunk of the wall above her collapses. She attempts to lift herself into the cavity.

AFON (CONT'D)

The fishermen would break it up.

Maya's broken nails can't get a grip. She slides back down.

AFON (CONT'D)

But by the time I was home again, I could look out my window to see it begin to freeze back over...

Afon sighs, smiling sadly.

AFON (CONT'D)

...as if nothing had changed.

INT. SANCTUM'S PURE SECTORS, CEDRIC'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Cedric sits on his dirty old mattress on the floor.

He glares at the photos on his dresser: several of him and Maya, a couple of CEDRIC'S MOTHER AND FATHER and a sole photo of a younger Cedric with a girl who shares his blonde hair and grey eyes - his sister, RUBY.

His eyes twitch as the dull light bulb above him flickers.

He digs his clean long nails into his hands as he listens to his parent's voice in the next room.

CEDRIC'S FATHER (O.S.)

She won't let them kill her.

CEDRIC'S MOTHER (O.S.)

Vaughan will be the first to demand her punishment regardless of what she says.

CEDRIC'S FATHER (O.S.)

Kala isn't much of a mother then.

CEDRIC'S MOTHER (O.S.)

She tries.

CEDRIC'S FATHER (O.S.)

Not hard enough. We should have taken Maya in years ago.

Cedric bites his lip, drawing blood.

CEDRIC'S MOTHER (O.S.)  
If she wasn't Vaughan's daughter I  
would have said the same.

CEDRIC'S FATHER (O.S.)  
Surely you're not scared of him?

CEDRIC'S MOTHER (O.S.)  
Maya is.

Cedric hears his father grunt.

CEDRIC'S MOTHER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
And so is everyone else.

CEDRIC'S FATHER (O.S.)  
Only because he's the Sanctum's  
mouth piece.

CEDRIC'S MOTHER (O.S.)  
Regardless, we have to do as he  
says.

Cedric hears his father kick something angrily. Cedric bites  
his lip harder, his face reddening.

CEDRIC'S MOTHER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Maya can't keep disobeying him and  
the Sanctum.

CEDRIC'S FATHER (O.S.)  
She is an unruly girl.

Cedric's closes his eyes, drops his head and whimpers,  
suppressing tears.

CEDRIC'S FATHER(O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Just like Ruby.

Cedric thumps his fists and launches himself off the  
mattress.

He marches to a photo of him and Maya, snatches it up and  
rips the photo out of the frame.

He goes back to the mattress, produces a pen from under it  
and scribbles over Maya's face.

CEDRIC'S MOTHER (O.S.)  
I worry about Cedric.

Cedric freezes.

CEDRIC'S MOTHER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
How will he cope when Maya--

CEDRIC'S (O.S.)  
Cedric won't let it happen. He'll  
find a way. He's a smart boy.

Cedric drops the pen, and stares at the photo.

He starts to tear it near the top but then stops.

He cries silently to himself. Torn.

INT. SANCTUM'S PRISON - SEVERAL HOURS LATER

Maya wipes the sweat from her brow with a dirt covered hand.

She pushes her messy hair behind her ear and stumbles  
forwards.

Her eyes droop and she falls onto a pile of earth she dug out  
of the hole.

She tries to get up but sinks back onto the soil.

Her eyes flutter and she begins to snore.

Afon smiles at the sleeping teenager. He gets up from where  
he's sitting and softly walks over to her.

AFON  
You are a wild one, child.

He attempts to pick her up but Maya stirs and whimpers at his  
touch, lazily kicking him a way in her sleep.

Afon smiles and pushes the soil on which she lays on away  
from the small cavity she has dug.

He grabs his old blanket, covered in blood and dirt, and lays  
it over Maya.

Tucking her in, he receives another sleepy kick.

He settles down on the floor next to the mound of dirt.

AFON (CONT'D)  
Maybe tomorrow, child.

His voices catches in his throat.

AFON (CONT'D)  
Maybe tomorrow, child.

His vivid blue eyes dull as he stares blankly at the earth  
above.

DREAM SEQUENCE MONTAGE

A) EXT. FROZEN LAKE BAIKAL - MORNING

Afon stands naked on the Frozen Lake's surface, alone.

B) INT. THE SANCTUM'S TESTING CHAMBER - DAY

DOCTOR #1 tightens his gas mask, it digs into his overalls. He sticks an empty syringe into a WOMAN's veiny blue arm. He drains black blood.

A) EXT. FROZEN LAKE BAIKAL - MORNING

Afon turns on the spot, staring at the white expanse of fog that surrounds him.

Nothing else in sight.

B) INT. THE SANCTUM'S TESTING CHAMBER - DAY

Doctor #1 jabs another needle into a MAN's arm. It too drains black blood.

A) EXT. FROZEN LAKE BAIKAL - MORNING

Afon stares at his body, brushing his hands across his blemish- and scar-free chest.

B) INT. THE SANCTUM'S TESTING CHAMBER - DAY

Doctor #1 drains blood from a dazed Afon, this time it's dark red with black blotches. He tips it into a test tube, holds it up to the light and swills it around.

A) EXT. FROZEN LAKE BAIKAL - MORNING

Afon looks down. A black swirl infects the clear water underneath the ice.

Afon crouches to touch the surface of the solid lake. He withdraws his hand and rubs black residue in between his fingers.

B) INT. THE SANCTUM'S TESTING CHAMBER - DAY

Doctor #1 takes the sample of blood and drops it into a machine. It beeps and the monitor flashes POSITIVE.

A) EXT. FROZEN LAKE BAIKAL - MORNING

Afon's veins bulge blue, his skin whitens. He rises and slaps at his body as it changes. The black liquid from his hands begins to stain his skin

B) INT. THE SANCTUM'S TESTING CHAMBER - DAY

Masked DOCTORS 2# and 3# rush into the room. They drag Afon off the surgical table.

They fail to carry his weight and Afon collapses to the floor. Afon comes to life and roars under the brown hood covering his head and begins to flail his arms.

The three doctors pin him down.

A) EXT. FROZEN LAKE BAIKAL - MORNING

The ice begins to crack under Afon's feet as he frantically attempts to brush off the black smears.

B) INT. THE SANCTUM'S TESTING CHAMBER - DAY

Doctor #2 lifts the back of Afon's hood, pushes his blonde hair aside and inserts a needle into the back of his neck. Afon's voice slurs, then fades.

C) EXT. A DARK FOREST - NIGHT

Afon stares at his hands.

A) EXT. FROZEN LAKE BAIKAL - MORNING

Afon's foot falls through the ice.

B) INT. THE SANCTUM'S TESTING CHAMBER - DAY

Afon is dragged by both his arms through a metal door into darkness.

C) EXT. A DARK FOREST - NIGHT

Afon's hands are covered in black slime. They shake violently

A) EXT. FROZEN LAKE BAIKAL - MORNING

The rest of Afon's body falls through. He claws at the surface of the ice, trying to get a grip.

B) INT. THE SANCTUM'S TESTING CHAMBER - DAY

Afon's hood is ripped off him and he is blasted in the face with water from a pressure hose.

C) EXT. A DARK FOREST - NIGHT

Afon's hands dropped to reveal Alla in the distance, standing at the edge of the forest's lake.

A) EXT. FROZEN LAKE BAIKAL - MORNING

Afon sinks further into the icy water as he thrashes.

B) INT. THE SANCTUM'S TESTING CHAMBER - DAY

Afon screams, trying to move his head out of the way of the water. He chokes.

C) EXT. A DARK FOREST - NIGHT

Alla drops into the water, Afon rushes forward after her.

A) EXT. FROZEN LAKE BAIKAL - MORNING

The ice freezes above Afon then suddenly *SPLITS* and *CRACKS*.

END DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. SANCTUM'S PRISON - DAWN

The Sanctum's prison ceiling crashes down next to Afon, waking him up.

Afon's eyes snap open, but then quickly shut again, blinded by sunlight and dust.

He quickly rolls over, using one arm to cover his eyes and the other to cover his mouth as he coughs violently.

Maya emerges from the dust cloud to Afon. She shakes his bicep.

MAYA

Afon!

Afon cracks open an eye to look at Maya, but squeezes it shut to avoid the morning sun's glare.

MAYA (CONT'D)

Afon!

Afon hears earth moving above him.

He tackles Maya out of the way as large lump of cold earth falls down.

They roll to safety.

Afon hoists Maya over his shoulder and runs to the edge of the prison.

He loses his footing and they both crash into the wall.

More clumps of soil fall, most of it barricading the entrance to the prison.

After a few thunderous seconds, the noise stops and the dust settles.

Afon slowly rises. He blinks, adjusting to the sunlight streaming into the prison from the large cavity above him.

Maya shoves past him and runs to where a mountain of dirt leads to the outside; a stair case to heaven.

She starts to climb up it, reaching out to the sky.

Afon yanks Maya back.

MAYA (CONT'D)

What are you doing!?

AFON

It is dangerous outside.

MAYA

I don't care!

Maya claws at Afon's hand clasped around her thin wrist.

He pulls her further away from the hole.

MAYA (CONT'D)

I wanna see the outside world!

AFON

Forget it, child.

MAYA

You wanna see the Frozen Lake!

AFON

Forget that too.

MAYA

Let me go!

AFON  
Net.

MAYA  
I have to go!

AFON  
Why?

MAYA  
Why do you give a shit?!

AFON  
You are a child.

Maya claws up his arm instead, aiming for his face.

Afon doesn't flinch.

MAYA  
I thought you disliked the Sanctum.

AFON  
I thought you disliked the  
Transformed.

MAYA  
Both as bad as each other.

AFON  
Better the devil you know then.

Maya attempts to yank her arm away using her weight.

AFON (CONT'D)  
Stop this nonsense, child!

Afon pulls her back.

AFON (CONT'D)  
It is safer in here.

Maya screams at him.

AFON (CONT'D)  
You will die if you leave!

CEDRIC  
(muffled)  
Maya!

Afon jumps at the voice and accidentally lets go of Maya. She falls heavily to the ground.

Afon leaps after her and takes her gently by the arm to lift her up.

She slaps his hand away.

MAYA

Cedric?

She looks around in search of Cedric's voice.

She spots a tiny newly formed crack in the wall a few yards away from the blocked prison door.

She races towards it and looks through to see one of Cedric's grey eyes staring back at her.

CEDRIC

What happened? The guards can't get in. They heard a massive crash - they thought it was an explosion. They've gone to get backup to break open--

MAYA

I've seen it!

CEDRIC

What?

MAYA

The sky!

She steps back from the crack to gaze lovingly at the sky.

INT. CORRIDOR TO THE SANCTUM'S PRISON - CONTINUOUS

Cedric's eyes open wide in alarm and he jumps back from the crack, holding his shirt over his mouth.

He waves an arm erratically.

CEDRIC

Get away from the hole! The radiation will--

MAYA

--I don't care.

CEDRIC

I will get you out of there. This will delay your trial. It will give me time to reason with the Sanctum and your father. I will get you out of here. I can save you. You won't be executed!

INT. SANCTUM'S PRISON - CONTINUOUS

Afon's head shoots up at the word "executed", his breath catching.

AFON

Child?

He begins to walk to her but then stops when Maya scoffs.

MAYA

I've a way out!

She points to the sky.

CEDRIC

But--

MAYA

I'd rather die out there than spend another day underground in the Sanctum.

CEDRIC

Stop being--

MAYA

And I'd rather die from radiation than give the Sanctum the satisfaction of murdering me.

CEDRIC

I don't want--

MAYA

And I don't need your help.

She walks away from the crack and grabs a fist full of dirt.

She stares at the sky, before spinning around and throwing the dirt into Afon's face.

MAYA (CONT'D)

Or yours!

Maya sprints up the hill of dirt to the outside world, not looking back.

Afon scratches the grit out of his eyes.

Once he can see again, Maya is gone.

AFON

Child!

He stares up at the hole. Silence.

AFON (CONT'D)

Maya!

Afon takes a step up the mountain of dirt but then retreats.

His breath quickens and he pinches the bridge of his nose.

Afon looks to the sky.

He trembles.

He shakes.

He bites his lip.

Holds his breath.

Closes his eyes.

And runs blindly after Maya into the world above.

EXT. ABOVE THE SANCTUM, RUINS OF KARAMAY, CHINA - DAWN

Afon runs into an upturned rusted 4x4 and falls flat on his back. He rolls on the floor, moaning.

AFON

*Idiot.*

He rises and looks over the vehicle to see the beautiful ruins of Karamay, China: an expanse of greenery.

Trees push their way through skyscrapers, consuming the metal and concrete. Roads have crumbled underneath the pressure of plants bursting through from underground. Nothing is untouched by the radiation-fueled ecosystem.

Afon wanders past the 4x4, eyeing the city in a daze.

A doe and its fawn dart across Afon's path, unaware of the human. They stop to munch on some flowers.

Afon grins, walking slowly over to the animals.

He steps on a twig.

*Snap.*

The deer's heads shoot up and look at Afon with vivid blue eyes; identical in colour and brilliance to his own.

Afon takes a step forward, hand reaching out.

The deer dart off with unnatural speed, revealing the enormous glowing red flowers.

Afon's smile fades. He stares at the flowers. At the redness.

His eyes widen. His breath quickens.

He spins around to dive back into the prison.

He freezes.

A DOZEN SOLDIERS spill out of the hole, wearing thick black leather overalls and black tinted gas-masks that cover the entire face.

Afon dives behind the rusted 4x4.

He takes a peek and notices them carrying rifles in their gloved hands. He spots a white triangle with two "S" symbols on a thick shoulder pad.

The soldiers begin to disperse; one SOLDIER walking straight past the 4x4, speaking into his radio in his gas mask.

SOLDIER

Confirming that no one was in the prison compound. Prisoner is missing.

RADIO (O.S)

Negative. Two prisoners are missing.

SOLDIER

Two?

RADIO (O.S)

Sanctum prisoners Maya Vaughan and Afon Volkov.

SOLDIER

Volkov?

RADIO (O.S)

Affirmative.

SOLDIER

How is that poss--

RADIO (O.S)

Classified.

The soldier grunts.

SOLDIER

Orders?

RADIO (O.S)

Kill the girl.

Afon's eyes widen.

RADIO (O.S) (CONT'D)

Seize and detain Volkov.

SOLDIER

Sir, I would--

RADIO (O.S)

Out.

The Soldier grunts, readies his rifle and moves further into the city.

Afon waits for a few painful seconds then raises his head over the 4x4 and sees soldiers standing by the prison entrance. No way in.

Afon shakes his head and sneaks off down what use to be a street alley, away from the soldiers.

EXT. STREET ALLEY WAY - CONTINUOUS

Afon gently pushes aside ivy and insects, careful not to disturb any of the wildlife, weaving in between the wrecked buildings.

The maze of alleyways finally open up...

EXT. JUNCTION TO HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

...into a wider section of road jammed with rusted cars and broken up concrete.

Looking over the roof of the cars he sees the road opens up onto a highway leading out of the city - empty green countryside in sight.

Afon grins.

Walking towards the highway, unaware, he trips over a crack in the road.

He falls on top of an old car hidden by vines. Through the window he spots the car keys. Another grin.

Pushing aside the plants, he pulls the car and frees it from the weed's grasp and out of the shallow crater in the ground.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Afon gets in, turns the keys and the car coughs. Then nothing.

Afon spies the fuel gauge and sighs.

EXT. JUNCTION TO HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

Afon gets out and opens up the bonnet. He pulls out a hand full of weeds before nodding - everything looking fine to his untrained eye.

He opens up the boot to find a first aid kit, a tool box and a small can of fuel. He grabs a pair of pliers and the can of fuel.

He dumps what he can into the car before getting to work on shifting the rusted cars out the way, cutting open each fuel line as he works, draining all he can.

By the time he's finished the can is half full. He dumps it into the car.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Afon gets back into the car and puts his hand on the key.

It takes four forceful turns before the engine comes alive.

He roars with laughter triumphantly, slaps his hands on the wheel and looks ahead.

The doe and its fawn block his path.

The fawn jumps around excitedly but trips on its own legs. The doe helps her young back up before licking behind its ear.

Afon watches sadly. He lets his head rest on the steering wheel before sighing heavily.

He gets out.

CUT TO:

INT. RUINED BUILDING - DAWN

Maya vaults over a large tree trunk that has burst through the floor of the ruined old office building.

She turns a corner into a hallway and spots a vent high on the right hand wall.

She jumps onto an old desk, pries open the vent and crawls inside.

INT. VENT - CONTINUOUS

She rushes through the vents and finds another opening.

INT. RUINED BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

She drops out of the vent near a broken window. She pushes her way through it, the broken glass piercing her skin.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Maya drops outside and presses her back against the wall, hiding under the window sill.

A GROUP OF THREE SOLDIERS rush past the window on the inside of the building.

SOLDIER  
Spread out! She couldn't have  
gotten far!

Once the soldiers pass, Maya pushes off the wall and begins to run.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - CONTINUOUS

She rushes through an alleyway, then climbs over a car and turns a corner.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

She runs into FIVE MORE SOLDIERS.

Before they spot her, she dives under a lorry and hides behind its wheel.

She pokes her head around the wheel, watching the soldiers.

Unknown to Maya, a hand comes around the other side of her.

It clasps down over her mouth.

Maya thrashes, the hand pulling her away from the wheel, further under the lorry.

Her attacker spins her around to face him. It's Afon.

Maya scowls at him.

He puts a finger to his lips, his other hand still over Maya's mouth.

Maya struggles harder.

Afon puts his finger to his lips again and stares at Maya firmly.

She rolls her eyes and nods.

He releases her and motions to follow him.

They both look around the lorry to spy on the soldiers. The soldiers begin to walk away from their post down another road.

Maya and Afon flee.

EXT. JUNCTION TO HIGHWAY - MOMENTS LATER

They arrive at the wide road Afon cleared.

Afon rushes ahead of Maya to start to car. It only takes two attempts this time.

Maya stops and glares at Afon.

MAYA  
I'm not coming with you.

AFON  
No choice.

Afon sits in the driver's seat and leans over to open the passenger door.

AFON (CONT'D)  
In.

MAYA  
Didn't you hear me?

AFON  
No time to argue. In.

Maya turns her back to him.

AFON (CONT'D)  
You do not have to stay. I shall take you away from Karamay then you find your own way.

Maya doesn't move.

AFON (CONT'D)  
Why must you be such a stubborn child!?

Maya's eyes widen at the sound of soldiers footsteps running nearby.

She spins around and dives into the car.

Afon hits the pedals. But stalls the car.

AFON (CONT'D)  
*Damn it.*

He starts the car again and he speeds out of Karamay onto the highway.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE, NORTH CHINA - MORNING

Maya opens the rusty car door.

It falls off its hinges, crashes into the road and is quickly left behind as Afon speeds over the abandoned, cracked roads.

Maya leans her body out of the car. Her hair whips at her face as she grins.

The vibrant countryside, bursting with greenery and overgrowth, whizzes past Maya's eyes.

She looks to the sky, the radiation creating swirls of colours in the air.

She screams with glee, her laughter echoing across the countryside.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Maya sits back down in her seat, keeping her legs dangling outside the car.

AFON  
Beautiful, is it not?

Maya says nothing.

AFON (CONT'D)  
Is it how you imagined?

Pause.

AFON (CONT'D)  
I think--

MAYA  
No talking.

AFON  
I thought--

MAYA  
Didn't you hear me?

AFON  
Why so rude, child?

MAYA  
I'm not a child.

AFON  
And why so angry?

Pause.

AFON (CONT'D)

Child?

No response.

AFON (CONT'D)

My mistake.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE, NORTH CHINA - CONTINUOUS

The car drives past several pools of liquid glowing the same vivid blue as Afon's eyes. Firefly-like creatures hover around it. Maya watches one whizz past.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Maya speaks over her shoulder, not looking at Afon.

MAYA

The ocean?

AFON

Hm?

Afon looks to the pools and frowns.

AFON (CONT'D)

Net. That was once oil.

MAYA

Oil?

AFON

A black liquid made from the bones of dinosaurs that makes cars run.

MAYA

Really?

AFON

Mhm.

MAYA

Liar.

Afon smiles.

MAYA (CONT'D)

How'd you know it used to be oil?

AFON

I have done this journey before.

MAYA

So you did escape before.

AFON  
I saw this on my way to register at  
the Sanctum.

MAYA  
Really?

AFON  
Mhm.

MAYA  
You're not that old.

Afon barks a laugh.

AFON  
I am flattered.

MAYA  
You were registered as a Tainted?

AFON  
Hm.

MAYA  
So what's your power?

AFON  
A secret.

MAYA  
What? Why?

AFON  
It has not brought me much fortune.

MAYA  
Fine. I won't tell you my power  
then.

AFON  
The Pure do not have powers.

Maya glares.

MAYA  
How did you--

AFON  
You are Vaughan's daughter.

MAYA  
You recognise me?

AFON  
I have not seen you before but I am  
acquainted with Vaughan.

Maya leans her head on the metal, digging her nail-less fingers into her clothes.

MAYA  
Like him?

AFON  
I would say no.

MAYA  
Why?

AFON  
Difference in opinion.

Maya turns to look at Afon.

MAYA  
Hate him?

AFON  
I do not hate. I am just not that fond of those that imprison others for not "following the rules".

Maya's eyes soften before turning back to the road.

MAYA  
Where are you even taking me?

AFON  
My home. The Frozen Lake. Listvyanka.

MAYA  
Why?

AFON  
We will be safe there. The Transformed are sparse and the Sanctum Soldiers do not patrol there.

MAYA  
Oh.

AFON  
We have a better chance of survival there.

MAYA  
How far is it?

AFON  
Probably a full three days of driving.

MAYA

Ew.

AFON

It is worth it.

MAYA

Is it as colourful as here?

AFON

Hopefully not.

MAYA

Eh?

AFON

I want it to be the same. White and grey.

MAYA

Is there an ocean?

AFON

Net.

MAYA

Then drop me off here.

AFON

There is no ocean here.

MAYA

I'll find one of my own.

AFON

I am not stopping.

MAYA

Don't take two seconds.

AFON

I do not want to be responsible for your death.

MAYA

I can take care of myself.

AFON

Can you?

MAYA

What's that--

CUT TO:

EXT. THE PATH NEXT TO LAKE BAIKAL - DAY - 2038 (FLASHBACK)

KATYA

*--supposed to mean?*

AFON (17) shifts awkwardly on the cold bench next to KATYA (16).

Katya doesn't look at him, just glares at the lake's icy surface while she holds her stomach.

Afon leans over to tighten her red cardigan around her skinny frame. She slaps his hands away.

AFON

*Nothing. I just think I should take some time off work to--*

KATYA

*We can't afford it.*

Afon leans back and sighs.

AFON

*Well I'm going to need to stay at home anyway. I got to work on the cabin.*

KATYA

*You're finally fixing the leak?*

AFON

*Nah. That's in the kitchen, it can wait. I need to put a partition in the living room first.*

KATYA

*A partition?*

AFON

*It's the easiest way to create a second bedroom.*

KATYA

*We don't even have a first bedroom.*

AFON

*Well, once I've split the living room there will be two bedrooms.*

KATYA

*So we go without a living room?*

AFON

*Don't need one.*

Katya shifts away from Afon, biting her nails angrily.

KATYA

*Or...*

Afon cocks his head.

KATYA (CONT'D)

*...we could forget the partition.  
Keep the living room and fix the  
leak.*

Afon frowns, laughing uncertainly.

AFON

*But what about the baby?*

Katya stares blankly at her lover.

Afon's eyes widen.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE ALTAI MOUNTAIN CRATER - DUSK (BACK TO PRESENT)

The car drives through the crater where the Altai mountains used to separate China and Mongolia.

The crater is a mass of grey rock woven with cracks. Tufts of grass and weeds crawl their way out of the earth's lines. A faint blue mist floats around each plant, glowing gently: radiation.

The car almost reaches the end of the crater before it coughs, shakes and then stops.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Afon turns the key multiple times. The car doesn't respond.

MAYA

What's happened?

AFON

Unsure.

EXT. THE CRATER - CONTINUOUS

Afon gets out of the car and opens the boot, whipping up the tool box.

As Afon walks to the front of the car, Maya gets out to gaze at the last of the sunset. She leans back onto the car.

Afon opens the bonnet and rummages through its contents.

AFON  
There is fuel in car.

Maya pushes off the car and begins to wander around, eyeing the little green sprouts spurting out the ground.

AFON (CONT'D)  
I do not understand why it shall  
not start.

MAYA  
Where are we?

AFON  
Altai Mountains.

MAYA  
This is a mountain?

AFON  
It was.

MAYA  
Was it high?

Afon's head emerges out of the bonnet.

AFON  
It was.

MAYA  
Until the Transformed?

AFON  
Until the blasts.

MAYA  
Blasts?

Afon doesn't respond.

MAYA (CONT'D)  
What blasts?

AFON  
Never mind, child.

MAYA  
I'm not a child.

Afon rolls his eyes, then buries his head in the bonnet.

Unsure of what's wrong, he sighs and pinches his nose with oily hands.

Noticing the wetness on the bridge of his nose, he looks at his hand and sees the black oil on it.

His breathing becomes more rapid and his hands shake.

CUT TO:

EXT. DARK FOREST - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Black slime covers Afon's shaking hands.

His hands drops to reveal Alla, in red, standing on the edge of the forest lake.

His blackened hands reach out to her.

Her red dress turns black.

She drops into the water.

He rushes towards her.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. THE ALTAI MOUNTAIN CRATER - DUSK (BACK TO PRESENT)

Afon leaps forward, hands reaching out.

He bangs his leg on the car.

The bonnet's hood falls onto his reached out hands.

AFON

*Fuck! Shit! Shit! Shit!*

He squeezes the hands in between his knees as he catches his breath.

After a few squeezes, he lifts his head.

Maya is gone.

He releases his hands and straightens up.

AFON (CONT'D)

Child?

Nothing.

AFON (CONT'D)

Child!?

He circles around the car.

AFON (CONT'D)

Maya!?

He spins around, searching frantically.

AFON (CONT'D)

MAYA!?

EXT. OUTSIDE THE CRATER - DUSK

Maya jogs away from the crater, putting distance between her and Afon.

She hears his echoes carrying over the edge of the crater. Maya ignores them.

She goes down the slope, towards an overgrown forest near the bottom.

Mesmerized by the vivid colours of the forest, she loses her footing on a tree root.

She spirals down the slope, falls over a small ledge and lands in front of an entrance to a cave.

Maya curses and pulls herself up.

*Grunt.*

Maya freezes.

A SWARM OF TRANSFORMED emerge from the cave. Maya stares eyes wide at their pale cracked skin. Their eyes are bloodshot and missing their pupils; grey and pink dead globes embedded into their sockets. They wear tattered clothes, all covered in black liquid. They edge forward.

AFON

(in the distance)

Maya!

Maya's eyes dart towards the ledge she fell off. They shoot back to the Transformed.

The Transformed shuffles forward, reaching out to Maya.

Maya throws herself at the ledge, trying to scramble up it.

MAYA

Afon! Afon! Help me! Help me  
please! Afon! Please!

The Transformed close in.

Maya's broken nails fail her and she can't get out.

She hears Afon's heavy footsteps.

MAYA (CONT'D)

Afon! Afon! Please!

Afon's extended hand grabs hold of the back of Maya's baggy jumper and he hauls her out.

AFON  
Foolish child!

A Transformed grabs Maya's ankle and drags her back.

Maya screams. Afon catches her arm. He tries to pull her back but the Transformed has a firm grip.

MAYA  
Get it off me!

Afon kicks at the Transformed's arm but with no effect.

MAYA (CONT'D)  
Help me!

AFON  
I-I--

MAYA  
Kill it!

Another Transformed grabs Maya's leg and pulls harder.

MAYA (CONT'D)  
Kill it! Kill it! Kill it!

Afon shakes his head.

AFON  
I cannot.

MAYA  
KILL IT!

Tears rolls down Afon's face.

AFON  
(whisper)  
I cannot.

MAYA  
HELP ME!!!

Two arrows shoot out of the depths of the forest and explode into the heads' of the Transformed who have a hold of Maya.

Afon yanks Maya out, drops to his knees and stares at the dead Transformed.

Tears drip from his face.

The bow creaks. Afon's head shoots up.

He leaps to his feet, arms spread out.

AFON

Stop! Stop!

Three arrows whizz past him, striking three Transformed in their foreheads.

Afon turns to see their bodies fall. His mouth falls open as tears roll down his face.

The ARCHER emerges from the woods, bow at the ready.

He wears a full body suit made up of crudely sewn together patches of leather. Belts filled with throwing knives loop around his torso, and a bag of sharpened pieces of wood that acts as arrows sits on his back. He wears a broken Sanctum Soldiers gas mask.

He takes a step forward and aims his bow at Afon, mistaking him for another Transformed.

Maya gasps.

The Archer shifts his attention to Maya. He looks to Afon then back to Maya.

Slinging his bow around his torso, the Archer rushes forward, snatches Maya off her feet and runs.

MAYA

What are you doing!?

Afon twists around at the sound of Maya to see the Archer disappearing into the woods with Maya.

Afon's eyes widen and he races after them.

EXT. THE WOODS - CONTINUOUS

The Archer jumps onto an old bicycle and races downhill, expertly dodging trees.

Maya kicks and screams at her kidnapper.

Afon spirals after them.

He trips over roots, rolling to the floor and jumping back up to his feet to continue the chase.

The sound of the rusty bike chain begins to fade away.

Afon begins to panic, running faster, allowing branches to claw at his face and bare arms.

He can no longer hear Maya's yells.

Afon misplaces his foot and he crashes to the floor.

He slides down the hill, slipping on the mud and leaves.

He is launched off the edge of a hill, smacking into a tree and hitting every branch on the way down.

He hits the ground.

CUT TO BLACK

VAUGHAN (V.O.)  
You and Maya are friends, correct?

INT. SANCTUM'S QUESTIONING CELL - EVENING

Cedric sits on the floor of a small, dark room, opposite a metal door.

His head is drooped, staring at his shackled wrists that he can barely see in the darkness.

He painfully lifts his head, his grey eyes now a vivid blue.

He looks up at the small opening in the door to see VAUGHAN'S (36) gas masked face.

VAUGHAN  
And yet look at where she has  
landed you.

Cedric's head falls back down.

CEDRIC  
Do people know?

VAUGHAN  
Know what?

CEDRIC  
Maya's disappearance.

VAUGHAN  
No one needs to know.

CEDRIC  
You expect me to lie?

Vaughan chuckles.

VAUGHAN  
Lie? My boy, there'll be no one to  
lie to.

Cedric looks up, frowning.

VAUGHAN (CONT'D)  
You tested positive for radiation.  
Sixty-eight percent.

CEDRIC  
Sixty... eight?

Vaughan nods.

CEDRIC (CONT'D)  
But how? I-I-I wasn't there that  
long! I was only there for--

Vaughan waves Cedric quiet.

VAUGHAN  
That prison has been collecting  
radiation for years. No surprise  
considering how close it is to the  
surface.

CEDRIC  
But--

VAUGHAN  
Don't worry. You've been deemed a  
Tainted, not a Transformed.

CEDRIC  
Don't worry!?! I'm infected!

VAUGHAN  
Yeah but you can still think,  
you're capable of speech and not an  
all around mess.

Cedric begins to weep.

Vaughan opens the door, wearing suit and tie. He crouches in  
front of Cedric.

VAUGHAN (CONT'D)  
It's alright, boy.

CEDRIC  
Oh god... why did I go see her?!

VAUGHAN  
I know. I know.

CEDRIC  
Like an idiot I thought I could  
help!

He thumps his fists onto the ground.

CEDRIC (CONT'D)  
For fuck's sake! Why didn't I just  
stay the fuck away!

Cedric cries harder.

CEDRIC (CONT'D)  
What am I going to do?

VAUGHAN  
Forget your parents. Forget your home. Forget your friends. Forget your life.

CEDRIC  
Forget Maya?

VAUGHAN  
Actually no. We need your help with Maya.

He angrily wipes away tears and glares at Vaughan .

CEDRIC  
Help? Why should I help you?  
You're condemning me!

VAUGHAN  
If you want to blame someone, blame Maya.

CEDRIC  
She was just running from you.

VAUGHAN  
Why defend her?

Cedric's glare softens.

VAUGHAN (CONT'D)  
If she hadn't talked you into "keeping a look out" for her, maybe you wouldn't be in this mess.

Cedric looks back down at his shackles.

VAUGHAN (CONT'D)  
If she hadn't spent years leaning on you, maybe you wouldn't have gone back to help. And if she hadn't pretended to be your sister--

Cedric's head snaps up.

VAUGHAN (CONT'D)  
--maybe you wouldn't be such a wreck.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Afon's head rolls side to side, dirt and leaves scrapping the back of it.

Red and black blood drips from his nose down into his ears.

His eyes flicker open - his vision a disorientated blur - to see the ground slowly moving past him.

His eyes lazily look up to see his legs bound and being dragged by the Archer.

Attempting to lift his head and arms, Afon loses strength.

He falls back down.

His eyes flutter and his blurry vision is engulfed by darkness.

FADE TO BLACK

INT. AFON & KATYA'S WOODEN CABIN, LIVING ROOM - DAY - 2039  
(FLASHBACK)

KATYA (17) paces back and forward, phone in hand, held to ear.

She presses her free hand into the small of her back, relieving strain from her protruding belly.

KATYA  
(to phone)  
*No, listen to me. We--*

Afon (18), comes in, dragging planks of wood through the front door, hammer in back pocket.

AFON  
*So I was thinking--*

Katya waves an angry hand to silence him.

He mouths an apology.

KATYA  
*When can we expect to have it back on?*

Afon raises an eyebrow as Katya listens to the voice on the other end.

She bites her lip, looks to the ceiling before scrunching her eyes.

KATYA (CONT'D)  
*Fine, fine. Thank you. Fine.  
Goodbye.*

She hangs up, tossing the phone onto the mattress in the corner before storming into the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Katya grips the kitchen counter, teeth clenched.

She looks around the tiny kitchen; empty cupboards missing their doors, a small lone table covered in unpaid bills and a string of 'congratulation' cards hanging from a sole beam.

Afon pokes his head through the door.

AFON  
*What was that about?*

Katya turns the tap. Nothing comes out.

AFON (CONT'D)  
*Eh, don't worry about it.*

He waves a hand and walks back into the living room, Katya follows.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

KATYA  
*Don't worry about it?!*

AFON  
*I'll just get water from the lake  
and we'll boil it down.*

KATYA  
*With what electricity?*

Afon drags the planks into the middle of the room.

AFON  
*We'll use the fire. We'll be fine.*

Afon measures the room from wall to wall, writing the details on the back of his hand whilst Katya glares into his back.

KATYA  
*You need to go back to work.*

Afon stops and smiles at Katya.

AFON  
*Yeah but then I'd miss you.*

She rolls her eyes and begins to walk away but Afon grabs her wrist and pulls her closer.

KATYA  
*I'm not joking.*

AFON  
*Neither am I.*

He smiles, strokes her hair and gives her a kiss.

She frowns. He kisses again.

Her frown wavers, an awkward smile peeking through. He grins.

AFON (CONT'D)  
*You know you love it.*

He puts his hand on her back, bending her backwards into a dip.

She finally bursts with laughter.

He pulls her back up, swinging her side to side in a makeshift dance.

Katya giggles but then stops, holding her stomach.

KATYA  
*Oh. Oh. Too much fun. Need to sit down. Oh. Oh.*

Afon lowers her gently onto the mattress, before hopping down next to her.

They lie together, holding each other, Afon stroking Katya's hair.

KATYA (CONT'D)  
*I've missed you.*

AFON  
*Missed me? Girl, we live in a two roomed cabin. There's been no escaping me.*

KATYA  
*I miss old you.*

Afon moves back to look at Katya's face.

Her eyes don't meet his.

He sighs heavily before tilting her head upwards, forcing her to look at him. He smiles.

AFON  
*I love you.*

She smiles back.

KATYA

*I lov--*

Afon scoots down and holds Katya's tummy.

AFON

*And I love you too, bump.*

Afon kisses the belly, holding it tight.

Katya's smile fades.

CUT TO:

INT. LAO'S TREEHOUSE, BEDROOM - NIGHT (BACK TO PRESENT)

*KNOCK KNOCK.*

Afon's eyes snap open.

He wakes up in a tiny candle-lit room on a bed of stained mattresses.

He stands up slowly, eyeing the room, spotting overflowing shelves of cans, bottles, nuts and bolts.

Cautiously stepping through the junk-filled room, he opens the curtain only to find his own battered reflection. A mirror.

Shaking his head, he walks past a crudely built wardrobe with children's clothes spilling out of it. Afon spies a photo of a Chinese family; a burly , an elegant pregnant mother and three grinning pre-teen boys.

He strokes the image of the pregnant woman.

*KNOCK KNOCK.*

Afon's head snaps around to the ill-fitting door.

He picks up a nearby screwdriver, holding it up as he approaches the door.

His hand rests on the handle. He takes a breath.

Whipping open the door and raising the screwdriver, he is greeted by the Archer, LAO (61), an older version of the man in the photo, chewing loudly on a carrot and holding a hand-carved bowl of soup.

He smiles broadly through his greying short beard, his vivid blue eyes the same shade and brilliance as Afon's.

He thrusts the bowl forward.

LAO  
Soup?

INT. LAO'S TREEHOUSE, LIVING ROOM - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Lao bumbles through the room, tidying up his array of junk whilst laying a patch-work cloth over his tattered table.

Afon, stood by the door, sees Maya already sat at the table perched on several tyres with her own bowl of soup.

LAO  
Have a seat, have a seat.

Afon moves over to the table.

LAO (CONT'D)  
The wife will be furious to think  
we have guests when the place looks  
like a bomb's hit it.

He shoves his bow and arrow to the side before hurrying himself back to the table and placing a hand on Maya's shoulder.

LAO (CONT'D)  
More soup, sweetheart?

MAYA  
Hm, please!

He turns to Afon.

LAO  
Afon?

Afon raises a hand, shaking his head.

LAO (CONT'D)  
Nasty fall you had. Probably still  
feel a bit nauseous.

Lao turns to head to the kitchen but then twists back.

He extends an arm.

LAO (CONT'D)  
Lao.

Afon takes the hand, shaking firmly. Lao releases and dives into the kitchen.

Once gone, Afon stands, throws the contents of his bowl out the window and sits back.

MAYA  
What the hell?

AFON  
Do not drink that.

MAYA  
Too late.

AFON  
Drink no more. We must leave.

Maya glares.

MAYA  
He saved us.

AFON  
Yes but why?

Lao pops back in with a large pot under his arm.

He hurries over and ladles spoonfuls of soup into Maya's bowl.

AFON (CONT'D)  
That is probably enough.

LAO  
Nonsense, she's still growing.  
Needs all the grub she can get.

He places the pot on the table, sits down, produces his own bowl and helps himself.

LAO (CONT'D)  
Got to be used up anyway as the family still hasn't come home.

MAYA  
Family?

LAO  
The wife and the kids, four boys.  
Been waiting three days now.

Lao cocks his head. Pause.

LAO (CONT'D)  
Maybe four? I'll check the calendar later.

AFON  
Should you not be looking for them?

LAO  
Nah, be fine. Xiu's a tough cookie and she's probably hunked up with the boys in one of the other tree houses.

MAYA

Other houses? There's more of you?

LAO

Sadly not. We built several tree houses when we first ran, just in case we'd found anyone else. Now we just use them as safe spots.

Lao grins, stretching his arms out wide.

LAO (CONT'D)

But after all these years, I finally found another family.

MAYA

We're not--

AFON

You escaped the Sanctum?

LAO

Escape? Didn't even register. We ran when they started rounding people up for testing. No way was I going to live underground for the rest of my life, no way.

AFON

Even at the risk of radiation?

LAO

Was worth it. Didn't seem to affect us anyway.

Lao flicks his hand around his glowing blue eyes.

LAO (CONT'D)

Except for the weird colouration.

Lao drinks the last dregs of his soup.

LAO (CONT'D)

So what were you both doing in my forest?

AFON

Just passing through.

LAO

Travellers?

AFON

Of sorts.

LAO

Where are you heading?

AFON

We are--

MAYA

He's going to the Frozen Lake.

Afon glares a warning at Maya.

LAO

Frozen Lake?

AFON

Siberia.

Lao whistles.

LAO

Long way from here. What's the reason?

AFON

We--

MAYA

We're outrunning the Sanctum.

LAO

What? Why are they after you?

AFON

It is--

MAYA

We escaped from the Sanctum. The *first* to escape from that shit hole!

Lao slaps his thigh, roaring with laughter.

LAO

You are wonderful, Maya!

He smiles warmly at Maya.

LAO (CONT'D)

For years Xiu has been telling me that we made a mistake. That we should return to the Sanctum for the kids' sake. Can't wait to rub it in her face!

He laughs and jumps up.

LAO (CONT'D)

Putting one over on the wife is always a cause for celebration! Pass me that bottle behind you, Maya.

Maya stands and takes a step towards a shelf of dusty wine bottles.

Her leg falls through a floor board.

Lao darts across the room, grabs Maya's hands and stops her falling.

LAO (CONT'D)  
I swore I finished nailing that.

He lifts her gently, moves her away from the hole and places her back on the tyres.

He grabs the bottle for Maya. Then stops, staring at the hole.

LAO (CONT'D)  
Should fix that.

He eyes Maya's scraped knees.

LAO (CONT'D)  
Should fix that too.

EXT. LAO'S TREEHOUSE, BALCONY - LATER

Afon looks through the window, watching Lao hammer a plank of wood over the hole, singing loudly to himself.

He pulls away from the window to look at the view of the forest with Maya.

She sits on the edge of the wooden platform, her legs dangling 100 feet high.

She scratches at the bandage on her knee, a caricature of Lao and "get well soon!" scribbled over the fabric.

AFON  
We must leave tomorrow.

MAYA  
Still think Lao's a bad guy?

AFON  
Regardless of what I think, we are wasting time and are not safe here.

MAYA  
How much safer can you be than up in a tree?

Maya lays back, leaving her legs dangling to look at the stars. She frowns.

MAYA (CONT'D)  
Why has the sky gone dark?

AFON  
It always does this at night.

Afon lays down next to her.

AFON (CONT'D)  
Does the Sanctum truly teach you nothing?

MAYA  
Nothing about the outside. Except that it's irradiated and full of Transformed.

AFON  
What made you so interested then, child?

MAYA  
Secret.

They face each other, eyebrows raised.

AFON  
I do not play mind games.

MAYA  
No mind games. Tell me your secret and I will tell you mine.

AFON  
No deal.

MAYA  
Why?

AFON  
I am not *that* interested.

MAYA  
Liar.

AFON  
Rude.

They both look back to the sky.

MAYA  
Maybe I'll live in one of Lao's tree houses.

AFON  
You do not know Lao.

MAYA  
Don't really know you.

AFON  
Touché.

MAYA  
You could stay here with me.

Pause.

AFON  
I cannot. I must return home.

MAYA  
But--

AFON  
I must finally face her.

LAO  
You're leaving?

Maya and Afon sit up and turn to see Lao holding a metal tray of hot tea and old biscuits.

LAO (CONT'D)  
Stay a few days.

AFON  
I must--

LAO  
I could do with the company. The house feels pretty empty.

Lao thrusts the tray towards them.

LAO (CONT'D)  
I've also made tea so there's no escaping.

He dances over to an upturned barrel to pour the beverages.

LAO (CONT'D)  
I actually have a favour to ask.

Lao hands a mug to Afon.

LAO (CONT'D)  
Before you leave.

Afon raises an eyebrow.

EXT. FOREST - MORNING - NEXT DAY

Lao strolls merrily through the woods, bow slung over his shoulder and Afon trailing behind him, hauling a small tree.

LAO

He'd call the cops all the time.  
I'd just walk past his car and he'd  
accuse me of harassing her - she  
didn't even have to be in the car  
for him to go nuts.

AFON

How did you convince him to let you  
marry her then?

LAO

Knocked her up.

Afon raises his eyebrows. Lao bursts with laughter.

LAO (CONT'D)

He practically married us himself.  
"No way is my first grandchild to  
be a bastard!"

Lao shakes his head, chuckling.

LAO (CONT'D)

What a cock.

Lao eyes a small fallen tree. He tests the branches and kicks the trunk before grunting. No good. The search continues.

LAO (CONT'D)

Oh but the miserable cow was worth  
it.

AFON

Charming.

LAO

She's called me worse.

AFON

Again - charming.

LAO

All in good nature. She's a  
wonderful woman.

Afon smiles.

AFON

She seems like a good mother too.

LAO

Hm?

AFON

I saw the photo of you and your family.

LAO

Ah - beautiful, ain't she? Miss her eyes though. The boys inherited her lovely golden eyes but hers changed like mine did.

AFON

The mark of a Tainted.

Lao turns to face Afon, walking backwards.

LAO

A what?

AFON

One of the four categories the Sanctum assign to humans based on their radiation level.

LAO

Being Tainted is bad, I guess?

AFON

Transformed is worse.

LAO

The difference?

AFON

The Sanctum keep one but exclude the other. Tainted can break down radiation and render it harmless. Transformed cannot.

LAO

And the Transformed are those zombie-like creatures?

AFON

Not zombies. They are just no longer of sound mind due to the poisoning.

LAO

Why so grabby then?

AFON

They want help.

LAO

Huh.

Lao spots another small fallen tree. Testing it, he nods.

LAO (CONT'D)

Good. I can use this.

Afon steps forward, readying himself to pick up the second tree.

LAO (CONT'D)

Nah, nah, allow me.

He wraps rope around it and begins to drag the tree with him.

Afon stops.

AFON

I thought you needed my help?

Lao looks over his shoulder to Afon.

LAO

Well apparently I need a reason to save someone's life - so by making you think that you're helping me it becomes like a favour for favour. That way you won't be so judging and jumpy about me, right?

Afon blushes. Lao roars with laughter.

INT. LAO'S TREEHOUSE, LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Maya organizes Lao's junk-covered bookshelf; separating and throwing bolts, springs and screws into several boxes on the floor.

She pushes around the clutter on the shelf, she knocks over several knickknacks onto the floor. They roll under the bookshelf.

Rolling her eyes, she rummages underneath, pulling out some bolts along with a hand-made calendar. It is eleven years out of date.

She spots a circled date with a love heart and Chinese characters: "Xiu & boys hunt for supplies". Every date afterwards is crossed out, each cross becoming more shaky and uneven as the months go by.

Maya frowns.

LAO (O.S.)

We're baaaaaaaack!

INT. LAO'S TREEHOUSE, BALCONY - EVENING

Maya and Lao sit side by side on the ledge, flicking through a photo album together.

Afon sits alone, eyes closed, on a branch of one of the trees holding up Lao's home.

Lao points to a photo of a younger Lao and XIU.

LAO

This is our trip to the Great Wall.

MAYA

Ew.

Lao laughs.

LAO

This is a proud historical landmark!

MAYA

Just looks like something to keep you in. Where are your sons?

LAO

Didn't have our boys until about ten years later. I was thirty-three when we had Deshi, thirty-five with Chao, thirty-nine with Liu and forty-six with Jian.

Lao turns the page, revealing more photos - one of them a photo of a sunrise on the ocean.

Maya's eyes widen, snatching the album from Lao to look.

MAYA

Where's that?

LAO

Yalong Bay, where we had our honeymoon.

MAYA

How far?

AFON

Too far.

Maya glares at Afon before turning back to Lao.

MAYA

Can you take me?

Lao scratches the back of his head.

LAO

Well--

MAYA

Please, please.

LAO  
I haven't really left the forest  
since running.

MAYA  
Now you have a reason to! Wouldn't  
Xiu love to revisit her honeymoon  
place?

LAO  
Probably not.

MAYA  
Ask her.

LAO  
I'd rather avoid a slap.

MAYA  
Then just--

AFON  
Stop your fussing, child.

MAYA  
Shut your mouth!

LAO  
Touchy.

AFON  
Excuse me?

MAYA  
You heard.

Afon raises an eyebrow.

AFON  
Well, we are full of ourselves  
today.

LAO  
Oh. Wow. Okay.

MAYA  
Why do you care anyway? Why are you  
even still here?

AFON  
Because I care about you.

MAYA  
Bullshit.

LAO  
Language.

MAYA

You only care about your stupid  
lake so why don't you fuck off  
there.

Afon nods and stands. Using Lao's rope system, he lowers himself down towards the ground, leaving Lao and Maya.

Pause.

Maya catches Lao's widened and surprised eyes. Her expression softens.

MAYA (CONT'D)

What?

LAO

He means well.

Maya rolls her eyes, turning her body away from Lao.

LAO (CONT'D)

You honestly think he would have  
stuck around if he didn't care?

Lao scoots up closer.

LAO (CONT'D)

Tell you what.

He tugs the photo of the ocean out of the album before pressing it into Maya's hands.

LAO (CONT'D)

You take this and show it to Xiu  
when she gets back.

Maya turns to him, eyes questioning.

LAO (CONT'D)

More likely to say yes to you than  
me. She always wanted a girl.

Maya grins. Lao snatches back the photo.

LAO (CONT'D)

But only if you go and get him.

Maya scowls. Lao hands her back the photo and watches her pocket it.

LAO (CONT'D)

Better be quick about it - Siberia  
is in the other direction.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE BOTTOM OF LAO'S TREEHOUSE - EVENING

Afon walks deeper into the forest, stroking each tree with each slow step.

He hears the patter of feet behind him.

AFON

*Child?*

He turns. It's only Maya. She stops several yards away.

MAYA

I'm going to bed.

AFON

Oh... well, good night then, child.

MAYA

Not coming?

AFON

Should I?

Maya doesn't respond.

AFON (CONT'D)

Maybe later.

MAYA

Why not now?

Afon raises an eyebrow. Maya doesn't meet his eye.

MAYA (CONT'D)

Don't want anything to happen to you.

AFON

I thought you only cared for the ocean.

Maya bites her cheek, annoyed. Afon smiles, taking a step towards her.

MAYA

Still going to the Frozen Lake?

Afon stops.

AFON

Yes.

MAYA

Don't want to stay here?

AFON

I need to go home.

MAYA  
Then why were you sat rotting in  
prison?

Afon doesn't answer.

MAYA (CONT'D)  
More secrets?

Maya turns her back to Afon and walks.

AFON  
I was not ready.

Maya stops.

AFON (CONT'D)  
I was weak, scared and in need of a  
push.

She turns to face him.

AFON (CONT'D)  
And I received that push from a  
very rude and stubborn child who  
has a lot more fire in her than I  
ever did.

Maya drops her head, hiding her face.

Afon smiles, walking past her and patting the top of her head  
on the way.

AFON (CONT'D)  
Let us sleep, child.

Afon walks back to the treehouse, Maya trailing behind.

INT. LAO'S TREEHOUSE BEDROOM - LATER

With the candles blown out, the three of them lie across  
several mattresses. Maya sleeps in between the two men.

Afon lies on his side, facing away from the other duo and  
staring at the photo of Lao and his family.

He looks at Xiu's smiling face and her vivid blue eyes.

Maya whimpers.

He cocks his head and hears Maya crying softly.

Afon rolls over to comfort her.

He stops.

Maya has turned to Lao. Lao holds her and strokes her hair.  
 Afon turns back to his original position.  
 He hugs himself. His nails digging into his shoulder.  
 He goes back to staring at Xiu.

CUT TO:

INT. AFON & KATYA'S WOODEN CABIN - EVENING

AFON (19) opens the big wooden door and squeezes his body through into the living room.

He hears his baby, ALLA, crying softly.

The fire isn't lit, the room cold and dark.

Old pieces of furniture have been upturned, plates smashed and clothes strewn over the old faded floor.

AFON

*Katya?*

The baby wails harder at the sound of her father's voice.

Afon rushes to the bed in the corner of the room and finds Alla crying underneath the dirty sheet.

He quickly scoops up his baby, wraps her in a woolen blanket.

He strides with his daughter to the fire place. Using only one hand, he lights the fire.

As the fire sparks into life Afon rubs Alla's back, warming the baby's cold skin.

AFON (CONT'D)

*Alla, my poor child. What's Mama done now, eh?*

Alla warms up and stops crying. She gurgles happily on her father's shoulder.

Holding Alla, Afon dries his hair with a dirty towel and fumbles to take off his yellow fisherman's overalls.

AFON (CONT'D)

*I hope Mama hasn't left you alone for too long again.*

He eyes the mess on the floor and sighs. He begins tidying by picking up a red cardigan; a note falls to the floor.

Picking up the note, he sits on the bed and opens it up. It reads in Russian: "This if not the life I wanted."

It's the life you forced upon me. Enjoy being a full-time parent, you selfish bigot. Goodbye."

Afon scrunches up the note and throws it into the fire before falling back onto the bed with Alla.

Alla begins to cry. Afon strokes the back of her and rocks her.

AFON (CONT'D)  
*Stop your fussing, child. Mama will  
be back.*

Alla continues to cry.

AFON (CONT'D)  
*She will be back.*

Afon can't settle Alla so he gets up.

AFON (CONT'D)  
*Baby Alla hungry? Hm? Baby Alla  
hungry?*

He pulls faces, but Alla continues to cry.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

He walks into the kitchen with her.

*Creak.*

Katya is hanging from the sole beam.

CUT TO:

INT. LAO'S TREEHOUSE BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING.

Afon is woken up by the sound of creaking wood.

He turns his head to face Maya and Lao. His eyes meet the end of a gun instead.

Afon's eyes move up to the smoked glass optics of SANCTUM SOLDIER #1.

The Soldier motions with his gun for Afon to get up.

Afon is escorted to the ropes where SOLDIERS #2, #3 and #4 wait.

EXT. THE BOTTOM OF LAO'S TREEHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The soldiers lower Afon down to the ground where Lao, Maya and SEVEN MORE SOLDIERS wait for him.

Maya kneels on the floor, hands behind her head as SOLDIER #5 and #6 aim their gun at her.

Lao, wearing his belt of throwing knives, lies face down on the floor, SOLDIER #7's rifle pressed into the back of his skull.

Maya's head snaps up as Afon thuds to the floor.

She gets up to rush to him but is grabbed by the shoulder and forced to kneel again.

Lao is released and the Soldiers line him, Maya and Afon up side by side, kneeling at the mercy of their guns.

SOLDIER #8 with a red SS symbol, as opposed to the typical white SS, steps forward; a SANCTUM COMMANDER.

SANCTUM COMMANDER

Afon Volkov. By the order of the Sanctum, you have been found guilty of high treason for the crime of multiple accounts of disobedience, including repeated counts of insubordination and for unauthorized leaving of the Sanctum. Afon Volkov, you are to be returned to the Sanctum Prison for further experimentation and reeducation; failure to cooperate will lead to yet another life sentence. Effective immediately.

Soldiers #1, #2 and #3 drag Afon to his feet and pull him away from Maya and Lao.

Maya jumps up, reaching for him.

SOLDIER #9, weedier and meeker than the rest, butts Maya in the face with the end of his rifle.

Black blood bursts from her nose. She falls to the floor.

Lao jerks towards her, but is forced back by the threat of guns.

Afon rips his arms out of the Soldier #1 and 2#'s grip and darts to Maya's attacker.

AFON

*Bastard!*

Soldier #3 butts him in the back of the head whilst Soldiers #1 and #2 drag him away, dazed, and thrust him up against a tree.

SOLDIER #10 readies a syringe, putting the point into a bottle of clear liquid.

Soldier #9 who butted Maya chuckles; young and high pitched - that of a young man.

Maya wipes the blood onto her sleeve. Her scowl fades into confusion.

MAYA

...Cedric?

Soldier #9 rips his gas mask off, revealing the smile of Cedric.

Maya's eyes widen and she latches onto his knees, looking up at him, black blood trickling from her nose.

MAYA (CONT'D)

Cedric! Cedric! Help me!

Cedric's smile fades, his face dark with rage.

He kicks her away.

Afon struggles under the grip of the Soldiers, eyes locked onto the bloodied Maya as he is gagged.

The Sanctum Commander steps closer to Maya.

SANCTUM COMMANDER

Maya Vaughan.

MAYA

Please! Please help me!

SANCTUM COMMANDER

By the order of the Sanctum...

CEDRIC

Why?

SANCTUM COMMANDER

...you have been found guilty of high treason...

MAYA

We-we-we're friends!

SANCTUM COMMANDER

...for the crime of assaulting...

CEDRIC

Friends don't shit on friends.

SANCTUM COMMANDER

...and resisting Sanctum guardians...

MAYA

I-I-I n-never. Y-You're...

SANCTUM COMMANDER  
...wilfully destroying Sanctum  
property...

MAYA  
...like my broth--

Cedric knees Maya in the face.

Afon screams into his gag.

SANCTUM COMMANDER  
...allowing harmful radiation...

CEDRIC  
You're not her.

SANCTUM COMMANDER  
...into Sanctum prison sectors...

CEDRIC  
And you'll never be her.

Maya shakes her head in confusion.

SANCTUM COMMANDER  
...and above all...

MAYA  
I-I-I don't underst--

CEDRIC  
Ironic isn't it?

SANCTUM COMMANDER  
...unauthorized leaving of the  
Sanctum.

CEDRIC  
That I became a soldier.

SANCTUM COMMANDER  
Maya Vaughan.

CEDRIC  
That I get to be outside.

SANCTUM COMMANDER  
You are to be sentenced to death.

CEDRIC  
Unlike you.

Cedric aims his rifle.

SANCTUM COMMANDER  
Effective Immediately.

Leaving behind a trail of wounded soldiers, Afon rushes in between Maya and Cedric.

*Bang.*

Afon collapses. Maya screams, covered in his blood.

A throwing knife strikes Cedric's head.

CUT TO BLACK

EXT. FOREST - A FEW MINUTES LATER

The fawn eats a flower, its petals turning from red to black as the plant dies in the deer's mouth.

The doe licks behinds her young's ear.

Both of their head's shoot up at the sound of an engine roaring.

They dive out of the way of a Sanctum armoured vehicle as it crashes through the forest.

INT. A SANCTUM ARMOURED VEHICLE - CONTINUOUS

Maya's bloodied hands shake uncontrollably on the wheel as she thrashes it left to right, the vehicle narrowly avoiding trees.

Lao is thrown around in the back as he leans over Afon's mangled body, pushing the heels of his hands into his chest.

He presses. One. Two. Three.

Lao forces his lips onto Afon's and breathes. His lips are covered in blood when he rises. He thumps Afon's chest again.

Maya gulps for air and looks into the rear view mirror.

LAO  
Don't look!

Maya's eyes snap away, just in time to spot a tree and spin the wheel frantically.

Lao breathes into Afon once more. Nothing.

LAO (CONT'D)  
(in Chinese)  
Don't leave us, man.

He locks his hands, gets into position and presses into Afon's chest.

The vehicle suddenly speeds up.

Lao's head looks up to see Maya's head slump onto the window sill.

Her usual chocolate brown eyes now glazed over.

Her hands no longer shaking.

Unconscious.

A tree rushes up into view in the front window.

Lao throws himself towards the front of the car, reaching for the hand break and the wheel. The vehicle skids and spins.

*CRASH.*

CUT TO BLACK

EXT. PARK - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Afon (22) pushes Alla softly (4) on the swing. Heavy dark bags rest under his pale blue eyes.

ALLA

*And then she tells me that Scruffy is hungry.*

AFON

*Okay.*

ALLA

*So we gave Scruffy a BIG bowl of biscuits!*

AFON

*Biscuits? What, chocolate ones?*

ALLA

*Not chocolate ones! The fish ones!*

AFON

*Ah I see.*

ALLA

*They're really salty!*

AFON

*Oh?*

ALLA

*Apparently.*

Afon chuckles, pushing Alla as he looks over the lake.

ALLA (CONT'D)

*I like sweet biscuits.*

AFON  
*Daddy actually likes the salty ones.*

ALLA  
*Which ones does Mummy like?*

Afon stops pushing Alla, the swing falling and stopping against his thighs.

Alla looks up at her towering over her.

AFON  
*I don't know.*

ALLA  
*Sweet ones, like me?*

AFON  
*I don't know.*

ALLA  
*Or salty ones, lik--*

Afon finally looks down at Alla.

AFON  
*I don't know!*

Alla's eyes look up, wide and afraid.

Afon smiles awkwardly, stroking his daughter's ringlets.

AFON (CONT'D)  
*Don't be sorry, child. It's just you like sweet. I like salty. That's all that matters.*

ALLA  
*We should see Mummy!*

Pause.

ALLA (CONT'D)  
*Then we can ask what biscuits she likes!*

Afon scrunches his eyes and takes a step back.

Alla, no longer leaning on her, falls backwards off the swing.

She hits the floor, bursting into tears.

Afon scoops her up, holding her close to his chest.

AFON

*Oh my child. I'm so sorry. I didn't realise. I'm so sorry.*

ALLA

*Daddy!*

AFON

*I know, Alla. I'm sorry. Where does it hurt? Daddy kiss it better.*

ALLA

*Want Mummy to kiss it better.*

AFON

*She can't kiss it better. Daddy do it, okay? Daddy do it.*

ALLA

*Want Mummy.*

AFON

*But... she's not here.*

ALLA

*Go see Mummy.*

AFON

*No.*

Alla cries harder.

ALLA

*You promised!*

AFON

*Maybe tomorrow, child.*

Alla's howls become louder.

ALLA

*You promised!*

AFON

*Maybe tomorr--*

ALLA

*YOU PROMISED!*

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST - MIDDAY (BACK TO PRESENT)

A flock of birds with vivid blue eyes take flight, whizzing past skid parts in the dirt and an armoured vehicle crushed up against a tree.

INT. SANCTUM ARMOURED VEHICLE - CONTINUOUS

Maya coughs herself awake, car fumes filling up the vehicle.

She looks up to see the side of the vehicle crushed against a tree.

The car door opens. Maya looks up.

It's Afon.

Maya blinks, her eyes widening.

She looks at his bare chest; a newly formed scar sits where the wound should be.

Afon winks and offers her a hug.

She collapses out of the car and grabs hold of his knees, clutching them to ensure their reality. She wails into his legs.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - A FEW MINUTES LATER.

Afon, naked, washes away his own blood in a nearby stream in the clearing, taking care around the scar.

Maya perches on a rock, dipping her feet into the water, watching Afon.

MAYA

Thought you said it hasn't brought you fortune.

AFON

I would not call getting shot in the chest a fortune.

Afon steps out of the stream, lies on the ground and closes his eyes, allowing the sun to dry him off.

MAYA

Does it hurt?

AFON

Initially but the pain subsides as the flesh begins to heal.

MAYA

How long does it take?

AFON

A few minutes at most. It used to take several hours. "What does not kill you makes you stronger" I think is the saying.

Maya eyes the map of scars on Afon's body. She shudders.

Lao appears from the forest, jogging.

LAO

Okay.

Afon and Maya look up at him expectantly.

LAO (CONT'D)

Yeah. I have no idea where we are.

Groaning, Afon puts his trousers back on.

LAO (CONT'D)

The upside is that the car wasn't completely destroyed. I think I could get it to work.

EXT. SCENE OF CRASH, FOREST - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Afon pushes his body against the back of the vehicle as Lao uses the driver's door frame to shove.

It doesn't budge.

AFON

Turn the steering wheel!

LAO

I have!

They push once more. Nothing.

LAO (CONT'D)

Oh wait.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Lao leans into the car, releasing the hand break.

EXT. FOREST - CONTINUOUS

AFON

What?

LAO

Nothing, nothing. Give it one more.

They push again; the wheels roll as the vehicle scrapes against the bark, moving away from the tree.

Once freed, Lao moves around the side to assess the damage.

AFON  
Thank you, my friend.

Lao stops, looking to Afon.

AFON (CONT'D)  
You were not obligated to try to  
save me.

LAO  
It is not like you needed my help.

AFON  
Still, I am wholly grateful.

Moving forward, Lao clasps Afon's shoulder.

LAO  
Know anything about cars?

AFON  
Net.

LAO  
Me neither.

They grin at each others. Lao moves to the front, opening up the bonnet whilst Afon opens the doors to brush out the broken glass

Maya appears, holding several branches in her arms.

She dumps them in front of the vehicle.

MAYA  
For the new treehouse.

Lao looks up.

LAO  
It took me four years to build that  
treehouse. And a lot more wood.

Maya folds her arms, annoyed. Lao returns to rummaging through the bonnet.

MAYA  
Me and Afon will build a better  
one.

LAO  
Have to get back to my own  
treehouse anyway. Family probably  
wondered where I got to.

AFON  
They may have heard the gunshots  
and stayed away.

LAO  
 Nah, Xiu would have come running.  
 Especially after two weeks, they'd  
 be running low on supplies.

Pause.

MAYA  
 Two weeks?

Afon's head shoots up.

LAO  
 Or three? I should check the  
 calendar later.

Maya and Afon share a concerned look.

MAYA  
 Weeks? Don't you mean days--

LAO  
 Could still use the wood.

MAYA  
 You said--

LAO  
 For fire wood, I mean.

MAYA  
 But--

AFON  
 Fire?

Maya opens her mouth but Afon catches her eye, shaking his head.

LAO  
 For tonight. Highly doubt we'll get  
 this car working today.

AFON  
 Who knows with our mechanic genius?

Lao pops his head out of the bonnet, his grinning face covered in oil. He chuckles.

Maya gazes at Lao, eyebrow knitted.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOTTOM OF LAO'S TREEHOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

A Sanctum armoured Vehicle pulls up, SIX SOLDIERS dropping out with guns.

Two soldiers climb up to the house whilst the other four eye the eleven soldiers' dead bodies scattered on the ground; all of them with hand-carved knives embedded into them.

A soldier steps over Cedric's dead body, pulling out the knife in his head.

He examines the knife, spotting Chinese characters carved into the handle.

He hands it to another soldier who reads it.

SANCTUM SOLDIER #1

Lao Chen?

Two soldiers return from the house, holding the photo of Lao and his family.

The soldier who pulled out the knife, snatches the photo before speaking into his radio.

SANCTUM SOLDIER #2

Back-up required. We have another Tainted, potentially two, with Volkov and Vaughan - Chen. Highly dangerous.

The radio crackles back.

SANCTUM SOLDIER #2 (CONT'D)

Confirm. Exterminate Vaughan and Chen, seize Volkov.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Lao sits in front of the fire, cooking an array of different plants.

Maya sits in the front of the vehicle, her legs dangling out towards the fire. Afon leans on the bonnet of the car; both watch Lao.

He pierces a giant blue leaf, crisps it in the fire, blows on it and places in his mouth.

He pulls a face and spits.

LAO

No good.

AFON

It may be time to end the experiments.

LAO

Never! One of these has to be edible.

He cooks another, eats, pulls a face and spits.

Maya laughs, her burst of laughter quickly turning into a coughing fit.

Afon pats her on the back, watching flecks of black appear on her hand as she covers her mouth. The coughing stops.

LAO (CONT'D)

You need soup.

AFON

She needs sleep.

LAO

Xiu always gave the boys soup when the they developed a cough. She spent years perfecting it since every damn week one of them would be coughing his guts out.

Lao tosses the rest of the plants into the fire before walking over to the vehicle.

LAO (CONT'D)

But I suppose sleep couldn't hurt either.

MAYA

Not tired.

INT. VEHICLE - CONTINUOUS

Afon climbs into the back seat, scrunching his oversize body into a sleeping position.

Lao opens the door, and settles into the front. He loses the belt around his torso, only holding one knife and places it on the dashboard.

LAO

I'll take watch.

MAYA

I said I'm not tired.

LAO

You can watch out for those Transformed then.

Maya's eyes widen. Lao chuckles.

AFON

He is only joking, Maya. We have not seen any Transformed since entering Mongolia.

LAO  
Don't mean there's none around.

AFON  
Lao.

Lao leans towards Maya, whispering.

LAO  
Could be back at the stream. Could  
be behind those trees. Could be  
some right. Under. This. Vehicle.

Lao holds his stare. Then roars with laughter. Maya punches Lao in the arm, causing him to laugh louder.

MAYA  
Evil!

Maya crawls from the front, into the back, cuddling up to Afon.

LAO  
Sure you can sleep now?

He laughs harder, Afon shaking his head.

Maya tucks herself into Afon's chest before pulling out Lao's photo of the ocean to look at.

As Lao laughter fades, Afon's eyes flutter shut, listening to Maya's heart beat against his.

CUT TO:

EXT. MONGOLIA/CHINA BORDER CONTROL - LATE AFTERNOON  
(FLASHBACK).

AFON (24) clutches ALLA (6) close to his chest with one arm as he pushes his way through the crowd. His feet sink into the wet mud.

Peering over the heads of the crowd, Afon sees a group of SANCTUM SOLDIERS with syringes and portable test machines.

ALLA  
*Want home.*

Afon pushes his way to the soldiers, getting in line to see a SOLDIER sticking a syringe into a WOMAN's arm before placing the sample into his machine.

It beeps. Then flashes: Radiation 17%, Touched.

The Woman sighs with relief. Her papers are stamped and she's let into China.

ALLA (CONT'D)

*Daddy!*

AFON

*Please Alla, be quiet.*

ALLA

*I want home!*

AFON

*I know, child, but we can't.*

ALLA

*But why?*

AFON

*It's not safe.*

A MAN has his blood tested; pure red. It beeps. Then flashes:  
Radiation 0%, Pure.

FIVE SOLDIERS hand him a high tech gas mask, before rushing  
him into a small portable dome for protection.

Alla kicks at her father, using her tiny hands to push away  
from his large chest.

ALLA

*Want home!*

AFON

*Please be quiet, Alla.*

ALLA

*Want mummy!*

AFON

*Stop, child.*

ALLA

*You promised!*

AFON

*I said STOP!*

Alla freezes, her eyes wide with fear.

Afon opens his mouth but is interrupted by a SANCTUM SOLDIER,  
signalling him to step forward.

SANCTUM SOLDIER

Name?

AFON

(heavy accent)

N-name?

The Sanctum Soldier exaggeratedly points to Afon and Alla before motioning to a clipboard with a form attached to it.

Afon nods.

AFON (CONT'D)  
Afon Volkov. Alla Volkov.

SANCTUM SOLDIER  
D.O.B?

Afon blinks.

Huffing under his mask, the soldier thrusts the clipboard at Afon whilst preparing syringes.

Juggling Alla, Afon scans the file and fills in what he can.

Alla points to her name, not recognizing the roman letters.

Afon smiles.

AFON  
*It's your name in English.*

ALLA  
*Pretty.*

Scanning the form, he notices four symbols with a title next to each one at the bottom of the page:

A white circle with a plus: Pure  
A regular white circle: Touched  
A gas mask: Tainted  
A skull: Transformed.

Afon frowns at the skull. The soldier whips the form out of his hands, eyes it and nods.

SANCTUM SOLDIER  
The girl first.

He steps forward, syringe at the ready.

Alla shakes her head vigorously, hiding her face in her 's chest.

Afon raises his hand to the Soldier.

AFON  
*Net! Net!*

He points to himself.

AFON (CONT'D)  
First.

The Soldier shrugs and grabs Afon's arm, jabbing the needle into a thick vein. The tube fills with blood; red with black spots.

Afon gasps as his blood is placed into the machine.

It beeps. Then flashes: Radiation 88% Tainted.

The Soldier stamps Afon's file, hands it to him, then moves to test Alla: her blood drains black.

The soldier gasps under his mask. He takes a moment to stare at Alla before popping her blood into the machine.

It beeps. Then flashes: Radiation 91% Transformed.

SANCTUM SOLDIER

Stay there!

The Soldier rushes to a A GROUP OF FOUR SOLDIERS, showing them the reading.

The Soldiers draw their guns.

ALLA

*Daddy?*

Afon turns on his heel with Alla and runs through the crowd, shoving everyone and anyone out of the way.

Gunshots. Alla screams.

Soldiers amongst the crowd try to tackle Afon, but his mammoth strength bests them, tossing them aside like a raging bull.

BANG - Afon's left shoulder explodes, the back of his shirt now suddenly soaked.

Nearing the edge of the crowd he spies a forest and shifts his course towards it.

BANG - Afon's neck burns with blood.

He doesn't stop. He keeps running.

Vehicles rev, chasing after them.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. VEHICLE - LATE MORNING

Afon's eyes snap open at the sound of the engine igniting.

LAO (O.S.)

WHOOO!

EXT. FOREST - LATER

They push the vehicle together, Afon and Maya at the back with Lao at the front, leaning into the vehicle, turning the wheel to manoeuver it around trees.

AFON

Plan?

LAO

We find a road and pray for the best.

AFON

I must head East.

MAYA

Me too.

Afon looks to Maya.

MAYA (CONT'D)

Trees aren't as safe as I thought.

Afon smiles warmly.

LAO

I shall miss you both.

AFON

Come with us.

LAO

Not without my family.

MAYA

Them too.

LAO

Would have to try and convince the dragon!

Lao roars with laughter.

LAO (CONT'D)

But I will give it some thought.  
Home won't feel as safe anymore.  
Plus...

Lao drops back to Maya, puts her in a headlock and rubs his knuckles into her head.

LAO (CONT'D)

... I'll miss this one!

He releases Maya, then stops.

Afon and Maya continue pushing the car, leaving Lao behind as he stares vacantly through the trees of the forest.

Maya looks around, finally noticing his absence.

MAYA

Lao?

She turns around to find him several feet behind.

MAYA (CONT'D)

Lao!

Afon stops pushing and looks to Lao.

AFON

What is the matter?

Lao doesn't move. Gulping, Afon grabs Lao's knife from the dashboard, holding it at the ready as he and Maya walk to Lao.

They freeze at the sound of something groaning.

Afon edges forward to look to where Lao is staring; A SWARM OF TRANSFORMED bang into each other idly, moaning softly.

Afon steps towards Lao, whispering.

AFON (CONT'D)

Let us move on before they see us.

Lao doesn't respond.

Maya shuffles over and pulls on Lao's arm, trying to get his attention.

He pushes her hand away, still staring at the Transformed.

He takes a step towards them.

MAYA

(hiss)

Lao!

She goes after him.

He shoves her to the floor.

Afon darts after Maya and pulls her to her feet.

Afon looks at the swarm and spots LAO'S FOUR CHILDREN amongst the cluster, not much older than what they were in Lao's photo.

Maya darts after Lao once more. Afon grabs her arm, stopping her.

MAYA (CONT'D)  
 (hiss)  
 What are you doing?!

AFON  
 We must leave him.

MAYA  
 What?!

Lao closes in on the swarm, arms out wide, tears rolling down his face; ready to embrace his children.

LAO  
*You've finally come back to me.*

The Transformed spot Lao and shuffle towards him, the children leading the group.

LAO (CONT'D)  
*I've been waiting for so long.*

Maya reaches out for Lao but is held back by Afon.

Afon stares in pain at Lao reaching for his children.

He gulps. Punches the ground. Hoists Maya over his shoulder.

He runs.

Maya kicks and screams, eyes glued to Lao as Afon flees with her.

MAYA  
 LAO!

Afon doesn't stop. He tightens his grip on Maya's legs.

MAYA (CONT'D)  
 WE HAVE TO SAVE HIM!

Lao's eldest son, DESHI (17) grabs his arm, pulling him into the swarm of Transformed.

MAYA (CONT'D)  
 WE CAN'T LEAVE HIM!

CHAO (15), LIU (11) AND JIAN (4) grab at Lao, begging for help. Lao pays no attention. He holds them in an embrace as they moan with glee.

MAYA (CONT'D)  
 SAVE HIM!

The other Transformed begin to trample Lao. Stamping on his feet, causing him to kneel. He holds his children closer.

MAYA (CONT'D)

LAO!

Lao's head disappears into the swarm as the Transformed suffocate and trample him.

MAYA (CONT'D)

LAAAAOOO!

EXT. FOREST - VEHICLE - CONTINUOUS

Afon arrives at the vehicle.

INT. VEHICLE - CONTINUOUS

He jumps into the driver's seat, dumps Maya into the passenger seat.

He locks the car.

Maya screams as she tries to tear off the handle.

Afon ignites the engine and speeds off.

Maya attempts to squeeze her body through the broken window, screaming at the top of her lungs.

Afon grips Maya's leg with one hand and the wheel with the other - his eyes wide and bloodshot

Maya gives up with the window and attacks Afon.

MAYA

YOU KILLED HIM!

She claws at his face. She draws blood; red and black.

MAYA (CONT'D)

IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT!

Afon doesn't flinch.

MAYA (CONT'D)

I WANT LAO!

She kicks him in the head.

MAYA (CONT'D)

I DON'T WANT YOU!

She punches him.

MAYA (CONT'D)

GIVE LAO BACK!

She pulls his hair.

MAYA (CONT'D)  
I HATE YOU!

Her fingers loosen their grip around his roots.

MAYA (CONT'D)  
YOU KILLED HIM!

Her kicks become weaker.

MAYA (CONT'D)  
It's your fault!

Her punches begin to miss.

MAYA (CONT'D)  
You killed Lao...

Her head slumps back against the glass.

MAYA (CONT'D)  
It's... your fault...

Her eyes glaze over, the colour fading from them.

MAYA (CONT'D)  
I... hate... you...

Her olive skin loses its rich complexion.

MAYA (CONT'D)  
Lao...

Maya passes out.

EXT. LAKE KHAR FOREST, MONGOLIA - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

ALLA (6) totters to the lake in the middle of the forest, swinging side to side.

As she moves, her pale skin peels and her hair falls.

AFON (24) trails behind her, eyes puffy and wet. He watches her struggling to walk as if she were a baby learning.

AFON  
*Alla.*

She continues to waddle, her legs shaking. She takes a step into the water, the bottom of her red dress dipping into the lake.

AFON (CONT'D)  
*Alla.*

She stops and looks over her shoulder. Her eyes bloodshot and glazed grey.

She smiles, her breath ragged.

ALLA  
*Da...ad...y.*

Afon enters the water reaching for her. His eyes fixed on hers.

AFON  
*Alla, my child.*

She grins as his hands reaches her face, stroking her cheek. Her skin sticks to his fingers and flakes at his touch.

CUT TO BLACK

INT. VEHICLE - NIGHT (BACK TO PRESENT)

Maya snaps awake, the vehicle cold and empty.

She looks out and spots a lake.

EXT. LAKE KHAR, FOREST - CONTINUOUS

Shoving open the door, Maya falls out, stumbles to her feet and trots over to the lake.

It's not the Frozen Lake.

Her eyes scan the less fascinating view and to her left she spies Afon, ankle deep.

He stares blankly at the water's surface, fist clenched.

Maya's nostrils flare. She stomps into the water, splashing her way to Afon.

Maya raises her fist high and aims for his face.

Before she strikes, Afon twists her arm and shoves her back.

She aims once more.

He knocks her arm back and slaps her.

Silence.

Maya glares at Afon's feet, unable to meet his gaze.

Afon's eyes soften.

He reaches for her cheek.

She slaps his hand away.

MAYA  
You killed Lao.

AFON  
I did not--

MAYA  
You left him to die.

AFON  
I could no--

MAYA  
You killed--

AFON  
Shut up, child!

Maya jumps. Afon looms over her.

AFON (CONT'D)  
Yes I did leave him to die! Because it was what he wanted! I left him with HIS children, the ones he wanted to be with the most! The ones he missed the most! He can die and be with them! He has the right to die! He has the right to be with his loved ones! And to deny him his rights would be inhumane and cruel! To not die, to not end my suffering is the cruelest thing this world has ever given me! But the world is cruel and unfair! That is life, child! You need to get that into your spoilt little head! You cannot have everything you want! Until you understand that, you will never understand me! Nor will you understand Lao! Or your friend, Cedric! A boy you have not even spent three seconds grieving for! How can you understand life when you do not even value it, you pathetic little girl!

Afon's roars echo through the trees.

Maya looks up from the water, glaring at Afon under her eyebrows.

His frown is replaced by a look of worry.

He reaches for Maya again.

She punches his gut and storms past him, leaving him winded.

Afon stares blankly into the water, before lifting his head to the sky and releasing a ragged breath.

He takes a step further into the lake.

EXT. LAKE KHAR, FOREST - NIGHT

Maya stampedes her way through the forest, punching branches and twigs out of her way.

Tears roll down her cheeks onto her gritted teeth.

She trips over a branch and falls flat to the floor.

She lies on the cold ground, squeezing her eyes shut and clutching at the mud as she tries to suppress her tears.

She lifts herself up and notices a stone protruding out of the ground.

EXT. LAKE KHAR, FOREST - NIGHT

Afon, waist deep in the water, walks deeper into the lake. His hands skim over the surface.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAKE KHAR FOREST - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Afon and Alla stand in the lake together.

AFON

*Alla... my child.*

Alla grins as his hands reach her face, stroking her cheek. Her skin sticks to his fingers and flakes at his touch.

Afon washes away her skin on the water's surface.

He takes a step closer to her in the water, pulling her close to his chest and holding her tiny head.

He walks deeper into the lake and tilts her limp body back into the water.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. LAKE KHAR FOREST - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Maya crawls to the stone and traces strange symbols in the rock, a language she is unfamiliar with: Cyrillic.

Hanging on the corner of the rock is a small plastic bracelet. She fingers the red plastic flower attached to the elastic string.

EXT. LAKE KHAR FOREST - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Afon goes so deep into the lake that his head begins to submerge, allowing the water to enter his nostrils.

He continues forward.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAKE KHAR FOREST - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Alla floats on the lake's surface with the support of Afon's embrace.

The dim light left in her eyes stares lovingly at Afon.

She raises a shaky arm and touches her 's blonde stubble.

ALLA  
D...a...dd.....y

Afon rests his forehead on hers, his tears running into her eyes.

He takes a deep breath, biting his lip.

He pushes her under the water.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. LAKE KHAR FOREST - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Maya's hand moves from the bracelet to the etchings. Underneath the foreign symbols are crudely carved English letters.

She strokes the "V" of the surname: VOLKOV.

EXT. LAKE KHAR FOREST - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Afon, several feet under the water, looks up at the ripples of the surface.

He places his hands over his face.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAKE KHAR FOREST - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Afon pushes Alla under the water. Bubbles pop to the surface.

The water turns black whilst Alla smiles at Afon from under the surface.

Her eyes close. The bubbles stop.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAKE KHAR FOREST - MAYA (PRESENT)

Maya strokes the rest of the letters, her breath catching as she reads: ALLA VOLKOV.

EXT. LAKE KHAR FOREST - AFON (PRESENT)

Afon grabs chunks of his cheeks, pulling the flesh apart from his face.

The water turns red and black with his blood, as bubbles are released from Afon's mouth as he screams silently beneath the surface.

CUT TO:

INT. SANCTUM ARMOURED VEHICLE - THE NEXT MORNING

Afon holds Alla's plastic flower bracelet, it taps against the steering wheel as he drives.

Grey scenery whizzes past the vehicle, the sun low and dull behind thick clouds.

Maya eyes the newly formed scars on his face.

She opens her mouth, shakes her head and closes it again.

Silence.

Maya stares out the window. Her head bangs on the glass as she nearly passes out.

Afon eyes Maya's paler skin and glazed eyes.

His brow knits with concern.

AFON

Do you need nourishment?

MAYA

Not hungry.

Afon nods, looking back to the road and at the fog in the distance.

AFON  
I will cook you something when we reach the Frozen Lake.

Maya looks up.

MAYA  
We're still going?

AFON  
Hm.

MAYA  
Even without Lao?

AFON  
Hm.

Maya sniffs, holding back tears. Afon sighs deeply.

AFON (CONT'D)  
I know, child.

MAYA  
How far?

AFON  
Not long.

Maya strokes her finger where she is missing a nail.

MAYA  
Maybe we should--

AFON  
I must go to the Frozen Lake.

MAYA  
Can I--

AFON  
You are coming with me.

MAYA  
But--

AFON  
I will not allow another child of mine to die.

Maya smiles.

She places her hand over Afon's and the bracelet. Hers tiny in comparison to his.

Afon smiles crookedly at Maya, stroking her hand with her thumb.

MAYA  
Were you this awkward with Alla?

AFON  
Fatherhood did not come to me naturally.

MAYA  
You don't seem that bad.

AFON  
THAT bad?

Maya giggles.

AFON (CONT'D)  
I had no one to learn from.

MAYA  
You don't need a dad to be a dad.

AFON  
Oh?

MAYA  
Granddaddy was great.

Afon smiles.

MAYA (CONT'D)  
Vaughan wasn't.

AFON  
He made you sad?

MAYA  
Angry. Confused. Hurt.

AFON  
I am sorry, child.

Pause.

AFON (CONT'D)  
What was Granddaddy like?

MAYA  
Strict.

Afon laughs.

AFON  
How did you turn out to be such a pain then?

Maya scowls. Afon sticks his tongue out.

MAYA  
Never got away with anything. Used  
to have a go for swearing, bad  
grades, all that stuff.

AFON  
So he should!

MAYA  
Hmph!

Pause.

MAYA (CONT'D)  
But he listened.

She smiles, gazing back out the window.

MAYA (CONT'D)  
He used to tell me stories about  
the outside world, especially what  
the sea and the beach looked like.  
He came from Wales.

AFON  
Wales?

MAYA  
You know it?

AFON  
I know it is a long way from here.  
I am surprised he made it to the  
Sanctum without being infected.

MAYA  
Nothing could beat Grandaddy.

AFON  
You tried?

MAYA  
Damn right. We'd wrestle. He'd  
pretend to let me win, then tackle  
me when my back was turned.

Afon snorts.

AFON  
How old was Grandaddy?

MAYA  
He died when he was 64, I was  
seven.

AFON  
64? That is rather young.

MAYA  
Really?

AFON  
Hm. What did he died off?

MAYA  
Old age.

Afon frowns.

MAYA (CONT'D)  
What Vaughan says anyway.

AFON  
You must miss him terribly.

MAYA  
Yeah. I lived with Vaughan afterwards.

AFON  
A big change for such a young girl.

MAYA  
Vaughan was strict. But not like Grandaddy.

Maya rubs her bare nail-less fingers with her thumb.

MAYA (CONT'D)  
At least Grandaddy was fair.

Maya shakes her head.

MAYA (CONT'D)  
Didn't help that I pushed Vaughan's buttons.

AFON  
I guessed that you were trouble.

Maya frowns.

AFON (CONT'D)  
Outspoken. Stubborn.

Maya scowls.

AFON (CONT'D)  
Rude.

Maya tries to pull back her hand. Afon tightens his grip.

AFON (CONT'D)  
But I love you for that.

Maya's eyes widen, unsure how to take Afon's affection. She stares at their hands.

Afon moves his hand and places the bracelet on Maya's wrist.

AFON (CONT'D)  
Keep it safe child.

MAYA  
I won't lose it.

AFON  
I know. But please keep it safe. It must arrive at the Frozen Lake.

MAYA  
Don't you want it?

AFON  
I have to take it to Alla's mother.

Pause.

AFON (CONT'D)  
Maybe then I will finally be at peace with myself and my mistakes.

Maya's eyes droop, her head slumping onto the glass.

Afon leans over, propping Maya back up into her seat.

A vehicle flashes in the passenger's side mirror

It catches Afon's eye and he glances behind him.

Two Sanctum armoured vehicles pursue.

Afon curses and slams his foot on the accelerator.

Maya is thrown around in her seat, her eyes struggling to stay open.

The SS vehicles speed up after Afon's.

A SOLDIER leans out his door and takes aim.

Sparks fly as a spray of bullets hits the back of Afon's vehicle.

Afon throws the wheel to the left.

The vehicle jumps off the road, swinging towards the fog that surrounds Lake Baikal.

The speedometer leaps upwards as Afon drives blindly into the grey blanket.

The soldier's bullets begin to miss and the sound of their vehicles recedes.

Afon doesn't stop.

He speeds up, jams the hand break on, spins.

He pushes Maya out of the passenger door. She falls to the floor, dazed.

AFON (CONT'D)  
Run, child!

Maya shakes her head, terrified.

AFON (CONT'D)  
The bracelet must get to the Frozen  
Lake! Alla must be with her mother!

Maya opens her mouth, but Afon drives off and is gone in a blink.

Maya staggers to her feet and barely manages a jog in the opposite direction.

*CRASH.*

She hears the sound of metal crunching together.

She whips her head around and sees the glow of a flame in the near distance.

She totters forward, trying to keep her balance.

She shouts for Afon, but only a raspy squeak escapes her lips.

She mouths Afon's name as she hobbles towards the flame, the smoke taking over the fog.

Afon emerges, skin seared and pink, holding Lao's knife.

He circles around the wreckage, waiting for soldiers.

Maya, at the sight of Afon's burning flesh, manages to find her voice.

MAYA  
A...A...Af...Afon!

Afon's head spins around to see Maya heading towards him, her feet barely able to carry her.

He pockets the knife and races forward.

AFON  
Run, child!

Maya nods and turns on her heel.

She stumbles forward, losing speed at an alarming rate.

AFON (CONT'D)  
Faster, child!

She pushes herself forward, sweat pouring down her forehead.

AFON (CONT'D)  
FASTER!

MAYA  
I CAN'T!

Maya trips, and falls.

Before she hits the ground, Afon scoops her up and flees deeper into the fog.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAYKALSK, SOUTH SIDE OF LAKE BAIKAL - LATER

Afon rows across the unfrozen Lake Baikal from Baykalsk to Listvyanka.

Maya sits in between Afon's legs, her head lolling from side to side against his thigh.

Afon does another stroke, then lets the rotten boat drift on its own.

Silence.

Afon looks down at Maya. He strokes her hair, the usually thick lush brown locks now brittle and grey, falling off at his touch.

Maya's eyes flutter and she looks up at Afon from the corner of her eye.

MAYA  
How... much... further...?

Afon looks up at the unfrozen lake and sighs.

AFON  
Soon.

MAYA  
You... must... be... excited.

Afon holds Maya closer, rocking her slightly.

AFON

Once Alla is with her mother, I can take you to the ocean. We can continue east to the Pacific, or we can go north to the Arctic or we can... We can...

Maya smiles blankly up at Afon as tears roll down his face.

MAYA

What was Alla like?

AFON

A lot like you.

Afon's tears splash onto Maya's grey skin.

MAYA

Outspoken... stubborn... rude?

Afon chuckles softly.

AFON

Exactly.

Afon sniffs loudly, looking back to the water.

AFON (CONT'D)

She gave me a reason to live, when someone else took it away.

MAYA

Drama queen.

Afon snorts.

AFON

Spoilt brat.

MAYA

Prisoner.

AFON

Criminal.

MAYA

Tainted.

AFON

Pure.

MAYA

Freak.

AFON

Outch.

MAYA

An awkward... and odd... freak.

Afon raises an eyebrow.

MAYA (CONT'D)

But... I... love... you... for  
that.

They smile at each other, before Maya begins to cough black blood.

Afon pats her back and she finally settles down.

Afon leans back, allowing Maya to rest back onto his stomach while they drift through the fog.

EXT. LISTVYANKA - DUSK

Afon lifts Maya out of the boat, cradling her to his chest.

He walks through his old home town. Grey, dark and wet.

Eyeing the cabins, he notices the rotten wood and caved-in roofs.

He walks past his own cabin. His breath catches at the sight of his ruined home.

Afon hurries past it, doing the same walk he did with Alla thirty years earlier.

EXT. ABANDONED FISH MARKET - CONTINUOUS

Through the old fish markets, scraps of cloth blow in the wind, caught on the broken pieces of rotten wood.

Afon's feet crunch on the fish bones that still cover the floor.

Maya winces at the noise, tucking her face into Afon's chest.

EXT. LAKE PATH - CONTINUOUS

Lake Baikal comes back into view as Afon walks on the lake path.

He wanders past the bench where he and Katya often sat.

On the horizon, the sun is low and dull on the grey murky water.

EXT. ROAD FORK - CONTINUOUS

Afon arrives at the fork in the road.

He stares up at the church, his eyes drifting down to the graveyard, now overgrown with dead weeds.

Holding Maya, he stops for a moment to touch Alla's bracelet. Tears form in his eyes.

Maya looks up at him with her blood shot eyes. Her skin cracks as she smiles.

Afon takes a breath and walks away from the church and down the path to the play park.

EXT. PARK - CONTINUOUS

The rotten fence barely stands. Afon steps over it.

Most of the equipment in the play park is destroyed and rotten.

Except one.

A lone swing. Alla's favourite.

Maya looks up and sees the swing and the view of the lake beyond it.

She wriggles in Afon's arms, wanting to be put down.

He releases her and she hobbles, legs shaking.

She plops down onto the seat, swinging softly.

MAYA

It's... not... frozen.

Afon pushes her gently.

AFON

I know.

MAYA

It's... not.... as good... as I'd... thought.

AFON

Dreams are not always as good in reality.

MAYA

I... dunno...

AFON

Hm?

MAYA  
Maybe... I'm not... getting... a  
good... enough... view.

She smiles at Afon over her shoulder.

He pushes her harder.

Maya giggles, her legs dangling lifelessly.

MAYA (CONT'D)  
Want... higher.

He pushes her higher. Tears rolling down his face.

MAYA (CONT'D)  
Higher.

Alla's bracelet rattles against the swing's rusty chain.

Maya's hair sheds as Afon pushes her harder.

She falls back to him.

He pushes her higher.

He draws Lao's knife.

She falls back.

He pushes her one last time. His breath catches.

AFON  
Maya.

He holds the knife out in front of him.

She falls back.

CUT TO BLACK

THE END