

**CARRA STONE AND THE
LEGEND OF THE SUN DRAGON**

Written by

Joe Bronzi, Lindsay Gelfand & Buddy Fitzpatrick

Kathy Muraviov
The Muraviov Company
818.425.5165/323.375.9400
Kathy@TheMuraviovCo.com

EXT. REMOTE OUTPOST - EARTH TERRITORY SEWER - FUTURE

LEGEND: "Earth Outpost Norman"

LEGEND: "Moments after resistance crumbles..."

CARRA STONE, filthy in a torn jumpsuit and only four years old, stares up through a sewer grate. PANTING and sweating, but defiant. Booted feet CLOMP by above...

Wide brown eyes watch through steel grates as Dominion warcraft SCREAM overhead.

A SHADOW falls over the grate. She bares her teeth in a snarl and darts ahead like a feral creature. Suddenly --

HUGE GREEN HANDS tear the grating away and snatch at her. Carra crawls and ducks clumsy fat fingers as they swipe at her...

Grate after grate is TORN up. She dodges and rolls and fights, kicking out and mashing the fingers against the tunnel wall, to an accompanying ROAR.

Finally, DEAD END. Her brows knit: teeth-bared she leaps back at the hand and bites savagely!

HUUUURRRRAGH! A painful angry HOWL --

-- and Carra is dragged up by her hair into the smoky wasteland, SCREAMING and fighting like a wildcat.

EXT. REMOTE OUTPOST - EARTH TERRITORY - MOMENTS LATER

Dark boots and a swirling cape track across ground torn by blasters. Blackened craters and splintered dwellings and smoke.

The boots crest a hill. A spectacular ALIEN SKY of red and orange opens above.

More Dominion warcraft MOAN and bank overhead.

BARBULL TROOPS, enormously fat and troll-like, lounge about in the ruins after battle: Every one of them eating. Some meat, some chewing discarded weapons or clothing, because that's what Barbulls do...

As the silhouette of the tall, caped figure looks about, the Barbulls feel her presence. A BARBULL OFFICER starts to shout, COUGHS up some food, then bellows:

BARBULL OFFICER

On yer feet, maggots! Look alive!

The Barbull Troops fall in line. A JIGGLE of dark green flesh and the JANGLE of armor.

They all freeze in formation. Except for CHEWING, SWALLOWING and the occasional BURP.

At the end of the line of troops, one Barbull hides something behind its back. Something that's putting up quite a fight.

The caped figure stalks down the line of troops, accompanied by the Officer, until they're in front of the Barbull struggling to conceal his prize.

The Officer puts his hands on his hips and CLEARS HIS THROAT.

Sheepishly, the TROOPER holds out a struggling Carra Stone. He grips her easily under her shoulder with one hand, and in the other he holds a leg of meat.

Carra remains fierce and bright and unbowed.

BARBULL TROOPER

I was jus' gonna eat 'er a little bit...

Carra pries at his fat fingers and shows no sign of relenting.

She suddenly changes strategy, twisting and grabbing the leg of meat, then jamming it into the Trooper's mouth.

The Trooper GAGS and drops her. She lands like a cat. As she starts to dart away---

The Officer catches her by her hair and holds her up.

She struggles again, no quit in her.

The Trooper falls to his knees, trying to dislodge the meat...

BARBULL OFFICER

She's the last survivor. Thirty of her kind took out a battalion. Would you like to execute her yourself, Your Majesty?

The caped figure turns, revealing the sharp and pale features of her race: the witch-like Makkai.

Meet the EMPRESS of the Dominion, NECRANISSA, ruler of the known galaxy. She's as cold and pale as a moon with blood red hair.

NECRANISSA

No. She's magnificent...put her on my ship.

The Officer carries the fighting child off. The Empress watches with an indulgent grin.

The NARRATOR's voice RASPS, casually laying it out:

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Allow me to spin a yarn fer ya...while I wait to get up to no good. I found me a dilly of a tale in this here ship's logs. It's worth tellin'...

The Trooper, laid out flat on the ground, stops moving.

EXT. BLOOD ACADEMY - ORBITING MAKKUS PRIME - FUTURE

LEGEND: "The Blood Academy"

A jagged metallic station orbits a shadowy world. SIZZLING red lightning and FLASHES of catastrophic weather strobe over the planet below.

LEGEND: "Orbiting Makkus Prime"

The view arcs towards the station in a decaying orbit.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

We're gonna skip ahead a bit, here an' there. I wants ta git to the point, an' I definitely don't wanna deal with puberty. Although there's a lot in the ship's logs about it. Yee-uch. Anyway, here's where history picks her up, at the Blood Academy...

The security ring, an artificial belt that rings the center of the station and CRACKLES with terrible energy, soars up towards us.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Trainin' ground for the Dominion Fleet. Place where the worst of th' worst learn ta crush all others.

We barely clear the ring, getting SINGED in the process, and drop sharply under the belly of the riveted station, flying close and tight underneath.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

So the story's about a girl and a giant and a tin man and a dragon. And oh yeah, a puppy named Norman. Stop me if ya heard it...

The belly of the satellite unspools above, in close. Then the view spins dizzyingly, turning towards the station as it rises up the other side, barely clearing the academy and facing outwards towards deep space.

A sun rises up over the shadow of the station like hope.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The girl's about to change the course a' history. An all she wanted goin' in was to survive and make her way. Like most of us.

Diving again towards the station's center, a massive hall with gigantic windows. Crowds of aliens, shadowed in shades of grey, wait in a long line before looming doors.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - GREAT HALL - CONTINUOUS

The view passes through the huge windows and stops abruptly, then follows the line front to back.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Three races in the Dominion go to the Academy. Fighters all. First th' fearsome beasties called Kuruwa. Oh, they'd eat their young, if the cubs wouldn't bite 'em back on the way down.

Hairy snarling were-beasts, the towering Adult Kuruwa herd fuzzy little cubs. One of the Adult males warns tussling cubs to cool it with a SNARL.

They freeze momentarily, until he turns away. Back to SNARLING ferocity.

A cub steps on another's paw. The injured cub SNAPS at his new mortal enemy but misses: teeth sink into an adult male's rear--

-- ROARING, SNAPPING and SNARLING chaos.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

An' let us not ferget the Barbulls.
Ye jus' met 'em. Biggest slobs
among the stars. An' proud of it.

Round fat goblins waddle forward, eating great haunches of meat. An adult pulls a haunch from a sack on its back, and finds little Barbulls clinging to it by their chewing mouths.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The Kandashians are a spoiled race,
each n'every one believes she's
born to inherit the Universe. And
not a one of 'em could spell
'Universe.' Or 'born.'

Tall green-skinned Amazonian warriors, hair the full length of their bodies, preen near the back of the line.

Their hair RIPPLES and REARS UP above them with a life of its own, JOSTLING other hairdos for position.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Then ya get th' odds n' ends, from
other races. Like Carra Stone,
first of her kind to ever apply to
th' Academy. A little taller than
last we saw, an' no less fierce...

Small human hands push through a wall of Kandashian hair and a pretty black teenage girl's face emerges, BLOWING to clear strands from her mouth: CARRA STONE.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Every one agrees she was
smart...Wit' our girl, though,
sometimes smart gave way to temper.

CARRA

Hey! Watch your mange!

Carra shoves a bunch of hair away from her personal space. The hair shoves back, spilling her onto her bottom.

Carra leaps to her feet, and the Kandashian (SNOOT) turns and steps towards her --

OOO! Carra is wrapped up in bonds of hair and yanked off her feet.

SNOOT

Eeeeew! I gotta bunch of crud in my hair. Dis-gusting!

The Kandashians LAUGH harshly.

Carra surreptitiously removes a knife from a sheath in her boot. The hair TIGHTENS and she CRIES OUT.

SNOOT (CONT'D)

If I squeeze it, does it pop like a blemish?

Carra, teeth gritted, wriggles until her hands come into sight: showing the knife and a hank of hair.

CARRA

If I cut it, will it hurt? Does it grow back?

WHIP! The hair unwinds, spinning Carra and dumping her in the dirt. She springs to her feet with her knife out.

A MAKKAI GUARD materializes, lean and tall, a warlock in armor made of dark bone.

MAKKAI GUARD

Break it up! Plenty of time for that soon.

Snoot mouths "I'll get you" before turning back to the front in a cascade of hair. Carra replaces her knife and stands a few paces back.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

That was a Makkai, upper crust of the Dominion, like the Empress. Nasty as a summer cold, an' not as much fun...

A gaunt witch-like figure steps out of darkness, high up on a balcony at the front of the hall. He's Makkai, too: tall and lean and pale with cold eyes and a cruel mouth. Robes flow around him like midnight.

The Makkai (PROFESSOR DEVITUS) holds up his hands. The line QUIETS and becomes still.

Snoot's hair deliberately flows back into Carra's face as if blown by wind. There's no wind.

Carra tries to control her temper, then lashes out with a GRUNT and shoves Snoot hard, two-handed.

With a GASP, the Kandashian topples forward. This causes a chain reaction that ripples all the way to the front of the line --

-- Kandashians topple, tangled in each other's hair. Barbulls tip over, haunches of greasy meat flying, and Kuruwa slam into the ones in front of them, then turn back on each other with ROARS and GROWLS.

Devitus, frowning thunderously, spots the lone figure standing at the back of the toppled line.

DEVITUS
(amplified)
Silence!

The petite teenage girl looks up over the long line of toppled creatures, to the towering witch-like figure above. Their eyes meet. Oops.

DEVITUS (CONT'D)
I am Devitus, Dean of this school!
The Blood Academy will make you
warriors! You earn everything here,
including your post as a cadet.
Move to the arena. Prepare to win
your spot by defeating a fellow
student in combat!

Snoot turns back to Carra and gives her an evil grin. She tosses her head haughtily and flounces away.

Chunks are missing from the back of Snoot's hairdo.

Carra looks down at her knife and the hair she's trimmed. She re-sheaths the knife and drops the hair in the dirt. She dusts off her hands.

CARRA
(to herself)
First look she gets in the mirror
is gonna be epic.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Aye, soon enough, Carra Stone would
be known by another name. And this
is the story of why...

The line moves forward and is swallowed by the arena.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - ARENA FLOOR - MINUTES LATER

The forbidding arena is an oval with two thousand seats, a dirt floor, and a tunnel leading under the stands to one side. Above the tunnel, halfway up the stands, is a review box.

Two Kandashians face off on the arena floor, bones littering the dirt at their feet. The crowd ROARS.

The hairdos of the Kandashians join in battle, WRITHING and STRIKING like powerful serpents.

Below the hair, the two princesses slap-fight furiously with ridiculous spoiled GRUNTS and CRIES.

Carra watches nervously off to the side as one hairdo encircles another, CRUSHES it, then raises the opponent in the air and SLAMS her into the dirt. Repeatedly. The crowd SHOUTS approval.

Snoot, standing nearby with her other friends, turns to indicate Carra with a toss of her head.

SNOOT

I hope I get that one. I wouldn't even split an end.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - ARENA REVIEW BOX/FLOOR - FOLLOWING

Devitus stands against the railing in the ornate review box, robe flowing around him. Behind him, Makkai guards in bone armor flank the doorway to the balcony.

Below, the vanquished Kandashian is dragged out of the arena by Makkai guards in the same battle dress. The winner takes her place in a section reserved for new students, to thunderous APPLAUSE.

Devitus leans against the railing. His voice amplifies across the arena.

DEVITUS

Who battles next?

A Kuruwa cub, BAGDA, raises its paws and ROARS:

BAGDA

Me! I am Bagda and I will crush anyone!

While other Kuruwa, including his brother KRANK, CHEER and ROAR their approval, Bagda pumps his arms and HOWLS.

Devitus gestures towards Bagda from above.

DEVITUS

Excellent! Who challenges this one?

The arena QUIETS as the potential cadets eye each other.

Snoot's hair curves around behind Carra. It STRIKES like a snake, poking Carra from behind. Carra YELLS OUT.

Snoot and her friends GIGGLE surreptitiously as every eye turns to Carra.

Devitus looks down, recognizing the troublemaker from earlier. He smiles and points.

DEVITUS (CONT'D)

Yes, that one!

Carra realizes what just happened.

CARRA

Aw, grub slime!

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - ARENA FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

The pretty teenager stands opposite the Kuruwa cub, who is much bigger and way fiercer looking.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

From the fore; The girl had a way of keepin' her wits and cuttin' to the chase.

Carra closes her eyes briefly and breathes, centering herself. She opens her eyes and scans the arena floor, seeing stained dirt and bones.

Across from her, Bagda turns to the stands and exhorts the crowd. He raises his arms, paws splayed to display his claws, encouraging the crowd. They ROAR for him.

Bagda throws back his head and ROARS back at them, loving it. He points at Krank, and his brother points back.

There's a loud THUMP and Bagda freezes, stopped mid-roar. His eyes roll up in his head and he falls face-forward into the dirt.

Carra stands behind him, holding the large bone she just used to clobber him. She flips it away casually and strolls back towards the winner's section in the stands.

STUNNED SILENCE.

Snoot glares at her, and Carra tips her a wink.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - ARENA STANDS - CONTINUOUS

The surprised crowd MUMBLES. Krank CHOKES with rage and trembles. He glares down at Carra taking her seat.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Carra made three enemies that day. The she-devil Snoot, the one she stood up to. Second an' worse, the brother of the Kurawa she defeated in the arena. Krank.

Krank snaps and goes mad in the stands, lunging for Carra and barely restrained by other Kuruwa.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Worst of all, she managed to gain the notice of Professor Devitus.

Devitus glares down at Carra as she takes her place with the other successful cadets. The arena is SILENT.

Carra takes in a sea of hostile faces. An oblivious Barbull CLAPS for her with two haunches of meat, until it gets ELBOWED by a classmate in the ribs. The Barbull shrugs and goes back to eating.

Carra sits straight and looks out defiantly at the arena, eyes a little wet and lips pressed firmly together.

FADE TO:

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - ACADEMIC HALLS - DAY

Milling students wear grey and black Academy uniforms. Carra walks alone down the halls, head up and eyes forward, clutching her tablet to her chest.

She's jostled rudely by Kandashians, shoved by Kuruwa, and almost accidentally eaten by a Barbull who gets to the end of a sandwich and just keeps on going.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Over thousands of years, that place has broken countless students. It decided Carra was to be next. But th' Blood Academy ain't never reckoned with a human teenage girl.

Carra ducks and dodges and marches on.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - TACTICAL CLASSROOM - AFTERNOON

As a CLAXON sounds, students settle at their desks. Kuruwa CUFF and GROWL at each other, Kandashians check themselves in hand-mirrors, and Barbulls sit MUNCHING.

The teacher, PROFESSOR SOWRUS, is an older female Makkai with wrinkles and stringy hair in a severe bun. She sketches on her own tablet, and a diagram of a ship's shield materializes as a hologram in front of the room.

Carra hurries in, clutching her tablet. She rushes for an open seat at the front, but SNOOT's hairdo snatches it and tosses it to another Kandashian mean girl, SHEESH.

Sheesh's hair hands it to Krank, who makes as if to put it down at the back of the class. As Carra wearily heads back towards it, Krank tosses it across the room to PUDGE, a Barbull licking his fingers.

Carra stops where she is and gives up. She resignedly sits in the aisle.

Professor Sowrus turns in time to catch Pudge holding a desk aloft. She looks at him. Pudge shrugs and takes a BITE out of a chair leg.

PROFESSOR

Anyone recognize this?

She gestures to the hologram. The class freezes like exposed prey, staring back at her. She spots Carra on the floor.

SOWRUS

You, the soft one. What is this?

The class TITTERS. Carra answers without hesitation:

CARRA

A ship's shield generator.

The LAUGHTER stops.

SOWRUS

Huh. Correct. And what is the purpose of this arm? You, the Barbull in the back?

She's indicating Pudge. He answers with his mouth full.

PUDGE
 Tuh hulb feff?
 (subtitle)
 To hold food?

SOWRUS
 (disgusted)
 Go back to sleep.

Pudge looks surprised, then puts his head down on his desk. He CHEWS and SNORES. Sowrus shakes her head.

CARRA
 It's to angle the shield, but I had
 a question about over-shields-

Sowrus rounds on Carra sharply with wide eyes.

CARRA (CONT'D)
 ...What?

SOWRUS
 Students do not speak unless spoken
 to.

CARRA
 But, how do we ask questions?

SOWRUS
 Why would you need to ask
 questions?

CARRA
 I...to learn?

SOWRUS
 You're not here to learn.

Carra is flummoxed.

CARRA
 Then...why are we in class?

The Professor leans menacingly into Carra's face.

SOWRUS
 To speak. When. Spoken to.

Carra nods with wide eyes and makes the 'okay' sign.

SOWRUS (CONT'D)
 Where was I?

She looks at Carra, who is afraid to open her mouth.

SOWRUS (CONT'D)

I just spoke to you!

CARRA

...Shield arms and over-shields.

Sowrus nods sharply, then gestures to the diagram.

SOWRUS

Yes, this arm angles the shield to deflect incoming fire. The better the angle, the less energy used.

(to Carra)

And the Fleet doesn't use over-shields. They're too complex to be practical, and if overlapping fields touch it could be catastrophic!

CARRA

Oh, but what if you just-

Sowrus rounds on Carra like she's on a swivel, eyes BULGING. She looks like she swallowed something too big for her throat.

CARRA (CONT'D)

Sorry! Sorry...

SOWRUS

Now, do you have another question?

CARRA

Yes?

Sowrus waits. Carra takes a breath and dares:

CARRA (CONT'D)

Why are all the systems on a spaceship so separate? Wouldn't it be more efficient-

Sowrus holds up an imperious hand.

SOWRUS

No. It would not be more efficient to allow just a few officers to mutiny and seize control of the ship! Separation of stations and controls is obviously necessary. Any more stupid questions?

The other students LAUGH and JEER.

Carra holds her tongue. Sowrus' attention drifts away.

SOWRUS (CONT'D)

Where was I? Erm...Angling a gravitic shield, whether it's personal or ship-size is an art form-

The Professor continues to lecture and the students' eyes glaze over. All but Carra, who shakes off the embarrassment and starts taking notes on her tablet.

FADE TO:

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - CAFETERIA - DAY

The cafeteria teems with cadets, divided by race. It's large, utilitarian, and looks like it would smell bad. The place echoes with ROARS, SQUEALS and coarse LAUGHTER.

Carra sits alone at the end of a table. On a tray in front of her is a bowl of grey slop. She rolls her eyes, then grimly shovels some into her mouth.

Against a wall, a blue and huge muscled giant stands next to garbage bins. This is BRICK. He's an impassive bald figure dressed in the white robes of a servant.

Brick holds out his massive arms and stares straight ahead as cadets BANG their discarded trays down in his grip, stacking them as they exit.

Carra looks up and notices various cadets flicking gruel on Brick's face, right before they toss their trays on his stack and leave. She reacts.

CARRA

What in the Nebula?!

Carra pops out of her seat and shoves her way over towards Brick. As she gets there, Snoot and her friends flick gruel in Brick's face on their way out the door.

CARRA (CONT'D)

Hey! Solar Waste! What's the matter with you?!

Brick is almost as startled as the cadets at her outburst. He can't help but cut surprised eyes to her, even as his face remains impassive.

The gaggle of Kandashians rounds on her, OUTRAGED.

SNOOT

What is your problem, short hair?!

SHEESH

Yeah, are you just one big split
end, or what?

The Kandashians all CACKLE at the joke. Carra steps into
Snoot's face defiantly.

CARRA

Why would you treat him like that?!
What's the matter with you?
(to Brick)
What's your name?

Brick stares straight ahead again. His voice is mine-
shaft deep:

BRICK

Brick.

CARRA

(to the Kandashians)
He's a being! His name is Brick.

Snoot's hair points in Carra's face, while Snoot and
Sheesh fold their arms and shake their heads
disbelievingly.

SNOOT

He's a servant! His kind are
Jaredians!

SHEESH

They're non-violent. They won't hit
back, so they don't matter!

Carra's eyes POP in incredulity.

CARRA

Everyone matters! What are you
talking about?!?

The Kandashians look at each other, then burst into nasty
LAUGHTER.

SNOOT

How can everyone matter when you
don't, Short Hair? You're not
making sense!

SHEESH

Her hair doesn't even move! Her
brain must be dead!

More DERISION. Carra's face reddens.

CARRA

You're all bullying cowards! Why
don't you try that with someone who
fights back?!

The Kandashians faces darken. Carra realizes what's about
to happen a second before it does.

CARRA (CONT'D)

Aw, grub slime!

With multiple rapid SLOPS, Carra is covered in gruel. She
wipes her eyes clear and presses her lips together.

CARRA (CONT'D)

Okay, Hairbags.

She snatches a tremendous submarine sandwich from a
passing Barbull and belts Snoot, SMACK! Snoot sails right
into Brick.

Brick doesn't budge. Snoot BOUNCES off him and hits the
floor in a heap.

Brick looks innocently away while 'accidentally' dropping
his trays on her head - CRASH!

Snoot, covered in an avalanche of trays and gruel,
SQUEALS in outrage.

On the backswing, Carra's 'sandwich sword' sends Sheesh
cartwheeling into a garbage bin - POW!

Sheesh's hair REARS UP out of the bin and begins flinging
gruel randomly: FWAP FWAP FWAP!

Two Kandashians grab Carra with their hair and FLING HER
into a Barbull table. Food ERUPTS everywhere!

A table of Kuruwa is HIT by the sloppy shrapnel. They
ROAR and overturn their table as they join the battle.

The cafeteria erupts in a galactic food fight: SMASHING,
wet SPLOOSHING of food, and outraged SCREAMS and BELLOWS.

Brick sees Carra in the middle of it, swinging her
sandwich like a claymore and HOLLERING a battle cry.

His lips twitch upward in a grin nobody sees.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - DEAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Carra sits in a hard-edged chair and looks around at the office. Her feet dangle from the huge chair and gruel still DRIPS from her.

Murky windows let in a tired light, supplemented by liquid candles that throw distorted shadows. The perfect place to cast a curse or summon a demon...

In a corner, a spiderish bug crawls out from under a carved molding. A slimy tentacle SNAKES out behind it, and SNATCHES it back into the dark!

CARRA
(sarcastically)
Lovely.

DEVITUS (O.S.)
So glad you like it.

Carra JUMPS and turns. Devitus glides into the room and slams his office door with a final-sounding BOOM!

Carra faces forward and grimaces at her mistake.

CARRA
Sorry, Professor...I didn't know
you were there.

DEVITUS
I'm always there.

Devitus sits behind his desk and folds his long fingers on the surface.

DEVITUS (CONT'D)
(dripping sarcasm)
So...how was your first lunch?

CARRA
I, ah...it was...wet.

DEVITUS
Yes. Ms. Stone, do you know what I
can do to students that cause a
riot?

CARRA
A riot?! It was just a food fight-

Devitus suddenly leans forward and puts a long finger to his lips.

DEVITUS

Only when spoken to, Ms. Stone. And answer only what I ask. Clear?

She nods. He presses a button and her records come up between them - a holographic projection of large pages.

DEVITUS (CONT'D)

Carra Stone. Orphan. Discovered on a remote outpost. Promising in mathematics, tactical thinking. Also shows tendencies towards disruptive behavior...Like riots.

CARRA

But it wasn't a-

He raises his eyebrows sharply at her and she closes her mouth with a POP.

DEVITUS

Did you know Bagda was my appointee? The Kuruwa cub you clubbed in the arena? Yes. He and his brother Krank. Do you know the shame you brought me when my personal appointee didn't even make it past the arena?

Carra opens her mouth to speak. She stops, closes it, then just shakes her head.

DEVITUS (CONT'D)

Again, do you know what my disciplinary options are for students that cause a riot?

Carra stares at him and BLINKS.

Devitus smiles. He presses another button and options begin to scroll down the holographic page, faster and faster as Carra's eyes widen in alarm.

DEVITUS (CONT'D)

I can do any of these. As many times as I want.

Carra cannot help herself.

CARRA

Do you really have a giant blender here?

DEVITUS

We use it for social events.

CARRA

Oh.

DEVITUS

But I'm not going to do any of these. Do you know why?

He waits.

CARRA

Uh...I'm not doing well with questions today. Pass?

DEVITUS

Because, Ms. Stone, this place is going to eat you alive. I'll enjoy watching that. Very very much.

He gestures towards the door in dismissal. Carra stands, steps away, then turns back.

CARRA

At the social events, do-

DEVITUS

Go!

She flees.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - FLIGHT CLASSROOM - LATER

Carra sits in the aisle again, while a Barbull in the back of the room CHEWS on her desk. She's gotten most of the gruel off of her, but her clothes and hair are damp.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Aye, so it went fer Carra. She ignores her tormentors best she can. Starts to soak in knowledge like an Antillean Sponge. The good kind, mind ya...

The teacher, PROFESSOR HANGUS, is a short and stocky Makkai with long whiskers. Behind him is a holographic diagram of star fighters engaged in battle.

HANGUS

Gravity, gravity, gravity. Once we mastered that, the Galaxy was ours! Gravity Cannons, Gravitic shields, gravity blades...

Carra's hand shoots up. The Professor stops mid-sentence and gapes at her.

HANGUS (CONT'D)

(stunned)

Wh...Why, I thought that was someone's pet!

The class erupts in LAUGHTER and Hangus joins them. Carra's face reddens, but she presses on:

CARRA

But couldn't you take away an enemy's advantage by-

The Professor holds a hand up, wiping his eyes.

HANGUS

I still didn't call on you. And it doesn't matter, little pet. You'll never be a decent pilot anyway.

CARRA

Wh...why not?

HANGUS

Well, for one thing, I have no intention of clearing you for the flight simulator.

CARRA

What? But why not?!

HANGUS

I've decided not to like you. Interrupt me again, and you go see Professor Devitus.

Hangus lectures. Carra's eyes narrow and her lips press together. She goes back to taking notes. No quit in her.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - ARENA FLOOR - AFTERNOON

The stands empty, the arena serves as a gym for physical training. Sports equipment sprawls over the floor. All students wear T-shirts and shorts with the academy logo.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Aye, sometimes it wasn't just about thinkin'. Sometimes it was about thinkin' fast...

An over-muscled female Makkai in short shorts, PROFESSOR MAWKUS blows a whistle. The students fall into lines.

Carra tries to fall in, but a Kuruwa shoves her, a Kandashian pokes her, and a Barbull trips her. She dusts herself off and stands in place.

MAWKUS

You grubs are gonna pair off and wrestle! Grab the student behind you, and get to it. No rules!

Carra turns and sees that she's in front of Krank. Sheer delight in his eyes, his fangs DRIP in anticipation.

She raises her arms as if to welcome a hug from him, and it throws him off. He hesitates...

CARRA

You've never wrestled my kind before, have you Krank?

KRANK

I'll tear you apart!!

He moves towards her and she smiles and cocks her head. He stops again. Then ROARS at her.

She doesn't move, other than to wipe his spittle from her face.

CARRA

Boy, I wish they had mints on your planet, big boy.

Really confused, he BELLOWS again and pops his claws.

CARRA (CONT'D)

You don't know what happens when you shake a creature like me, do you? Well, come on then.

She beckons him like Morpheus in the Matrix. He frowns.

KRANK

Wait. What happens?

CARRA

Sometimes we explode. You'll probably live. But I am feeling really Boom-y today. Hey, where you going?

Krank turns and stalks away, MUTTERING.

Carra shrugs, and the class resumes. The other students wrestle furiously while she sits in the stands and dives into her tablet, studying.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - BIOLOGY CLASS - LATE AFTERNOON

The students wear white smocks and goggles, in a lab environment, paired up at tables. Carra's next to Snoot.

PROFESSOR MAGDUS, a short and round female Makkai with half-glasses, CLAPS for the class's attention. She's in front of a closed box with red warning labels.

Snoot chews on a lock of her hair. While Carra is listening to the Professor and taking notes, the wet end of hair creeps over and pokes into Carra's ear.

Carra CRIES OUT in disgust. Everyone looks at her, including MAGDUS.

MAGDUS

You! The rude little soft one!
Front and center!

Carra shoots Snoot a look and Snoot blows her a kiss. As she walks around the table, Snoot's hair waves to her.

Carra reaches the front of the room.

MAGDUS (CONT'D)

This is an alien creature recovered by the bioweapon division. Nobody knows what it can do.

(to Carra)

You'll be the one to find out.

She YANKS Carra over in front of the box. Carra looks down at the mysterious package with wide eyes.

MAGDUS (CONT'D)

Dissect it alive. Try not to let it kill you before you identify it.

Magdus takes a giant step back. Carra GULPS and reaches out a shaking hand to open the box...

The lid POPS open. From shadows within, two eyes open and blink. A little tongue unfurls over the teeny teeth of an adorable underbite.

Cara frowns down in wonder as everyone else cowers back. She reaches in the box and slowly lifts out a ridiculously adorable tri-colored Shih Tzu puppy.

The puppy wags its tail in a circular motion and BARKS.

The class RECOILS: Kandashians hide in their hair, Barbulls try to squeeze under their desks, and Kuruwa ROAR back at the little guy. Magdus presses against the front wall of the class, eyes clamped shut.

The puppy gapes at the class, then BARKS again. The class REACTS LOUDLY, the same way, and he wags his tail happily.

MAGDUS (CONT'D)

Oh! It's horrible! Dissect it quickly and I'll give you a passing grade!

Carra looks down at the knives and sharp instruments laid down around the box. The puppy LICKS her nose. Carra thinks fast:

CARRA

Oh! Oh no! It's an Outlandian Bandersnortle! It's poisonous! And flammable! And, and...it smells bad! RUN!

CHAOS.

Kandashians and their hair jam up the classroom door, YANKING and CLAWING at each other.

Barbulls try and dive out the classroom windows and immediately become wedged tight.

Kuruwa form a crazily circling pack in the center of the class, WHINING, SNAPPING and HOWLING.

Magdus still stands pressed against the wall, but now has the box over her head pretending to be a lamp.

Carra realizes absolutely nobody is looking at her or the puppy. She shoves the pup down into her uniform shirt.

CARRA (CONT'D)

Arrgh! It's pushing into my mouth!
 Help! It's going down my throat!
 HUUUURGH humph! Glug!

The SOUND and FURY subsides as curious classmates peek out to see what horrible fate has befallen Carra. Magdus raises a corner of the box on her head.

Carra looks back at all of them. Her shirt bulges and moves as the puppy squirms. It gives a happy muffled BARK.

Everyone jumps, startled. Pudge THROWS UP in revulsion.

CARRA (CONT'D)

Out of my way! It's eating my
 insides!! AAAAAAAAAAAAAaaahhhh!

Kandashians fall over themselves to get out of her way. Carra barrels out of the classroom YELLING.

Carra's SHOUTS echo and fade down the hall, and the students turn to MAGDUS for guidance.

MAGDUS

(shrugging)
 Well, we found out what it is. She
 passes.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - FEMALE DORM - NIGHT

Carra, in plain pajamas with the Academy logo, enters a huge dorm hall. She carries a towel and a toiletries bag.

The dorm is filled with hundreds of hard-looking cots, most of them occupied by Kandashians.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

So Carra stays alive th' first day
 by thinkin' fast and keepin' her
 eyes open.

The puppy pops its head out of the bag, and she pushes it back in before anyone notices.

A CLAXON sounds and lights begin to go out, plunging the room into darkness.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

An' she sees pretty quickly she'd
 have to be real careful where she
 closes them eyes.

In the darkness, Carra sees scores of hostile eyes glowing at her, waiting for her to go to sleep...

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - ACADEMIC HALLS - NIGHT

A tired Carra carries a puppy in a toiletry bag in one hand, a pillow and blanket in the other.

She passes rows of lockers and YAWNS mightily.

She spies a small maintenance hatch between two banks of lockers. It has a numeric keypad. She puts her stuff on the floor to examine it.

The puppy jumps out of the toiletry bag and immediately begins SCRATCHING on the hatch.

CARRA

It's a good idea, right? Let's see if we can figure out how to get in and hole up for the night.

The puppy BARKS in agreement and wags his tail.

CARRA (CONT'D)

This type of keypad is usually a three-digit code. So, the stupidest one would be 1,2,3...

She hits the numbers as she talks. The hatch CLANKS open.

CARRA (CONT'D)

Of course it is. Come on, Pups.

She pushes and drags her stuff through the hatch, the puppy trying to help and mostly getting in the way.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - MAINTENANCE CRAWLSPACE - NIGHT

The utility space is just tall enough for Carra to stand, a grated metal walkway with stark metal walls enclosing it like a dented tube.

The lighting is dim and red. Carra and the puppy turn a corner and come face-to-face with an android.

CARRA

Holy grub guppies!

They're face-to-face because the android is deactivated and sitting discarded in an alcove adjoining the walkway. Standing, it would tower over her.

The legend UGN-3 stamped on its chest, it's made up of rounded plates of green and blue shades. The simplified humanoid/helmet-type head is tilted to the side, leaning against the wall. It is dirty, scratched and neglected.

The puppy leaps up on the leg of the android, then onto its shoulder.

CARRA (CONT'D)

Hey! Get down from there! Pups!

The puppy licks the side of the android's "face" and wags his tail.

CARRA (CONT'D)

Puppy, come on-

The android's eyes LIGHT UP! It straightens abruptly, catching the puppy as it slips off its shoulder.

UGN-3

You will have more success with commands if you name the puppy.

Carra's mouth drops open, perfectly synched with the puppy's BARK.

CARRA

You're...activated?

UGN-3

I am.

The puppy BARKS again. UGN-3 raises it to 'eye' level and scans it with blue beams of light.

UGN-3 (CONT'D)

Canis Lupus. Breed: Shih Tzu.
Native of Earth.

CARRA

Oh! Thanks. It isn't dangerous, is it?

UGN-3

Only to itself. And to Leteria, commonly known as Leeches. The Shih Tzu bark actually causes a physiological terror reaction in them. They're a scavenger race-

CARRA

Excuse me, who are you? Why are you here?

UGN-3

I'm UGN-3, a wardrobe droid. I displeased a Professor and was discarded here. Why are you here?

CARRA

Same reason. I displease everyone. I'm Carra. Don't know where I'm from...

The android bends over to scan her with its 'eyes.'

UGN-3

Human. From the planet Earth. No one here is aware of your origin or they would exterminate you.

CARRA

Wait, what? Why? Why would they exterminate me?

UGN-3

Earth resisted the Dominion. Successfully. The only planet to do so in thousands of years. It was walled off from the trade routes and wiped off the star charts. It's forbidden to speak of it.

CARRA

But you just did. Speak of it.

UGN-3

To an Earther. The Dominion didn't foresee a human at the academy. That's a loophole in the logic.

CARRA

I'm a big fan of those. Hmph. Then it's definitely not safe for me to sleep in the dorm.

The android stands and gestures at an unsecured hatchway behind it.

UGN-3

You can rest in this utility closet. It hasn't been opened in 147 years.

CARRA

Thanks.

She and the puppy head into the closet. Then she pops her head back out.

CARRA (CONT'D)
How did you displease the
Professor?

UGN-3
I informed him he'd gained weight.

CARRA
That'd do it. Thanks again.

She goes into the closet again, then pops her head back out.

CARRA (CONT'D)
And...probably never tell me I've
gained weight, okay?

UGN-3
Agreed.

Back into the closet, then her head pops out once more.

CARRA
And the puppy's name is Norman. I
just decided.

She disappears into the closet again.

CARRA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Can you set an alarm for me?

UGN-3
Yes.

CARRA (O.S.)
Zero five hundred, please.

UGN-3
Done.

As UGN-3 closes the hatch softly, we see Carra and Norman curled up in her blankets, already drifting off.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - ACADEMIC HALLS - MORNING

Carra marches through the halls, looking around at the social groups and feeling left out. She rounds a corner.

A group of Kuruwa wait for her in a semi-circle, Krank in the center. He's wearing space armor on his chest and arms, with a helmet on his head. The visor is up.

KRANK

Hello, Meat. I'm wearing armor in case you blow up. Who's smart now?

He pops his claws and grins at her.

Behind the Kuruwa, Kandashians and Barbulls crane for a glimpse of the upcoming carnage.

CARRA

You should've put on the whole suit.

She steps forward smartly, planting her left foot, and her right leg rockets up like a football kicker. WHAP!

The visor of Krank's helmet jolts down over his face and muffles his pained GRUNT. His eyes cross, and he falls face forward.

The armor CLANKS on the hallway floor. Carra stands over the laid-out body of her enemy, and the Kuruwa pack stares at her, stunned.

CARRA (CONT'D)

BOOM!

The Kuruwa scatter with WHINES and BARKS. On the floor, Krank GROANS.

Norman BARKS and she pets him surreptitiously through her uniform. She steps over Krank and marches on.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Carra was teachin' her own class,
'bout not messin' with a human
teenage girl.

Everyone gives her a wide berth. She struts a little as she rounds another corner.

Devitus stands there like the Grim Reaper.

CARRA

Oh!

She comes up short and instinctively puts a hand on the pup in her shirt, down by her waist.

DEVITUS

I told you I'm everywhere.

She opens her mouth, then closes it. He notices.

DEVITUS (CONT'D)

Your teachers told me you learn quickly. Do you know the penalties for fighting in the halls?

CARRA

Do they involve blenders?

DEVITUS

Many of them.

Inside her shirt, Norman rubs his face against her side and gives a tiny GROWL.

Carra twists away from Devitus and grabs her side.

CARRA

Boy, can't wait for that gruel! My stomach is growling! Whoo!

DEVITUS

I heard you survived swallowing a poisonous creature. Your kind is strange.

CARRA

Yes, sir. You have no idea.

Devitus leans his face down into hers.

DEVITUS

I'll be right here when you meet something you can't survive. And no more fighting in the hall!

Carra nods and walks away from him, head down and holding her side where Norman is now trying to wrestle with her finger through her shirt.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - AIRLOCK PLATFORM - NIGHT

UGN-3 and Carra sit opposite each other on a square platform, hanging above a shaft over an endless chasm.

The tunnel opens off one side of the platform, and an airlock abuts the other.

Carra is trying to teach Norman to give her paw.

CARRA

Paw. Buddy, give me a paw! Paw,
Norman!

He cocks his head, then wags his tail and BARKS at her.
She gives in and gives him the treat.

As she talks with UGN-3, another game starts: Norman
keeps rushing heedlessly towards the edge of the
platform, while the android and Carra redirect him
without looking.

CARRA (CONT'D)

I can't keep this up forever. Snoot
and Krank hate me. Even that
Barbull Pudge hates me!

UGN-3

Are you certain?

CARRA

He ate my desk.

Carra turns the happily crazed pup back towards U-GN3.

CARRA (CONT'D)

Way I look at it, I have two
problems. My flight professor won't
even let me on the simulator. I
can't pass his class without
learning to fly -

UGN-3

You can access the simulator
through these walkways.

CARRA

What now?

UGN-3

Three hatches past the closet where
you sleep. I do not know the
security code-

CARRA

I'll bet I do. Okay, that solves
one, thanks. Anyway, second problem
is if I do any of the combat
activities in the gym, with anyone,
I'll get crushed. But I have to
learn to fight.

UGN-3 effortlessly redirects the puppy, who treats their game like a battle Royale: GROWLING his adorable little growls, baring teeny teeth ferociously and wagging all the while he rushes towards the edge.

CARRA (CONT'D)

Hey! You can be my sparring partner! I'll sneak a couple of training blades in here and-

UGN-3

I cannot.

CARRA

Why?

Norman pretends he doesn't care, turning his head and acting indifferent. Then, he suddenly turns and heads for the edge, little paws scrabbling and slipping on the hard surface: doing 60mph an inch at a time.

UGN-3 waits until Norman almost reaches the edge and turns him neatly in the opposite direction.

UGN-3

I'm an artificial life form. My programming does not permit me to engage in any combat activity.

Norman has furiously scrambled to the opposite edge of the platform and Carra turns him again. He redoubles his efforts to run off the other edge.

CARRA

But...you could look at what you're doing with Norman as a kind of combat, right?

UGN-3 freezes, then shuts down. His head drops, his lights go out, and he goes limp. Norman heads for the edge unimpeded.

Carra dives for the pup, barely catching his tail as he drops over the edge. His weight starts to drag her into the chasm. He BARKS, alarmed.

CARRA (CONT'D)

EUGENE! HELP!

The android pops back up, LIGHTS UP, and grabs her by the ankle just in time! He lifts them both effortlessly back up onto the platform.

CARRA (CONT'D)

What in the Nebula was that!! You almost let Norman fall!

UGN-3

My breakers kicked in. I cannot engage in combat activity. I also could not let you fall.

CARRA

Wait...why couldn't you let me fall?

UGN-3 tilts his head and stares at her. Processing with a HUM. Then the android shrugs.

UGN-3

I don't know.

CARRA

But you were. Playing with Norman. Before you decided it was combat. Why could you, and then you couldn't?

UGN-3 HUMS, there's a little electrical SIZZLE and POP in him somewhere, and then the android shrugs again.

UGN-3

It must be a flaw in my programming.

CARRA

Okay, don't fry your circuits. Maybe it's all in how you look at it. If you don't think of it as combat, maybe you can do it.

UGN-3

Maybe. You called me Eugene.

CARRA

Yeah, I was a little panicked. Guess you got a new nickname.

UGN-3/EUGENE

All right. Eugene.

Carra looks at him, then puts the wriggling puppy down on the platform.

CARRA

It's not combat, it's a harmless game. Can you play?

Norman charges the edge with a BARK. UGN-3/Eugene pauses, then reaches out to redirect the pup.

CARRA (CONT'D)

Yes! All in how you look at it. Way to go, Eugene!

The android high-fives her with a SLAP. She shakes her hand and blows on it, smiling.

The two of them play with the giddy pup, having fun on a platform hanging over the abyss.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - ACADEMIC HALLS - DAY

MONTAGE - CARRA FINDS HER SCHOOL GROOVE

Carra dodges and ducks her way through the hallways.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

And so the days went, Carra Stone survivin' and thrivin' in one of the darkest places in the Stars...

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - BIOLOGY CLASS - DAY

Professor Magdus lectures in front of a box and two beakers full of solution. A vine-like plant snakes out from under the box.

Carra raises her hand and the Professor ignores her. She shrugs and lowers her hand.

The plant LASHES OUT suddenly, wrapping around the Professor's neck!

While the class panics and the Professor strangles, Carra walks to the table and calmly pours a solution on the plant, shrinking it.

Magdus THUMPS to the floor. Carra helps her up.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - CAFETERIA - AFTERNOON

Brick stands with a full stack of trays, covered in gruel as the room finishes emptying of students. He looks down and that little grin twitches at the corners of his lips.

Carra is there in front of him. She tosses him a towel.

EXT/INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - FLIGHT SIMULATOR - NIGHT

Carra presses 1-2-3 on a keypad and a hatch pops open. She crawls into the flight simulator.

Carra sits in the flight chair. She grabs the controls like she was born to it. She grins confidently.

Immediately, her face reflects horror as she crashes the simulator spectacularly. Flashes and ALARMS sound. She covers her face.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - AIRLOCK PLATFORM - NIGHT

Norm sits in front of Carra in begging position. She commands him:

CARRA
All right, Norman...Give me Paw!

Norman hesitates, then gives her a paw! She gives him a treat and there is much celebration...

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - MAINTENANCE CRAWLSPACE - NIGHT

Carra sits wrapped in her blankets with Norman curled up in her lap. They both watch as Eugene projects a hologram of a female knight (who looks like Carra) riding a horse towards a large red dragon.

He's telling them a bedtime story.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - CAFETERIA - AFTERNOON

Carra and Brick clean up the cafeteria together. She's wearing headphones and singing along to something upbeat.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - ARENA FLOOR - MORNING

Students in gym uniforms battle each other with solid/dull practice blades. Carra sits in the stands, studying them.

She makes little movements as she follows individual battles, giving herself mental reps.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - MAINTENANCE CRAWLSPACE - NIGHT

Carra holds practice swords in one hand behind her back while Eugene shakes his head 'no.' Carra thinks, and an idea occurs.

Minutes later, Carra practices sword techniques by herself, while Eugene projects holograms from his eyes. She's shadowboxing the projections with a blade.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - FLIGHT SIMULATOR - NIGHT

Carra flies the flight simulator, determined grimace on her features. She crashes again. Flashes and ALARMS.

She yells and pounds the controls in frustration.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - BATHROOM - DAY

Carra enters a bathroom. The Kandashians wait for her. Sheesh LOCKS the door behind her and Snoot comes out of a stall and grins an evil grin at her. Carra's eyes go wide and she grabs at her tummy.

This disturbs the napping puppy in her shirt: Norman wriggles and BARKS.

Carra grabs at her wriggling belly as if it had an alien in it and opens her mouth in mock agony.

The Kandashians freak out! Sheesh jumps into the trash can, and Snoot dives face-first into a toilet, quivering.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - ACADEMIC HALLS - CONTINUOUS

Carra runs out of the bathroom, then collapses against a locker, laughing. Norman pops out of her collar and licks her face.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - CAFETERIA - AFTERNOON

Carra checks that the coast is clear in the cafeteria, looking out into the hall. She turns to Brick and nods, then turns away from him again.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Ya, she found th' secret ingredient
that can turn a loner into a
leader. Friends.

Norman pops out of her collar and Brick feeds him a scrap of food. Carra's shirt wags with the force of Norman's tail. Brick gently pushes the pup back down into her uniform and she leaves. He looks after her.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - MAINTENANCE CRAWLSPACE - NIGHT

Carra trains hard in the crawlspace, Eugene's projected holographs putting her through her paces. She looks pretty badass. Norman capers and BARKS at her feet as she dances the Dance of the Gravity Blade.

EUGENE

A gravity blade reverses gravity so quickly it can slice through atoms. There's no room for error.

She finishes a spin-move with a flourish and a lock of hair drops in front of her eyes. She blows it back up with a grin.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - FLIGHT SIMULATOR - NIGHT

Carra confidently flies the flight simulator. At the right moment, she presses her firing triggers. Something on her screen detonates and she celebrates a big win.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - MAINTENANCE CRAWLSPACE - NIGHT

Carra and Norman curl up, exhausted. Carra tries to keep her eyes open to watch Eugene's projected hologram of the female Knight riding a soaring dragon. She finally fails and dozes off.

Eugene turns off the hologram and turns to stand watch.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

As the year wound down and Carra learnt and grew, her enemies watched and waited...

END MONTAGE

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - UTILITY CLOSET - MORNING

Norman sits, head cocked, looking at Carra sadly. His tail droops.

CARRA

No. You stay with Eugene today.
Stay. I've got a final. Be good. Do
not pee on him again!

Norm turns away from her and curls into a ball on their
blankets. He gives a dispirited little GROWL/WHINE.

CARRA (CONT'D)

(to Eugene)
Take care of him.

The android nods and she heads up the tunnel.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - ACADEMIC HALLS - DAY

Carra emerges from the hatch between lockers. Suddenly
all goes BLACK --

-- KRANK holds a sack with the grunting and struggling
Carra inside!

Snoot, Sheesh, and Pudge, dressed in full suits of armor,
stand by. Pudge holds a giant haunch of meat.

Krank BANGS the sack down on the ground and Carra CRIES
OUT in anger. He puts his face to the sack.

KRANK

Who's smart now! You're caught,
Meat!

The sack goes still for a second.

CARRA (O.S.)

BOOM!

The bullies all jump.

SNOOT

Your tricks won't work!

SHEESH

Yeah! We're all wearing armor!

CARRA (O.S.)

I bet Krank still peed!

The bullies look down, then look at Krank, who blushes.

KRANK

I did not! The armor leaks! It
doesn't matter! We have you!

CARRA (O.S.)
 Yeah, huh? I bet Pudge is trying to
 get a leg of meat into his helmet.

They look over and Pudge is trying to do exactly that,
 unsuccessfully.

KRANK
 Stop your talk! We have you!

CARRA (O.S.)
 Sure. Did anybody plan what you
 were going to do with me?

The bullies look at each other. Krank shakes his mane.

KRANK
 We planned! Shut up!

SNOOT
 You're going out an airlock Short
 Hair!

SHEESH
 Yeah! Out an airlock!

Pudge manages to stuff the meat into his helmet end-
 first.

PUDGE
 Ooaf hah earlagh!
 (subtitle)
 Out an airlock!

CARRA (O.S.)
 Gotcha. Just please, whatever you
 do, please don't throw me out the
 garbage airlock! I don't want to
 die smelling bad. Please!

The bullies look at each other happily.

KRANK
 The garbage airlock!

SNOOT & SHEESH
 The garbage airlock!

PUDGE
 Hmph gbgge hahkle!
 (subtitle)
 What they said!

They CHEER and celebrate, then Krank stops them.

KRANK

Wait! Wait! Where's the garbage
airlock?

There's an audible SIGH from the bag.

CARRA (O.S.)

Through the hatch I came out of.
Straight down, then two rights.
(without conviction)
But please don't do it. Not the
garbage airlock, oh please.

Krank throws the sack over his shoulder and the group
happily turns to the hatch. They stare at the keypad and
Krank frowns.

CARRA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

1-2-3. But please don't.

Krank reaches towards the keypad, then hesitates.

CARRA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

(exasperated)
One...two...three. Please. Don't.

Krank pushes the buttons and the hatch pops open. The
bullies JEER again. They squeeze into the tunnel.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - CRAWLSPACE - CONTINUOUS

The bullies have to crawl to get through the tunnel.
Krank is in the lead dragging the sack. They round the
first corner and come across Eugene playing possum in
front of the utility closet, his lights out.

The hatch is closed behind Eugene, but Norman's frantic
muffled SCRATCHES and BARKS sound faintly within.

SNOOT

Wait, do you hear that?

SHEESH

What's that noise?

CARRA (O.S.)

Oh, I hope it isn't one of the Bog
Rodents that live here! I saw one
almost as big as Pudge last night!

KRANK

No such thing!

Nevertheless, the bullies crawl faster past the android.

As they pass, Eugene's eyes light up faintly as he SCANS the sack.

EUGENE'S POV - Carra through the cloth. She mouths 'help' to him. Then she makes a 'monster' face and mimes a roar as she jolts along the floor.

Files flash through his head, reflected faintly in his eyes, as he searches frantically. They slow and settle on the picture of a monstrous rodent.

Eugene tilts back his head and the electronic version of a Bog Rodent ROAR fills the crawlspace!

The bullies WHIMPER and CRY OUT as they crawl forward frantically. Eugene follows them, ROARING terribly.

After they've all gone, the hatch is pushed open by a determined Pup. Norman, SCRABBLING madly, joins the chase.

But he turns the opposite way.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - AIRLOCK PLATFORM - FOLLOWING

The narrow tunnel opens up onto the platform over a ludicrous drop. Opposite the tunnel is the airlock.

The bullies crawl out onto the platform. The Kandashians run to opposite sides, see the drop, then back hastily into each other, going down in a tangle of hair.

Pudge turns back to the tunnel, brandishing a leg of meat that's been eaten down to about 4 inches long.

Krank drops the sack and Carra spills out. He crosses frantically to the airlock and starts tugging on it.

CARRA

Stop! Stop you idiot! That's an airlock!

Krank turns and knocks her down with a panicked swipe of his paw. She skids to the edge of the platform.

At that moment, Eugene runs out onto the platform, ROARING like a Bog Rat. The bullies cower and close their eyes, shaking.

Carra looks at Eugene with her hands spread wide: "What are you doing?"

The bullies open their eyes, one by one, and see that it's an android making that noise. They unclench.

SNOOT

Hey! It's only a robot!

SHEESH

Yeah, it's a robot!

EUGENE

I'm an android!

KRANK

He can't hurt us! He's not allowed to! Hah!

Krank SMACKS Eugene, and ROARS in the android's face.

CARRA

Eugene, pal, how about we play a nice game of toss 'em off the platform? Just for fun.

Krank laughs and shoves the android. Eugene falls, then pushes himself up. Krank ROARS in his face again.

CARRA (CONT'D)

Please, Eugene. I'm in real trouble here.

Eugene clenches his hands into fists.

The android SHORTS out. His lights go out and he collapses in a heap in front of Krank. The Kuruwa cub kicks him roughly to the edge of the platform.

CARRA (CONT'D)

Worth a try.

The bullies round on her triumphantly, eyes and claws gleaming and hair rearing up to strike.

Carra bravely assumes a fighting stance.

CARRA (CONT'D)

All right then, let's do this.

The bullies crowd in at her eagerly, then a very deep voice stops them:

BRICK

What's going on here?

The massive servant stands at the entrance to the tunnel, Norman on his shoulder. Norman wags his tail at Carra, then GROWLS at the bullies.

SNOOT

We weren't doing anything!

SHEESH

It's a study group!

PUDGE

Yeah, we're studying!

Pudge throws his last bit of meat away guiltily, then looks after it longingly as it falls.

KRANK

Wait! He's Jaredian!

SNOOT

That's right! He can't do anything!

SHEESH

They're nonviolent! Hah!

She SLAPS Brick. Brick clenches his fists, then unclenches them.

SNOOT

You gonna faint like the robot?

Krank turns towards Carra and POPS his claws.

KRANK

He can watch.

BRICK

How about if I just step out onto the platform?

He strides out onto the center of the platform with one massive step. The metal CREAKS alarmingly.

BRICK (CONT'D)

Do you know how much a Jaredian weighs? I'm heavier than most.

They BLINK at him.

CARRA

They're not great at math.
(to the bullies)
He's real heavy. And this platform's really old?

BRICK

Hundreds of years old. Could collapse any second, take the whole section down with it.

CARRA

Definitely. But I was gonna die anyway, so...

She shrugs at them. The bullies look at each other, undecided and a little frightened. The platform sways a little.

Another scary CREAK and a BUCKLING metal sound decides them.

KRANK

We're gonna fall!

SNOOT

Run! Get to the hatch!

SHEESH

Ahhhhhh!

PUDGE

I shouldn't have eaten the meat!

They scramble madly into the tunnel and retreat, shoving each other, dragging each other out of their way, and trampling each other unashamedly. Their YELLS and HOWLS follow them, echoing the whole way.

Carra skips to the tunnel and cups her hands:

CARRA

Oh no! It's collapsing! Ahhhh!

The bullies terrified CRIES intensify, along with the receding SOUNDS of their flight.

Carra picks up a waggy-tailed pup, who promptly licks her nose.

CARRA (CONT'D)

Good dog! Good boy!

She taps the android's faceplate gently.

CARRA (CONT'D)

Hey. Wake up. Good try, buddy.

As Eugene lights up and regains his feet, the platform CREAKS again. She looks sharply at Brick.

CARRA (CONT'D)
We're okay, right?

BRICK
This platform is rated at 1200
kilograms!

She looks at him and raises her eyebrows.

BRICK (CONT'D)
How much do you think I weigh?!

Carra smiles.

CARRA
Just the right amount.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - MAINTENANCE CRAWLSPACE - MORNING

As Carra deposits Norm in their space, Eugene sits dejectedly outside.

CARRA
What's wrong, wing-nut? We won.
It's all good.

EUGENE
I did not help.

CARRA
The hell you didn't! You bought us
time! Had 'em all panicked! Brick
just gave them one more little
push. Good job.

She starts to leave, but his next words stop her:

EUGENE
I couldn't do what you asked.

CARRA
Yeah, that was my fault. I asked
too much. My bad, not yours.

The android doesn't move.

CARRA (CONT'D)
Hey, Eugene? Eugene?

The android turns its face to her slowly.

CARRA (CONT'D)

You know what? I'm not leaving you here to sulk.

UGN-3

Sulk?

CARRA

Let's work on next time...Do you have a really simple game you can play that doesn't trip your breakers?

Eugene considers with a HUM.

UGN-3

Bubble Break?

CARRA

How do you play? Show me.

The android projects a field of multicolored holographic bubbles from his eyes. They wobble slowly downwards.

UGN-3

You pop as many as you can before they hit the ground. And if you hit the "wild bubble" they all pop.

He demonstrates, rapidly popping all of the dozens of bubbles on the screen. More materialize.

CARRA

Play for a little bit each day. And try to pretend, a little bit, that you're...fighting bad bubbles. Without shutting yourself off.

Eugene pauses in his play to consider her.

CARRA (CONT'D)

It's all in how you look at it. With some practice, you could be the wild bubble, Eugene.

EUGENE

I will practice.

She pats him on his shoulder.

CARRA

All right, I got a final to take. Still in the running for Top Student! See ya!

She's gone. He continues to play the game. Norman wags his tail and tries to jump and snatch the bubbles.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - FLIGHT CLASSROOM - MORNING

Carra sits at a desk that has obviously been put back together piecemeal. She reaches the end of a multiple-choice holographic exam in front of her, choosing answers confidently.

She selects the last answer with a flourish, then sits back with her arms folded. A CLAXON sounds and all the students look up, most of them unhappily.

Professor Hangu looks up from the game of Bubble Break he was playing on his tablet. A light flashes in front of him.

HANGUS

Done. Hold for an announcement from Professor Devitus.

Devitus' face replaces the exam in front of each student's face.

DEVITUS

Year-end exams are concluded.
Student standings are in. As you all know, the top student gets the honor of serving on the flagship.
The top student is...

CUT TO:

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - DEAN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Devitus sits at his desk. A globe extended from the ceiling bathes him in green light, capturing his severe features for the announcement.

DEVITUS

...the top student is...

He glances off to the side at the student scores, which are holographically projected as a list. He double-takes.

His mouth draws down in a disgusted grimace.

DEVITUS (CONT'D)

...not to be determined by grades alone.

(MORE)

DEVITUS (CONT'D)
 Tomorrow, in the arena, we will
 hold war games to decide the top
 student. Devitus out.

CUT TO:

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - FLIGHT CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

The students look at each other, surprised. Carra's hand goes up and the Professor ignores it.

HANGUS
 Any questions?

Carra keeps her hand up, clearly frustrated.

PUDGE waves a haunch of meat. Hangus points to him and he talks with his mouth full.

PUDGE
 Wfmpg igth fa warpbf gumps?
 (subtitle)
 What are the war games?

Hangus works on his tablet while he talks, and a hologram behind him on the "board" illustrates his explanation:

HANGUS
 Ah! Okay...The games are in two
 parts: Space Battle and Personal
 Combat. First, Space Battle...

An Academy student in Space Armor appears and rotates in three dimensions to follow the Professor's words.

HANGUS (CONT'D)
 Cadets in Space Armor act as space
 fighters in a zero gravity field.
 Equipped with Boot thrusters, hand
 cannons and shields.

The armored combatant swoops and dodges. She fires her hand cannon and hides from a blast behind her shield.

HANGUS (CONT'D)
 You may form squads or even
 fleets...

The hologram pulls back to reveal the combatant is one of dozens firing at a lone opponent. Sparks "explode" from the loner and they float, immobile and "dead."

HANGUS (CONT'D)

...But in the end there's only one winner. The crowd will look forward to the moment when allies turn on each other.

The combatants turn on each other, and the hologram dissolves in projected cannon fire.

Carra raises her hand again to the expected result: Hangus ignores her and fiddles with his tablet.

HANGUS (CONT'D)

The second part of the games is personal combat...

The board shows the previous combatant armed with a gravity blade. The blade is a narrow black void surrounded by sizzling green light. She moves through various thrusts and parries.

HANGUS (CONT'D)

The top ten cadets from the space battle, will "hold the ship" from android boarders. With a real gravity blade.

The combatant stands in a narrow "gate," fighting off battle droids that attempt to swarm her with their own blades. She dispatches five before the rest swarm her with their practice staffs and beat her down.

HANGUS (CONT'D)

The two who last the longest will pair off and face each other.

Two combatants battle with swords that glow only faintly.

HANGUS (CONT'D)

The gravity blades will be powered down, but they'll still hurt.

One combatant vanquishes the other and holds their sword aloft in triumph. The hologram fades away.

HANGUS (CONT'D)

Winner of the final duel will be top student. With the honor of serving on the flagship.

Carra raises her hand. The Professor rolls his eyes.

HANGUS (CONT'D)

What is it, soft one?!

CARRA
 You realize that's the first time
 you've called on me all year, sir?

HANGUS
 What. Do. You. Want?!

CARRA
 Just wanted to make sure I was
 still here.

She smiles sweetly at him.

HANGUS
 (disgusted)
 Class dismissed.

The students file out. A holographic alert flashes in front of the Professor, and he hurries out after them.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - DEAN'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Devitus sits behind his desk, hands folded. Hangus hurries into his office, clearly disconcerted.

He sits in front of the Dean's desk, then pops up again nervously.

HANGUS
 May I sit?

Devitus gestures 'be my guest.' Hangus sits and Devitus shoots to his feet.

DEVITUS
 What is wrong with you?!

Hangus tips backwards out of his chair and onto the floor. He scrambles to his knees and looks up helplessly as Devitus rounds the desk at him.

HANGUS
 I...I'm sorry! What did I do?

Devitus leans down into Hangus' quivering face.

DEVITUS
 How does Carra Stone qualify as top student when I told you not to let her on the flight simulator?!

HANGUS

But....but I didn't! She never...I
did what you told me, Sire!

Devitus points a long finger at Hangus' throat, then raises the finger until Hangus tilts his head up, stands, then goes up on his tiptoes.

DEVITUS

No?! You didn't let her on the
flight simulator? What's this?

He points to his desk. A holograph lights up showing scores. Carra's name is at the top of the list.

DEVITUS (CONT'D)

She outscored everyone! How did she
get into the simulator?!

HANGUS

I, I don't...the security is
impenetrable...She couldn't
of...ah, I'm sorry, I don't know.

Devitus whirls away and Hangus sags, righting his chair nervously, then just fidgeting next to it. Devitus stalks behind his desk. He points Hangus into the seat again.

DEVITUS

I have a bet with our Empress. I
have no idea how she knew that,
that...creature would be so
proficient! Aaargh! If we don't
stop her, she's still liable to win
top student!

HANGUS

Was it...was it a large wager?

Devitus frames his own head with his hands.

DEVITUS

For me, the wager was about this
big!

Hangus looks at him, uncomprehending.

HANGUS

I don't know how much that is...

Devitus leans across the desk at him and he recoils.

DEVITUS

It's everything! Send in the
Kuruwa!

HANGUS

Which one?

Devitus BANGS his desk. Hangus topples over backwards
again.

DEVITUS

The one waiting outside! Krank!

Hangus scrambles out of the office on his hands and
knees.

Devitus collapses in his chair and rubs his temples.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - AIRLOCK PLATFORM - NIGHT

Eugene sits cross-legged, Norm in his lap, as Carra
cleans and polishes him.

CARRA

How long has it been since someone
cleaned you?

EUGENE

272 years and thirteen days.

CARRA

Just because you told a Makkai they
gained weight?

EUGENE

I gave her the exact amount gained,
to the ounce.

CARRA

Oh, well then...

EUGENE

Why would you go to the trouble of
cleaning me? You have to prepare
for the Academy games tomorrow.

CARRA

How you treat people says stuff
about you, more than it says about
them. Read that somewhere. Besides,
I don't have a chance tomorrow.

EUGENE

Why would you say that?

CARRA

Soon as the combat starts,
everyones's gonna shoot at yours
truly. I'm only gonna have one
shield.

She stops polishing and stands lost in thought. Norman
looks up at her and BARKS quizzically.

CARRA (CONT'D)

Hey, Eugene...can you pull up the
specifications on an over-shield? I
have an idea.

EUGENE

I can do that.

Eugene projects the schematics of an over-shield in front
of them. Carra's eyes light up.

CARRA

Keep an eye on Norm. I'm gonna go
grab my armor. And some tools.

She dashes off down the tunnel.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - ACADEMIC HALLS - NIGHT

Snoot, Sheesh and Pudge hustle around a corner to find
Krank with his hands behind his back.

SNOOT

What? What's so important?

KRANK

Professor Devitus gave me this.

He pulls a gravitic side-arm from behind his back. It
looks like a steam punk revolver.

He turns it back and forth to catch the light, then hits
a stud in the handle. The six holes, where the cylinder
would be on a gun, FLARE in sequence.

Pudge hustled a little too much. He bends over, catching
his breath.

SHEESH

Why would he give you that!

SNOOT

Yeah, why?

PUDGE

(panting)

Uh...why?

Krank brings the weapon up and aims it at a bank of lockers, squinting one eye over the sight.

KRANK

He hates her like we do! If she
cheats with her like, smart stuff,
I gotta surprise for her!

He moves a lever back on the top, 'cocking' the gun. The sequence of lights whirls around faster and a WHIR of power sounds. The bullies gape at the side-arm.

SNOOT

But, won't you get in trouble if
you just...blast her?!

Krank grins and jacks the lever back even further. The WHIR of power heightens.

PUDGE

Hey, Krank...you sure that thing
ain't gonna go off?

KRANK

It's fine!

(to Snoot)

I might get detention or something,
but Devitus hates her so much he'll
probably give me a medal in
private! Hah!

SHEESH

Yeah, that's what'll happen.

Krank accidentally squeezes the trigger as he lowers the gun: BA-WAM! He zaps a gaping hole in the lockers!

They stare at the damage he did, wide-eyed, then scramble to clear the area.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - ARENA FLOOR - MORNING

The arena is packed and BUZZING. Dozens of cadets are on the sidelines of the arena floor, with wardrobe androids assisting them into their armor.

Carra walks out of a tunnel under the stands, already in her armor, and is taken aback by the spectacle.

An antigravity field projects up from the main floor. Cadets step into it and begin to float, then activate their boot thrusters and ZOOM around in the field.

The Kandashians start a wave in the stands with their hair, sitting placidly beneath it. It gets to the Kuruwa and they throw each other in the air, following the wave with flying fur and fangs.

The wave gets to the Barbull section and meat ripples into the air and is caught by hundreds of salivating mouths. The wave reaches the teachers' section and dies in the cold gaze of the Makkai.

Carra stands on the sideline, helmet in the crook of one arm. She takes a deep breath and raises her helmet.

An android steps up to Carra and gently stops her, taking possession of the helmet. Surprised, she sees the familiar UGN-3 on its chest.

CARRA

Eugene! What are you doing here?

EUGENE

I don't really know. I was...
compelled. My processors may be
malfunctioning.

He fits her helmet in place and secures it.

CARRA

I think they're working just fine.
Glad you're here.

EUGENE

Then...I am as well. You'd better
get up there and adjust to your
thrusters. I'm tuned into your
armor's wavelength, so we can
communicate.

CARRA

Really? How come?

EUGENE

I can activate the device more
precisely. And also...so you'll
know you're not alone.

Her eyes well up a little. She nods, then steps forward.

She floats, then immediately activates her thrusters and ZOOMS to the top of the Arena.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - ARENA REVIEW BOX - MORNING

Devitus watches Carra ZOOM up from the floor and his knuckles tighten on the railing.

There's a commotion, and he turns to see something that makes his eyes bulge:

Empress Necranissa glides out onto the balcony, flanked by her own guards. Her men place an ornate throne in the middle of the box, and Devitus' two sentries bow and back out of the box.

She smiles thinly at Devitus and holds out her long-fingered hand. Devitus kneels immediately and kisses the hand.

DEVITUS

Your Majesty! Empress! I...I had no idea you were-

NECRANISSA

By design. I brought my brand new flagship, Devitus. I've decided the top student will have the honor of christening it.

DEVITUS

Well, that's....that will be perfect, Your Eminence. I-

He lets her hand go and starts to rise.

NECRANISSA

Not yet.

DEVITUS

Okey dokey.

He drops back on his knee, wincing.

NECRANISSA

So, who was in the lead? Who would've won if you hadn't decreed the games?

DEVITUS

I'm not, uh, not sure...I can check.

NECRANISSA

No need. I know who it was. And
there she is!

Carra dips and dodges, looking like a combat veteran in
her suit. The entire arena watches her.

The Empress sits in her throne. Devitus tries to rise
again.

NECRANISSA (CONT'D)

No.

Devitus is back down on the ground, then he switches
knees with a grimace.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - ARENA FLOOR - NOON

As Eugene watches Carra fly with his mechanical neck
craned upwards, Brick steps up beside him.

Eugene turns to look at the giant. Brick looks up at
Carra.

EUGENE

You are not assigned here.

BRICK

Nope.

EUGENE

You came for her.

BRICK

Yup.

EUGENE

Me too.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - ARENA REVIEW BOX - CONTINUOUS

Devitus stands at the railing, massaging his knee.

A CLAXON sounds. The crowd ROARS and all the armored
students fly back down and land on the sidelines.

Devitus' voice BOOMS out to the arena:

DEVITUS

Welcome to the Academy Games!

The crowd GOES CRAZY.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - ARENA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Carra lands and is surprised to see Brick.

CARRA

Brick!

The giant shrugs a bit sheepishly.

BRICK

I figured nobody would be at lunch...

EUGENE

She knows why we're here.

Carra smiles and high-fives them both, SMACK SMACK. She immediately shakes her hand.

CARRA

Still hurts in the armor. Gotta find someone softer to hang out with. Speaking of which...

Brick leans forward to her and pulls the neck of his robe out. Resting against blue abs is a waggy-tailed pup.
Norman BARKS.

BRICK

The Kandashians like to flank you.
The Kuruwa will bunch up-

CARRA

Brick, they're all coming for me.
Either my crazy idea works, or I'm a floater.

Devitus raises his hand for silence from the box. His voice BOOMS out across the arena.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - ARENA REVIEW BOX - CONTINUOUS

The rabid crowd ROILS below the Dean. He savors it.

DEVITUS

At the alert, combatants will blast off! The last ten still flying will advance to personal combat. Stay within the gravity cylinder or you'll fall on the crowd-

Sudden SILENCE. Nobody knew that.

DEVITUS (CONT'D)
 (amplified)
 Are the ships ready?

The students in armor salute, right hands/paws flat and held straight up. The crowd ROARS.

DEVITUS (CONT'D)
 (amplified)
 For the glory of the Dominion!

A CLAXON sounds, the crowd CHEERS.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - ARENA FLOOR/CEILING - CONTINUOUS

Carra leaps forward and activates her boot's THRUSTERS. The anti-gravity cylinder rings the arena floor, and she steers a rapid spiral up along its shimmering sides.

Students BLAST away immediately, and most of the fire concentrates on her - inches behind her exhaust, and closing...

Off to the side, Pudge chews at some meat that floats in his helmet. He shoots at random and LAUGHS.

Some of the fire directed at Carra HITS other combatants. Sparks shower from their armor and they suddenly drift, arms akimbo.

Carra reaches the top of the cylinder. She's at the top of the arena, looking down on the crowd and every other combatant BLASTING up towards her.

EUGENE (O.S.)
 Ready to activate?

CARRA
 Hold.

Carra cuts her thrusters and drops straight down. Multiple cannon blasts SLICE the air where she was instants before.

She cuts her THRUSTERS on as she reaches the midpoint of the cylinder, in the exact middle of the airspace. Fall arrested, she cuts her thrusters off again and hangs for a moment in space...

She pulls her knees up and to the side, so the thrusters are angled to her right and FIRES them on again.

She begins to spin rapidly.

CARRA (CONT'D)

Now, Eugene!

As the combatants' concentrated fire catches up to her, the GLOW of an over-shield completely surrounds her.

Cannon fire GLANCES off and bounces back at the enemy in multiple directions!

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - ARENA REVIEW BOX - CONTINUOUS

Devitus leans out over the railing and his eyes bulge.

DEVITUS

That's an over-shield!

The Empress throws back her head and LAUGHS.

NECRANISSA

Is it even mentioned in the rules?

DEVITUS

Well, no, but...

Their faces are lit by the IMPACTS of multiple shots.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - ARENA FLOOR/CEILING - CONTINUOUS

Carra spins in a rapidly rotating over-shield, as enemy FIRE glances off and wipes out her opponents spectacularly - BOOOM BOOM B-BOOM BOOOOM!

CARRA

I'm gonna puke! I'm gonna puke!

Snoot floats helplessly near the roof, SCREAMING in frustration. Sheesh floats past her, also disabled and having a loud TANTRUM. Ditto Krank.

Pudge floats off by himself, deactivated but focused entirely on trying to turn his head to grab a last little floating morsel in his helmet.

The gravity CANNON-FIRE dies, as everyone but Carra floats with their arms out in involuntary submission.

Carra drops her boots and slowly stops spinning.

EUGENE (O.S.)

Deactivating the over-shield.

The over-shield WINKS out. Carra soars in place for a moment, then the stunned crowd ERUPTS for her.

CARRA

I was sooo close to hurling.

She lessens her thrusters and descends to the ground.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - ARENA REVIEW BOX - CONTINUOUS

Devitus stands at the railing with his head down. The Empress smiles wickedly.

NECRANISSA

Tell me, is she good with a blade?

Devitus looks up, barely concealing hope.

DEVITUS

She hasn't done any sparring.

NECRANISSA

(sarcastically)

Well, I'm sure she hasn't done anything to prepare on her own. You could still win your wager...

Devitus pulls nervously at his collar. He makes an announcement to the arena:

DEVITUS

(amplified)

Second game will begin shortly!
Personal combat. Students will hold the gate for as long as they can with a gravity blade until a security droid crosses the line!
Best two advance to face each other in a duel!

The crowd ROARS its approval.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - ARENA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Carra ZOOMS down near the floor. She cuts her THRUSTERS and flips upright, floating neatly to the ground. She steps out of the anti-gravity field and over to her team.

Others behind her are not quite as adept at the maneuver. About a dozen students have trouble getting down to the ground, including Krank and Pudge.

A robotic ANNOUNCER pipes over the loudspeaker:

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
Gravity field deactivating.

Pudge and Krank float, still about twenty feet up. They try to 'swim' downwards ridiculously. The anti-gravity cuts off and they CRASH to the ground.

Brick and Eugene start removing Carra's armor.

Short and mean-looking androids mass at the end of the floor opposite the gate. There are hundreds of them. They swing metal staffs that glow blue and SIZZLE as they jostle each other.

BRICK
They're repurposed perimeter units.
They'll be predictable.

CARRA
How do you know that?

BRICK
I pay attention.

CARRA
You're not getting another high five. My hand's still numb. But thanks.

Brick removes her torso armor with a small grin. Eugene straightens after removing her lower armor and boots.

She pets Norman through Brick's robe. The pup's tail wags frantically through the cloth. Norman BARKS.

EUGENE
If they hit you solidly, the level-three stun will stop you long enough to let them cross the line.

CARRA
All right, got it. Hope I get to rest a little before it's my turn.

Devitus' voice ECHOES through the arena.

DEVITUS (O.S.)
First up will be Carra Stone!

Carra smiles and SIGHS, shaking her head. The crowd CHEERS her. She's won them over.

CARRA
Of course it will.

Carra jumps up and down to limber up, then waves to the crowd. They GO NUTS. She pulls her hair tight in a ponytail and puts her game face on.

She puts her hand out low and behind her a little for her blade. Eugene gives her a low five.

CARRA (CONT'D)
The blade, Tin Foil.

Eugene lays a gravity blade in her hand. She squeezes the handle and the blade becomes a negative void with a light green corona. She spins it casually up into a ready position and steps onto the arena floor.

Carra readies herself and turns sideways, blade held ceremoniously above her head pointing at the droids.

CARRA (CONT'D)
Come on, then!

The crowd is ECSTATIC!

On the sidelines, Krank, Pudge, Snoot and Sheesh glare. They are in various stages of removing their armor.

Devitus' amplified VOICE stops the advancing droids in their place.

DEVITUS (O.S.)
The droids will be set to security level 9. Commence!

Brick and Eugene look at each other in alarm.

EUGENE
She took her armor off! That's high enough to kill a human!

The bullies hurry to put their armor back on. The droids' staffs grow a deeper navy blue, their CRACKLING intensifying, and they begin to advance again.

Carra's stance falters and she steals a glance over at Brick and Eugene. Norman perches on Brick's shoulder, his barking unheard because of the crowd.

A calculation occurs to Eugene.

EUGENE (CONT'D)
 (shouting to Carra)
 The gate! Carra, the gate! Let them
 cross the line and the turn ends!
 Just step aside!

Carra shakes her head at the android.

BRICK
 No good. When the droids win, they
 execute a ceremonial death-stroke
 on the combatant. The stun at level
 nine would kill her.

Carra turns back to the droids. Her blade lowers a little. She glances over at the jeering group of her tormentors, then up at the thunderously CHEERING crowd.

She raises the blade again. She achieves balance and finds a grin.

CARRA
 If today's the day, so be it.

She snaps back into a long-point guard and watches the droids come over the tip of her SIZZLING blade.

On the sidelines, Brick turns to Eugene.

BRICK
 Hey! Can you break into the arena's
 systems and lower the droids' stun
 level?

EUGENE
 Oh! Yes, but...not from here!

Eugene turns and strides off rapidly.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - ARENA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

The first wave of droids closes in, and Carra raises her blade. The droids raise their staffs to meet it.

Carra suddenly steps and drops, sliding forward and cutting the legs out from under the droids in a searing SLASH!

She pops back up in front of the next wave, and they are unprepared. She cuts them down in a mighty STROKE, and runs forward to flip over the third wave.

Before they can turn, she cuts them down with three mighty BLOWS.

She turns away from them, and they fall behind her - KLANK KLANK KLANK! She grimly faces the hesitating ranks of her enemy.

The crowd, holding their breath, lets it out in a ROAR!

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - UNDER THE ARENA - CONTINUOUS

Eugene drops through an open grate and strides rapidly along a metal tunnel, bent over, footsteps CLANKING.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - ARENA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Carra's blade is a pale green circle in front of her as she SPINS it, the reflection shining as a grim fire in her eyes.

She turns the circle sharply this way and that, BATTERING staffs and droids aside like a hurricane wind...

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - UNDER THE ARENA - CONTINUOUS

Eugene stops in front of a maintenance panel. It has a security keypad. He rapidly punches 1-2-3.

The keypad flashes red and a BUZZER sounds.

EUGENE

You have to be kidding me!

Eugene TEARS off the keypad, then the cover of the panel!

His fingertips fold back, and wires with plugs extend into waiting sockets on the panel.

EUGENE (CONT'D)

Hello. Hi. I need access to the arena's remote control systems... what do you mean, no?! You talkin' to me? You talkin' to me? All right, then. You wanna get binary? Let's get binary...

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - ARENA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Carra dodges, parries and CUTS down another group of droids. She blows hair off her forehead then wades in again with her blade--

-- She drops to her knees and two converging droids BASH each other silly!

She leaps up over an advancing staff and IMPALES the droid behind it!

She flips over the droid, holding her blade still in its chest, and then uses the blade to fling the droid over her head into the next wave of droids - CRASH!

They drop like bowling pins.

Carra is breathing hard, and more droids are advancing on her. Her blade FLASHES in a deadly guard as they press her back towards her gate.

They drop in front of her, but she's losing ground and they are surrounding her.

Brick sees this and he bellows:

BRICK

Carra! Jump!

She leaps high without hesitation, as Brick STAMPS! His massive foot SHAKES the arena floor and all the droids loose their feet, CRASHING to the ground!

As the ones around her try to rise, she obliterates them with sweeping SLASHES. She has room, but she's breathing heavily now, badly winded...

Lights in the Arena ceiling SHATTER and an entire bank of them breaks free on one end and swings downward in a shower of SPARKS!

The light bank dangles over the arena floor, and the crowd SCREAMS.

Both Carra and Brick see this. They can't use that trick again.

BRICK (CONT'D)

Aw, hurry up, android.

Here comes the next wave.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - UNDER THE ARENA - CONTINUOUS

Eugene has relaxed against the wall. Now, it's as if he's talking to an angry girlfriend through a locked door.

A finger on his unengaged hand gently traces a circle on the wall.

EUGENE

No, you're right...I didn't need to be rude. She's my friend, and...no, no! Of course we can be friends, too. My bad. I mean it, I'm sorry. No, it was all me.

He stands there a moment longer, listening.

EUGENE (CONT'D)

That's really nice, my sweet. Um, would you mind doing that security level setting thing now? Thanks ever so much. You're the best. No, you are. Hurry.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - ARENA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Carra is completely surrounded by droids and is being pressed back to the gate. She YELLS in exhaustion and frustration as she tries to beat them back one more time.

She KICKS over a droid to her left, SLASHES one to her right, and the one in front of her brings its staff down with a two-handed stroke - WHOOSH...

Carra gets her blade up, but it drives her to her knees, SIZZLING near her face. The next SLASH sends her sword spinning!

As she kneels helpless, the droid she kicked over stretches out on the floor and its fingers cross through the gate.

A CLAXON sounds. The Droid in front of her raises its staff for the ceremonial killing stroke. Carra closes her eyes tight. At the apex, the navy corona around the staff FIZZLES and dulls to a weak pale blue.

The staff comes down on Carra's shoulder with a weak ZAP. One of her eyes opens.

CARRA

OW! That stings!

She looks down at the powered-down staff resting on her shoulder. She shoves the droid away and stands.

The arena is stunned into silence. The security droids DEACTIVATE. The ANNOUNCER pipes over the loudspeaker:

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
 Combatant's time holding the gate
 is 14 minutes, 7 seconds. A new
 Blood Academy record!

The crowd LOSES IT. They begin to CHANT her name.

CROWD
 CA-RA! CA-RA! CA-RA!

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - ARENA REVIEW BOX - CONTINUOUS

Devitus bangs the railing in frustration and HOLLERS.

Necranissa laughs a rich throaty laugh.

NECRANISSA
 Enough of this. I have a Galaxy to
 terrorize. Skip to the end.

DEVITUS
 What? What, er, what do you mean
 Your Eminence?

Necranissa sits forward.

NECRANISSA
 I grow bored of watching her
 outsmart you! Skip to the last
 match! Krank is second in the
 standings, so fast forward!!

DEVITUS
 But...she'll get no rest. She's
 exhausted. I don't understand.

NECRANISSA
 It's clear to everyone here, except
 you, that she'll find a way. That's
 what her kind do. That's why I
 brought her here. She'll be my
 greatest general someday, and
 she'll lead the armada that finally
 wipes out her troublesome home-
 world! Skip. To. The End!

Devitus can't believe his good fortune. He can barely hide his smile as he makes the announcement:

DEVITUS
(amplified)
Per the order of the glorious
Empress Necranissa, the games will
now move to the final stage! Carra
Stone will meet the next student in
the standings in combat! She will
face Krank in the center of the
arena in two minutes!

The crowd APPLAUDS and CHEERS.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - ARENA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Carra sits on the ground, elbows on her knees and her head hanging low. Brick towers over her on one side, worried. Norman, unconcerned, tries to wheedle a belly rub out of her.

She GROANS.

CARRA
I couldn't raise my arms again if I
had two hours! Krank hasn't even
broken a sweat yet! I'm fried.

Eugene joins them.

EUGENE
Are you uninjured?

CARRA
Thanks to you, Wingnut. Brick told
me what you did. Thanks.

EUGENE
You're welcome.

A CLAXON sounds. The robotic ANNOUNCER intones:

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
Combatants to the center of the
arena please.

CARRA
(sighing)
I just wanted a good report card.

She bends over and pets Norman, then hands him to Brick. Brick places the pup on his shoulder.

BRICK

Play for time.

CARRA

Yeah.

She strides wearily into the center of the arena, where a grinning Krank waits.

Krank reaches behind him to touch the handle of his Gravitic Side-Arm, which protrudes above the belt at the small of his back.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - ARENA REVIEW BOX - CONTINUOUS

Devitus looks down on a weary Carra trudging towards the center of the ring. Waiting gleefully for her is a fresh and savage Krank.

DEVITUS

With all due respect, Empress, it looks as though you're about to grant me three estates. She's done!

(to himself)

And I have insurance...

The Empress rises from her throne and joins him at the railing.

NECRANISSA

I hope most of your students learn faster than their Dean. Watch.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - ARENA FLOOR

Carra approaches Krank, who is hopping up and down in his excitement.

They reach a lit circle about twenty feet in diameter and face each other. Krank ROARS.

CARRA

Seriously, Krank. Maybe brush a fang once in a while. Ugh!

The robotic ANNOUNCER speaks:

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Blades up and charged!

Carra and Krank lift their blades and power them on.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Winner take all, personal combat.
 Do not leave the circle or be
 disqualified! Begin!

Carra turns sideways to him and presents a high guard.

KRANK
 This is where you brought my
 brother shame! This is where I end
 you!

CARRA
 This is where I put gum on your
 Christmas list. Bring it, Doormat!

Krank SNARLS and charges wildly. Carra waits until the last second, then lunges to the side with one leg extended.

Krank trips over her leg and sprawls and rolls. He jumps up and ROARS as she turns to face him again.

A CLAXON sounds.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
 Contestant out of bounds!
 Disqualification. Carra Stone Wins.

Krank looks down to see a single claw touching the circle. He gapes at Carra and she looks back at him, just as stunned.

CARRA
 Seriously? Worst revenge match
 ever, lint face.

The crowd goes BERSERK! Krank lifts the offending paw, far too late, and looks around stupidly.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - ARENA REVIEW BOX - CONTINUOUS

The Empress is doubled over the railing, LAUGHING. Devitus stands there GIBBERING, lips blubbering and eyes wide.

The Empress rolls back against the railing, points at him, and screams derisive LAUGHTER.

She tries to catch her breath, then sees Krank standing on one paw and is gone again. She turns, doubled-over and resting her forehead on the railing, and HOOTS laughter.

Devitus suddenly makes a run for the entrance to the review box. The Empress' guards lower their lances and block his way.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - ARENA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Krank looks across the circle at Carra, who shrugs at him.

Krank realizes he's still standing on one leg and puts it down sheepishly.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
Defeat in final match at exactly
6.8 seconds. Also a Blood Academy
record.

The crowd begins to GIGGLE, then LAUGH, then the laughter SWELLS.

Carra sees Krank's brow furrow at the laughter. She sighs, shakes her head, and raises her blade in guard.

Krank charges fiercely, hacking at her with his blade. Carra meets it with a ferocity of her own, parrying his blade aside each time expertly.

She deflects his last roundhouse slash and backhands him with a sharp SLAP. He staggers back and his eyes widen as his paw goes to his face...

Krank pulls the side-arm out from behind his back and points it at her. The audience GASPS.

Eugene grabs onto Brick's shoulder. Norman jumps down out of view.

BRICK
Carra! NO!

EUGENE
No!

Krank 'cocks' the side-arm and the lights WHIR around the cylinder.

CARRA
Krank, you know they'll fry you for
this, right?

KRANK
I'll fry you!

There's a SCRATCHING sound. Krank frowns, then looks down at his boot.

Norman SCRATCHES at Krank's boot with one paw. When the pup is sure he has the Kuruwa's attention, he drops down on all fours.

Krank draws a shocked breath, GASP. He stares at Norman for a moment, the entire arena frozen in time...

The pup's eyes narrow, then he suddenly lets out a sharp bossy BARK.

Krank utterly and completely freaks out, SCREAMING and accidentally FIRING the pistol in the air: ZZZAAAT!

This startles him and causes him to drop the gun, and it goes off again when it hits the floor: ZZZAAAT!

The second shot hits the hanging light bank with an EXPLOSION that showers sparks on the crowd - They SCREAM!

The entire bank is driven up into the ceiling, and a RUPTURE occurs. Air is SUCKED out into the void around the station.

The bank of lights drops straight down from the hole, sparking and flaming. Carra leaps across the circle to knock Krank out of the way - CRASH!

She gathers a BARKING puppy up off the floor, and stuffs him in her shirt.

A CLAXON sounds repeatedly. The Announcer reports:

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
Hull breach! Activating containment
field! Clear the arena floor! Clear
the arena floor!

A field, similar to the anti-gravity field, KICKS ON to protect the crowd. The oxygen LEAK is contained to a cylinder that extends from the floor all the way up to the ceiling.

Krank, on his paws and knees, is looking straight up at the LEAK. He begins to slowly rise towards the ceiling. He looks at Carra and WHINES, the world's largest puppy.

Carra stands, then runs at him and leaps, catching onto his boots. They both begin to lower towards the floor.

Above, more of the ceiling lets go. The LEAK intensifies and Krank and Carra head upwards again, rapidly. Norman BARKS, muffled, from within her shirt.

CARRA

Brick!

Brick runs over to the edge of the seats and PUNCHES his hand into the floor. He comes up with a heavy metal cable. Muscles bulging, he ties a huge knot in the end, then rapidly yanks up coils of the cable.

Carra and Krank are halfway up to the hole in the ceiling. Krank is HOWLING. Carra holds onto his boots grimly.

Brick runs to the edge of the arena floor, SPINNING the knotted end of the heavy cable like a lasso. He lets the cable fly and it soars up towards Carra and Krank.

BRICK

CARRA! GRAB HOLD!

Carra catches the cable with one hand, but Krank continues to rise and she's stretched between him and the cable.

BRICK (CONT'D)

(shouting up to her)

LET HIM GO!

Carra shakes her head 'no.' She reaches out with one foot, finds the cable and wraps her leg around it. She bends the leg, trapping the cable.

They've been rising the whole time, and Krank's panicked face is inches from going out into space.

Carra lets the cable go with her hand and grabs onto Krank's boot with both hands.

CARRA

PULL US DOWN!

Brick begins to reel them in. His massive muscles work like a machine as he heaves through clenched teeth. He gets them about twenty feet from the ground and almost to the edge of the field.

A plate CLANGS down over the gaping hole, and air stops venting out into space. Sparks drop from the ceiling as the plate is WELDED in place.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
Hull integrity restored.
Engineering droids on site.

Carra and Krank drop. They both land hard: WHAP! WHAP!

ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Deactivating containment field.

Brick hurries over to Carra. Eugene strides urgently up to them both.

EUGENE
Is she okay? Her vitals are
elevated, but I don't-

BRICK
Calm down Salad Fork. She's okay.

He stands her up. She's a bit wobbly, but okay.

CARRA
Hey, Krank, you think we can just-

Suddenly, she is snatched into the air by a paw!

Krank holds her by her throat and glares into her face.
In her shirt, Norman GROWLS fiercely and for real.

KRANK
First you shame my brother, then
you shame me! I kill you for all to
see!

And then --

-- a giant blue hand snatches Krank off his feet by his
throat and turns him in the air.

KRANK (CONT'D)
Hururgh!

Krank is whirled around at the end of Brick's arm, to see
Brick's other hand drawing back in a giant fist!

Carra, in a heap on the ground, looks up in alarm.

CARRA
Brick?!

KRANK
Hah! You can't hit me! You-

BOOM! Krank plows into an empty row of chairs,
SPLINTERING them and coming to rest in a furry heap...

A small WHINE issues from a pile of Krank.

Carra stares disbelievingly at Brick. He shrugs at her.

BRICK

I'm a little different than most
Jaredians.

CARRA

You'll smack someone good!

BRICK

I will smack someone good.

The entire arena looks on at them in stunned silence.
There are no cheers. Eugene steps up to them.

CARRA

How much trouble are you in?

BRICK

It's not good.

CARRA

We'll fight, then!

Eugene raises his hands like a boxer, then SHORTS OUT and
collapses in a heap - KLANK.

Brick shakes his head.

BRICK

Take care of Norman. Get as far
from me as you can. You're top
student, you have a future. I
don't.

Guards are coming down the aisles and from out of the
tunnel for him. Dozens and dozens of them.

Carra starts to raise her blade.

CARRA

You and me then!

Brick gently pushes her blade down and shakes his head
'no.'

BRICK

Thanks for being my friend.

Guards arrive and take him roughly into custody. Carra watches helplessly. They drag him away.

Eugene stirs as Carra pets Norman through her shirt.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - ARENA REVIEW BOX - CONTINUOUS

The Empress strides towards Devitus, who drops to his knees.

DEVITUS

Please! Please, Your Highness!
Don't take my head! It's the only
one that fits! I'm attached to it!
Please!! I-

She holds up a hand as she reaches him, cutting him off. She bends over into his upturned blubbering face.

NECRANISSA

My sweet Devitus! I forgot how much
you amused me. I'm not going to
kill you...

Devitus tries to reply, but he's too overcome. He makes NOISES and quivers and BLUBBERS.

NECRANISSA (CONT'D)

Eloquent. No, I won't kill you, but
I'm transferring you back to the
fleet. To my ship. The same ship as
Carra Stone. You can watch as she
succeeds by my side.

DEVITUS

...Please kill me Your Majesty!
Take my head! Chop me up into
pieces! Anything! Please-

NECRANISSA

I hope your old uniform fits.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - ARENA FLOOR - LATER

Carra sits dejectedly in a front row seat, even though the place has emptied. Norman sleeps in a ball on her lap.

She looks up at Eugene, who sits beside her.

CARRA

This is my fault. Brick got in trouble because of me.

EUGENE

Yes.

CARRA

We're gonna have to work on your conversation skills. Especially with women.

EUGENE

The arena computer called me a "smooth talker."

CARRA

Well, when I'm gone at least you'll have someone to talk to.

Norman wakes, his hair standing up. He stands in her lap and GROWLS at the tunnel entrance.

Carra stands and puts Norman in her shirt. He continues to GROWL.

CARRA (CONT'D)

Shh! I'll give you a treat if you're quiet.

The GROWLING cuts off and there's a quiet BARK. A tail wags through her shirt.

Out of the shadows of the Arena tunnel comes the Empress, surrounded by her guard.

Carra drops to a knee, Eugene does the same beside her.

CARRA (CONT'D)

Your Majesty!

EUGENE

Your Majesty.

The Empress stops near them and gestures.

NECRANISSA

Rise.

Carra and Eugene stand facing the ruler of all known space. Norman stirs and Carra quickly puts a hand on him.

CARRA

I, ah, I swallowed something in class-

NECRANISSA

I know you have a pet. I don't care. The Academy's top student deserves a perk. Bring it with you on the Flagship. But I can't promise my guards won't eat it.

Norman WHINES unhappily.

CARRA

Your Majesty, may I ask a favor?

A GUARD steps forward sharply and levels his bone staff at her throat. The tip glows.

GUARD

Speak only when spoken to!

The Empress gestures and the guard lowers his staff.

NECRANISSA

I cannot grant you the giant's life.

She steps close to Carra and puts a hand on her shoulder. Norman WHINES again, warily. Carra pets him.

NECRANISSA (CONT'D)

The Jaredians serve the Empire all across the Galaxy. They've been our slaves for thousands of years, and we bred them to be nonviolent.

CARRA

You...bred them?

NECRANISSA

If one commits an act of violence unpunished, others might discover the same capacity. He dies.

CARRA

But-

The Empress raises an eyebrow and Carra holds her tongue.

NECRANISSA

Tomorrow morning, you will christen my new flagship by breaking the giant across its bow.

Carra reacts in surprise and alarm, GASPING.

NECRANISSA (CONT'D)

Don't worry, we have a device for just such a purpose. I designed it myself. And the hull is reinforced. He may dent it though, he's a big one.

Carra's mouth opens in horror.

NECRANISSA (CONT'D)

No worries, my little pet. That's why we have engineers. We sail right after the christening.

She turns and leaves, her guards falling in around her as she disappears in the shadows of the tunnel.

Eugene turns to Carra.

EUGENE

We're not going to let that happen are we?

CARRA

No, we are not. We have one night to plan a surprise.

EUGENE

What's a surprise?

CARRA

Look it up in the data banks. Like 'surprise party.'

Eugene tilts his head and HUMS.

EUGENE

Oh! Is it appropriate for me to say 'Yay'?

CARRA

You betcha.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - DUNGEON CELL - NIGHT

Brick sits, his back against a dirty stone wall, knees drawn up and head dangling between them. A dim light glows through a small window in the heavy metal door.

Ridiculously large manacles on his wrists are bolted to equally heavy chains. Brick looks up when he hears the hot THRUM of a welding torch.

Ceiling shadows recede under the torch's blue light, revealing a duct with a vent set in it. The torch CUTS a rapid outline around the vent.

The vent cover falls and the torch cuts off. Brick snags the vent cover before it can hit the floor. He juggles it for a second (it's hot) before laying it on the floor.

We hear a muffled and eager WHINE, then a "SHHHH!." Carra wriggles out of the vent and hangs down into the cell. She carries a small pack on her back.

Carra drops like a cat. Brick reaches out to steady her when she lands, chains JINGLING. She sets the pack down.

Carra produces Norman from her shirt, and the puppy goes crazy for Brick. He jumps up on Brick's boot, tail wagging crazily, and WHINES again eagerly.

CARRA
(whispering)
Better pick him up before he gives
us away.

Brick bends to pick up Norman, who covers the giant's face with kisses, wagging all the while.

BRICK
(quietly)
I can't fit in that duct.

CARRA
That's not the plan.

BRICK
There's a plan?

CARRA
Of course there is.

Brick takes a deep breath then sits on the floor, JINGLING. Carra joins him.

Norman curls up immediately in Brick's immense lap, SIGHS, then SNORTS in contentment.

BRICK
I don't want this. You need to go.

CARRA

Sorry, you're not the boss of me.

Norman SNORES. They both look down at him for a second.

BRICK

You need to look out for him, and then yourself.

CARRA

I need to look out for all my friends. That's how it works.

BRICK

Says who?

CARRA

Says your friend. I got a lot to do for tomorrow, so listen up.

Brick inhales some dust from the dirty floor, his nose wrinkles in the precursor of a sneeze.

CARRA (CONT'D)

I just needed to stop by, make sure you're okay. And I need to know if there's any way you can get free-

Brick lets go with a tremendous SNEEZE, snapping the manacles off both of his wrists with the violence of it.

He wipes his nose, then smooshes the manacles back on his wrists effortlessly.

BRICK

Sorry, what?

CARRA

Nothing. We're good to go.

BRICK

Where's the android?

CARRA

He's on a date.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - SHIP'S HANGAR - NIGHT

The hangar space is cavernous, the curved walls and ceiling made of clear plates looking out on winking stars. A dark green metal deck holds various ships.

The deck is quiet, everything tied down and inactive. TWO Makkai HANGAR GUARDS stand bored, with their bone staffs crossed.

Behind them, an enormous shape sits in a berth under a black tarp, like a beast sleeping under a black sheet.

In the background, Eugene sneaks in exaggerated high steps from out of a side doorway towards the sheet. He, too, wears a small backpack.

One of his steps CLANGS on the deck. A Hangar Guard turns as Eugene freezes.

The guard sees Eugene, then immediately turns to face back out.

HANGAR GUARD #1
Just a droid. All clear.

Eugene sneaks the rest of the way with shaking knees, then ducks under the enormous black tarp.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - DUNGEON CELL - NIGHT

Carra takes out food and drink from her pack.

BRICK
I'm not hungry.

CARRA
You need your strength.

Brick looks at her.

CARRA (CONT'D)
Figure of speech. I gotta ask something...

BRICK
What?

CARRA
...Does the Dominion really breed your people as slaves?

BRICK
Yes. For longer than our history.

CARRA
Gods. When I give the word, we're getting long gone. I got us a ride.

BRICK
A ride?

CARRA
You'll see.

BRICK
And then?

CARRA
And then we run like hell. And
break some heads on the way.

Brick drinks from the container she put out. Thirsty, he drains it in a great draught, then BELCHES.

A DUNGEON GUARD can be heard far off down the hall.

DUNGEON GUARD (O.S.)
Quiet down there, slave!

Carra and Brick share an amused look, and Carra puts a hand over her mouth to stifle a giggle.

BRICK
(quietly)
Break some heads, huh? Anyone else told me we were gonna make it out, I wouldn't believe them. You sure you wanna throw away everything you earned here?

CARRA
I'm not serving any fleet that has slaves. Nuh huh, no way.

BRICK
You really think this can work?

Carra shrugs.

CARRA
If it doesn't, we'll put the epic in epic fail.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - UNDER THE FLAGSHIP TARP - NIGHT

Eugene leans with his back against a gleaming red hull, one knee cocked. He's reaching low and behind him to plug into a panel on the ship. His other hand is on his hip like a model on a photoshoot.

EUGENE

How YOU doin'? What? Aw, don't play me like that, now...You got a fine hull, Mama. No, I've never said that to another ship...I know we just met, but can I ask you a couple of favors?

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - DUNGEON CELL - NIGHT

Carra stands, packing up the food and such she brought.

CARRA

Boost me up.

Chains JINGLING, he effortlessly lifts her up with one hand to scramble into the vent. He hands Norman up with the other. The pup is now DREAM BARKING, in an adorably muffled fashion.

When they're both secure in the duct, he bends over and lifts the vent cover.

CARRA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

(whispering)

You need me to weld it?

BRICK

Nah.

He SQUEEZES the metal together with his fingers.

BRICK (CONT'D)

That'll hold until tomorrow. Then either way, it won't matter.

CARRA (O.S.)

Get some rest.

Brick sits in a JINGLE of chains, shaking his head.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - UNDER THE FLAGSHIP TARP - NIGHT

Eugene, now facing the hull, finishes his task.

EUGENE

I'm gonna see you tomorrow. Yes, promise! Um hmm...Ciao, Bella!

He disengages from the panel and puts the cover back on. A seal GLOWS around the panel, and the hull appears unblemished.

Eugene moves back, under the tarp along the ship, to scaffolding.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - SHIP'S HANGAR - CONTINUOUS

The two Hangar Guards stand as before, impassive. One yawns and shakes his head.

HANGAR GUARD #1
There's no point to this. Who's gonna mess with the Empress' flag ship?

HANGAR GUARD #2
An idiot. Or someone who wants to make the Empress a mortal enemy.

Eugene's form can be seen under the tarp, climbing the scaffolding on the side of the ship.

HANGAR GUARD #1
I'm wiped.

HANGAR GUARD #2
Try sleeping with your eyes open.

HANGAR GUARD #1
You can do that?

Hangar Guard #2 stands impassive for a beat, then begins SNORING softly. Eugene's form stops under the tarp, near the top of the ship.

HANGAR GUARD #1 (CONT'D)
Cool.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - UNDER THE FLAGSHIP TARP - NIGHT

Eugene unpacks his bag silently. It looks like cans of futuristic spray-paint and a compressor.

On the hull near him in giant letters is written the legend "E.S.S. Dreadnought".

Eugene puts a finger to his ear and speaks softly.

EUGENE
Have you decided?

CARRA (O.S.)
What does the ship look like?

EUGENE

Sending you an image now.

There's a pause, then a small GASP.

CARRA (O.S.)

Oh, I know exactly what to call it.
Paint this...

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - SHIP'S HANGAR - CONTINUOUS

Both Hangar Guards stand immobile, different kinds of gentle SNORING coming from each, as the tarp ripples behind them while Eugene works.

Above the sleeping guards, stars shine through the ceiling panes and comets trail across the sky.

INT. BLOOD ACADEMY - SHIP'S HANGAR - MORNING

The view tilts downward from the stars through the ceiling pane, revealing the entire class of cadets in two columns before the concealed flagship.

Floodlights illuminate the ship, and scaffolding under the tarp has been removed so it looks even more like a sleek sleeping creature.

A ceremonial carpet lined with Makkai guards runs between the two columns of students, leading up to a stage erected in front of the ship.

Faculty sits on the stage, including Sowrus, Hangus and Magdus. A throne center stage waits for the Empress.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The day arrived, as it always does,
where Carra had to decide the kind
o' person she wanted to be, an'
just how she'd let the Galaxy know.

Carra stands at a podium center stage, to the right of the ship's hidden prow. She wears a dress uniform and looks older than she did at the start of our story.

Devitus stands uncomfortably at the foot of steps leading up to the stage. He's in his old Naval uniform, and it no longer fits. The pants look raised for high-water, and the waist gaps to show where the scholar has softened.

Devitus draws in breath to make an announcement. A button POPS off his uniform jacket and ZINGS off.

Somewhere in the crowd of cadets, Pudge utters a quiet:

PUDGE (O.S.)
Ow! Was that a button?

DEVITUS
(amplified)
A-TEN-SHUN!

The Makkai guards and the Cadets rise to attention.

The Empress makes her way down the carpet. Great HORNS blare a fanfare. She wears a headdress and cape, and holds a huge staff: tall and dark and evil.

She sees Devitus in his discomfort and smiles wickedly. The grin broadens when she sees Carra at the podium.

The Empress mounts the steps and turns to face the assemblage.

NECRANISSA
(amplified)
We are here today to launch my new
flagship: The Dreadnought! And to
punish a rebellious slave who dared
strike a cadet. A two-fer!

The cadets CHEER. In the crowd of cadets, we see Krank in a cumbersome body cast.

She TAPS her staff on the stage floor. To stage right, deck plates retract to allow a platform to rise next to the stage with a HYDRAULIC WHINE.

Brick, in chains, stands in the bucket of what looks like a huge metal catapult set on its side. The device is designed to whip Brick around and into the hull at the pull of a lever. He's the champagne bottle.

As the sideways catapult comes to a rest, Brick is at the level of the stage, close to Carra's podium. Between them is the lever that will smash him against the ship.

The cadets JEER and CALL OUT for the sacrifice. From within his bandages, Krank HOWLS.

NECRANISSA (CONT'D)
There will be no graduation
celebration for the rest of you!

The Crowd NOISE stops abruptly.

NECRANISSA (CONT'D)

None of you are top student, are you? You're lucky you'll get to serve in my fleet.

The cadets look at each other, crushed. We hear Pudge from the back:

PUDGE (O.S.)

Hey, I found a button!

The Empress turns to Carra, who grips the podium with white knuckles.

NECRANISSA

Would you like to say something, dear?

Carra bows her head in acknowledgement, and the Empress takes her place on her throne.

CARRA

(under her breath)

Well, you spoke to me first...

She raises her head and looks out over the students and the faculty that tormented her.

CARRA (CONT'D)

I came to the Blood Academy to learn. And I did. I learned things I expected: about Shields and gravitic cannons and space fighting and the Dance of the Gravity Blade.

Cadets and Faculty alike are descending into expected boredom, eyes glazing over and mouths gaping slightly. The Empress looks on politely, but checks her watch.

CARRA (CONT'D)

And I learned things I didn't expect: about how when teachers are bullies, students follow their example. Most importantly, I learned some things at the academy that I was never supposed to know.

Cadets and faculty are perking up: Something unexpected is unfolding. The Empress frowns and refocuses with a slight shake of her head.

CARRA (CONT'D)

I learned that I'm human and I'm from Earth.

(MORE)

CARRA (CONT'D)

And that we had a long history of standing up against bullies. When dictators rose up, we cut them down, even though sometimes we took too long.

Devitus turns to Magdus and whispers:

DEVITUS

(whispering)

I would never have let her speak.

Carra takes another breath and continues.

CARRA

When the Empires of our planet ruled our seas, we rebelled as pirates. The Dominion and the Empress are just bullies in the stars. And I guess that makes me a pirate.

Everyone is riveted now. The Empress frowns thunderously, professors BLUSTER among themselves.

Carra reaches to her left and tugs on the tarp. Assisted by hidden MACHINERY, the black cloth comes down in a THUNDERCLAP, revealing the ship.

The flagship is shaped like a dragon. A bulbous head makes up the prow, with wraparound windows making up a bank of "eyes."

After the head, the ship thins to a long neck, and then widens to a huge body bristling with cannons. Aft of the main hull, she tapers to a tail with two horizontal fins.

Enormous blood red wings lay against the hull. The 'head' rears up and the wings suddenly unfold to reveal that the ship has been renamed:

The word DRAGON is painted on both sides of the ship. The crowd GASPS as one.

She reaches into the podium, then sets Norman on her shoulder. He happily wags his tail at everyone and BARKS.

CARRA (CONT'D)

Now, Brick!

Brick shrugs his chains off spectacularly, SHATTERING them with a mighty shrug. Faculty and front row cadets YELL and dive under their chairs to avoid shrapnel.

Brick turns and grips the catapult. He GRUNTS and rips it out of the deck, bolts ZINGING off everywhere.

From the crowd, in a lull in the YELLING we hear:

PUDGE (O.S.)

Hey, I lost my button!

Brick sets the catapult on the ground and steps back into the ammunition bucket. He holds out his hand to Carra.

CARRA

No more tyranny, no more slaves!
Down with the Dominion!

The Empress stands, the crowd SCREAMS in outrage. Guards rush the stage!

Carra grabs Norman, pulls the lever and leaps. Brick grabs her hand and the three of them are LAUNCHED in a high arc towards the upraised head of the Dragon.

Eugene pops out a window and yells:

EUGENE

Surprise!

Carra lands like a Cat on the prow of the ship, cradling Norman. Brick lands heavily behind her with a WHUMP. His weight dents the center of the Dragon's 'head' near the windows, making the ship look like it's frowning fiercely. They scramble into the window past Eugene.

CARRA

Permission to come aboard!

BRICK

Look out, Can Opener!

EUGENE

How come nobody else yelled surprise?

The crowd SCREAMS, and Makkai begin FIRING at the ship. Eugene ducks inside.

NECRANISSA

Stop! Do not fire at my ship or I'll roast you alive! Hold your fire!

A makeshift Jolly Roger flag unfurls at the highpoint of the Dragon's tail, like a third fin.

The Dragon's engines ROAR to life and it levitates slowly. The wings stretch out and up with a mechanical WHINE.

A voice from the back of the crowd:

PUDGE (O.S.)
All good! I found the button!

The Dragon begins to turn towards the end of the hangar and the Empress realizes what's happening.

NECRANISSA
What are you idiots waiting for!
Destroy that ship! Fire!

The Makkai guards look at each other, then begin FIRING on the ship.

INT. STARSHIP DRAGON - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Three sling-like seats hang from the ceiling in a triangle. The pods have attached control panels like huge tablets.

Eugene is plugged into a bank of computers behind and slightly to the left of the center seat. A door leads back into the ship to the right of him.

EUGENE
All systems tied together! You have
the conn!

Carra sits in the center seat, strapped in across her torso. She grips the same types of controls from the flight simulator: she's flying the Dragon by herself.

Brick is in the seat to her right, also belted in. The seat suddenly drops under his weight, almost to the deck, with a SHRIEK of metal.

CARRA
We'll reinforce that.

Brick, whose knees are now up around his eyes, rolls his eye, and returns to scanning his panel.

BRICK
None of the escort fighters are
powered up yet.

CARRA
Eugene disabled them.

EUGENE

I'm told it was like speed dating.

CARRA

They'll override and come after us,
but I'm more worried about the home-
world fleet.

Brick hits something on his tablet and a holograph pops up in the center of the bridge. It shows the Academy orbiting the home-world.

A little dragon flies out of the academy into orbit. On the opposite side of the planet, a fleet of ships orbits on an intercept course. A star shines out and away from the center.

BRICK

We got about five minutes. You said something about a plan?

CARRA

Eugene, how long to reroute power from these engines into the new shields?

EUGENE

That'll take a long time, Captain!

CARRA

How long?

EUGENE

At least seven minutes!

CARRA

Get on it. You have four.

Eugene unplugs and exits the bridge.

BRICK

Isn't he a wardrobe droid?!

CARRA

Dominion uniforms have hundreds of thousands of combinations. He's got a serious processor.

BRICK

But they're not supposed to get involved in combat, right?

CARRA

Neither are you. He's learning to look at things differently.

BRICK

What are we gonna do to buy time?

CARRA

Draw them in and bang some heads.

Brick grins.

BRICK

Aye, aye Captain.

EXT. STARSHIP DRAGON - MAKKUS PRIME - CONTINUOUS

The Dragon soars out of orbit and heads off towards the nearby star. Her engines PULSE and she tears off.

INT. MAKKAI DESTROYER - BRIDGE - DAY

The Empress strides into the command center of the warship as Makkai crew members work frantically. Devitus, still in his too-small uniform, bends over a control panel with a MAKKAI OFFICER.

NECRANISSA

What is the delay?! I want to get after that ship and blow it out of space! NOW!!

DEVITUS

I'm sorry Your Majesty! The ship's computer keeps returning a phrase when we order it to power up.

NECRANISSA

What phrase?!

DEVITUS

"Papi says to just chill here"?

Devitus shrugs at her, uncomprehending.

NECRANISSA

Have you tried unplugging the computer and rebooting it?!

Devitus and the officer look at each other sheepishly. The Empress drops her forehead to her hand with a SMACK.

INT. STARSHIP DRAGON - BRIDGE - MINUTES LATER

Carra points the ship towards the star growing in the front view screens.

BRICK

The fleet is closing in. Are we...are we headed right for the star?

CARRA

Yep. They won't be able to see us.

BRICK

Because we'll be all kinds of burned up.

CARRA

Angle the shields to face the star. The Dragon can take more heat than any other ship out there.

The hologram at the bridge's center shows the dragon headed right for the star with the fleet behind her and closing.

BRICK

Captain...

CARRA

Say it, Brick.

BRICK

I'm new to this First Mate thing, but...if the shields are facing the star, aren't we vulnerable to the fleet's cannons behind us?

CARRA

Good point. No plan is perfect.

INT. MAKKAI DESTROYER - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

The Empress and Devitus watch the main viewscreen: the Dragon heads into the star's corona and disappears.

NECRANISSA

Why are we slowing?! Get her!

DEVITUS

Our shields won't take as much as hers. We can't get closer.

NECRANISSA

Then open fire!

DEVITUS

Our sensors can't lock on. She's kind of invisible.

The Empress grabs him by his collar. He loses more buttons with multiple POPS.

CREWMEMBER (O.S.)

Ow!

NECRANISSA

Shoot. Until. You. Hit. Something!!

DEVITUS

Yes, Your Majesty. Open fire!

EXT. MAKKAI DESTROYER - BATTLE GROUP - CONTINUOUS

The destroyer opens fire, gravity cannons BLASTING. The ships around it join in until the fusillade BOOMS.

NARRATOR (O.S.)

Actually, in space there ain't no sound. So it went like this...

The sound of the many GUNS cuts off and the ships continue to fire in SILENCE, guns flashing, with just a HUM of space behind them.

NARRATOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)

But that's kinda borin', naw? So...

The THUNDER of guns resumes as the fleet tries to hit a Dragon they can't see.

INT. STARSHIP DRAGON - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Carra and Brick look at the viewscreen intently. The hologram in front of it shows the fleet firing straight ahead. The Dragon is off to the left.

BRICK

They're gonna figure it out. Shields are down to twenty-one percent.

Carra hits a BUTTON on her console.

CARRA

Eugene! Four minutes is up.

Norman hops up and down, BARKING, trying to get attention.

Eugene's voice comes out of a speaker:

EUGENE (O.S.)

Power rerouted from the engines,
Captain!

BRICK

We're back up to ninety-two percent, but it's all going to protect us from the star. One shot'll cream us.

CARRA

Yeah, how are their shields?

Brick checks his control panel and grins widely.

BRICK

Dropping rapidly. They can't take the heat!

CARRA

Get ready to-

Norman is BARKING nonstop and hopping up and down in front of the viewscreen.

CARRA (CONT'D)

WHAT, NORMAN?!?

Norm sits, wags his tail and offers her a paw. He BARKS, encouraging her to do the right thing. Carra closes her eyes and reins in her temper.

CARRA (CONT'D)

Fine. You want a treat?

Norman shoots up on his hind legs so happily he tips over and rolls around on his back, GROWLING and SNORTING with ecstasy at the thought of a treat.

Carra unbelts and stands. She snaps her fingers over the other pod and Norman jumps up into it, immediately BEGGING for his treat.

Carra feeds him a treat and belts him in.

CARRA (CONT'D)
 (to Norman)
 Can I go back to my space battle
 now? Thanks.

He wags an affirmative. She takes her seat again and harnesses herself.

CARRA (CONT'D)
 (to herself)
 I hadda teach him that trick.
 (to Brick)
 Where was I?

BRICK
 We have shields. Them, not so much.

CARRA
 Oh, yeah. Power up the cannons.

She grabs the flight controls and swings the nose of the Dragon around to face the fleet.

INT. MAKKAI DESTROYER - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

The Empress strains forward, searching the viewscreen for signs of an explosion. Devitus stares at a control panel.

NECRANISSA
 Keep firing! Shift the blast point
 left to right! She's in there!

DEVITUS
 Your Majesty? Your Majesty!

She rounds on him, eyes crazy.

NECRANISSA
 What?! Why isn't she dead yet?!

DEVITUS
 Your Highness, our shields are down
 to less than ten percent. Across
 the fleet! We're extremely
 vulnerable.

NECRANISSA
 She wouldn't dare!

DEVITUS
 Have you met her?!

The Makkai Officer sees something in his scanner.

MAKKAI OFFICER
It's coming! It's coming! Right out
of the Sun! Dragon at two o' clock!

INT. STARSHIP DRAGON - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Carra steers the Dragon right at the fleet. Eugene comes back on the bridge and sees what's happening.

EUGENE
I'll be hiding in a locker if you
need me...

CARRA
Brace yourself, Hair Clip!

The fleet grows in the viewscreen. Eugene plugs into the rear computer bank and metal braces come out of the deck to anchor him.

BRICK
(bellowing)
TIME TO BANG SOME HEADS!

CARRA
Fire the Gravity Cannons!

EXT. STARSHIP DRAGON - OUT OF THE SUN - CONTINUOUS

The Dragon SOARS out of the glare of the sun, cannons ripping into the Dominion fleet. She tears a path of EXPLOSIONS and FIRES through the heart of them!

The Dominion ships SHOOT back randomly, but they don't even come close.

The Dragon soars off. The Dominion ships, most of them damaged, turn slowly to give pursuit.

INT. STARSHIP DRAGON - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Carra and Brick CHEER and high-five each other. Eugene CHEERS a second after they stop, awkwardly. Carra shakes her numb hand, while Norman BARKS happily.

EUGENE
Captain-

CARRA
I'm gonna swing back around and
finish them-

EUGENE
 Captain!

CARRA
 What?

EUGENE
 Our shields just cut out.

The ship is JOLTED by a stray shot. The hologram shows the fleet regrouping and closing, targeting their fire.

CARRA
 Raise them!

EUGENE
 I'm trying to! I don't know what's wrong!

Another JOLT and a small explosion from within the ship.

BRICK
 That took out some of our guns!
 Run, Captain!

Carra's eyes narrow and her lips press into a line. She flies the Dragon with the fleet in pursuit.

EXT. STARSHIP DRAGON - AHEAD OF THE FLEET - CONTINUOUS

The Dragon dodges the incoming cannon BLASTS, soaring and banking like crazy.

NARRATOR (O.S.)
 The flight instructor was right.
 Carra Stone would never be a decent pilot. From th' beginnin', she was the best.

The Dragon outflies the pursuers' shots, and banks towards a planet that grows in the distance.

INT. STARSHIP DRAGON - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Carra flies the heck out of the Dragon as Brick and Eugene grip their control panels tightly. Norman naps in his chair, unconcerned. He SNORES.

CARRA
 What's that planet?

Eugene hits buttons on his control panel, head tilted.

EUGENE

Garbage planet. Junked ships and trash.

CARRA

Perfect.

INT. MAKKAI DESTROYER - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

The Empress points her staff at the Dragon dancing on the viewscreen.

NECRANISSA

Why isn't she blowing up?

MAKKAI OFFICER

I can't hit her!

The Empress fires a BLAST from her staff, knocking the officer across the bridge.

NECRANISSA

See how easy that was!

DEVITUS

She's heading for Podus III. It's a junk planet. Our destroyers aren't meant for atmospheric fighting. She can avoid us forever.

NECRANISSA

Shoot her down!! Now!

EXT. STARSHIP DRAGON - AHEAD OF THE FLEET - CONTINUOUS

The fleet redoubles its fire. Despite crazy aerial acrobatics, the Dragon takes a few glancing HITS on her hindquarters.

She descends into Podus III's atmosphere trailing smoke.

INT. STARSHIP DRAGON - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Carra fights the controls. Eugene works frantically behind her, and Brick works his control panel like a novelist finishing the last chapter.

CARRA

We're coming in hot! It ain't gonna be a smooth landing!

BRICK

Just keep it in one piece, Captain.
Me and the tin can will fix it.
They can't follow us with those
ships!

EUGENE

I did it! I figured out what went
wrong with the shields!

CARRA

Yeah? Did you fix it?

EUGENE

Oh! Uh...I'm on it, Captain.

EXT. STARSHIP DRAGON - PODUS III - CONTINUOUS

The Dragon screams down from the skies, still dodging
cannon BOLTS.

A galactic junkyard rises up towards the ship. Jagged
metal, rust-covered plates and wreckage as far as the eye
can see.

The Dragon dodges and dips through the wreckage at
breakneck speed. Struts come out of the bottom of the
ship as it slows, then darts into a giant metal silo.

The struts SQUEAL as they hit the floor of the silo, and
the Dragon SKIDS and turns, finally BUMPING to a stop in
a cloud of dirty smoke.

INT. STARSHIP DRAGON - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Carra and Brick let out the breath they were holding.
Eugene sags against the rear computer station.

Norman looks up from his nap and queries with a little
BARK: "Are we here?"

Eugene finishes something with a flourish.

EUGENE

I fixed the shields! It was just a
faulty connection. New ships, you
know.

BRICK

Lotta good it'll do us now.

EUGENE

Why?

Carra unbelts and studies the hologram. It shows the dragon in the silo, and the remains of the fleet high above the atmosphere directly over it.

CARRA

Their sensors will see us coming now. Even with the best shields in the galaxy, we try and take off and they'll pound us.

EUGENE

Oh. And now our cannons are offline.

Carra closes her eyes and SIGHS.

CARRA

Of course they are.

EUGENE

It's all the surface debris. If we take off, the air will clear them.

BRICK

Right before they blast us. At least they can't come after us...

INT. MAKKAI DESTROYER - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

The Empress rages at the entire bridge crew.

NECRANISSA

Go after them! Go after them!
Attack!

DEVITUS

Highness, we're not designed for atmosphere. And we can't maneuver well enough with all that junk. We'll have to out-wait her.

The Empress leans her face into his. Her eyes are wide and hair sticks out under her crown crazily.

NECRANISSA

Do I look like I'm good at waiting?!

DEVITUS

Your Majesty, nobody wants her more than I do....there's just no way to pilot this ship down there!

NECRANISSA

Do we have any armored tugs aboard?

DEVITUS

Wha-Oh! Yes, we do!

The Empress smiles wickedly and adjusts her crown.

NECRANISSA

Arm them to the teeth and go get me her head! Or I will have yours.

INT. STARSHIP DRAGON - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Carra paces back and forth in front of the hologram. Eugene and Brick watch her. Suddenly she stops and turns to the android.

CARRA

What would we need to make an over-shield big enough for the Dragon?

Eugene tilts his head to the side and HUMS.

EUGENE

We have everything except a bracer coil big enough.

Brick bends immediately to his panel.

BRICK

There's one in the freighter wreckage less than a kilometer north of our position!

Eugene notices a signal on his panel.

EUGENE

Captain! An armored tug with escorts is descending from the fleet! They're coming for us!

BRICK

I'll go for the coil.

CARRA

Nope, I'm faster. Get the
overshield ready by the time I get
back.

BRICK

Captain-

CARRA

That's an order.

Brick and Eugene exit the bridge. Carra turns to Norman
and rubs the offered belly.

CARRA (CONT'D)

You stay.

EXT. STARSHIP DRAGON - PODUS III - MINUTES LATER

A hatch lowers HYDRAULICALLY from the belly of the
Dragon. Carra emerges with a sack wrapped around her
torso. She raises her hand and talks into a wrist
gauntlet with gadgets and lights on it.

CARRA

(into the gauntlet)

Does this thing work? Hello? I
think it belonged to the Empress.

BRICK (O.S.)

We read you loud and clear.

EUGENE (O.S.)

I hear you, too.

CARRA

(into the gauntlet)

Only need one reply, guys.

BRICK (O.S.)

Okay.

EUGENE (O.S.)

Aye, aye Captain.

She shakes her head and heads off into the junked
landscape.

She spies two massive guns in the wreckage of a warship.
Together, they're the size of the Dragon,

CARRA
 (into her gauntlet)
 There's an old Battleship wrecked
 out here. Too bad we don't have
 time to attach those guns to the
 Dragon.

EUGENE (O.S.)
 Captain! The enemy ships will be
 here in seconds!

CARRA
 Aw, Grub Slime!

BRICK (O.S.)
 Hurry!

Carra starts running.

INT. STARSHIP DRAGON - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Brick and Eugene watch Carra's progress on the hologram.
 Above, enemy ships descend.

BRICK
 She's not gonna make it.

He turns and operates the panel at his seat, searching
 hard for something. He finds it and marks it on the
 panel. He whirls to Eugene.

BRICK (CONT'D)
 Eugene, listen to me! I'm gonna go
 set something up, and I'll need you
 to operate it.

EUGENE
 What is it?

BRICK
 I'm not gonna tell you. But when I
 give the word, it's all up to you.

EUGENE
 Can't it be all up to you?

BRICK
 Stay on the comms. Get the over-
 shield ready.

Brick rushes off the bridge.

INT. ARMORED TUG BLUNDERBUSS - PODUS III - MINUTES LATER

Devitus stands in his ridiculous uniform at the center of the Tug's bridge. The hologram in front of him suddenly zeroes in on Carra's running form.

DEVITUS

There she is! Out in the open!
Fire!

He turns to the viewscreen and can actually see her tiny form darting across the landscape.

DEVITUS (CONT'D)

Fire! Fire!!!

The guns ERUPT.

EXT. PODUS III - SURFACE - JUNKYARD WRECKAGE - CONTINUOUS

Carra looks up at the SIZZLING of incoming fire and dodges.

A BOLT of energy slams into the ground where she was a moment ago and sends her sprawling.

She rolls and is up and running again.

BOLTS slam down into the dirt and metal around her as she zigs and zags, closing in. Dirt ERUPTS around her.

She jumps over a metal tube, somersaults, and abruptly changes direction an instant before a BOLT obliterates the tube.

She runs, legs pumping, and talks into her wrist gauntlet:

CARRA

Boys! I'm gonna need a little help
here!

More BOLTS, closer and closer as she runs...

EXT. STARSHIP DRAGON - PODUS III - CONTINUOUS

Brick slides down the back of the Dragon with a massive cable trailing out behind him. He pounds towards the wrecked warship Carra spotted earlier, lugging the cable.

INT. ARMORED TUG BLUNDERBUSS - PODUS III - CONTINUOUS

Devitus leans forward over the holographic display, watching cannon FIRE close in on Carra.

He closes his hand on her little projected form.

DEVITUS

I have her! She's mine!!

EXT. PODUS III - SURFACE - JUNKYARD WRECKAGE - CONTINUOUS

Carra dodges, vaults over debris, and swings herself around wreckage. The BOLTS from above close in.

A SIZZLING bolt hits too near her and blows her off her feet. She tumbles and comes to rest, her head SMACKING a protruding rock. She CRIES OUT.

She grimaces and tries to rise. The Armored tug above her blurs and then sharpens in her vision.

Carra looks up --

-- as the barrels on the Tug's cannons glow in preparation to fire.

Suddenly, a fierce GROWLING furball is there, gripping her by the shoulder of her uniform and dragging her sharply to the left.

The puppy's legs strain as he pulls her out of the path of the cannon BLAST and into the shelter of two crossed metal plates.

EXPLOSIONS rain down around them. She pets him and he licks her face. He wags at her.

CARRA

Good boy. I'm glad you never listen.

EXT. PODUS III - SURFACE - SHIP WRECKAGE- CONTINUOUS

Brick jams a cable into a column and turns the end in the socket to secure it. Lights on the column power up and he hits buttons rapidly.

BRICK

Yes! Here we go!

He taps a device in his ear.

BRICK (CONT'D)
Eugene, you there?

EUGENE (O.S.)
I am.

BRICK
Stand by, Umbrella Stand.

Brick bends his knees, wraps his arms around the column, and lifts something enormously heavy. Metal SCREAMS and dust falls, obscuring him.

INT. BLUNDERBUSS - BRIDGE - PODUS III - CONTINUOUS

Devitus and Makkai officers stare at the clouds of holographic dust that obscure Carra and Norman in their makeshift shelter.

DEVITUS
Did we get her?

EXT. PODUS III - SURFACE - JUNKYARD WRECKAGE - CONTINUOUS

Carra huddles protectively over Norman as the dust settles. She looks up and sees a big brass-looking coil.

CARRA
The damn coil's right there. Might as well be miles away. Sorry, pal. You're only the best dog ever. I'm so sorry, Norm.

Norman licks her nose and WHINES.

EXT. STARSHIP DRAGON - PODUS III - CONTINUOUS

Brick steps up on the back of the Dragon. He is carrying the enormous gun battery from the battleship wreckage. He GRUNTS mightily with the effort. It's almost as big as the ship he stands on, and the cable he connected trails out behind him.

He braces his back foot, actually denting the hull.

BRICK
Eugene, you there?

INT. STARSHIP DRAGON - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Eugene sits in the command chair at center.

BRICK (O.S.)
Come in, Bucket. You there?

EUGENE
I'm here.

BRICK (O.S.)
You see what I hooked up?

EUGENE
Yes! We have guns! Good work!

BRICK (O.S.)
I need you to operate them.

EUGENE
Me?

Eugene's lights go out immediately and he sags in the chair as if unconscious.

EXT. PODUS III - ON THE BACK OF THE DRAGON - CONTINUOUS

Brick shifts the enormous weight of the gun battery on his back.

BRICK
Eugene! Come in, Eugene! Listen to me!

He shifts the weight on his shoulders.

BRICK (CONT'D)
I can't operate it. It's gotta be you...she's our friend and the Dominion has her dead to rights! She needs you! Eugene!

EXT. PODUS III - SURFACE - JUNKYARD WRECKAGE - CONTINUOUS

Carra scrunches her eyes tight, arms around the puppy. Norman scrunches his eyes, too.

INT. STARSHIP DRAGON - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Eugene slumps, motionless.

BRICK (O.S.)
 She needs you! Eugene! They're
 gonna blast her!

The lights in Eugene's eyes flicker.

CARRA (V.O.)
 Maybe it's all in how you look at
 it. If you don't think of it as
 combat, maybe you can do it.

Eugene suddenly sits up and his face lights shine
 fiercely.

The android slowly places his hands on the controls.

EUGENE
 Let's just play a little game...

INT. EUGENE'S MIND - CONTINUOUS

Mentally, Eugene follows the ship's connection: Through
 the length of the cable Brick laid and all the way to the
 massive guns, until he's looking out of the gun's sights
 at the armored tug.

A faint projection of "Bubble Breaker" is overlaid on the
 sights, not quite obscuring the armored tug.

EUGENE (O.S.)
 Just gonna have a little innocent
 fun.

Inside the android, there's a little JOLT and a POP. A
 wisp of smoke comes out the side of his head.

EUGENE (CONT'D)
 Game on.

INT. STARSHIP DRAGON - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Eugene grips the flight controls. A finger caresses the
 trigger.

EUGENE
 Let's break some heads!

BRICK (O.S.)
 All right!

EXT. PODUS III - ON THE BACK OF THE DRAGON - CONTINUOUS

The massive battery of guns Brick is holding OPENS UP with a thunderous CRASH.

Brick throws his head back and ROARS right along with the guns. He anchors the guns as they swivel, targeting.

INT. ARMORED TUG BLUNDERBUSS - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

On the viewscreen, Devitus spots Carra's form huddled under the shelter of the metal plates.

A MAKKAI OFFICER (#2) sees something on his control panel.

DEVITUS

There she is!

MAKKAI OFFICER #2

Sir! Sir there's an energy surge down there!

DEVITUS

What? What now?! What the-

INT. EUGENE'S MIND - CONTINUOUS

Though the bubbles, Eugene sees Devitus staring out his viewscreen right at him.

DEVITUS

(mouthing)

What the-

INT. STARSHIP DRAGON - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Eugene squeezes his triggers on the flight controls. The massive guns above him THUNDER.

EUGENE

I am the wild bubble!

EXT. PODUS III - SURFACE - CONTINUOUS

Brick's battleship guns lance out and DESTROY the armored tug, then the accompanying ships. They BLOW UP under the ONSLAUGHT, one by one! BOOM! BOOOM! BOOM! BOOOOM!

Some try to fire back, some try to turn and run. Eugene and Brick wipe them all out.

EXT. PODUS III - SURFACE - JUNKYARD WRECKAGE - CONTINUOUS

Carra opens her eyes in wonder and watches the enemy ships getting BLOWN out of the sky.

She talks into her wrist gauntlet:

CARRA

Guys, what is happening? Those aren't the Dragon's cannons.

EUGENE (O.S.)

I'm breaking bubbles!

BRICK (O.S.)

He's breaking bubbles! Ha HAH!

Carra and Norman look at each other, at a loss.

INT. MAKKAI DESTROYER - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

The Empress looks at a holograph that shows the armored tug and escorts near the surface blowing up, one by one.

NECRANISSA

She's destroyed them! All of them!
Damn her!

The Makkai officer from before, the one she blasted, approaches gingerly. His uniform is still charred and smoking.

MAKKAI OFFICER

Maybe...we should retreat?

She BLASTS him with her staff again.

INT. STARSHIP DRAGON - BRIDGE - MINUTES LATER

Carra enters the bridge. She's changed out of her filthy uniform. She wears a long brown coat with a belted red sash, loose pants, and boots with buckles.

She looks a lot like a pirate. Brick and Eugene stare.

CARRA

What? My uniform was filthy. Plus, it's not my uniform anymore. Found this in the Empress' quarters.

She crosses to her center seat and sits wearily.

CARRA (CONT'D)

So, is the over-shield ready to go?

EUGENE

Aye, aye...

He tilts his head to the side. His processors HUM, then there's a small SIZZLE and a POP inside him.

EUGENE (CONT'D)

...Captain.

BRICK

His processors are fried.

CARRA

Nah, we just re-educated him a little.

Eugene twitches, HUMS, and SIGHS.

EUGENE

Captain, I have to tell you that I may be falling in love with you.

BRICK

You re-educated him, all right.

CARRA

Wow. Okaaaay, we'll deal with that later.

Eugene and Brick take up their stations, and Norman jumps up into Carra's lap. She straps them both in.

CARRA (CONT'D)

Let's go re-educate the Empress. Whaddaya say, boys?

BRICK

Let's bang some heads!

CARRA

Activate the over-shield on my signal!

EXT. PODUS III - HIGH ORBIT - MINUTES LATER

The Dragon comes TEARING up from the surface, guns ABLAZE. The Dominion fleet returns fire but it glances off the massive over-shield and hits their own ships.

NARRATOR (O.S.)

So, that's how the legend began.
How do I know? Cuz I stowed away on
the Dragon, while she was on the
surface of Podus III.

CUT TO:

EXT. STARSHIP DRAGON - PODUS III - FLASHBACK

As Carra leaves the ship with her sack, a red lizard-like creature with a toolbelt sneaks onboard as the ramp closes.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. STARSHIP DRAGON - THROUGH THE FLEET - DAY

The fleet is scattered, and on fire as the Dragon makes her escape.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

They were probably headed for some
kind o' happy ending, but well...

The wings of the Dragon fold back and the ship SPEEDS away from the fleet. We ride along the hull.

NARRATOR (O.S.)

I'm a scavenger, and I aim to break
up their ship for parts. Right out
from under their noses. So it goes.
But the story in the ship's logs
was entertainin'! Least I can do is
make sure it don't get lost...

A hatch OPENS on the hull of the Dragon, and a bottle POPS out into space. There's an old-fashioned cork stopping it up.

As the Dragon recedes rapidly from sight, the bottle floats among the stars, spinning slowly. Pages have been curled into a tube and placed inside.

The writing on pages within spins into view slowly: A computer printout with the title "The Legend of the Sun Dragon".

TO BE CONTINUED...