

"ICON OF THE DEFENDER PART III"

Written by

Stefano Pavone

Based on the novel "Icon of the Defender" by

Stefano Pavone

Copyright (c) Stefano Pavone - 2023

30th Draft - 20 May 2023

Email: [Stefanopavone@live.co.uk](mailto:Stefanopavone@live.co.uk)

Telephone: +44(0)7591938371

TITLE CARD: "SOMEWHERE ON THE GEORGIAN-RUSSIAN BORDER -  
2020"

FADE IN:

EXT. GOLDMAN FAMILY MANSION - AFTERNOON

A pink and white Kazan Ansat ("Easy" or "Light") Russian-made helicopter soars through the bright baby blue Sky.

INT./EXT. VINCENZO'S HELICOPTER - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Two men and a woman are present - bald and bespectacled Euro-Mediterranean pilot VINCENZO CORBUCCI, dark-haired Afro-Russian former Spetsnaz officer NIKOLAI ROSTAVILI, and Japanese raven-haired beauty SAKURA NOGUCHI. The Italian aviator manoeuvres the helicopter expertly towards an improvised helipad in the mansion courtyard.

VINCENZO  
(Into his radio)  
Helia, this is Vincenzo. We've got  
good news and bad news.

He looks at Nikolai with a slight smirk before smiling at Lovisa, who ruffles her fair hair seductively.

INT. HELIA'S STUDY - DAY - CONTINUOUS

A businesswoman with dark hair and a man with a weathered face are present - Middle Eastern businesswoman/cabal leader HELIA SALIBI-DRAKENBERG and her Swiss valet, RAINER ACKERMANN. Helia is seated in front of her computer.

SWITCH BETWEEN VINCENZO/NIKOLAI/SAKURA AND HELIA/RAINER.

HELIA  
What's the bad news, Vincenzo?

VINCENZO  
Kana got away... again. I'm sorry.

HELIA  
It's OK - what's the good news?

VINCENZO  
Your parents are going to be OK.

HELIA  
 (Cutting him off  
 sharply)  
 Wait, what? My parents!?

VINCENZO  
 I think they were trying to tie up  
 loose ends.

NIKOLAI  
 (Bluntly)  
 That wouldn't be too far from the  
 truth.

Helia's eyes narrow slightly as she looks through her documents, eventually fishing out a black-and-white photograph of Star 1 dated from 1985. In the photograph, her parents – ROSH GOLDMAN and NADIA SALIBI-GOLDMAN – are present, as well as Japanese-American scientist KANA TAKAHASHI! She swears in Arabic and slams her fist on the desk.

RAINER  
 What is it?

She takes a few seconds to regain her composure.

HELIA  
 Vincenzo, I need you over here NOW.  
 We need to talk.

Vincenzo lands the whirlybird and kills the engines, the rotor blades whirring into silence.

VINCENZO  
 I'm coming, I've just landed. I'll be  
 there in a minute.

HELIA  
 Good... and bring Nikolai with you.  
 Out.

Click, dial tone.

BACK TO:

INT./EXT. VINCENZO'S HELICOPTER – DAY

Vincenzo sighs and looks pensive as he exchanges a glance with Sakura before turning to face Nikolai, who is examining his plasma burn wound critically.

NIKOLAI  
 (Not facing Vincenzo)  
 Let me guess: she wants to give us  
 another mission?

VINCENZO  
 Something like that. The trail of the  
 madman has run cold.

Nikolai turns to face Vincenzo, locking eyes with his friend  
 with a slight smirk and a solitary raised eyebrow.

NIKOLAI  
 Don't you mean madwoman? I'm not  
 surprised, considering we fucked up.  
 Come on, let's go.

They leave the chopper, one by one – first Vincenzo, then  
 Nikolai, and finally Sakura, who closes the door with a  
 SLAM! The silence is deafening.

OPENING TITLE SEQUENCE

FADE TO:

INT. ATRIUM OF THE GOLDMAN FAMILY MANSION – DAY

The trio enter the main atrium of the mansion to find two  
 fair-haired siblings – ERIK and LOVISA DRAKENBERG, the  
 former sporting a very weathered face and looking tired,  
 while the latter looks exhausted.

All dialogue written in *italic* is in a foreign language and  
 subtitled unless stated otherwise.

VINCENZO  
 How'd you park the minisub?

ERIK  
 The mansion's close to Turtle Lake,  
 which leads directly into the  
 Varazis-Khevi River.

NIKOLAI  
*Kus Tba...* of course.

ERIK  
 (In English)  
 Come on – she's waiting for us.  
 (In Swedish)  
*Lovisa, go get some rest. You look  
 tired.*

Lovisa replies in the affirmative in Swedish as she leaves – Vincenzo looks at Sakura for a moment and waggles his head at the departing Swede. She looks back at him with mild annoyance, following her best friend. The boys brace themselves as they head for the office of their unofficial boss.

INT. HELIA'S STUDY – DAY

The double-doors to the office swing open and Erik leads the way, with Vincenzo and Nikolai behind him, walking side-by-side. Helia and Rainer are indeed present. Vincenzo closes the double-doors behind him. Helia doesn't even bother to look at them.

HELIA  
What happened?

Erik looks at Vincenzo and Nikolai and motions for them not to speak as he steps forwards.

ERIK  
She escaped, Helia... I'm sorry. I should have gone after her.

Helia looks up to face her husband, calm and concise.

HELIA  
Don't be. You did what you had to do. What I'm worried about is what my parents were doing there.

ERIK  
I don't know.

HELIA  
That isn't good enough, Erik.

ERIK  
It's the only answer I've got and it's an honest one, Helia.

VINCENZO  
I think I do.

Helia looks at Vincenzo eagerly, demanding an answer.

HELIA  
OK, Vincenzo... tell me: what do you think my mother and father were doing there?

VINCENZO

Tying up loose ends, settling an old score with the Iron Bitch, maybe trying to protect you from knowing too much about the organisation's fucked up past, or maybe they can't stand things being done differently.

HELIA

What's that got to do with anything?

Nikolai intercedes, sensing Vincenzo's frustration.

NIKOLAI

Everything. Look... when we were in San Francisco, we saw them openly talk to Kana. He knew who we were, he knew what we were up to and he knew our exact positions.

Helia looks at the trio before her for a moment before glaring at a family photo beside her.

HELIA

Thank you... I now know what I must do. You may leave.

Vincenzo and Nikolai thank Helia in their native languages and do as they are told... but Vincenzo stops as he reaches the double-doors.

VINCENZO

What about Daisuke? Is he OK?

RAINER

*Monsieur* Kasai is recovering quite well. He was most fortunate – if he had been a centimetre closer to the blast radius, then the explosion would have certainly blown him to pieces.

Nikolai smiles slightly, showing uncharacteristic tenderness.

NIKOLAI

Thank you... we'll take him back with us.

RAINER

You do that. Now... go.

Vincenzo and Nikolai leave the spacious study-cum-office as Helia breaks down into tears, Erik hugging his wife to try to console her while Rainer puts his hand on her shoulder.

INT. INFIRMARY — DAY

A Japanese man of medium height with dark hair — ex-Gendarme-turned-author DAISUKE KASAI — is sitting up in a bed as he looks slightly bruised. He smiles as he sees Vincenzo and Nikolai enter.

DAISUKE

Well, now... that was quick. I didn't expect you to be back so soon.

NIKOLAI

We didn't get her, J.

Daisuke's face falls slightly.

DAISUKE

Oh... OK. So what's the plan?

VINCENZO

First, we get you out of here and take you back to base, and then we scour the Earth for this motherfucker and send her to the 10th Circle of Hell.

NIKOLAI

How'd you heal so quickly, anyway?

DAISUKE

Experimental nanotech treatment — the same technology Gonta was working on when those bastards got him.

(Notices Nikolai's distressed expression)

Is something wrong, Nikolai?

Nikolai nods as his hard exterior cracks, giving way to his soft interior as he looks depressed.

NIKOLAI

Yes.

(To Vincenzo and Daisuke)

What I'm about to tell both of you stays between the three of us, OK?

(MORE)

NIKOLAI (cont'd)  
 (Vincenzo and Daisuke  
 reply in the  
 affirmative in their  
 native languages)

Kana... she revived him as a fucking  
 cyborg revenant. He was programmed to  
 kill us... or rather, me... much like she  
 had done to Lovisa and Sakura 30  
 years ago.

(Trying not to cry)  
 I... I had to put him out of his  
 misery. He asked me to look after his  
 former test subjects... I think what he  
 really meant... was that he was asking  
 us as a whole to keep them safe... and  
 to put a stop to this fucking  
 madness.

(Calming down)  
 We have to find and kill Kana  
 otherwise it'll be the end of  
 everything. Who knows how many more  
 young women she'll kidnap and  
 brainwash? It has to end NOW.

Vincenzo says nothing and hugs Nikolai, while Daisuke looks  
 shocked.

VINCENZO  
 We're going to sleep it off here  
 tonight, take a day off, and we go  
 back to base tomorrow.

Nikolai and Daisuke exchange knowing looks.

INT./EXT. VINCENZO'S HELICOPTER - DAY - THE NEXT DAY

The twin engines whine into existence and dual rotor blades  
 whir to life as everyone takes their seats, the chopper  
 ascending into the air.

VINCENZO  
 OK... homeward bound.

Sakura turns to face Vincenzo worriedly.

SAKURA  
 (In Japanese)  
*Vincenzo... what if we don't succeed...  
 again?*

Vincenzo's eyes narrow slightly and his face tightens up -  
 he doesn't even look at Sakura to answer her question.



VINCENZO  
 (In Italian)  
*We MUST succeed.*

He takes the helicopter up, the whirlybird ascending confidently as it strides forward through the stratosphere.

INT. FIRST GUEST BEDROOM OF THE GOLDMAN FAMILY MANSION – DAY

Lovisa is in her civilian clothes, playing with her smartphone, running her hand through her long golden blonde hair as she sighs wistfully. Eventually, she stumbles upon the telephone number of a very familiar person. After hesitating, she calls the number, putting the phone to her ear.

INT. LIVING ROOM OF SOFIA'S BUNGALOW HOUSE – DAY

A woman with dark hair – SOFIA SOLANDER – is practicing her dance moves to 80s pop music, clad in her black workout clothes. Just as she concludes the session, however, her telephone rings with a demanding RING! RING!, distracting her at the critical moment. She swears in Swedish; examining the number on the phone... it's Lovisa! She answers the call.

SOFIA  
 (In Swedish)  
*Hello?*

SWITCH BETWEEN SOFIA AND LOVISA.

LOVISA  
*Sofia, it's me, Lovisa.*

SOFIA  
*Lovisa... Miss Drakenberg!?*

LOVISA  
*Yes, it's me.*

SOFIA  
*What are you doing? Where have you been? I haven't seen you at the leisure centre for some time!*

LOVISA  
*I've been busy. I've been... facing the demons of my past.*

She ruffles her blonde hair, her own feelings relaxing into a melting pot of happiness.

SOFIA

*You mean you're after the people who  
froze you and turned you into a  
killing machine?*

LOVISA

*Exactly. I'll see you soon, OK? I  
just have to finish this one last job  
and then it's done. I'll be back  
soon. I promise.*

SOFIA

*I can't wait.*

Click, dial tone.

BACK TO:

INT. FIRST GUEST BEDROOM OF THE GOLDMAN FAMILY MANSION — DAY

Lovisa smiles and lies on her bed, sighing contentedly as her long golden blonde hair falls freely, happy for the first time in her adult life.

She looks at her sapphire blue racerback swimsuit before her and, after a moment's thought, picks it up. Lovisa grabs a towel with the Swedish flag on it as she leaves for the mansion's swimming pool.

INT. BOARD ROOM — DAY (FLASHBACK)

SUPER: "UNIVERSITY OF BERLIN, WEST GERMANY — 1980"

A woman with raven-dark hair and a somewhat haughty appearance complete with facial expression enters a board room packed with professors and executives — a younger Kana.

At the front and centre of the room sits the university's dean. The atmosphere is silent and solemn with tension as nobody speaks for nearly a full minute. Eventually, the dean looks up and locks eyes with Kana.

DEAN

*Kana Eva Takahashi... it is my  
unfortunate duty to remind you of the  
charges that have been brought up  
against you during your tenure in  
this illustrious academy.*

(MORE)

DEAN (cont'd)

For the past year, you have been accused of exploiting some of the more vulnerable female students in this university, subjecting them to arduous and inhumane experiments in the name of science. There have been reports of these women suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, long-term amnesia and bouts of rage as a result of your tests.

Kana sneers mockingly at the dean.

KANA

They failed, that is all – they simply weren't compatible as guinea pigs... imperfect results due to being imperfect creatures.

The dean looks at Kana with a combination of apprehension and compassion.

DEAN

Kana, these are human beings we're talking about. Your obsessive pursuit for perfection is a blue rose, a pot of gold at the end of a rainbow that doesn't exist. I admire your devotion to science but even the most fanatic academician must recognise their limitations – your brother, Gonta, is one such man – in fact, it was he who reported these horrific discoveries to us.

KANA

Limitations are for the weak, Dean *Fettgesicht*, just like my brother – one day, you will realise that your emotions make you weak. Logic is the way forwards, and you will thank me when you see the errors of your ways, as will those women.

The dean hardens slightly at Kana's lack of remorse.

DEAN

Very well. In that case, I have no choice but to terminate your tenure on campus. Your grade point average is cancelled, your student discounts revoked and any other perks you may have attained are nullified with immediate effect.

(MORE)

DEAN (cont'd)

You are hereby expelled from this university and you are to vacate the premises with your personal possessions by Sunset. Farewell, Kana. I'm going to be sorry to see you go... you were such a promising student. It's a shame you had to use your talents for evil when you could have done a world of good with them, like your brother.

KANA

(Snapping)

Do not compare me to him!

(Calming down slightly)

He's a fool, always grovelling even when he's done nothing wrong. He's not a man... he's a mouse... and so are all of you.

(Turns to leave but stops at the open door)

You'll see... mark my words... you will see.

She exits the room, the door slamming closed behind her.

EXT. UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE — EVENING — LATER (FLASHBACK)

The Sun is setting in the reddish-pinkish-orange Sky as a young Kana walks out of the building and through the main gate, carrying a duffel bag with the Japanese and American flags on it. She looks back at the impressive yet intimidating university one last time before moving forwards.

ROSH (O.S.)

It's always the same old story, isn't it?

Kana turns around to see a man wearing a black turtleneck sweater and blue jeans — a young ROSH GOLDMAN.

KANA

Who are you?

ROSH

I'm just like you — an outcast feared by the consensus reality defined by society.

KANA

I haven't seen you here before... who are you really?

Rosh smiles slightly, disarming the tension. He is making a big mistake, but he does not yet know this.

ROSH

My name is Rosh Goldman. You may have heard of me, I'm quite a controversial journalist.

KANA

I don't talk to the press, Mr Goldman – now, if you'll excuse me, then I have to find somewhere to spend the night.

ROSH

Come with me, Kana. I can help you.

Kana looks at Rosh with a cold anger.

KANA

How do you know my name?

ROSH

I have ears – I hear things. I also understand your peers didn't appreciate your efforts... but I think I do.

KANA

Oh, you like to think, do you?

Rosh chuckles.

ROSH

Not too much, of course – that would have unforeseen consequences. Look... I can help you complete your research and I can even help you get your doctorate, but you've got to trust me.

KANA

What would you have me do in return?

Rosh thinks it over for a moment before locking eyes.

ROSH

Work with me... together, with my trusted associates, we can make the world a better place for everyone.

Kana eyes up Rosh, smirking to herself as she considers his offer. In actuality, she is looking for a way to use him and manipulate him, as he will find out in the future.

KANA  
OK, Rosh... let's go.

Rosh smiles as he walks away with Kana, the two figures fading away into the distance.

EXT. MILITARY BASE – EVENING

SUPER: "TASZÁR AIR BASE, SOMOGY COUNTY, HUNGARY – 1990"

A Kamov Ka-32 chopper flies towards a military base as the Sun begins to set, painting the Sky a deadly pinkish-orange.

INT. KANA'S HELICOPTER – EVENING – CONTINUOUS

18-year-old Sakura is lying on a wheeled stretcher in her assassin's outfit, a pair of electrodes connected to her head.

A Swedish woman in an outfit similar to Sakura's – 17-year-old Lovisa – is seated in a high-tech brainwashing chair with its helmet on her head complete with glowing visor, both women having new orders uploaded into their minds.

Two scientists – Kana and timid Japanese geneticist-cum-nanotechnologist GONTA TAKAHASHI – are present, the former calm and collected, the latter anxious and nervous. Kana gets up and works a computer, inputting a series of commands known only to her. The visor on the helmet stops glowing and the helmet itself rises. Lovisa's eyes click open, cold and soulless, as do Sakura's.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF THE MILITARY BASE – EVENING

The Sun's descent is nearly complete as Sakura and Lovisa silently infiltrate the military base, stealthily making their way inside as they navigate an electric fence.

EXT. MILITARY BASE – EVENING – CONTINUOUS

Inside the base's perimeter, Sakura and Lovisa take cover behind a military truck to avoid a searchlight.

LOVISA

Here's what we'll do. I'll distract the guards while you slip into the commander's office and take him out – if they give us any trouble, then we kick their asses and hightail it out of here. Just don't let them raise the alarm. OK?

SAKURA

OK, fine... but we need a signal to let each other know.

LOVISA

Trust me.

Lovisa smiles seductively at Sakura as she heads out into the open. A single lonely guard is present, holding his Kalashnikov (AK-74) assault rifle firmly while staring out into the distance.

Lovisa sneaks through the base, avoiding the ever-rotating searchlight, while Sakura watches from a distance. The guard raises his weapon at Lovisa, yelling at her in Hungarian.

He keeps his rifle raised at her as she advances, the Nordic beauty blowing him a kiss as she works her seductive charms.

GUARD

What are you doing here? This is a restricted area.

LOVISA

Oh, I'm lost and I'm looking for someone who will help me find my way home... someone big and strong, who can protect a woman on a whim.

She puts his arms around him. After a while, the guard lowers his rifle and nods, smiling, seduced by the Scandinavian teenage assassin's charms.

He motions for her to follow him as he walks off – Lovisa turns to face Sakura and flashes her a thumbs-up, giving her her cue to act. She returns the gesture and slips into the base unnoticed, making her way inside through a ventilation shaft while her Swedish friend and partner continues to seduce the guard.

INT. VENTILATION SHAFT – EVENING

Sakura silently crawls through the ventilation shaft while stealthily making her way to the intended target.

A look of worry crosses her face for a moment – worry for Lovisa – but she quickly shakes it off and regains her senses. Following the necessary directions thanks to her own radio earrings, she eventually reaches a dead end, a grating beneath her. She remains out of sight as she watches below.

INT. COMMANDER'S OFFICE – EVENING

A man enters the office, wearing a white military uniform complete with cap and medals – this is the base's commander. Remaining hidden, she watches him sit down and pick up the phone, issuing an order to his men in Hungarian.

Unable to understand the language, Sakura must rely on her instincts as he hangs up and drinks from a coffee mug. She slowly and quietly opens the shaft and slips down into the office, hiding behind a statue.

She begins to hesitate, but keeps it under control as she emerges from behind, pointing a suppressed FN P35 Mark 3 pistol at his head. There is a silence that lasts for several seconds as Sakura's finger squeezes the trigger carefully... but she cannot bring herself to do it.

The commander turns and yells at her in Hungarian before punching her, knocking her out cold. He then pushes a button on his desk, activating the alarm!

INT. GUARDHOUSE – EVENING

In the guardhouse, Lovisa is busy getting cosy with the guard she just seduced when the alarm goes off. Realising her friend is in danger and her cover is blown, she kisses her target passionately before pinching his neck, knocking him out.

LOVISA

Sorry, honey, but I don't do one-night stands.

She peers out of the guardhouse to see what the hell is going on – the base is alright with troops! Cursing to herself in Swedish, she prepares to enter the fray as her radio earrings glow red, activating her programming... and out she goes.

EXT. MILITARY BASE – EVENING – CONTINUOUS

Lovisa sneaks through the base undetected as she draws her own silenced pistol, ready to fight.



Her first target is the searchlight, which she destroys with a single well-aimed shot before taking out the guard with a headshot. He falls out of the guard tower and lands on the floor below, splattering blood everywhere.

INT. KANA'S HELICOPTER – EVENING – CONTINUOUS

Kana is watching and listening, wearing a headset with a built-in microphone, giving Lovisa her orders.

KANA

Excellent, Miss Drakenberg... I can't say the same for Noguchi-chan's performance, though. Speaking of which, your orders are to rescue her and bring her back with you. Still, though, this hasn't been a complete failure – one of you has succeeded. I'll have to put Noguchi-chan through stricter training.

Gonta glares at her as she turns to face him.

GONTA

Not. One. Word!

She turns back, smirking slightly to herself, and continues watching the commotion unfold before her.

INT. INSIDE THE MILITARY BASE – NIGHT

The Moon is shining in the Sky as Lovisa breaches the interior of the base. Using the cover of darkness to her advantage, she hides in the shadows as Hungarian soldiers run past her, failing to notice the beautiful but deadly adolescent assassin.

Slipping out of her hiding spot, she runs towards the commander's office – a pair of guards hold her at gunpoint, preventing her progress, but she is able to knock them out with some well-placed martial arts moves, finishing with a backflip. She fires a single suppressed shot at the door before kicking it down, entering the office.

INT. COMMANDER'S OFFICE – NIGHT – CONTINUOUS

Lovisa holds the commander at gunpoint as she approaches him slowly, menacingly, her icy cold stare piercing his soul. He raises his own sidearm but she shoots it out of his hand, disarming him as she pins him to the table, holding her pistol to his neck.

LOVISA  
Where is Sakura?

COMMANDER  
Who?

LOVISA  
My partner – where is she?

COMMANDER  
She's being interrogated in the  
base's detention centre –  
Interrogation Room 4.

Lovisa glares at him before propping him up.

LOVISA  
Take me there. Move.

She presses the barrel of her suppressed handgun into his neck as she frogmarches him out of the office.

INT. DETENTION CENTRE ON THE MILITARY BASE – NIGHT

A pair of Hungarian military police officers are on guard duty outside each interrogation room while the soldiers within question and even torture suspects in various ways, from verbal abuse to physical and sexual assault. A woman's voice is heard screaming outside Interrogation Room 4 – Sakura's voice.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM 4 – NIGHT – CONTINUOUS

Two Military Police officers are yelling at a handcuffed Sakura. One of them slaps the Asian beauty, knocking her to the floor.

MP #1  
(In Hungarian)  
Who are you and what are you doing  
here?

SAKURA  
I wish I could explain, but I can't.

MP #2  
What do you mean?

SAKURA  
You wouldn't understand.

MP #1

We wouldn't, would we? Maybe you understand this.

(He slaps Sakura again)

Why were you trying to kill our commanding officer?

(He slaps Sakura yet again, angering her)

What agency are you with?

He proceeds to slap her but Sakura catches his wrist, glaring at him with a tranquil fury.

SAKURA

(In Japanese)

An agency that could put you and people like you out of a fucking job if you don't behave yourself!

The MPs look half-amazed, half-infuriated at Sakura's rebellious outburst. Before they can do anything, however, the sound of the door knocking catches their attention. One of them goes to check, only to find their commanding officer behind held at gunpoint by Lovisa! He opens the door.

MP #1

What do you want!?

LOVISA

Let her go! Or I'll do your boss.

(The MPs raise their AK-74s at her, cursing in Hungarian)

Oh, you're going to be heroes? How touching. I'm warning you. Let my partner go or your boss dies, and then you'll be next.

As Lovisa distracts the guards, Sakura picks up the chair she's been sitting on and strikes one of them over the head with it before throwing it at his friend, knocking them both out. Setting the chair upright, she holds out her handcuffs and turns her head away. Lovisa shoots the cuffs, releasing her friend as she removes them from her wrists.

SAKURA

Thanks.

LOVISA

Don't mention it - come on, let's get out of here.

She pistol-whips the commanding officer, knocking him out cold, before placing him in a nearby locker.

EXT. MILITARY BASE – NIGHT – CONTINUOUS

The darkened base is on full alert – nobody is present except for the two *femme fatales* as they run through the base, occasionally hiding to avoid improvised searchlights or patrols. When they are sure the coast is clear, they jump out of their hiding spots and continue half-running, half-sneaking towards the exit, heading towards a familiar-looking helicopter.

INT. KANA'S HELICOPTER – NIGHT – CONTINUOUS

Kana, who has been watching via hidden cameras in the girls' radio earrings, turns to her pilot, the Kazakh-Slavic roboticist looking angry and displeased, her face contorted into a serious expression.

KANA

Start the engines – the mission is a failure.

PILOT

Yes, Doctor.

He does as he is told, the helicopter's engines whirring to life as the rotor blades pick up speed. The doors slide open to reveal Sakura and Lovisa, who climb into the helicopter, the latter closing the door behind her. Lovisa's earrings glow, reactivating her brainwashing.

KANA

What happened?

LOVISA

Sakura couldn't bring herself to eliminate the target, which nearly cost her – and myself – greatly.

SAKURA

He posed no threat. I used my judgement.

KANA

Noguchi-chan, the only judgement you must rely on is mine. Here, drink this. It'll make you feel better.

She hands her a drink in a plastic cup – feeling thirsty and tired, Sakura drinks it willingly.

As she sets down the cup, she begins to feel woozy... and she collapses onto the helicopter's floor.

Lovisa and Kana look at each other calmly as the former sits down in her chair once again, the metal restraints closing around her wrists as the helmet lowers onto her head, the visor glowing. Kana smirks evilly as she downloads the data from Lovisa's fight.

INT. AIRLOCK – NIGHT

Sakura, wearing a ruby red racerback swimsuit, is pushed into the airlock – she gets to her feet as her hair falls. Water fills up the airlock. Sakura holds her breath and scans the area, trying to remain calm and focused.

INT. SKYBOX – NIGHT – CONTINUOUS

Kana is watching dispassionately while Lovisa stands beside her in casual clothes, the blonde calm and cool. Kana turns to face her briefly, with a fake reassuring smile.

KANA

Don't worry, Lovisa... this is for  
Sakura's own good.

Lovisa simply smiles back, completely under her hypnotic influence.

BACK TO:

INT. AIRLOCK – NIGHT – CONTINUOUS

18-year-old Sakura struggles to turn the door's bulkhead-like wheel as she grips it firmly. She rotates it frantically, closing her eyes tightly and screaming loudly, expelling all the air out of her lungs as the water descends.

Her distorted scream eventually translates into an audible cry as the water drains out completely... and she falls to the floor, coughing up whatever she has ingested, gasping for breath as the airlock door opens.

A pair of guards escort Lovisa out of the airlock as she struggles to stabilise her breathing, her tortured lungs sucking in as much air as they possibly can.

INT. SKYBOX – NIGHT – MOMENTS LATER

Kana is watching with one of her aides present, who types in commands on a keyboard, overseeing a hospital gown-clad Sakura in the brainwashing chair.

SWITCH BETWEEN KANA AND SAKURA.

The aide flips a switch... and the visor on the helmet glows as Sakura screams loudly in agony, the volts raging into her brain! The aide looks slightly appalled, while Kana is apathetic – this goes on for a full minute before the electricity finally dies down, the Oriental woman passing out from the pain.

KANA

Good. Now, continue to Level 6.

AIDE

Level 6, Doctor?

KANA

I gave you an order. Program the subject to Level 6 with enhanced encryption.

AIDE

Yes, Doctor.

He does as he is told, the visor glowing rapidly and brightly as Sakura gasps slightly – she's struggling to fight the programming as she screams louder and harder. Kana's apathy turns to an evil smile as her young charge's screams fade away into whimpers.

INT. ROSH'S STUDY – EVENING

SUPER: "GOLDMAN FAMILY MANSION, TBILISI, GEORGIA"

The Sun is setting. A lone Rosh is sitting at his desk, his leather armchair soothing and supporting his thin frame. He looks pensive as his eyes dart over to a framed picture of himself with his wife and daughter – memories of happier times. Reaching into his drawer, he produces a small tape recorder and activates it.

ROSH

This is the personal log of Rosh Adam Goldman, dated 26 August 1990.

(MORE)

ROSH (cont'd)

The Cold War is finally over and the 5 Elements can at long last unite the last separatist movement in the world, the Gaulish Village of the East, if you like. It has been over a decade since I began my life's work and while we have had progress in some areas, namely, science, technology and media, other fields such as culture and education have been less successful... because instead of telling them the truth... we systematically withheld it. We... I, rather... encouraged old, oppressive values in the short term, in order to pave the way for progress and long-term reformation.

(Starting to cry)

Despite my benign intentions, I find myself on a road that I did not foresee happening, and now I have to ask myself: Have I stepped outside the bounds of human morality? I can only hope that whoever finds this recording can put a stop to what I have inadvertently set in motion, topple the myth that I helped to create. This is Rosh Adam Goldman, founder and CEO of the 5 Elements... message ends.

He switches off the tape recorder and puts it down, weeping silently for several seconds. As the Israeli-Palestinian philanthropist regains his composure, he reaches into his drawer again and takes out a bottle of vodka, drinking from it before producing a compact semiautomatic pistol – a Beretta Model 1951 in 9\*19mm Parabellum. He looks at it thoughtfully.

FADE TO:

TITLE CARD: "2021 – 6 MONTHS AFTER THE STAR 1 MISSION"

FADE IN:

INT. DRIVE ROOM OF THE RHODIUM GOLEMS' BASE – DAY

SUPER: "SOMEWHERE IN THE SCANDINAVIAN MOUNTAINS"

Vincenzo, Nikolai, Daisuke and Sakura are seated around the familiar round white table once again, looking over some notes in Sakura's handwriting, written in both Japanese and English.

A picture of a pompous-looking man catches Vincenzo's attention as he inspects it critically, showing his girlfriend.

VINCENZO

Miletto Fresson... who is he?

SAKURA

He's a... well, he was... a high-ranking officer in the French military.

VINCENZO

Was?

SAKURA

He was discharged for arms trafficking.

NIKOLAI

That makes no fucking sense – my Government sells weapons all the time and they don't get any repercussions.

SAKURA

The weapons he sold went to 3rd-world countries and he used his fortune to build his own PMC.

DAISUKE

So what exactly led to his discharge? It couldn't have just been the fact that he was selling guns on the cheap.

SAKURA

The guns were stolen from Government reserves and were used in conflicts in which the participants were enemies of the Free World.

VINCENZO

So he used his influence at the height of the Cold War to perpetuate the conflict between the East and West in order to promote his own career?

SAKURA

Right, and, like I said, he made a sizable fortune in the process.

Nikolai takes a swig from a bottle of vodka, unable to contain his suspicions.



NIKOLAI

Where is the fucker now?

SAKURA

Last I heard, he had his base of operations set on *Mont Blanc*.

NIKOLAI

OK, and how do you know all this? You were just a guinea pig, a programmable hitwoman-for-hire.

Sakura hesitates for a moment but she realises Nikolai deserves to know the truth.

SAKURA

They programmed me, yes – that was their strength... and their weakness.

NIKOLAI

OK, Sakura. You've bought yourself some time... for now.

VINCENZO

Look, we need to go to the White Mountain – to *Monte Bianco* – and get *Monsieur Fresson* on our side. It's the only way we're going to make any kind of progress.

NIKOLAI

Good thinking, Vincenzo – that's the best idea I've heard from you in a long time. Get the helicopter ready.

VINCENZO

I don't know, guys. This would be our first time using weapons set to incapacitate rather than kill, and given the nature of our target, it might be wise to keep this a stealth mission if we're ever going to pull it off.

NIKOLAI

(Indicating Sakura)

You're just acting brave and manly to impress her, aren't you?

SAKURA

No, Vincenzo's right. You two are going to have to go in swift, stealthy and silent – the three S's.

There is a pause before Daisuke speaks up.

DAISUKE  
OK, Vincenzo.

NIKOLAI  
Just start the helicopter and we'll  
take care of the rest, OK?

Vincenzo does as he is told, getting up and leaving the drive room – Sakura looks at Nikolai and Daisuke for a moment before following him. Nikolai and Daisuke exchange glances.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE RHODIUM GOLEMS' BASE – DAY – LATER

Vincenzo starts up his precious whirlybird, the dual rotor blades whirring into action as the twin engines are engaged. Looking at Sakura's red outfit, he removes his turtleneck sweater and offers it to her.

VINCENZO  
(In Japanese)  
*You want this? It's going to get  
pretty cold.*

SAKURA  
*Oh, what a gentleman. Thank you.*

She takes his sweater and puts it on, making her look a little less flattering due to its larger size. Vincenzo slips on a heavy Gore-Tex jacket, zipping it up as he helps his partner into the helicopter.

INT. ARMOURY OF THE RHODIUM GOLEMS' BASE – DAY

Nikolai and Daisuke are present, observing their available weapons. They eventually reach out for a pair of tranquilliser pistols complete with dart-like projectiles.

NIKOLAI  
I guess we have no choice but to use  
these.

DAISUKE  
In addition to our standard weapons –  
we're not taking these alone.

NIKOLAI  
No shit. What's in these darts,  
anyway?

DAISUKE

Tramadol.

Nikolai looks at Daisuke in mild disbelief.

NIKOLAI

Are you insane? You seriously want to start a zombie apocalypse with this shit?

DAISUKE

It's all we've got – we're mercenaries on a budget.

Nikolai sighs.

NIKOLAI

OK, fine.

He loads up his tranquilliser gun before arming and holstering his CZ 75 SP-01 pistol along with his beloved Kalashnikov assault rifle, the latter slung over his shoulder. Daisuke follows suit with his short-barreled rifle and they leave the armoury.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE RHODIUM GOLEMS' BASE – DAY

Nikolai and Daisuke, now wearing winter gear complete with gloves and woolly hats, exit the base and head for Vincenzo's helicopter, climbing in with renewed vigour. The chopper rises into the air and flies away from the mercenaries' HQ as it disappears into the Sun.

EXT. SUMMIT – DAY

SUPER: "MONT BLANC, CHAMONIX, FRENCH-ITALIAN BORDER"

Vincenzo's helicopter flies through the White Mountain as the air is thin and light, burning coldly like comet ice. Nikolai and Daisuke exit and arm their silenced weapons, both men dressed in arctic camouflage. The two mercenaries prepare to make their move as they disembark from the chopper, the Sun setting in the Sky.

VINCENZO (V.O.)

You two – be careful out there. We don't want a repeat of what happened last time.

NIKOLAI

Don't worry. I'm in complete control this time – out.

Nikolai ends the radio transmission, he and Daisuke trudging through the mountains with their weapons ready. The area is virtually vacant, except for a few skiers and dogs in the distance.

EXT. VILLAGE — DAY — LATER

The two rebels enter the village, Nikolai scanning his whereabouts and generally ignoring the cold while Daisuke provides cover fire.

DAISUKE

Nikolai! I want a position and bearing. I want to be on the move in three minutes, maximum.

NIKOLAI

I'm on it.

Nikolai looks at a map and makes mental notes of their target before nodding at Daisuke. The two men trudge further into the village, remaining quiet and undetected. Daisuke fires a silenced shot at a few guards patrolling the area, incapacitating rather than killing them.

EXT. OUTPOST — DAY — CONTINUOUS

Eventually, the peerless pair reach a base-like camp, patrolled by adolescent skiers with guns.

NIKOLAI

What are we looking for, anyway?

DAISUKE

An entrance to a large house overseeing the mount — we can't miss it.

The Asian ex-Gendarme produces his compact binoculars and looks through the eyepieces, scanning the area meticulously as he observes the layout of the mountain mansion.

Looking through his portable telescope, Daisuke zooms into the house as he spots a pair of guards protecting the front doors, wielding futuristic-looking assault rifles with attached grenade launchers. He moves over to the surrounding area, where a dozen or so guards, all of similar age, are encroached around the outer regions of the house. Satisfied, he lowers his binoculars and pockets them.

NIKOLAI

Anything?

DAISUKE

14 guards – 12 surrounding the house,  
2 at the front doors. They're armed  
with five-five-sixers and pineapples.

NIKOLAI

OK, what about a rear entrance? Is  
there any way in from the back?

DAISUKE

Not that I can see. We're going to  
have to knock them out and make our  
way in... and pray they don't wake up.

NIKOLAI

With this cold, they won't sleep for  
long, so we'll have to act fast.

(Getting to his feet)

Come on.

DAISUKE

Just this once, I hope you're wrong.

They proceed further into the installation, keeping their  
weapons raised and ready.

NIKOLAI

Try and aim for the head – do as I  
do.

Daisuke glances at Nikolai briefly with a disbelieving look.

DAISUKE

You're loving this, aren't you?

Nikolai smirks slightly as he raises his weapon, looking  
through the telescopic sight. He aims at a guard's head and  
steadies himself.

NIKOLAI

(In English)

OK. Ready? Aim?

(In Russian)

Fire.

BLIP! BLIP! Two silenced shots later and their targets fall  
down like a sack of potatoes, snoring away. The peerless  
pair continue to make their way towards the mountain  
mansion, using the snow and the wind as cover.

EXT. ENTRANCE TO THE MOUNTAIN MANSION – DAY – LATER

Reaching the main gate, Nikolai and Daisuke alternate between taking cover and tranquillising the guards with well-timed and well-placed headshots – Nikolai crawls through the courtyard, using the ornaments as cover, while Daisuke crouch-walks from spot to spot. They reach the front doors and hide behind opposite columns.

DAISUKE

One of them has to have the key to get inside.

NIKOLAI

Not necessarily.

DAISUKE

What do you mean?

NIKOLAI

Someone with this much security wouldn't bother to lock the door. If anything, the door to their personal domicile would be heavily fortified.

DAISUKE

So you're saying we take them out?

NIKOLAI

(Deadpan)

Yes – you can search the bodies if that'll make you feel better.

They aim carefully and take out their targets, the two guards collapsing into unconsciousness, one of them falling down the stairs and landing at the base of the courtyard. Emerging from their hiding spots, the mercenaries head for the front doors – Nikolai tries one of them.. it opens.

Daisuke activates his radio.

DAISUKE

Vincenzo, this is Daisuke – do you read me? Over.

INT./EXT. VINCENZO'S HELICOPTER – DAY – CONTINUOUS

Vincenzo and Sakura are present, observing their actions through hidden cameras concealed in their weapons.

VINCENZO

Yes, I can hear you. What's up?

SWITCH BETWEEN NIKOLAI/DAISUKE AND VINCENZO/SAKURA.

DAISUKE

We've made it to the front doors – we're going in. Are you still in the area?

VINCENZO

Yes, but I've had to park the whirlybird out of sight – the locals were getting suspicious.

DAISUKE

OK. Vincenzo, listen to me very carefully. Stay where you are and wait for our signal. Do not – I repeat, DO NOT – try to be a hero if anything goes South. Get yourself and Sakura to safety.

Vincenzo looks shocked, almost hurt, by Daisuke's request as he curses to himself in Italian.

VINCENZO

Are you serious?

DAISUKE

Trust me – either two people may or may not die on this mission or four people certainly die.

Vincenzo groans audibly – he ends the transmission, looking at Sakura with mild annoyance.

BACK TO:

INT. ATRIUM OF THE MOUNTAIN MANSION – DAY

The two mercenaries observe the eclectic lobby before them, looking like something out of a drug dealer's mansion from the 1980s. Taking cover behind opposite columns, Nikolai holsters his weapon and produces a wireless fibre optic camera, activating it as he switches on his radio.

NIKOLAI

Vincenzo, turn on your smartphone and load up the FO camera's app.

INT./EXT. VINCENZO'S HELICOPTER – DAY – CONTINUOUS

Vincenzo does as he is told before switching his attention back to Nikolai's camera.

VINCENZO  
It's ready, Nikolai.

Nikolai's voice is heard over the helicopter's speakers.

NIKOLAI (V.O.)  
Good. Watch the screen carefully and  
let us know if anything's wrong.

Vincenzo watches intently, the Italian pilot focusing on the action before him. Nikolai walks up a grand staircase while Daisuke brandishes a motion sensor.

VINCENZO  
I don't think you can open that  
door - at least, not without a key.

NIKOLAI (V.O.)  
I noticed - there's a numerical  
keypad here. It requires a 6-digit  
code made up of 3 separate pairs of  
numbers.

VINCENZO  
Give me a minute and I think I can  
hack it.

He works a computer keyboard while Sakura takes over watch duty.

BACK TO:

INT. ATRIUM OF THE MOUNTAIN MANSION - DAY

Daisuke's motion sensor begins vibrating, causing him to look up around him and scan his whereabouts.

DAISUKE  
We've got company.

NIKOLAI  
You're just reading me - don't worry.

DAISUKE  
No, it's not you. Someone's coming -  
multiple signals.

The vibration on the motion sensor intensifies as both men look at each other, swapping their tools for their weapons.



NIKOLAI

Vincenzo, whatever you're doing, do it fast – we've got hostiles coming our way.

Vincenzo's voice is heard on Nikolai's radio.

VINCENZO (V.O.)

Relax, Nikolai, they're on the other side of the door.

NIKOLAI

How do you figure?

VINCENZO (V.O.)

Because you've tranquillised the others on your way here, so, logically, any hostiles will be beyond that door. Let the motion sensor do its work for now.

Nikolai and Daisuke look at each other calmly as the motion sensor's vibrations get weaker and weaker, eventually fading away. They both breathe a sigh of relief.

NIKOLAI

It's gone, Vincenzo. Have you got the code cracked yet?

VINCENZO (V.O.)

Yes, I have. The combination is 39-46-89.

Daisuke inputs the code and a red LED on the keypad turns green accompanied by a high-pitched beeping sound.

DAISUKE

Well done, Vincenzo.

VINCENZO (V.O.)

Thank you – and try to keep your bloodlust under control.

They head into the restricted area of the mountain mansion, the door closing (but not locking) behind them.

INT. CORRIDOR IN THE MOUNTAIN MANSION – DAY – CONTINUOUS

Nikolai and Daisuke walk through a rather posh corridor with their weapons drawn and ready, occasionally taking cover. They eventually reach the end of the corridor, where they are confronted with a pair of heavy oak double doors.

Hearing a set of heavy footsteps approach, they hide in the shadows, calm as ever – eventually, three people arrive at the double doors: two guards accompanied by a middle-aged man with spectacles and dark hair: MILETTO FRESSON.

He opens the door and waves his guards goodbye, who, after turning their backs, each promptly get a tranquilliser dart to the back of the head. Nikolai and Daisuke emerge from their hiding spots and place the unconscious bodies in the shadows. They quietly open the double doors to Miletto's living quarters and slip inside, closing the doors behind them.

INT. MILETTO'S LIVING QUARTERS – DAY – CONTINUOUS

Miletto is in his chair, drinking from a coffee mug as he mutters to himself in French. Looking at his notes, he then observes the scene from his window to find it completely empty. Suspiciously, he activates his radio.

MILETTO

(In French)

*Tighten security. The base needs to be protected. What the hell do I pay you for? Seriously.*

Sneaking up behind him, Nikolai strikes Miletto in the back of the head, knocking him out cold. He turns to face Daisuke with a smirk.

NIKOLAI

Never fails.

(Clutches his fist in pain)

Ow, fuck, it hurts!

Daisuke sighs in mild exasperation as he picks up Miletto by the arms.

DAISUKE

Grab his legs and help me carry him. We don't have much time left – more of his guards are going to be here any minute.

Nikolai obliges, the two of them carrying an unconscious Miletto to a king-size bed.

INT. MILETTO'S LIVING QUARTERS — DAY — LATER

Miletto is awoken by a sharp slap to the face. He awakens to see the two rebels before him. His eyes widen slightly as he realises what is in store for him.

DAISUKE

(In French)

*You know who we are, and you know what we want.*

MILETTO

*I'm sorry, I don't think I understand.*

NIKOLAI

Kana Takahashi — you're one of her insiders, aren't you?

Miletto curses at them in French.

MILETTO

How do you know?

Nikolai grabs Miletto and holds his knife at his throat.

NIKOLAI

We've got one of her ex-guinea pigs working with us, that's how!

MILETTO

No! Don't! Please!

NIKOLAI

What do you know about Project Athena? Tell us and we'll let you live.

Miletto gathers his notes and shows them to Nikolai.

MILETTO

*This is all I know about it. Don't kill me, please... I'll tell you everything, but you've got to get me out of here.*

The blade of his knife cuts into Miletto's skin slightly as he realises what he is doing, lowering the knife slowly with an apologetic look on his face. Miletto coughs, getting his breath back before swearing again in French. He nods once.

DAISUKE

(In French)

*OK, Miletto. We'll get you out of here and you'll give us what you've got.*

(Helping him up)

*How do we get out of here?*

MILETTO

*There are some snowmobiles parked nearby – we can use them to get to the base of the mountain.*

DAISUKE

*OK, we'll evacuate from there.*

(In English, drawing his radio)

*Vincenzo, get us out of here! Meet us at the base of the mountain – out.*

(In French, to Miletto)

*Come on, let's get out of here.*

(In English, into his radio)

*Vincenzo, we've got him. Are you ready?*

VINCENZO (V.O.)

*Yes, I'm ready. Bring him back alive.*

DAISUKE

*You got it. Out.*

With a nod towards his friend and ally, Nikolai holds Miletto at gunpoint, frogmarching him out of the room, with Daisuke in tow.

INT./EXT. VINCENZO'S HELICOPTER – DAY

Vincenzo and Sakura observe the action before them, the Italian pilot smirking with triumph as the Japanese beauty smiles.

VINCENZO

(In Japanese)

*They've got him... I don't know how they did it but they've fucking got him.*

SAKURA

*That's great – start up the helicopter, Vincenzo.*

Vincenzo does as he is told, flipping a series of switches as the dual rotors whirl into life, activating the whirlybird's twin engines.

VINCENZO

Nikolai, Daisuke, we're on our way.  
Give us your position and we'll come  
to pick you up.

(Pause)

Nikolai? Daisuke?

He begins to panic as he looks at Sakura. He gets to his feet and scours the weapons on the helicopter's rack.

SAKURA

(In Japanese)

*What are you doing?*

VINCENZO

*Whatever I can to help them.*

SAKURA

*Vincenzo, don't, it's suicide.*

VINCENZO

*I'm one of them – we look out for  
each other if we can.*

Sakura approaches Vincenzo and holds onto him, trying to make him reason with her.

SAKURA

*Vincenzo, listen to me! You don't  
need to do this. We can get ourselves  
out of this, save each other. You  
don't need to be a hero. I'd miss  
you.*

She hugs him – Vincenzo strokes her hair gently before looking at her.

VINCENZO

*Give me 10 minutes, OK? If I'm not  
back in 10 minutes, then get yourself  
out of here and get a head start on  
your new life.*

Kissing her cheek, he arms up with an ex-Yugo-Tokarev pistol and a Dragunov sniper rifle before heading into the white wilderness alone. Sakura sighs as she wipes away a tear from her cheek – she's falling in love.

## EXT. OUTPOST – EVENING

The Sun is beginning to set as Vincenzo walks through the European tundra. Hiding behind a tree with his sniper rifle, he can see a dozen or so figures in the distance holding two men at gunpoint. He aims his sniper rifle and looks down the telescopic sight, identifying the two hostages as Nikolai and Daisuke! He curses to himself in Italian.

## EXT. ENTRANCE TO THE MOUNTAIN MANSION – EVENING

The boys are being harassed by some of Miletto's guards, who are yelling random phrases at them in French and Italian. Daisuke keeps quiet, while, true to his nature, Nikolai is belligerent, and getting angry.

NIKOLAI

(Slowly raising his  
voice)

Haven't you idiots figured it out  
yet?

(In Russian, yelling)

I don't speak your FUCKING LANGUAGE!!

One of the guards strikes him with the butt of his rifle, causing him to hold his cheekbone in pain.

DAISUKE

You're not exactly helping our case,  
you know.

NIKOLAI

Shut up!

Unknown to them, Vincenzo is watching through his sniper rifle's scope, cocking it as he hesitates, one of their men in his sight.

He lowers the sniper rifle, struggling with his conscience... but quickly raises it again, remembering that his allies, the nearest people he has to friends, are in danger. He composes himself... and pulls the trigger.

BLIP! A suppressed gunshot tears through the guard's head, killing him instantaneously. BLIP! BLIP! BLIP! Three more silenced shots follow, taking down three more bad guys.

Nikolai and Daisuke take the opportunity to gun down the remaining men with their sidearms before reapprehending Miletto as Vincenzo's voice comes from their radios.

VINCENZO (V.O.)

You can thank me later – for now,  
however, you need to get to the  
bloody chopper. You've got 5 minutes.  
Out.

Miletto indicates a pair of snowmobiles – they mount them immediately, Daisuke taking the French neo-warlord with him while Nikolai goes alone. They gun the engines and speed away.

EXT. MOUNTAIN SLOPE – EVENING

The trio descend down the White Mountain as Miletto's crew gain ground, gradually catching up to them. Miletto turns back briefly, noticing the mercenaries on their tail.

MILETTO

Daisuke, behind us!

Daisuke turns to face an unsavoury group of men in hot pursuit. He knows what he has to do. He fires his sidearm with almost unerring accuracy, operating his weapon with one hand while driving the snowmobile with the other.

Ending the transmission, Daisuke reloads his FN Five-Seven pistol and resumes gunning down his adversaries with well-timed and well-aimed one-shot kills. A metallic CLUNK! Noise is heard as a bullet hits Daisuke's snowmobile, the smell of leaking gasoline catching the Japanese ex-Gendarme's nose. He yells in French as he holsters his pistol, realising the gravity of the situation. He tries to steer the snowmobile to the best of his abilities.

DAISUKE

The brakes are gone! Shit!

(Calming down  
slightly)

OK, I've got an idea, Miletto. Hold  
on to me!

Miletto does so as Daisuke tries to keep the snowmobile steady. He counts backwards from 3 in French. On 0, he jumps off the doomed snowmobile with Miletto, the alpine transport vehicle colliding with a tree, effectively ending its useful life. Nikolai stops beside them.

NIKOLAI

Get aboard – quickly!

They do so and the chase resumes, the Russian ex-Spetsnaz officer gunning the engine.

EXT. MOUNTAIN BASE – EVENING

The three of them speed towards the helicopter.

NIKOLAI

Hold on!

One of the mercenaries is able to get a lucky shot at the Russian driver, firing a single shot from his own rifle. BANG! The bullet collides with Nikolai's forearm, yelling and cursing in Russian as he struggles to steer the snowmobile, crashing it, too.

DAISUKE

Nice landing.

NIKOLAI

Thanks.

They pick themselves up and start running, heading towards their escape vehicle, just barely jumping into the chopper.

INT./EXT. VINCENZO'S HELICOPTER – EVENING

As they take their seats, Miletto breaks out a first-aid kit and tends to Nikolai's wound while Daisuke closes the doors.

DAISUKE

No time to explain – get us out of here, NOW!!

Vincenzo does as he is told as he flips switches and grabs the helicopter's HOTAS controls once again, the chopper ascending into the air. Looking out of the window, he can hear a wet squelchy PLOP! Nikolai yells from the pain as Miletto patches him up.

EXT. SUMMIT – NIGHT

SUPER: "SCANDINAVIAN MOUNTAINS"

Vincenzo's helicopter soars through the inky black Sky, the Moon the sole source of illumination.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE RHODIUM GOLEMS' BASE – NIGHT – CONTINUOUS

The whirlybird lands on an improvised helipad, flashing green, white and red lights decorating and illuminating its chassis. The dual rotor blades slow down and stop moving as the twin engines fade away into silence. A door opens and Miletto steps out, held at gunpoint by Nikolai and Daisuke.



NIKOLAI  
 (In Russian)  
 Move – and no tricks.

He jabs the barrel of his Kalashnikov assault rifle into Miletto's back to emphasise his point, the captured arms dealer doing as he is told.

INT. DRIVE ROOM OF THE RHODIUM GOLEMS' BASE – NIGHT –  
 MOMENTS LATER

Miletto is seated opposite Nikolai and Daisuke in an improvised interrogation as the Russian ex-Spetsnaz officer and Japanese ex-Gendarme assume the respective roles of bad cop and good cop.

DAISUKE  
 (In French)  
*You've got nothing to fear, Monsieur Fresson. Just tell us everything you know about the 5 Elements and we'll try to help you.*

MILETTO  
*The 5 Elements?*

DAISUKE  
*Our female ally was part of something called Project Athena, which was tied to the 5 Elements. we need to know everything you know... please. who is Kana Takahashi? really?*

Miletto thinks it over before acquiescing.

MILETTO  
*Kana is the epitome of evil – she's the personification of every devil and dark god you can imagine. Project Athena was an attempt to make the impossible possible: an Übersoldat. The greatest trick the Devil ever pulled was convincing the world he didn't exist... well, he – or, in this case, she – does. I can tell you that much.*

Nikolai, despite not understanding French, quickly puts 2 and 2 together.

NIKOLAI  
 Don't make me laugh.

MILETTO

Seeing is believing, *Monsieur* Rostavili... or so it seems. As a man of honour, do you not feel inclined to take my words seriously? Am I not innocent until proven guilty?

Nikolai glares at him.

NIKOLAI

Don't give me that crap. Your knowing association with those bastards makes you guilty by default.

DAISUKE

I think what my colleague is trying to say that your hands are tainted... and if you want to clean them, then you need to work with us. Please.

Miletto looks at Daisuke's sympathetic eyes before quickly glancing over at Nikolai's shiny head. Looking back at Daisuke, he nods.

MILETTO

OK.

Daisuke smiles.

DAISUKE

Good.

He and Nikolai get up, leaving Miletto to ponder his actions, the French Euro-warlord looking more than a little anxious as he is left alone. He reaches into his pocket and produces a cigarette lighter.

MILETTO

You got a cigarette? Please?

Daisuke turns back to face Miletto and gives him a packet.

DAISUKE

Here. I'm trying to quit, anyway.

MILETTO

Thank you.

DAISUKE

You're welcome. Just think about what we talked about, OK?

Nikolai and Daisuke leave as Miletto lights up his cigarette.

## INT. VINCENZO'S QUARTERS – NIGHT

Vincenzo is in casual wear, looking pensive as he tries to make sense of his feelings towards Sakura. He gets up and starts muttering to himself in Italian.

VINCENZO

(In Italian)

Sakura and I... she's a gorgeous woman. OK, she's not Lovisa, but I'd rather take someone who can help me stay on the right path and practice my linguistic skills with than a rich bitch with fratricidal tendencies. Holy shit – she sounds a bit like me, really. We're too similar, anyway... we'd break up in a week. No... no, it's true. I'm in love with Sakura... opposites do attract. Oh, fuck me dead.

He sighs and lies on his bed once again as he tries to get some sleep.

## INT. RECREATION ROOM OF THE RHODIUM GOLEMS' BASE – NIGHT

Nikolai and Daisuke are present, the Afro-Siberian playing a game on an arcade machine while his Japanese counterpart throws a squash ball, catching it as it flies back to him and repeating the process. There is a long silence for several seconds until Nikolai loses his game, cursing in Russian. He turns to face Daisuke.

NIKOLAI

Even with free play enabled, this game's a bloody thief.

DAISUKE

What do you expect? It's not going to hand you victory on a silver platter.

NIKOLAI

I know... shit.

He gets his things and proceeds to leave.

DAISUKE

Where are you going?

NIKOLAI

To get some sleep – I suggest you follow suit, since we've got one hell of a day tomorrow.

Nikolai leaves Daisuke alone in the rec room – after a moment's thought, he, too, leaves, closing the doors behind him as the lights go out.

FADE TO:

INT. DRIVE ROOM OF THE RHODIUM GOLEMS' BASE – THE NEXT DAY

Vincenzo, Nikolai, Daisuke and Sakura are present, looking pensive as they look through notes and documents for what feels like the millionth time. There is a deep, abiding silence for a full minute, and then a faint rumbling sound is heard. Vincenzo is the first one to pick it up.

VINCENZO

What the fuck was that?

NIKOLAI

What?

The rumbling sound gets louder and closer as Vincenzo begins to panic.

VINCENZO

That.

Gunfire is heard followed by men yelling orders. Nikolai and Daisuke exchange glances.

DAISUKE

(With increasing  
urgency)

Vincenzo, get to the chopper,  
quickly, and take Sakura with you.  
Go! Now!

Vincenzo gets up uncertainly before doing as he is told, with Sakura following him. Nikolai and Daisuke look at each other, exchanging knowing glances.

INT. DRIVE ROOM OF THE RHODIUM GOLEMS' BASE – DAY – LATER

Nikolai and Daisuke are standing back-to-back in the drive room, the Afro-Russian wielding and cocking his trusty Kalashnikov assault rifle complete with grenade launcher while his Japanese counterpart primes his light machine gun.

NIKOLAI

You sure about this?

DAISUKE  
I can't think of another solution,  
can you?

Nikolai laughs humourlessly.

NIKOLAI  
Good point.

DAISUKE  
Besides, someone had to tell the  
outside world where we are.

Nikolai turns to face Daisuke, his eyes alight and sparkling  
with demonic fury.

NIKOLAI  
You mean...

DAISUKE  
...Miletto? Who else?

Nikolai swears loudly in Russian as he proceeds to storm off  
to get Miletto but Daisuke stops him.

NIKOLAI  
(Yelling and shaking  
him off)  
Get off me!

DAISUKE  
Nikolai, focus! We take out the  
invaders first and then you can  
question Miletto... I'll give you free  
reign.

He nods.

NIKOLAI  
OK... I'll hold you to it.

They resume their positions as the front and back doors  
burst open simultaneously, and a fierce gunfight ensues as  
they dive for cover.

Nikolai fires wildly in his signature Rambo-esque fashion,  
swearing at his enemies in Russian, while Daisuke takes  
careful calculated shots – single and burst – from cover.

This goes on for a full minute until both men are out of  
ammunition... and cornered. Daisuke swears in both French and  
Japanese, with Nikolai following suit in Russian and German.

DAISUKE

Out of ammunition... no spares... bugger.

NIKOLAI

I told you to get more than 3 magazines!

The commanding officer, the last remaining Plutonium Phoenix, draws and cocks his sidearm, pointing it straight at Nikolai's head. He taunts them in an unintelligible vocoder-like language.

DAISUKE

Any last words?

Nikolai turns to face Daisuke with an annoyed look.

NIKOLAI

Yes – when I meet you at the Pearly Gates, I'll ask for a separate lawyer.

They turn to face their would-be reaper and close their eyes tightly in fear. BANG! A single gunshot is heard as the officer falls over, dead. Nikolai and Daisuke slowly open their eyes to see Sakura standing in the doorway with her Steyr L9A2 MF (Modular Frame) pistol in her hands.

SAKURA

You don't think I know about your reputation for getting into trouble, do you? Some pirates you boys are.

They calm down and thank her in their native languages as Nikolai heads for Miletto's quarters.

DAISUKE

Nikolai, don't take too long.

SAKURA

Where's he going?

DAISUKE

To settle a score. Get Vincenzo here – we might need him.

She leaves the drive room. Daisuke looks at the massacre before him solemnly.

INT. MILETTO'S QUARTERS - DAY

A furious Nikolai kicks open the door to Miletto's quarters, knocking it off its hinges and sending it flying across the room. Miletto turns to face the angry, pissed-off giant before him as the colour drains from his face. He tries to protest but Nikolai punches him in the nose, knocking him off to the floor. Nikolai yells at him in Russian, doing a "Get up!" gesture with his hands.

Miletto tries to do as he is told as Nikolai props him up and punches him again before throwing him into a wall, disorienting him as the French arms dealer tries to get to his feet. Nikolai grabs his head and slams it into the wall several times, synchronising each slam with every emphasised word.

NIKOLAI

YOU... BASTARD!! YOU disgusting piece of SHIT!! You SOLD us OUT, you FUCK!!

MILETTO

What the hell are you talking about?!

NIKOLAI

Those soldiers who came to kill us - you told us about our position, didn't you?

MILETTO

You should have known better than to trust me, then, shouldn't you?

Nikolai throws Miletto into a wall angrily, letting him collapse onto the floor.

NIKOLAI

SHUT UP!! Just shut up! I ask the questions! Where is Kana?

MILETTO

Who?

Nikolai grabs the piece of shit before him and slaps him with his large, muscular hand.

NIKOLAI

Where is Kana Takahashi?

MILETTO

I'm not quite sure.

NIKOLAI

Then allow me to boost your confidence.

(Kicks Miletto in the sternum before dropping him onto the floor)

Where. Is. Kana. Takahashi?

MILETTO

(Panicking)

I don't fucking know! Seek out a man named Gebhuza! He'll tell you everything!

NIKOLAI

Where do I find him?

MILETTO

(In English, terrified)

He's a warlord based somewhere in North America!

(In French)

Just don't kill me, please!

Nikolai looks at Miletto for a moment, his heart fighting with his mind for dominance. Eventually, he comes to a personal executive decision as he grabs the cowardly Euro-warlord and props him up.

NIKOLAI

(With a tranquil fury)

You don't matter enough to kill — that would be far too lenient. If you're lucky, then Kana will set her dogs on you. If not, then you'll watch your life rot away in the mirror of a prison cell.

He knocks out Miletto with one last punch and slings his body over his shoulder, carrying him outside.

INT./EXT. VINCENZO'S HELICOPTER — DAY — LATER

Nikolai drops Miletto's unconscious body into the helicopter, taking a few deep breaths to control his infamous temper.

DAISUKE

You OK?



NIKOLAI  
I will be when we're out of here.  
(To Vincenzo)  
Vincenzo, come with me.  
(To Daisuke)  
We need to scuttle the base.

DAISUKE  
What? Are you serious!?

NIKOLAI  
There's no alternative, Daisuke –  
those bastards know where we are.

VINCENZO  
What the hell are you talking about?  
We can still win.

NIKOLAI  
You don't understand, Vincenzo – we  
need to activate the self-destruct  
sequence. It's the only way to put a  
stop to this madness. For as long as  
we exist, so will Project Athena.

Vincenzo and Daisuke look at each other for a moment as they proceed to follow Nikolai. Vincenzo stops briefly to check on Sakura.

VINCENZO  
(Indicating Miletto)  
Watch him.

SAKURA  
Don't worry, I can take care of  
myself.

VINCENZO  
It's not you I'm worried about,  
Sakura.

Sakura smiles softly.

SAKURA  
Don't be gone long, Vincenzo.

Vincenzo nods imperceptibly and smiles back as he heads into the base while Sakura watches over an out-cold Miletto with her handgun drawn and ready.

INT. CORRIDOR IN THE RHODIUM GOLEMS' BASE – DAY

Vincenzo, Nikolai and Daisuke enter the base and walk solemnly through a marble white corridor with a pair of red double-doors at the end. They look at each other for a moment, acknowledging their inevitable fate in silence as Vincenzo inputs an access code into a keypad.

A single LED illuminates from red to green, while two more remain red. Nikolai and Daisuke follow suit along with their respective LED lights changing colour one by one. Each illumination is accompanied by a high-pitched PING! The double-doors slide open.

INT. COMPUTER CORE IN THE RHODIUM GOLEMS' BASE – DAY –  
CONTINUOUS

The trio enter a large server room as Vincenzo types up a series of instructions on a computer keyboard, executing an unknown command. The screen flashes green with a confirmation sound.

VINCENZO

It's up.

DAISUKE

Good.

Daisuke tries to remain composed while Nikolai is hesitant, the Afro-Russian trying to control his panic.

VINCENZO

Nikolai, Daisuke, are we going to  
continue this?

Nikolai nods as his face tightens with resolve.

NIKOLAI

Yes. We have no choice.

VINCENZO

OK. Computer, this is Vincenzo  
Corbucci, requesting access.

The computer's voice is a masculine *basso profundo* as it confirms his request with a digitised jingle.

COMPUTER (V.O.)

Identity acknowledged – access  
granted.

VINCENZO

Computer, initiate self-destruct  
sequence – authorisation: Corbucci  
46-Victor-Romeo-Charlie.

COMPUTER (V.O.)

Confirmed. Awaiting two more codes  
for activation.

NIKOLAI

Computer, this is Nikolai Rostavili –  
authorisation: Rostavili 23-November-  
Sierra-Romeo.

COMPUTER (V.O.)

Confirmed. Awaiting one more code for  
activation.

DAISUKE

Computer, this is Daisuke Kasai –  
authorisation: Kasai 69-Kilo-Delta.

There is a brief pause before the computer speaks up again.

COMPUTER (V.O.)

Confirmed. Destruct sequence  
completed and engaged. Please specify  
time limit and further options.

VINCENZO

This is Vincenzo Corbucci. Destruct  
sequence: Type 01. One hour – silent  
countdown.

(Pause as they  
exchange knowing  
looks)

Enable.

Red warning lights start flashing accompanied by a muted  
alarm sound as the computer monitor turns a menacing blood-  
red complete with a countdown timer.

COMPUTER (V.O.)

Self-destruct sequence is activated.  
The base will be destroyed in 60  
minutes – there will be no further  
audio warnings.

They look at each other ruefully, silently, for a full  
minute.

VINCENZO

Let's load up on provisions and get  
the fuck out of here.

(MORE)

VINCENZO (cont'd)  
 I don't want to be around when this  
 place... our home... is turned into the  
 New Chernobyl Exclusion Zone.

They leave, one by one – first Daisuke, then Nikolai, and  
 finally Vincenzo, who takes one last look around before  
 Nikolai's voice snaps him back to reality.

NIKOLAI (O.S.)  
 Come on, Vincenzo! We're counting on  
 you to fly us to the Promised Land!

Vincenzo leaves the room, the double-doors sliding shut with  
 a deafening silence.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE RHODIUM GOLEMS' BASE – EVENING – LATER

The Sun is setting in the Sky as the trio emerge from the  
 base – Vincenzo is holding a box in both hands, Nikolai is  
 carrying a large crate over his shoulder and Daisuke is  
 wearing a rucksack. They take one more look at their old  
 home before heading for the whirlybird.

INT./EXT. VINCENZO'S HELICOPTER – EVENING – CONTINUOUS

They drop their provisions into the back of the helicopter  
 and take their seats as Sakura rejoins Vincenzo in the  
 front.

NIKOLAI  
 (Urgently)  
 Vincenzo, get us out of here NOW.

VINCENZO  
 No shit.

SAKURA  
 What about him?  
 (Indicates Miletto)  
 We can't just drop him off into the  
 ocean.

NIKOLAI  
 (Contemptuously)  
 It's no more than he deserves... but  
 that is not our way. We'll drop him  
 off back at his posh mountain home in  
 the White Mountain.

DAISUKE  
 (Calmly)  
 Just take us up, Vincenzo.

Vincenzo flips switches and grabs the dual throttles on the HOTAS controls as the chopper ascends into the Sky.

INT. OUTSIDE THE RHODIUM GOLEMS' BASE – EVENING – CONTINUOUS

As the familiar pink and white helicopter departs the base for the final time, there is a deep, abiding silence which lasts for several seconds... and then a low rumbling sound is heard followed by a white blinding flash of light accompanied by a deafening crack, which echoes away into silence.

EXT. STEPPE – THE NEXT DAY

SUPER: "ENGADIN VALLEY, SWITZERLAND"

The Kazan Ansat-M helicopter is idle, the Sun shining in the Sky with a soothing baby blue.

INT./EXT. VINCENZO'S HELICOPTER – DAY

Vincenzo is asleep. He leans back in chair a little TOO far and falls to the floor, cursing in Italian. He removes some foam earplugs before slipping on his spectacles, looking up to see Nikolai and Daisuke trying not to laugh.

VINCENZO  
Hey... what time is it?

Nikolai checks his wristwatch.

NIKOLAI  
Nearly 2 PM, Vincenzo. We've been up for over an hour, waiting for you.

He smiles, showing off his white teeth and pissing off his friend.

VINCENZO  
(Irritated)  
Why the hell didn't you make me up?

DAISUKE  
(Deadpan)  
Because we didn't want to piss you off. We know you like your sleep.

Vincenzo picks himself up as Sakura calls his name. He turns around to see his partner holding up some documents and images with Miletto's face on them, highlighting his ties to the 5 Elements.

He approaches the Asian beauty as he scratches his stubble, which is starting to form into a beard and moustache. Vincenzo's eyes widen slightly in disbelief and triumph.

VINCENZO

That's it... yes, of course!  
 (Kissing Sakura on  
 the cheek)  
 Sakura, my dear, you are a fucking  
 diamond!

Nikolai and Daisuke looks half-surprised, half-amused at their friend and pilot's uncharacteristic extroversion. Without another word, Vincenzo quickly inputs a series of commands on a computer keyboard and slips on a pair of headphones with a built-in microphone, activating it. A telephone is heard ringing several times before it is picked up, and with it comes Helia's voice.

HELIA (V.O.)

Hello?

VINCENZO

Helia, it's Vincenzo. Look, can you  
 put us in touch with a man named  
 Gebhuza Gwala?

HELIA (V.O.)

Gebhuza Gwala... you mean the Butcher  
 of Fear?

SAKURA

If that's the name that he goes by,  
 then yes.

HELIA (V.O.)

I can arrange a meeting with someone  
 who can get you to him.

DAISUKE

Perfect.

HELIA (V.O.)

What's wrong? Why the urgency?

NIKOLAI

Miletto gave us his name when we  
 interrogated him. We think Comrade  
 Gwala might know where the Iron Bitch  
 is.

HELIA (V.O.)

(Pause)

Of course... go to Japan and head for the Izumi Garden Tower in Tokyo – my contact will meet you there. He'll brief you.

VINCENZO

Perfect. Thank you.

HELIA (V.O.)

You're welcome. Just find her and put a stop to her machinations, please... otherwise, my father's lifetime of diplomacy and benevolence will have been for nothing.

Click, dial tone. Vincenzo smiles at his allies.

INT. CEO OFFICE – EVENING

SUPER: "IZUMI GARDEN TOWER, TOKYO, JAPAN"

Nikolai and Daisuke are in a pristine office, waiting for their employer to arrive. Nikolai rests his legs on an expensive mahogany desk while Daisuke looks out of the window, looking slightly disgusted by Nikolai's brash behaviour.

After a while, a door is heard opening and closing and the men assume their positions. Their employer enters, a man in a business suit with a briefcase – he sits down and shakes Daisuke's hand followed by Nikolai.

EMPLOYER

Gentlemen – I'm glad you could take on this assignment.

NIKOLAI

Firstly, the pleasure's all ours... and secondly, get to the point, please.

There is a pause as they exchange glances.

EMPLOYER

Very well. Here is your target. His name is Gebhuza Gwala, also known as the Butcher of Fear. He's a nasty piece of work based in Somalia, in the capital city of Mogadishu. He uses children as his private army. Find out what he knows about Kana...

(MORE)

EMPLOYER (cont'd)

(Ruefully)

...such a waste of talent, that woman.  
All that potential, and she used it  
for evil.

(Shows them a picture  
of a tall, bald  
African man in a  
military uniform)

You get 10 Million New Taiwan Dollars  
if you take him out.

Nikolai and Daisuke exchange glances before the Japanese ex-Gendarme speaks up.

DAISUKE

OK, we'll do it. One less piece of  
shit in the world.

EMPLOYER

Good. I'll contact your pilot - once  
you're in there, seek, locate and  
destroy. Good luck.

NIKOLAI

(Cockily)

Thank you, but I don't need luck. I'm  
good.

They leave the office, ready for their mission, the outcome  
of which will change their lives forever.

EXT. CITY OUTSKIRTS - NIGHT

SUPER: "SOMEWHERE IN THE CANADIAN ROCKY MOUNTAINS"

It is dark and the Moon is shining in the city of Mogadishu  
as Vincenzo's helicopter lands in the Somali metropolis.  
Nikolai and Daisuke get their senses together and quickly  
disembark from the whirlybird as they silently infiltrate  
the city under cover of darkness.

EXT. MILITARY CAMP - NIGHT

Nikolai and Daisuke eventually reach the camp as they take  
cover from a patrol. As their footsteps fade away and recede  
into silence, they proceed and soon breach the perimeter of  
the camp.



Firing two shots from his silenced CZ 75 pistol, Nikolai quickly hides the bodies of a pair of adult guards before proceeding further into the base with Daisuke as they eventually reach a house at the centre of the improvised installation.

INT. GEBHUZA'S LIVING QUARTERS – NIGHT

They climb in through an open window, hiding in the shadows of the bungalow. Peeking out from his hiding spot, Nikolai can see a tall bald man – GEBHUZA GWALA – and two child soldiers.

Thinking quickly, he emerges from his hiding spot and grabs Gebhuza, holding a knife to his throat while holding the child soldiers at gunpoint, who raise their assault rifles at the tall man before them.

NIKOLAI

(Softly)

Lower your weapons. Do it now.  
Please.

(One obeys – the  
other looks at him  
confused before  
following suit –  
Nikolai smiles and  
shoots the door open)

Get out of here – you and your  
friends are free.

The child soldiers thank him in Somali before fleeing the scene. Now alone, Nikolai kicks Gebhuza down to the floor, turning on him like an angry lion as Daisuke emerges.

DAISUKE

Get up.

Gebhuza, now defenceless, does as he is told as he looks at the peerless pair before him.

NIKOLAI

Where's Kana? Tell me and I might let  
you live.

Gebhuza begins to panic, showing his true colours.

GEBHUZA

No! No! Please!

Daisuke approaches him with deadly hostility.

DAISUKE

Where's Kana? Time's running out, *mon ami*.

GEBHUZA

My contact was a man named Rosh... I never met Kana!

Nikolai glares at him, approaching him calmly.

NIKOLAI

Rosh... hang on – Rosh Goldman?

GEBHUZA

Yes! How do you know?

NIKOLAI

(Trying to remain calm)

We have a personal history with the founder of the wannabe Illuminati. Where is he?

GEBHUZA

Egypt! He's in the capital city of Cairo... his hometown.

(Screams in pain as Nikolai jams his knife into his leg)

Stop! Please!

Nikolai removes his knife and holsters it before stepping back. He looks at Daisuke, who nods approvingly. He thanks Gebhuza in Russian before hitting him with the stock of his AK-74M, knocking him out. Spotting a computer nearby, Daisuke looks at the screen, and what he sees ultimately shocks him. He copies all the data to a flash drive before shooting the computer, which sets off an alarm – he curses in French as a squad of adult soldiers head towards the compound.

NIKOLAI

You idiot!

DAISUKE

You can rip and tear me a new rectum later – for now, we need to get out of here!

NIKOLAI

(Into his radio)

Vincenzo! Gebhuza broke! Where are you!?

VINCENZO (V.O.)

I'm at the helipad at the edge of the camp – hurry up, it'll be daylight soon.

NIKOLAI

Got it! See you in 2 minutes!

A gunfight ensues between the Rhodium Golems and Gebhuza's private troops as the mercenaries fight their way through the base, Nikolai firing his Kalashnikov madly while Daisuke lays down suppressing fire with his CZ Scorpion SMG. They can see a pink and white helicopter in the distance and proceed to run towards it.

EXT. HELIPAD – NIGHT

Vincenzo is relaxing with Sakura on the shoreline, the two civilians taking advantage of the situation to get to know each other.

VINCENZO

(In Japanese)

*I don't know why I put up with those two, Sakura – I mean, they're the nearest things I have to friends and... fuck, I don't know why I came back here – this is where they found me a decade ago, in that police station over there.*

He indicates a police station about a hectometre or so away in the distance.

SAKURA

*What were you in there for?*

VINCENZO

*I used to deliver weapons for the local warlord. I couldn't find any normal work in Italy or the UK so I resorted to a life of luxury and larceny. It's OK, Sakura, I got my flying licence, it's all legal.*

He laughs.

SAKURA

*You're a strange man, Vincenzo... and yet, you're the most normal person I've met in a long time.*

VINCENZO

*I suppose you could say I'm a living paradox.*

SAKURA

*I think you're charming, Vincenzo.*

Vincenzo is taken aback by Sakura's statement.

VINCENZO

*Holy shit... seriously!?*

She smiles.

SAKURA

*Yes.*

VINCENZO

*Wow... no woman has ever said to me I'm charming before. They've usually said: "Vincenzo, you're a complete bastard." before vomiting all over me in total disgust.*

*(Checking the time on his smartphone)*

*Let's go – we don't want to disappoint our brave little soldiers, do we?*

Sakura tries not to laugh as they head into the helicopter, the dual rotor blades whirring to life as the twin engines are engaged.

INT./EXT. VINCENZO'S HELICOPTER – NIGHT

Vincenzo looks out of the window and his face turns to shock and disbelief upon witnessing a Mexican standoff – 2 against 5. He turns back to face Sakura.

VINCENZO

*Oh, no... not again. Vincenzo to the rescue as per bloody usual. What would these clowns do without me, eh? Anyone else would probably get a medal for this, the OMRI, the Order of Vittorio Veneto. I bet I don't even get a book token.*

He grabs his Dragunov sniper rifle and opens the pilot's door, slipping out of the helicopter, as Sakura looks worried.

EXT. HELIPAD – NIGHT – CONTINUOUS

Unknown to them, Vincenzo aims carefully... and opens fire on the pirates, taking out all but one with a single well-placed headshot to each target – BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! – as Nikolai and Daisuke dive for cover. Vincenzo points his sniper rifle at the last man standing.

VINCENZO

(In French)

*It'll shoot the fleas off a dog's  
back at a kilometre, and it's pointed  
straight at your head!*

The surviving pirate simply backs away and turns around, breaking into a run. Vincenzo lowers his sniper rifle as Nikolai and Daisuke get to their feet.

NIKOLAI

Dead on time, Vincenzo.

DAISUKE

Thank you. We owe you one.

VINCENZO

Actually, that's five you owe me –  
now, come on.

He smiles politely as the trio board the whirlybird, its rotor blades bursting into life as it takes off, leaving Somalian airspace.

EXT. OCEAN HORIZON – NIGHT – MOMENTS LATER

The helicopter swerves slightly to the sides as the lights flicker on and off momentarily.

NIKOLAI (V.O.)

Are you sure you're OK to fly this  
thing, Vincenzo?

VINCENZO (V.O.)

Yes, of course I'm OK, Nikolai. I had  
a couple of dozen bottles of Gatorade  
earlier – don't worry, I'll get us  
out of here safely.

The now-stable helicopter disappears into the distance.

INT. HELIA'S STUDY – NIGHT

Helia and Erik are present, the atmosphere thick with tension as the Arab CEO looks nervous, occasionally clicking a pen in her hand while her husband tries to conceal his irritation. Rainer enters and gives them both a cup of tea each – they thank him in their native languages... and the red telephone rings. RING! RING! Helia picks it up.

HELIA

Hello?

She holds her pen cautiously.

INT./EXT. VINCENZO'S HELICOPTER – NIGHT

A sugared-up Vincenzo is piloting the whirlybird with expert dexterity, the glucose in his system acting as a power-up of sorts.

SWITCH BETWEEN HELIA/ERIK/RAINER AND VINCENZO/NIKOLAI/DAISUKE/SAKURA.

VINCENZO

Helia, it's me. We've got the info we needed from *Il Macellaio della Paura* and we're on our way.

HELIA

(Relieved)

Perfect! What is it?

VINCENZO

I think it's best if we tell you upon our arrival.

HELIA

Wait, what do you mean?

VINCENZO

I can't tell you right now – just hold on, we'll be there ASAP.

HELIA

(Firmly)

No, tell me now.

VINCENZO

(Snapping)

I said I'll tell you when we get there, Helia.

(MORE)

VINCENZO (cont'd)  
 If you're the same kind of leader  
 your father was, then you'll know  
 when to compromise, when to shut up...  
 and when to pray. Out.

He terminates the connection tersely – Nikolai looks at him,  
 stunned.

NIKOLAI  
 You OK, Vincenzo?

VINCENZO  
 (Getting angry)  
 Yes, I'm fine, Nikolai, thank you  
 very fucking much for asking!

Nikolai is taken aback slightly by Vincenzo's sudden  
 outburst as he quickly figures out why his friend is acting  
 in this uncharacteristic manner.

NIKOLAI  
 No wonder you're permanently hyped  
 up.

Vincenzo proceeds to open a glass bottle of Gatorade but  
 Nikolai takes it from him and throws it against the wall,  
 shattering it into a million shards of glass and narrowly  
 avoiding Daisuke in the process, who curses in both French  
 and Dutch.

VINCENZO  
 What the fuck!?

Vincenzo angrily activates the autopilot and turns to face  
 Nikolai with a glare that could melt the Polar Ice Caps.

NIKOLAI  
 It had to be done, Vincenzo.

VINCENZO  
 You mean just like when you beat the  
 shit out of Miletto? Did that have to  
 be done as well!?

NIKOLAI  
 Look at yourself, man.  
 (Raising his voice  
 slightly)  
 You're a fucking junkie! What  
 happened to you?! For the past 6  
 months, you've been on that crap like  
 a fly to shit!

(MORE)

NIKOLAI (cont'd)  
 (Calming down)  
 I know it's tough, but trust me, once  
 this is done, it's over... but I need  
 you – WE need you – to remain  
 focused. Do you understand?

Vincenzo sighs and collapses into his seat – he replies with a single nod and an affirmation in Italian as Sakura looks at him worriedly, hugging him to soothe him. Nikolai and Daisuke exchange worried glances silently.

EXT. GOLDMAN FAMILY MANSION – NIGHT

It's dark and the Moon is shining in the Sky as Vincenzo's pink and white helicopter lands on the mansion's helipad, its engines and rotor blades dying out into silence.

INT. HELIA'S STUDY – NIGHT

BANG! BANG! BANG! Three short, sharp knocks are heard – Helia looks up, recognising them. Erik and Rainer are also present.

HELIA  
 Come.

The double-doors to her study-cum-office open to reveal the quartet entering the office, Sakura closing the double-doors behind her. Vincenzo hands Helia an orange USB flash drive – she looks at it for a moment before plugging it into her computer, the display sparkling to life... and her eyes widen in shock. Erik notices this.

ERIK  
 What is it?

HELIA  
 (With restrained  
 anger)  
 Vincenzo was right.

Erik looks at the monitor... and his eyes, too, widen in shock as he runs out of the study. Vincenzo and Nikolai exchange glances, the Afro-Russian shrugging silently, prompting his Euro-Mediterranean counterpart to nod once and give up.

EXT. GOLDMAN FAMILY MANSION – THE NEXT DAY

Vincenzo and Sakura are seated in the former's chopper as the Drakenberg siblings slowly make their way to the whirlybird in silence.



As they reach the helicopter, Erik reaches into his pocket and produces a small device shaped like a rounded rhombus with a single green LED on it... a hologram light bee.

He looks at Lovisa for a moment, who returns his stare, before activating it. The light bee flies into the air and a solid white human outline appears before materialising into full colour, and a Hispanic man with dark hair and a gold Ace of Spades on his forehead appears – Peruvian-Australian former spy ALEJANDRO ROJAS. He looks mildly irritated.

ALEJANDRO

(In Spanish)

Switch me on, switch me off, like I'm  
some sort of battery-powered sex aid...  
make up your minds, damn it!

Vincenzo looks slightly amused at Alejandro's mini-outburst.

ERIK

We need your help, Alejandro.

ALEJANDRO

What's happened now? You had a fight  
with your wife and she's sending you  
out for the night? It's your problem,  
*amigo*, not mine.

ERIK

We know who's behind all this.

(Pause)

Helia's not going to like this.

Lovisa turns to face Erik, her patience nearing its end.

LOVISA

(Raising her voice  
slightly)

Tough shit for her! It's time she  
faced reality and acted like a real  
leader instead of riding on her  
father's coattails!

Erik and Alejandro exchange knowing looks nervously.

ERIK

Helia's REALLY not going to like  
this.

They get aboard as Vincenzo flips switches and the chopper's dual rotor blades whir into life again, the twin engines barking and whining into existence as it ascends into the Sky before disappearing into the shining Sun.

EXT. CITY STREETS – EVENING

SUPER: "CAIRO, EGYPT"

The Sun begins to set as the streets of Cairo are hustling and bustling with energy. The Drakenberg siblings walk with Sakura and Alejandro to a VERY specific bungalow house on the city outskirts as the shadows grow longer.

Nervously, Lovisa strikes a few poses, trying to look cool and sexy at the same time as she flips back her blonde hair, Sakura putting her hand on her friend's shoulder to soothe her as the sound of the door knocking brings them back to reality. A voice greets them in Arabic as the door opens, letting them inside.

INT. ROSH AND NADIA'S BUNGALOW HOUSE – EVENING

Entering the living room, Erik finally comes face-to-face with his in-laws for the first time in nearly a quarter of a century. A woman with dark hair – NADIA GOLDMAN – smiles at Erik politely.

NADIA

Erik... hi! It's been a long time.  
Please come inside.

Erik thanks her in Swedish as he steps inside.

ERIK

Where's Rosh? There's a little matter  
we need to talk about.

NADIA

(Concerned)

What? Helia's in trouble?

ERIK

No. She's not in trouble.

(Pause)

5 Elements... Project Athena... my  
sister.

Nadia tenses up a bit as she immediately yells Rosh's name in a panic. A Middle Eastern man with dark grey hair – ROSH GOLDMAN – enters from the master bedroom as he curses in Hebrew... his mood soon changes when he sees Erik looking really pissed off.

ROSH

(Nervously)

Erik... hi.

The elder Drakenberg sibling approaches him, pushing and shoving him into an armchair.

NADIA

What are you doing!?

She runs to help her husband but Alejandro holds onto her.

ALEJANDRO

*Señora* Goldman, please try to understand. Erik knows what happened – he deserves to know the truth, don't you think?

Nadia looks at Alejandro sadly, guiltily – with a single nod of her head, she replies in the affirmative in Arabic.

ERIK

(To Alejandro)

Thank you, Alex.

(To Rosh)

Start talking, Rosh... why did you let this happen?

His anger is an ice-cold tranquil fury like a comet on a collision course with Earth – unbound and unstoppable.

ROSH

I tried everything to stop the project, Erik... please believe me.

ERIK

You knew Kana was up to no good yet you still funded her experiments.

(Pause before raising his voice with each successive question)

Why? Why my sister!? Why Sakura?!

Erik can feel tears of rage and grief threatening to escape his eyes as Rosh looks at him remorsefully.

ROSH

I didn't know what kind of person she really was for a long time. She just wanted to perfect robotics with Gonta's nano-augmentations... that's all she wanted to do, she told me. I was responsible for holding the world on my shoulders, please try to understand – the decisions I had to make weren't easy.

(Pause)

I'm sorry.

ERIK

(Coldly)

Oh, don't worry – I have a feeling you'll be VERY sorry when we're finished with you. Get up.

(Rosh does so)

Look at your guinea pigs now.

(Rosh tries to look away)

If you don't look at the people whose lives you've ruined with your machinations here and now, then I'll make sure that you and your wife will NEVER see your daughter again. Never!

Rosh forces himself to make eye contact with Lovisa, Sakura and Alejandro.

ROSH

I'm sorry – please... forgive me.

Lovisa nods, while Sakura bows gratefully.

Erik stares at Rosh and after several seconds of silent staring, punches him in the nose, breaking it with an audible CRACK. Rosh curses in Hebrew as he staggers back. Erik grabs Rosh and punches him again, this time in the stomach, throwing him onto the table.

Rosh tries to sit up but Erik drives his elbow into the retired man's torso, causing him to scream in azure agony as Nadia yells his name, cursing Erik angrily in Arabic as Sakura tries to restrain her, the elder Drakenberg pointing his SIG P226 handgun at the heresiarch's head and pulling back the hammer, cocking it with a CLICK.

ALEJANDRO

Erik, don't do it.

ROSH

(Terrified)

Don't shoot me, please!

(Pause, as Nadia swears at Erik in Hebrew)

I'm sorry, but I had to do what I thought was right at the time.

ERIK

(Screaming)

DO NOT SPEAK TO ME, YOU SACK OF FUCKING SHIT!!

Erik's eyes are burning with tears as Alejandro stands in front of Rosh protectively, stunning the former heresiarch.

ALEJANDRO  
May I speak with you, then?

Erik, completely overwhelmed by his emotions, points his sidearm at his former friend.

ERIK  
Get the fuck out of the way, Alex.

ALEJANDRO  
Or what? You'll shoot me? I'm already dead.

Alejandro is calm and collected, a stark contrast to the hysterical Erik.

ERIK  
(Close to tears)  
He's got to pay for what he's done, Alex. For my family... and for me.  
(Emphatically)  
This is a matter of justice!

ALEJANDRO  
No, it's a question of vengeance, my friend – plain and simple. You got your sister back; the Rhodium Golems are taking care of the Iron Bitch – what more do you want? No wonder that sick fuck could turn your sister against you so easily.

ERIK  
Get. The Fuck. Out. Of. The way!  
(Pause)  
Do it unless you want to be turned into an expensive paperweight!

His hand twitches as Alejandro looks at him straight in his eyes.

ALEJANDRO  
No. Let Helia take care of him.

Erik feels his hand shake for a moment before it steadies, his finger squeezing around the trigger. Alejandro yells in protest in Spanish – BANG! – Erik fires a single shot from his gun as Nadia screams in shock, turning her head away.

There was a long silence... and Rosh slowly opens his eyes, having squeezed them shut when he heard the gunshot.

He examines his body critically – there is no blood, no wound, nothing.

He lets out a sigh of relief as he follows Erik's gaze towards a 9mm-bullet-shaped hole in the floor, the projectile having perforated the wall, which is otherwise left unscathed. Erik decocks his gun, the hammer falling to its resting half-cock position with a loud SNAP sound.

Sakura releases Nadia, who hugs Rosh tightly and looks at Erik sadly, who apologises in Swedish before thanking them and leaving the house with his entourage – Alejandro is the last to leave as he closes the door emphatically behind him. Now alone together, Rosh weeps, and Nadia weeps with him.

INT. HELIA'S STUDY – EVENING

Helia and Rainer are present. She can feel tears welling up in her eyes. Helia looks at her family photo for a moment and then dials an unknown number, her face curling into a snarl as she grips the telephone's receiver so tightly her knuckles bleed.

RAINER  
(Worriedly)  
What are you doing?

HELIA  
Something I should have done a long  
time ago.

RAINER  
You're going to face your demons,  
aren't you?

HELIA  
Yes, Rainer. That's exactly what I'm  
going to fucking do.  
(Pause)  
No more games, no more secrets... no.  
More. Bullshit.

Rainer smiles.

RAINER  
Good luck. I'll be with you if you  
need my support, as always.

Helia smiles back and thanks him in Arabic – the two of them are close, like father and daughter, more so than her actual biological father.

INT. ROSH AND NADIA'S BUNGALOW HOUSE – EVENING

Rosh and Sarah have finished fixing the hole in the wall left from Alejandro's bullet as they look at each other on the sofa in silence, both having recovered from their brush with mortality on Star 1 half a year earlier.

The telephone rings quite loudly – RING, RING! RING, RING! – it takes Rosh several seconds to muster the courage to answer as he picks it up, holding the receiver to his ear.

ROSH

Hello?

SWITCH BETWEEN ROSH/NADIA AND HELIA/RAINER.

HELIA

(In Hebrew)

*Hello, Dad.*

ROSH

*Helia! Hi... are you OK?*

HELIA

*I will be when I get some answers.*

Rosh looks nervous as he raises a solitary eyebrow in a Spock-like fashion.

ROSH

(Nervously)

*Answers?*

HELIA

*Have you been interfering with my direction of the 5 Elements? I'm starting to worry that the organisation's step into legitimacy isn't quite as easy as it seems.*

ROSH

*That's part of the challenge of running a global cabal, my dear. I wouldn't dare to get in the way.*

HELIA

*Then why is all hell breaking loose around me and those I care about? The Rhodium Golems have had to reform to put a stop to Kana's madness.*

Rosh panics.

ROSH

*Kana's back?*

HELIA

*Don't lie to me, Father. I know you and my mother were with Kana in San Francisco, I know you colluded with her back at Star 1... and I want to know why.*

Nadia looks at Rosh worriedly as he sighs. He knows the game is up as he takes a deep breath before preparing himself to bite the bullet.

ROSH

*I'm sorry... she made us cooperate in exchange for your safety.*

Helia's eyes narrow in restrained anger.

HELIA

*You haven't changed one iota.*

ROSH

*I know... I thought that by luring her to Star 1, we could put a stop to all this chaos...*

HELIA

*...and you didn't tell me – do you know what you and my mother have done? The Rhodium Golems risked their lives on multiple occasions to stop her – one of them could have died because of you.*

*(Raising her voice slightly)*

*Am I really that dumb? Do you really not trust me, your own fucking daughter, to run the 5 Elements and bring it into the light after your regime of darkness?*

Rosh hangs his head in shame, feeling mortified by his daughter's admonitions and accusations – he knows they are true. After several seconds of silence, he finally speaks up, trying to maintain his composure.



ROSH

*I'm sorry, Helia... I know nothing can make up for what I've done... but please, try to understand: I was trying to protect you from the darkest depths of the organisation's corruption... I didn't want you to be tainted with the same brush. I thought I was doing you a favour. The 5 Elements were founded as an icon of the defender, not an emblem of darkness.*

Rosh openly lets his tears run down his face. Helia softens up as she tries to hold back her own guilt at lashing out at her father.

HELIA

*I'm sorry, too... I shouldn't have yelled at you.*

ROSH

*It's OK, Helia. You were right to ask me about Kana and my activities.*

Helia regains her composure as Rainer puts his hand on her shoulder soothingly.

HELIA

*Just promise me one thing, Dad: Don't get involved with the 5 Elements again. Ever. Try to enjoy your retirement years – the organisation's in good hands.*

Rosh cries slightly as he lets the tears run down his cheeks and fall onto the floor, the truth and knowledge of his daughter's leadership of the 5 Elements finally releasing him from a lifetime's worth of pain and struggling.

ROSH

*OK, Helia... I promise.*

*(Turns to face Nadia while wiping away his tears)*

*I think your mother wants to speak with you. Goodbye, my dear... I love you.*

HELIA

*I love you, too.*

Rosh hands Nadia the telephone, who holds it up to her ear.

NADIA  
 (In Arabic)  
*Hello?*

HELIA  
*Mother... hi.*

NADIA  
*I just want to tell you we love you, Helia. You're right, we shouldn't have gotten involved again, but we can't help ourselves – you're our daughter. Have you thought about what will happen to the 5 Elements after your tenure? I don't think so.*

Helia sighs and looks pensive.

HELIA  
*You're right, I haven't.*

NADIA  
*Then do this for us: If you can't find someone to take your place when you retire, then let the organisation die naturally – the power we took away from the people must be given back to the people, and the icon of the defender will become a legend for future generations.*

Helia nods understandingly.

HELIA  
*You're right. OK, Mother... I'll do that.*

NADIA  
*Thank you.*

HELIA  
*Just keep yourselves alive, OK?*

NADIA  
*We'll try. Goodbye, Helia... goodbye, my dear.*

Nadia hangs up just as her own tears begin to well up.  
 Click, dial tone.

BACK TO:

INT. HELIA'S STUDY – EVENING

Helia hangs up and she looks at Rainer, smiling softly at him.

RAINER  
Are you OK, Miss Helia?

HELIA  
Yes... I'm fine.

She opens a drawer and gives Rainer a little cardboard box decorated with the Swiss flag.

RAINER  
What is it?

HELIA  
It's something for you... to say thank  
you for effectively raising me and  
looking after me all these years.  
(Noticing Rainer's  
confused expression)  
Take it, it's yours.

He hesitates for a moment before taking the box.

RAINER  
Are you sure about this? Can I open  
it?

HELIA  
Of course.

Rainer opens it to reveal a pair of wristwatches – one gold, the other silver. He looks shocked.

RAINER  
Wow... Miss Helia, I can't take these...

HELIA  
...yes, Rainer, you can, and you will.  
You deserve them. You gave your whole  
life to help my father and help me.  
Think of them as retirement presents.

Rainer looks at the wristwatches and notices they are both set to different times. He laughs nervously.

RAINER  
Why two?

HELIA

Different time zones – gold one's set  
to Swiss time, silver one Georgian  
time.

He smiles at the wristwatches and closes the box, hugging  
Helia tightly.

RAINER

Thank you so much.

HELIA

No, thank YOU.

They embrace each other tightly, savouring the rare moment  
of human tenderness between them.

EXT. GOLDMAN FAMILY MANSION – EVENING

The Sun is setting in the Sky as two figures – Nikolai and  
Daisuke – are present, watching the landscape before them.

NIKOLAI

Do you ever wonder, Daisuke?

DAISUKE

Wonder about what, Nikolai?

NIKOLAI

About how life forces you into making  
decisions you don't want to make, or  
how it withholds vital information  
from you until the critical moment  
when it's nearly too late to make  
amends?

DAISUKE

No... I can't say that I do. I try to  
live in the now.

NIKOLAI

I don't... I don't think I can, anyway.

Daisuke looks at Nikolai worriedly, noticing his friend's  
uncharacteristic sentimentality. Nikolai doesn't turn his  
head to face him.

DAISUKE

What are you saying, Nikolai?

NIKOLAI

What I'm saying, Daisuke, is that I'm  
done.

(MORE)

NIKOLAI (cont'd)

I'm sick of carrying a gun in my hand, I'm sick of fighting, I'm sick of killing, I'm fucking fed up of it all. I've been tired of it for several years, to tell you the truth.

Daisuke looks concerned.

DAISUKE

I'm sorry, Nikolai.

NIKOLAI

So am I.

DAISUKE

What happened to you?

NIKOLAI

I woke up and took a big whiff of the faeces that were being shovelled into my face, that's what happened. When I was in the Spetsnaz, I loved every second of it – the training, the combat, the missions, the promotions, everything. Somewhere along the line, I did the one thing you don't do in a job like that: I used my head. I was young, foolish and patriotic at the time... now I'm old, wise and burned out. I quit after my Black Beret award and got an honourable discharge as a Sergeant.

(Turning to face  
Daisuke)

How about you? How'd you come to be a mercenary with morals?

DAISUKE

I was what you'd call a Gendarme – I got discharged after a disciplinary hearing following a botched hostage crisis in which all but two of the hostages died. It was worse than the siege on the Iranian Embassy in London from 1980.

NIKOLAI

You were ex-SFG, weren't you?

Daisuke smiles sympathetically at Nikolai, who returns the smile for once – for the first time in their adult lives; they are letting their guard down and getting to know each other as men instead of soldiers.

DAISUKE  
Special Forces Group, Japan's answer  
to SWAT – that's right.

NIKOLAI  
Fucking hell... we're not so different,  
you and I.

DAISUKE  
No, we're not... what about Vincenzo?

They turn back to face the setting Sun.

NIKOLAI  
Well... I don't know, to be honest.  
What I do know is that he deserves  
better than this – he deserves a real  
life, not chauffeuring two ageing law  
enforcers like some kind of crappy  
throwback to an '80s television show  
that got rejected after its pilot was  
made.

Daisuke laughs as the sound of an unmistakable whirring  
noise catches his attention. He looks up to see a familiar  
pink and white chopper approach them, a distant speck  
emerging from the hazy sunset.

DAISUKE  
Speak of the bloody Devil... he's back!

NIKOLAI  
Great! Now we can finally get a fix  
on that mad bitch.

As the whirlybird lands on the improvised helipad, the doors  
open to reveal Erik, Elsa, Alejandro and Sofia disembark –  
the dual rotor blades slow down to a complete stop and the  
twin engines whine away into silence before Vincenzo exits  
with Hiroka, approaching his brothers in arms.

DAISUKE  
Well, now... that was quick.

VINCENZO  
It was a red herring, Daisuke. The  
mission was a fucking setup.

DAISUKE  
By who?

VINCENZO  
Who do you think?

Daisuke puts 2 and 2 together, while Nikolai looks at Sofia suspiciously.

NIKOLAI

Who's she? She's not another turncoat bitch, I hope.

Sofia looks offended by Nikolai's semi-insult, prompting Lovisa to intercede and mediate.

LOVISA

No, Nikolai... this is Sofia Solander, my classmate and teammate... and she's my friend.

Sofia eyes up Daisuke curiously.

NIKOLAI

I see.

Sofia smiles gratefully before ogling Daisuke briefly.

VINCENZO

You guys coming to see *La Madrina* or are you going to sit here and mope like a pair of codgers?

NIKOLAI

I think I'll stay here and mope, thanks.

DAISUKE

Yes, moping sounds good.

Vincenzo sighs and nods acceptingly.

VINCENZO

OK, gentlemen.  
(To the others)  
Let's go.

He leads his group into the mansion, leaving Nikolai and Daisuke alone as they continue to watch the setting Sun... they soon reconsider as they exchange glances.

NIKOLAI

Fuck it. Let's go.

DAISUKE

You don't say.

They turn around and head into the mansion after their allies.

INT. HELIA'S STUDY – EVENING

BANG! BANG! BANG! Three short, sharp knocks are heard as Helia is seated at her desk once again, with Rainer behind her.

HELIA

Come.

The double-doors open to reveal the complete entourage, who stride forward as they approach Helia's desk – Nikolai closes the double-doors behind him as he and Daisuke stay slightly apart.

VINCENZO

I'm sure you know by now what happened, so I'll spare you the details. We have a favour to ask from you now.

Helia raises her eyebrow slightly in a Spock-like fashion – this is new.

HELIA

Yes...?

VINCENZO

We're tired of running around in circles. We're ready to take the fight back to the source – if you can find out where Kana's based... if you can get us her location, then we can go over there and put a stop to whatever it is she's planning. No more games, Helia – now's your chance to prove you're a real leader.

Nikolai and Daisuke exchange impressed looks, silently stunned by their friend and pilot's confidence and courage.

HELIA

OK... if you can give me until tomorrow, then I'm sure I can get a lead for you.

VINCENZO

Thank you. Remember: once she's dead, we're free from your service and we move on with our lives. Deal?

Helia nods sadly and replies in the affirmative in Arabic. Vincenzo smiles softly and thanks her in Italian as the group leave the office, the double-doors closing behind Nikolai and Daisuke with a resounding SLAM!



Now alone with Rainer, Helia looks at her red telephone and, after a moment's hesitation, picks it up, dialling an unknown number as she puts the receiver to her ear.

HELIA

This is a Priority 1 Order – to all active departments: seek out Kana Takahashi – I repeat: seek and locate Kana, but DO NOT destroy. Use the evidence provided by the Rhodium Golems to assist you. I repeat: this is a Priority 1 Order. Over and out.

She smiles at Rainer mischievously, who simply smiles back.

EXT. GOLDMAN FAMILY MANSION – NIGHT

It's now dark and the Moon is shining in the Sky. Vincenzo's pink and white chopper rests on the mansion's helipad, idle and silent.

INT./EXT. VINCENZO'S HELICOPTER – NIGHT – CONTINUOUS

Vincenzo is sitting in the cockpit of his trusty whirlybird looking pensive while Nikolai and Daisuke approach their friend and pilot, knocking on the helicopter's metal chassis to get his attention.

DAISUKE

Everything OK, Vincenzo?

VINCENZO

Yes, I'm fine, Daisuke. You guys OK?

NIKOLAI

We're fine – we were wondering if we could have a quick word before leaving.

Vincenzo nods.

VINCENZO

OK. What's up?

He dismounts the chopper to face his friends and allies as they compose themselves.

DAISUKE

Look... I know we haven't been the best possible friends to you, and given the choice, we probably wouldn't have chosen you as our pilot... but, we just want to say, all things considered...

He takes a deep breath to try to control himself when Nikolai intercedes.

NIKOLAI

...what we're trying to say, Vincenzo, is that you've proven yourself time and time again to be a good guy. You're one of us, and we're proud to have you as a Rhodium Golem. I know I've been a bit of a hard anus but I had to keep you safe – I mean... you don't exactly come from a military or police background, do you?

Vincenzo laughs at Nikolai's joke.

VINCENZO

It's OK.

DAISUKE

We also know how much Sakura means to you and we just want you to know that you're free – if you want to live your own life now, then you can do so. We won't stop you.

VINCENZO

Not until this last mission is completed – it's going to be one hell of a final confrontation.

NIKOLAI

Are you sure, Vincenzo?

VINCENZO

I've never left a job half-finished, and I don't mean to start now.

He holds out his hand – Nikolai looks at it for a moment before extending his own, with Daisuke following suit as their hands briefly unite. Their hands part as they look at each other, reaffirmed and confident in each other's abilities.

NIKOLAI

Let's fucking do this.

DAISUKE

You've come a long way since we found you in that Somalian shithole more than a decade ago – Nikolai and I are both proud of you. We could have used someone like you back in the day.

VINCENZO

Thanks, Daisuke.

DAISUKE

Why did you come back for us, anyway? We always told you to save your own skin first.

VINCENZO

I could have left you guys to rot – every time – but I didn't... I came back because you're the nearest people I have to friends, even brothers. If we're going to go, then let's go out doing the right thing, like we've always done.

Locking the helicopter, he smiles and walks with his brothers in arms towards the mansion, ready to get some much-needed sleep for the final push.

INT. FIRST GUEST BEDROOM IN THE GOLDMAN FAMILY MANSION – NIGHT

Nikolai and Lovisa are present, the latter now in casual wear as she lies on her bed, while her new boyfriend sits beside her. Eventually, they look at each other and smile awkwardly.

NIKOLAI

Can this work, Lovisa?

LOVISA

Can what work, Nikolai?

NIKOLAI

Us. I mean, shit... we rescued you; you're young enough to be my sister. I shouldn't be having feelings for you.

Lovisa takes Nikolai's hand and squeezes it gently.

LOVISA

It doesn't matter to me... we're both adults, even though, technically speaking, I'm old enough to be your mother.

NIKOLAI

That doesn't bother me... not even your past as a human killing machine worries me. I just want to know if our relationship can work in spite of all our wild differences.

She looks thoughtful for a moment before locking eyes with her lover.

LOVISA

Yes. We're going to make it work.

Nikolai smiles at Lovisa, relieved as he squeezes her hand in return.

NIKOLAI

Thank goodness. I have to confess, Lovisa... I didn't count on falling in love with you. For a long time, I thought love was just a silly word with a fairy-tale meaning. It wasn't until I saw Vincenzo with Sakura and realised just how deeply he loves her that I could open my own heart.

She smiles.

LOVISA

I'm going away for one last, final mission tomorrow.

NIKOLAI

Let me guess: We're going to kill the madwoman responsible for ruining your life?

LOVISA

Yes. She can't be allowed to live.

NIKOLAI

We're ALL going.

LOVISA

Nikolai, it's too dangerous – I want you and Daisuke to stay here with Helia, Erik and Rainer – they'll protect you and Sofia.

(MORE)

LOVISA (cont'd)  
They'll make sure you're OK until I  
return. Besides, you deserve a rest.

Nikolai looks sad – his eyes meet Lovisa's as he tries to  
put on a brave face.

NIKOLAI  
I can't, Lovisa... because I love you.  
I don't want to lose you.  
(Nikolai hugs Lovisa  
tightly, stroking  
her blonde hair)  
Oh, Nikolai... it's OK, you can cry if  
you want to.

She kisses him – after a moment's hesitation, he returns the  
kiss and holds her gently while stroking her golden blonde  
hair, the two of them together, in love.

INT. SECOND GUEST BEDROOM IN THE GOLDMAN FAMILY MANSION –  
NIGHT

Sofia and Daisuke were getting to know each other at the  
same time in another guest bedroom, the Gothenburg native  
and Osaka citizen awkwardly flirting with each other.

DAISUKE  
So... how long have you known Lovisa?

Sofia smiles at Daisuke.

SOFIA  
About a year or so, since we met in  
college. What about you? What's your  
main occupation?

A nervous smile creeps across Daisuke's face.

DAISUKE  
Well, I used to be a spec-ops  
officer... but I got discharged... and  
now I'm a soldier of fortune, and I  
occasionally write books.

SOFIA  
What kind of books, Daisuke?

DAISUKE  
Pulp fiction novels... loosely based on  
my adventures.

This earns him a slight laugh from Sofia, who smiles  
dazzlingly at him.

SOFIA  
So, you're a man of many talents.

DAISUKE  
You could say that.  
(Kisses Sofia  
passionately)  
I'm going on a mission tomorrow, to  
put down a VERY wild dog.

SOFIA  
I'm coming with you.

DAISUKE  
No, Sofia. It's too dangerous – I  
want you to stay here with Helia,  
Erik and Rainer – they'll protect  
you. They'll make sure you're OK  
until I return.

Sofia nods.

SOFIA  
Just keep Lovisa safe for me – she's  
my friend.

DAISUKE  
You have my word on it.

Sofia smiles and thanks him in Swedish.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM IN THE GOLDMAN FAMILY MANSION – THE NEXT  
DAY

RING! RING! Vincenzo's smartphone rings insistently. He  
grunts to himself and picks it up, cursing in Italian.

VINCENZO  
Hello?

INT. HELIA'S STUDY – DAY – CONTINUOUS

Helia, Erik and Rainer are present.

SWITCH BETWEEN VINCENZO AND HELIA/ERIK/RAINER.

HELIA  
Vincenzo, it's Helia. I've done what  
you've asked and I've got a fix on  
Kana's location.

VINCENZO

Fucking marvellous! Where is she?

HELIA

She's at the Mouse Bunker in Berlin – she's renovated the top floor into a penthouse suite complete with a lab... God only knows what she's doing there.

VINCENZO

You mean besides continuing the building's history of animal testing? Probably cooking up the next generation of "Perfect Soldiers".

HELIA

(Coldly)

That's not funny, Vincenzo.

VINCENZO

It wasn't meant to be. Thank you, Helia – I now know what I must do.

HELIA

You're welcome... and Vincenzo?

VINCENZO

Yes?

HELIA

(Pause)

Come back alive – all of you.

VINCENZO

I guarantee it. Thanks again.

HELIA

Don't mention it. I will give your team permission to use the experimental plasma weapons found on Star 1.

(Softly)

Good luck, Vincenzo.

Click, dial tone. f

EXT. GOLDMAN FAMILY MANSION – DAY – LATER

Vincenzo, Nikolai and Daisuke are looking over images, notes, documents and audio cassette tapes pertaining to the complete history of the 5 Elements and the legacy of Project Athena.

NIKOLAI

OK... let's run through this one more time. Rosh co-founded the 5 Elements with Nadia, Rainer, Gonta and Kana, who seems to have dropped off the face of the bloody planet.

VINCENZO

She can't elude us forever, Nikolai – she's gone into hiding to cook up another batch of psychotic female ninjas.

NIKOLAI

Why would you say that?

VINCENZO

It's the oldest trick in the book of "How to Be an Evil Overlord" – go back to the place that spawned you, lay low and wreak revenge when it's too late to stop you.

DAISUKE

But that means she's gone back to... no – she can't be that stupid.

VINCENZO

Every villain has an Achilles's heel, Daisuke. Hers is overconfidence and pride.

NIKOLAI

I'm impressed, Vincenzo. You'd have been a fine soldier. I'll get the crew together one last time.

Vincenzo decides to make a phone call to a former adversary. The telephone rings once before being picked up.

ROSH (V.O.)

Hello?

VINCENZO

Rosh, it's me, Vincenzo. We've got Kana and we're going after her – she's hiding at the ex-Research Institution for Experimental Medicine – right in the heart of the Land of the Berlin Wall.

ROSH (V.O.)

(Soothing, pleading)

Vincenzo, don't let justice become  
(MORE)



ROSH (V.O.) (cont'd)  
 revenge – take it from me. Kill  
 Kana and then put an end to your  
 life of crusading. Do it for me –  
 show me that there is still some  
 good in this world.

Vincenzo mulls it over before coming to a decision.

VINCENZO  
 OK, Rosh. I'll take care of that  
 psycho bitch and then start a new  
 chapter of my own life, as long as  
 you can begin anew in yours.

ROSH (V.O.)  
 You've got yourself a deal, my  
 friend – and Vincenzo?

There is a long pause for several seconds before Vincenzo finally speaks up.

VINCENZO  
 Yes, Rosh?

ROSH (V.O.)  
 ...thank you, and farewell.

Click, dial tone. The trio mount the chopper one last time.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE MOUSE BUNKER – NIGHT

SUPER: "BERLIN, GERMANY"

Vincenzo's chopper lands about a hectometre away from the imposing-looking edifice looking like a descendant of the Battleship Potemkin, the Moon shining in the Sky.

INT./EXT. VINCENZO'S HELICOPTER – NIGHT

BEGIN LOCK-AND-LOAD MONTAGE

Nikolai's hand goes to a double-barrelled plasma rifle – a Dual-Neutron Disruptor – as he holsters a plasma pistol or Slow-Fire Protector along with his knife, with Erik, Lovisa, Sakura, Vincenzo, Daisuke and Alejandro following suit. Lovisa and Sakura are dressed in their familiar combat outfits. Everyone disembarks except for Vincenzo, who looks nervous – Sakura hesitates, approaching him as he turns to face her.

VINCENZO  
 This is fucking crazy, you know.

SAKURA

What is?

VINCENZO

This whole Project Athena business – I used to think it was the stuff of science fiction but actually seeing it unfold before me kind of puts a damper on the whole thing.

He laughs, showing rare humour.

SAKURA

Hey. Look at me.

(Vincenzo does so)

You're not alone, Vincenzo, if that's what you're worried about. You've got Nikolai and Daisuke, you've got me.

(Softly)

I love you.

Vincenzo pauses to think about this and looks at her straight in the eyes. He smiles.

VINCENZO

I love you too, Sakura.

SAKURA

I need you to remain optimistic, Vincenzo – besides, Nikolai and Daisuke have their good qualities, too: we wouldn't have made it this far without their planning and their proficiency in the field. They're far better soldiers than Lovisa and I ever were.

VINCENZO

They were trained for it – you and Lovisa just had the info downloaded into your brains. War as a bloody video game: what better way to raise the ultimate fighter?

This time, it's Sakura's turn to feel anxious.

SAKURA

We also need to make sure Lovisa is kept safe from the Iron Bitch. Who knows what she'll do if she gets her hands on my best friend again?

VINCENZO

She won't even get near him – Erik and Alejandro will still her tongue by taking her head the second she speaks the first syllable of her name.

Sakura hugs Vincenzo. Nikolai's voice comes from the speaker of his radio after a brief embrace.

NIKOLAI (V.O.)

Vincenzo, we're ready.

Vincenzo smiles, thanking Nikolai in Italian before turning to his girlfriend.

SAKURA

(In Japanese)

*Come on... let's go.*

VINCENZO

*Too fucking right.*

He dismounts the chopper with Sakura, looking determined.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE MOUSE BUNKER – NIGHT

Exiting the whirlybird, the team look at the disused research facility known not-so-affectionately as the Mäusebunker. They all know that this will be their last adventure together, their final mission.

NIKOLAI

This is it.

(Cocks his plasma gun)

Kana does not leave here alive.

He glances at the brutalist behemoth before him before leading the team into the disused installation.

INT. ATRIUM OF THE MOUSE BUNKER – NIGHT

It's dark – only the lights from the multipurpose holographic sights mounted on the mercenaries' plasma guns illuminate the way. Vincenzo is beginning to feel nervous, knowing the history of the pseudo-fortress's true purpose.

VINCENZO

It's too quiet.

ALEJANDRO

Keep your guard up.

Vincenzo tweaks his wrist computer, the red LED display flashing green.

VINCENZO

I've got Kana's location – she's on the topmost floor.

Nikolai smiles.

NIKOLAI

Good job, Vincenzo.

The bunker is adorned with signs written in German, a language Nikolai has no trouble understanding – only a few of the signs are translated into English, and even then, only partially. It is at this point that the septet know that the complex/facility is too large for them to search all together.

ERIK

I know this is going to sound incredibly predictable, but... shit, I can't bring myself to say it.

VINCENZO

(Snapping)

Say what? That we should split up, like in one of those crappy cartoons from the hippie era?

Erik nods nervously, while the others look at Vincenzo's sudden outburst with stunned surprise.

ERIK

(Shocked)

Yes.

Nikolai and Daisuke look at each other worriedly before deciding to intercede, knowing how Vincenzo has trouble balancing his emotional and logical sides at times.

DAISUKE

Good idea. This is a 9-storey building. Nikolai, you, and Vincenzo are with me – we'll each take the first three floors. Erik, you can cover the next four levels with Lovisa, Sakura and Alejandro. One person per floor.

NIKOLAI

Right, and we'll rendezvous as soon as we find the entrance to the Iron Bitch's subterranean hideout.

The septet split up roughly into two factions and begin storming the dilapidated installation. The three mercenaries have no trouble scouring the first level, which is empty and desolated.

INT. TECHNICAL LEVEL OF THE MOUSE BUNKER – NIGHT

As Daisuke leads the way to the second floor, he can hear a faint electronic sound, a sort of distorted whir. He approaches the source of the noise with caution... but he sees nothing. The Asian ex-Gendarme feels a cold wind swipe across his face, prompting him to reflexively back off, cursing in French and Japanese simultaneously.

NIKOLAI  
(Impatiently)  
Stop pissing around and get to the  
top of the bloody staircase!

VINCENZO  
What's wrong?

DAISUKE  
I don't know... seems to have  
disappeared.

Daisuke leads the trio to the top of the second floor. He pauses to take a breather. Vincenzo spots a pair of glowing red eyes behind the Osaka native, ready to strike.

Vincenzo yells Daisuke's name and raises his double-barrelled plasma rifle, firing a twin shot of superhot directed-energy deadliness at the nearly-invisible enemy behind his friend.

BA-BAM! A familiar yell of pain is heard as Daisuke wheels around to inspect his failed attacker's body, which fizzles out into plain visibility, its stealth camouflage destroyed. The trio examine the corpse carefully.

Nikolai can feel his heart sink into the pit of his stomach as he puts 2 and 2 together, his testicles leaping up to meet it.

NIKOLAI  
(Into his radio,  
urgently)  
Erik, Nikolai here! Keep your eyes  
and ears open – Kana's got a new  
trick up her sleeve!

Erik's voice comes from their radios.

ERIK (V.O.)

Spectre soldiers? I think we've come across a few... they look like those Mercury Griffins we ran into back in the Dark Citadel. We must be close if she's trying to stop us like this.

ALEJANDRO (V.O.)

Night vision won't work, especially since they're hiding in dark areas of the building. Set your holographic sights to infrared mode – they can pick up their heat signatures.

Vincenzo examines his wrist computer.

VINCENZO

(Trying to remain calm)

He's right, guys... these are new and improved versions known as Radon Firebirds – they're walking radionuclides, so keep your distance. There could be more of them on the higher levels.

The trio enable the thermal imaging on the holographic diffusers mounted to their Dual-Neutron Disruptors and proceed further into the house of the dead.

BEGIN GUNFIGHT MONTAGE

With their infrared assistants effectively nullifying the invisible cyborgs' stealth camouflage, it becomes an easy task to seek, locate and destroy the robotic zombies as both factions gun down the spectre soldiers with ease, clearing out the Mouse Bunker – Nikolai gets the final kill with a well-placed dual headshot.

END MONTAGE

As the last Radon Firebird falls before the Rhodium Golems, Nikolai glances at the remains of the fallen cyborgs with a combination of disgust and pity, his desire to make Kana pay for her evil crimes only intensifying. Vincenzo's wrist computer beeps, catching his attention – it's an email from Alejandro!

EMAIL: "HIDDEN ELEVATOR LOCATED ON LEVEL 8 – REGROUP FOR FINAL OBJECTIVE! NO CREATURES DETECTED – ASR."

INT. TOP FLOOR OF THE MOUSE BUNKER – NIGHT

The septet are reunited, standing before a hidden elevator on the eighth and penultimate (second-to-last) floor of the Mouse Bunker. Alejandro looks stern but calm.

ALEJANDRO

Once we go up this lift, there's no turning back. Do you understand?

DAISUKE

Yes, I do. Let's finish this.

Alejandro calls the elevator, its double doors opening to reveal a futuristic hexagonal compartment – sleek, sexy and soulless, just like Kana herself. Alejandro's 7 enter without a second thought, the double doors closing before them as the lift begins its ascent.

INT. HEXAGONAL ELEVATOR – NIGHT

The elevator zips up to its destination as Erik and Lovisa look at each other – Erik is nervous, while Lovisa is resolute in her conviction and determination

Vincenzo turns to face Sakura – she smiles at him, prompting him to return the gesture, even though he never was very good at social norms. He exchanges a silent declaration with Sakura briefly as the elevator doors open with a PING!

INT. PENTHOUSE MARBLE CORRIDOR – NIGHT

The team exit the lift, the corridor before them very dimly illuminated, with only a few torches to light the way. Eventually reaching Kana's residential suite, the group hide in the shadows.

NIKOLAI

Ready?

Vincenzo and Daisuke nod silently as the Afro-Russian fires three accurate plasma shots at the door – BA-BA-BAM! – before kicking it open, storming into the suite and leading the team inside the Iron Bitch's final hideout.

INT. PENTHOUSE SUITE – NIGHT

The team scan the area carefully. The suite is empty. Nikolai can't believe this!

NIKOLAI  
She's not here!

Vincenzo spots a mobile laboratory in the lounge, complete with a miniature computer terminal. Hacking into the system, he looks at the information presented on the screen before him, his eyes widening slightly as disbelief starts to fill his mind.

VINCENZO  
(In Italian)  
I knew it!  
(In English)  
Nikolai, Daisuke, have a look at this.

The Afro-Siberian and the recovered Asian approach the computer curiously, their own eyes narrowing and falling respectively.

NIKOLAI  
No... she couldn't be that crazy!

Nikolai swears in both Russian and German in disbelief.

DAISUKE  
She's... oh, God, no...

Daisuke curses in both French and Japanese in disgust. Alejandro notices their body language.

ALEJANDRO  
(In Spanish)  
*What is it?*

VINCENZO  
*Kana... she's... that thing. She's uploaded her mind into that bloody monstrosity.*

Vincenzo indicates a humanoid super cyborg figure in the centre of the plush fallout shelter-cum-living quarters. Standing tall and proud on an improvised pedestal is an impressive-looking humanoid creation – a fusion of nanotech augmentations, liquid metal and microscopic electronics – ATHENA OMEGA.

A gold version of its predecessor and ten times deadlier. Its eyes glow a bright, threatening red.



A white sphere in its torso – its nuclear heart made of solid radium – glows brightly. Vincenzo snaps out of his shock and quickly begins inputting a series of keyboard commands.

SAKURA

(In Italian)

*What are you doing!?*

VINCENZO

*Awakening the dragon, my dear.*

(In English)

Kana spent her life chasing perfection... let's see how perfect her final form really is.

Alejandro begins to realise what is about to happen as he raises his plasma gun.

ALEJANDRO

He's right – the future belongs to the people who are alive here and now... I let this happen, and I'm prepared to spend the rest of my afterlife bearing the burden of my crime.

The rest of the team follow suit, aiming their weapons at Athena Omega as it bursts to life, breaking out of the glass capsule housing its form as it levitates into the air, sparkling with electricity as its golden body glows dangerously, hovering above Alejandro's 7.

Its voice is electronically modulated and distorted, giving it a robotic, almost demonic sound... Kana's voice.

ATHENA

I am Athena... I shall destroy everything and... resurrect everything.

Alejandro glares at the nanomechanical monstrosity, the Hispanic hologram looking determined, approaching the evolved superwoman who has ruined so many lives.

ALEJANDRO

(Pleadingly)

The killing has gone too far.

ATHENA

I have only begun. It is better to reign in Hell than to serve in Heaven.

ALEJANDRO  
(In Spanish,  
disgusted)  
You flatter yourself.

He raises his plasma gun, pressing a self-destruct button on the gun's control panel – a red LED starts flashing, beeping, accompanied by a 10-second countdown timer.

NIKOLAI  
What are you doing!?

ALEJANDRO  
(In English, to  
Nikolai)  
Something I should have done a long  
time ago... we must close Pandora's Box  
now or never! This is our only  
chance – this will weaken it.  
(Last words, in  
Spanish, to Lovisa)  
Forgive me, and farewell.

He then charges at Athena Omega... Erik SCREAMS Alejandro's name in despair. A bright white light envelops the room as the plasma gun detonates, engulfing both hologram and nanotech warrior in an electric cloud of purple lightning as the others take cover.

Alejandro screams in rage and agony as he can feel the electromagnetic waves burn at his light bee, devouring his consciousness.

There is a small explosion which destroys the plasma rifle, and his destroyed light bee falls to the floor with a dull clunk, letting out a few electrical buzzes akin to a failing heart monitor before finally falling silent.

Emerging from cover, Erik picks up the warm projection unit, looking at it solemnly before pocketing it. Athena Omega is weakened thanks to Alejandro's heroic sacrifice. He glares at her angrily, belligerently, coldly, determined to destroy her forever.

Vincenzo scans his wrist computer for any weaknesses – the screen flashes red accompanied by a low-pitched bleep.

VINCENZO  
"Analysis is impossible"... fucking  
marvellous. Just shoot the shit out  
of it!

Their final battle begins. Athena Omega fires bolts of lightning at Vincenzo, prompting him to take cover behind an armchair, before switching over to launching metallic orbs at Nikolai, who shoots them down with single, calculated shots from his plasma gun.

Athena Omega then resorts to launching deadly ice crystals at Daisuke, who blasts them with plasma projectiles as the crystals shatter into a million pieces. Nikolai is hiding behind a column as he reloads his plasma gun.

NIKOLAI

Vincenzo, shoot the electrical  
projectiles, that'll wear it down!

Thanking the Afro-Russian in Italian, Vincenzo fires several spheres of blue and white plasma at the bolts of lightning heading towards Nikolai, disintegrating them almost immediately.

Nikolai jumps back in shock as he narrowly dodges the concentrated plasma rounds! Vincenzo is focusing on Athena Omega's torso... its spherical heart pulsing and glowing. He feels his lips curl into a manic grin and he allows a laugh to escape his larynx.

VINCENZO

Everyone, aim for the big shiny ball  
in its torso!

Daisuke aims at Athena Omega only for the technowarrior to throw a fireball at him, forcing him to take cover beside Nikolai, who is reloading his plasma gun with a new energy cell. He curses in Japanese.

NIKOLAI

You OK?

DAISUKE

I will be when this is over.

He loads a new power cell into the plasma rifle, engaging its flamethrower mode – a blue flame emanates from the tip of each barrel.

NIKOLAI

Hold on, Daisuke... and just shoot its  
heart out!

On the H of "Heart", Nikolai emerges from his hiding spot and fires, the steel-core plasma bolts hitting Athena Omega squarely in the torso as it yells in pain, its cry of rage and agony ungodly and inhuman. He smirks with triumph.

Athena Omega activates its stealth camouflage and zips around its targets, deliberately choosing to attack Vincenzo more often than the others. The infrared/thermal mode cannot detect her, forcing Vincenzo to switch over to ultraviolet mode on his DND's holographic sight.

VINCENZO

Guys, switch over to UV mode! IR doesn't work on this thing!

Athena Omega's attacks are swift and furious, and the final battle rages on. While providing cover fire for the trio, Erik can just barely see Athena Omega's translucent form charging up a lightning strike, preparing to attack a nervous Lovisa, who scans the air desperately.

He only has a split second to react... and he takes action. Lowering his plasma gun, Erik yells his sister's name as he pulls her down to safety – ZAP! The lightning bolts hit him squarely in the torso, causing him to scream in rage and agony as he convulses on the floor.

Lovisa SCREAMS her brother's name as she tries to help him, the elder Drakenberg sibling whimpering in pain as he appears to calm down. He looks at Lovisa, taking her hand.

ERIK

(In Swedish)

Finish... the... fight... Lovisa.

He passes out.

LOVISA

No... no! Erik, please! ERIK!!

She tries to hold back the tears running down her cheeks. Sakura fires short, controlled bursts of plasma deadliness at Athena Omega whenever she can, the brunette beauty trying to cancel out its multiple attacks, never using the same attack pattern twice. Vincenzo bolts over to Lovisa's position and scans Erik's body with his wrist computer, the display flashing a golden yellow colour. He looks at Lovisa.

VINCENZO

He's unconscious – he's lucky to be alive.

Lovisa smiles in relief as she takes cover with Vincenzo while Sakura and the Rhodium Golems continue their seemingly unending assault on the inhuman creature before them. Lovisa begins to remember something she had almost forgotten about – the final piece of the puzzle is falling into place!

FLASHBACK TO 1989 – LOVISA'S FIRST BRAINWASHING.

SCIENTIST VOICES (V.O.)

"Subject is stable... What if she overcomes the conditioning? If it's done by force, then she loses all of her memories. What if she started remembering who she is? Then we will just have to implant memories in her head that will leave her uncertain of her actions."

BACK TO THE PRESENT DAY.

Lovisa's eyes illuminate with fiery hatred for the evil bitch before her as she transforms into a lioness once again. She picks up her double-barrelled plasma gun and reloads it with deliberate force, joining Sakura.

The fight with Athena Omega shows no sign of stopping as Vincenzo dives behind an armchair to avoid an influx of deadly plasma lightning bolts. He, Nikolai and Daisuke exchange glances and nod at each other, emerging from their hiding spots as they reload their weapons.

The gold technological mutant flashes green as it takes damage from each of the three mercenaries and their allies, grunting in pain, slowly changing to yellow, then orange, and eventually red. Vincenzo screams loudly before finally gunning down the technowarrior.

Vincenzo approaches the machine carefully... only for it to rise again, its gold body now turning a threatening black before becoming near-transparent, its pure red eyes glowing evilly. He screams in pure terror, bolting for cover.

VINCENZO

What the FUCK!!

DAISUKE

Look, focus! When Spectre Dural becomes translucent, shoot it in the heart! We might be able to disable its cloaking device with enough shots!

Lovisa takes a bolt to the chest, incapacitating her – Sakura, despite her best efforts, runs out of ammunition at a critical moment and is promptly knocked out as well! Vincenzo swears loudly in Italian and jumps out of his hiding spot angrily, briefly checking to make sure both girls are OK.

Vincenzo tries to keep his eyes peeled. He can hear an electronic growl of sorts, like a cybernetic war cry... and he raises his plasma rifle and shoots Athena Omega in its radium heart-like core, causing it to lose its invisibility as he keeps the trigger pulled while screaming wordlessly, stunlocking the beast. Eventually, the electricity begins to fizzle and crackle as the stealth camouflage wavers away permanently.

Athena Omega's eyes glow a bright red but it no longer has the advantage as it glares at the quartet before them. As a last resort, it stands up, erect and defiant as its semiliquid gallium body glows a dangerous golden yellow once again, an electro demonic cyber-roar blasting out of its mouth as lightning bolts surround its severely damaged and terminally wounded body and it begins to power itself up!

VINCENZO

This thing is REALLY pissed off!

He reloads the plasma carbine with his last remaining energy cell, the others following suit.

DAISUKE

Vincenzo, Nikolai, shoot the heart!

The Osaka native smirks at the doomed techno-Frankenstein creature before him. All three Rhodium Golems open fire, stunning Athena Alpha permanently as it ascends into the air, flashing assorted colours and sparkling with visible electricity complete with small explosions coming from its irreparably destroyed carapace.

ATHENA

(In English)

This is the World you Humans wanted...  
the World is imperfect, flawed...  
chaotic... even you must realise that!

(In Japanese)

I... am... the future... of combat... of the  
human race! I am... Man Plus!

They slowly raise their guns, one by one. This is it.

VINCENZO

(In English)

This is OUR future – we'll handle it  
ourselves!

(In Italian, after a  
pause to zero in on  
his target)

FIRE!!

They empty their remaining ammo supply into the monstrosity before them. Fires rage, explosions occur and lightning shoots out of Athena Omega, a bright white light emanating from every orifice in its broken body before ultimately exploding in a brilliant flash – BOOM!

When the smoke clears and dust settles, Athena Omega is gone, like it never existed.

NIKOLAI

I don't believe it – we've done the impossible... Olympus Mons has fallen.

VINCENZO

Endgame to the Deadly Alliance.

The trio look at each other and start laughing, one by one.

Sakura and the Drakenberg siblings gradually awaken from their stupor, recovering from their free session of electric shock therapy. Vincenzo hugs Sakura tightly and kisses her, smiling at his girlfriend. They sling their plasma guns over their shoulders.

DAISUKE

I guess everything's over.

NIKOLAI

I guess so.

DAISUKE

Shall we go now?

Nikolai looks at Vincenzo, then Daisuke... and nods.

NIKOLAI

(In Russian)

Yes.

They turn around to leave the destroyed suite one by one – first Erik, then Lovisa, then Sakura. The Rhodium Golems, after exchanging knowing looks, follow suit – first Daisuke, then Nikolai, and finally Vincenzo. He stops to look back for a moment, taking one last, final glance at the remains of the humanoid techno-demoness.

VINCENZO

(In Italian)

Goodbye, Doctor. May your soul rest in peace... and thank you, Alejandro.

Despite all the pain and suffering Kana had put them through, he still cannot help but feel some sympathy for the Devil. He turns around and continues walking, leaving the ex-suite.

FIRST-PERSON VIEW OF LEAVING THE BUNKER AND RETURNING TO THE SURFACE, EXITING THE INSTALLATION AS THE SUN RISES.

EXT. GOLDMAN FAMILY MANSION – EVENING

The Sun is setting in the Sky as the helicopter lands on a helipad outside the Goldman family mansion, its engines and rotor blades fading away into silence.

INT. HELIA'S STUDY – EVENING

Helia and Rainer are present, looking serene and feeling peaceful as the three knocks are heard one last time.

HELIA

Come.

The double-doors open to reveal the Rhodium Golems, beaten, battered and bruised but alive and well as they enter the study, Vincenzo closing the double-doors behind them.

VINCENZO

It's finally over.

Rainer smiles proudly.

RAINER

Good... then the 5 Elements can finally become completely legitimate. Your service is over – you are free men once again.

HELIA

What about Alejandro?

Vincenzo and Nikolai exchange glances, and then turn to face her grimly. They know what they have to say, but neither of them is willing to say it.

VINCENZO

His soul is at peace now. Face it, being a hologram must have been Hell for him.

Lovisa cries slightly at Alejandro's holodeath – she hugs Erik tightly, the elder Drakenberg sibling soothing his younger sister as Sakura puts her hand on Lovisa's shoulder.



DAISUKE

So... what now?

HELIA

You're all free. What you do now is up to you. Thanks to you, my father's legacy is now secure and nobody will ever know of his past mistakes. Thank you, Rhodium Golems.

NIKOLAI

No, thank YOU... for giving us something to live for.

RAINER

We'd love for you to stay for tonight: tell us everything.

The trio look at each other for a moment. Helia and Rainer smile at them while Erik continues soothing Lovisa.

EXT. GOLDMAN FAMILY MANSION – THE NEXT DAY

The Sun is shining in the Sky. Vincenzo exits with Sakura, putting his things in the chopper before turning to face Nikolai, Daisuke and Lovisa one last time. He approaches them wistfully.

VINCENZO

So... this is goodbye.

NIKOLAI

This is it, Vincenzo... the end of the Rhodium Golems.

VINCENZO

Yes, I know... still, though, we had one hell of a run, didn't we? All 3 of us.

NIKOLAI

True – what are you going to do after being one of us for a whole decade?

VINCENZO

I think I'll go back home, take Sakura with me... show her the Motherland. You?

NIKOLAI

I don't know – anything's better than this shit.

(MORE)

NIKOLAI (cont'd)  
I'll quit the Ministry of Internal  
Affairs, that's for sure - I won't  
need a gun where I'm going.

DAISUKE  
Where's that?

NIKOLAI  
The real world - I'm going to Sweden  
with Lovisa.

Vincenzo smiles sadly.

VINCENZO  
I'm going to miss you guys.

NIKOLAI  
I'll miss you too.

DAISUKE  
Don't worry - we'll pay you a visit  
sometime.

VINCENZO  
Really? I'll look forward to that,  
then.

He shakes Daisuke's hand and pats him on the shoulder before  
doing the same with Lovisa, who embraces Sakura, while  
Nikolai pulls Vincenzo into a humorous bear hug, muffling  
his protests.

LOVISA  
Keep yourself alive, Sakura.

SAKURA  
You too, Lovisa... you're your own  
woman now.

LOVISA  
Don't be a stranger, OK?

SAKURA  
I won't, I promise.

Vincenzo is eventually able to release himself from  
Nikolai's large embrace, or rather, Nikolai lets him go.

VINCENZO  
What now?

NIKOLAI

We've got to help your girlfriend and my girlfriend pack their stuff and then we're counting on you to get us all home in your personal flying machine.

Nikolai smiles at him.

INT. MAUSOLEUM — EVENING

SUPER: "CAIRO, EGYPT — A WEEK LATER"

Rosh and Nadia enter the Goldman family mausoleum, with his family's name written in both English and Hebrew. Holding a bouquet of flowers in one hand, Rosh places it before a memorial dedicated to his mother and father as the light of the Sun illuminates his now-dark grey hair.

ROSH

(In Hebrew)

*Mother... Father... at last, I understand your words. I finally understand the meaning behind your guidance. I'm sorry... it's not about trying to make a difference, for better or worse... it's about leaving a positive legacy and leaving behind something for people to remember... something for which you can be admired. After all, isn't that what you always said to me?*

He kneels before the memorial, weeping openly as he breaks down into tears with his wife soothing him. He gradually regains his composure and gets to his feet, wiping away the tears from his eyes only to be greeted by a familiar voice from behind.

VINCENZO (O.S.)

Hello, Rosh. Hello, Nadia.

Rosh and Nadia turn to face Vincenzo, who is now sporting civilian attire, clean-shaven and dressed mainly in monochrome clothes. Rosh greets Vincenzo with a sad smile, grateful that his friend has come to pay him one last visit.

NADIA

Vincenzo... you did it?

Vincenzo nods softly.

VINCENZO

Yes. . Project Athena is finished – all her journals and equipment will be destroyed, along with the hologram technology. No longer will impressionable young women be kidnapped and trained to kill.

ROSH

(Emotionally)

Thank you, Vincenzo. It all began when I saw mankind for what it really was... a dangerous, savage, child race – a race in need of being held in check by a careful balance between power and responsibility.

VINCENZO

That might never again be possible. Yasmin is now in the process of completely legitimising the 5 Elements with Rainer's help. The people might not be so quick to trust us again. The icon of the defender is finished.

The trio leave the mausoleum.

EXT. GRAVEYARD – EVENING

The Sun is setting in the Sky as the trio exit the mausoleum, exchanging glances.

VINCENZO

I've got a present for you, Rosh.

Rosh looks at him in mild surprise.

ROSH

For me? Really?

Vincenzo replies in the affirmative in Italian as he retreats to his helicopter and wheels out a familiar-looking raven-haired woman in a wheelchair connected to a life-support machine complete with heart monitor, bringing her to his kindred spirit and his wife – a crippled, catatonic, even braindead Kana.

VINCENZO

Recognise her?

Rosh feels a myriad of emotions sear through his mind – anger, betrayal, hurt, vengeance – but also sympathy and sadness. Nobody deserves this.

NADIA

(Stunned)

Where... how...?

VINCENZO

She had her mind uploaded into Athena itself. The experiment left her permanently catatonic – I found her body in the General Hospital in Vienna, near her old proving grounds... and the rest, as they say, is history.

Rosh looks at Kana's vegetative form. He wants to scream at her, hurt her, make her pay for destroying his good work and besmirching his family name... but he can't bring himself to do it. Rosh finally looks at Vincenzo with a determined expression.

ROSH

The 5 Elements began with us, and they will end with us.

(Indicating Nadia and himself)

Us, Rainer... Gonta... and Kana. When the last of us crosses over into the great beyond, the organisation will disband and, in its place, will be a historical legacy. I gave Kana life because I felt sorry for her all those years ago – I didn't realise just how evil she truly was until it was too late.

NADIA

So, what are you going to do?

ROSH

I'm going to do what I should have done a long time ago.

(Sadly)

I'm going to set her free.

He approaches the wheelchair-bound woman and examines the controls on her life-support machine. With a heavy heart and a head full of bad memories, he disconnects the oxygen tank and disables the respirator with the flip of a single switch – CLICK.

Kana's breathing gradually becomes laborious as she begins to cough and wheeze, her body convulsing in pain as Rosh holds his arms around her in a comforting manner.

Vincenzo can feel tears welling up in his eyes as he turns his head away – after what feels like an eternity, Kana lets out one last, final sigh as her body finally goes limp, the heart monitor flatlining.

Rosh closes his ex-student's eyes sadly and switches off the electronic equipment on the wheelchair. He puts his hand on Vincenzo's shoulder to soothe him and smiles sadly, thanking him in Hebrew.

VINCENZO

So... what now?

NADIA

Vincenzo, don't waste your life fighting to change something which is a part of human nature.

ROSH

Live your life, not as a hero or a villain... but as a man.

Vincenzo holds out his hand for Rosh to take – his older counterpart looks at the gesture with mild intrigue before shaking it. The two men embrace briefly.

VINCENZO

Just remember to take your own advice, Rosh. We've done our part – the future belongs to the people who are alive here and now.

ROSH

*Shalom, Vincenzo...*  
(In Hebrew)  
Live, my friend.

Vincenzo smiles at Rosh nervously.

EXT. MOUNTAIN TOWN – EVENING

SUPER: "LORENZAGO DI CADORE, VENETO, ITALY – 8 MONTHS LATER: 2022"

Vincenzo is watching the Sun set in the Sky. He feels a hand on his shoulder – turning around, he sees Sakura, dressed in winter gear complete with a red woolly hat, pink scarf and white gloves. She smiles as she hands him a printed piece of paper.

VINCENZO

(In Japanese)

*What's this?*

SAKURA

*An email from Nikolai. He said it would amuse you.*

She kisses him before heading into town. Vincenzo looks at the letter curiously.

FINAL MONTAGE PLAYS IN TIME WITH NIKOLAI'S NARRATION.

NIKOLAI (V.O.)

(In English)

Dear Vincenzo, I thought it seemed rational to inform you of the epilogue to our epic crusade. Rosh and Nadia are due to receive a Jabotinsky Medal for their outstanding achievements and personal redemption, despite nearly bringing the known world to the verge of collapse. Lovisa and I are getting on just famously, both of us learning the ups and downs of an interethnic relationship (maybe I should ask you and Erik for advice regarding this field). Daisuke got together with Sofia and is writing those stupid pulp novels again – have you seen his latest one? "Bastard With a Helicopter". That's one hell of a way of saying thank you to the man who got him out of God knows how many jams over the course of over a decade. Erik, Helia and Rainer have fully legitimised the corporation – the laboratory housing Project Athena has been burned to the ground and the surviving personnel have been reassigned – everything related to that infernal project has been destroyed and deleted, erased from existence. Rainer's retiring after serving two generations of secretive world leaders – he's earned it if you ask me, especially after celebrating his 70th birthday this past New Year's Day.

(MORE)

NIKOLAI (V.O.) (cont'd)  
Finally, I just want to say thank you – you have been a good, honest and loyal friend to me and you have made a real difference in my life... and Daisuke's, as well (but don't tell him that because he'll think I'm getting too soft). The time's come for me to bid you farewell, Vincenzo, as I re-enter the civilian world, a life which I left nearly 20 years ago to serve the Motherland. Oh, that reminds me: Alejandro was finally given a decent send-off after his light bee couldn't be repaired. It's been sent back to his hometown in Lima, Peru, where it will remain buried in a unique grave. I hope his soul can finally rest in peace and I sincerely hope he's happy, wherever he is. In any case, I shall look back on our friendship fondly, and I look forward to hearing from you in the future.

(In Russian)  
*Your dear friend (and partner-in-arguments), Nikolai Segdovich Rostavili. 7 February 2022.*

Vincenzo lets out a slight smile as he puts the letter in his pocket before heading into town with Sakura – he looks at the setting Sun.

FADE TO WHITE

TITLE CARD: "THE END"

FADE TO BLACK

ROLL CLOSING CREDITS

**THE END**