

EPIC FANTASY II

by

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FADE IN

EXT. DOWNTOWN- DAY

An old car full of dudes pulls up to the curb. BIRON (23), hops out the back with a head full of unkept locs, a Burger Joint work shirt, and sagging pants. He's a thug, and he doesn't care.

His BOY pops his head out of the car. SKIP. Another thug.

SKIP

How long you gon' work this gig, B?

BIRON

'Long as the probation says I do.

SKIP

Man, it's still crazy that the stray you adopted from the pound turned out to be an undercover K9 dog.

BIRON

Yeah, crazy. I catch ya later...

The car takes off.

Biron walks menacingly down the street. Pedestrians give him the Moses treatment. Parting like the Red Sea to avoid him. He walks straight passed the Burger Joint restaurant and into the building next door.

INT. COMMERCIAL BUILDING- DAY

A corporate setting. Busy people walk across the main hall with their important briefcases in one hand and the most important thing in the other. Coffee. They all take time out of their busy day to check out the elephant in the room. Biron, who presses the button on the elevator.

As Biron waits, he looks over his shoulder to see some worm-looking WHITE DUDE running through the hall waving his hand. NICK (23), is the kind of guy to be interested in how paint is made and go down a rabbit hole on YouTube about the inventor.

NICK

B!

Biron's pressing the button faster now. Hoping the doors open. "C'mon, c'mon". They don't open in time. And Nick pops up right at his side.

NICK (CONT'D)

What's up B!

Nick goes for the dap. SLAPPING and TWIDDLING Biron's hand like some gang-related Bop It. It's too early for this.

DING!

INT. COMMERCIAL BUILDING- ELEVATOR- DAY

Biron begins taking off his Burger Joint shirt. Nick judges him the whole time.

NICK

Still playing dress-up?

Biron's shirt is off. Showcasing an undershirt with a huge ANIME GIRL on it. He pulls up his pants. Tightens his belt. Puts on huge glasses and ties his dreads neatly to the back. The de-thugification is complete!

BIRON

When you come from where I live,  
you gotta blend in, Nick. I can't  
be walking around the hood with a  
waifu on my shirt!

NICK

But you love your waifu...

Biron folds up his make-believe shirt.

NICK (CONT'D)

You shouldn't care about what other  
people think.

BIRON

I don't care about what other  
people think.

Biron checks his reflection in the elevator doors.

BIRON (CONT'D)

How's my hair?

DING! The doors open. Biron walks out as a new man. The real him. A NERD.

INT. COMMERCIAL BUILDING- 4TH FLOOR- DAY

Biron and Nick walk through the halls.

NICK

Oh! I finished the movies on that list. Now can I say it?

BIRON

Dude, I gave you that list less than twenty-four hours ago. How did you watch all that?

NICK

Easy. I used my peepers, duh. I think John Singleton might be my new favorite director. His portrayal of the everyday life of a black man in the hood is just so profound.

BIRON

Well, at least you learned something.

NICK

So, can I say it?

BIRON

Have you seen 12 Years a Slave?

NICK

No...

BIRON

Roots?

NICK

No...

BIRON

How about Higher Learning?

NICK

(sad)

No.

BIRON

Watch those, and we'll talk.

They turn into an office.

INT. SQUARE WARE OFFICE- DAY

An office space that weirdly resembles a teen boy's room. Or a girl's? Anime posters line the walls and action figures pose on file cabinets and desks. This is no office, it's a meeting ground for man-children.

Biron and Nick walk through the row of colorful cubicles. They're empty.

NICK

Wow, they must be having a blast.

INT. SQUARE WARE OFFICE- CONFERENCE ROOM- DAY.

Biron and Nick walk inside to see two other coworkers already seated. JULES (24), the self-proclaimed alpha who listens to one too many podcasts on masculinity. And LACEY (24), a popular online E-girl with pink hair and a black heart. Together they are the INTERNS at the game company SQUARE WARE.

In front of them stands ALICE (42) the HR rep. She looks like she just got done tearing her hair out.

ALICE

Well, glad to see everyone made it in without getting hit by a skydiving swordfish.

The interns aren't following.

Nick looks around. Raises his hand.

NICK

Um, where's the team?

Alice takes a deep breath. Closes her eyes. Uses her hands to breathe. She's got this. But it doesn't inspire confidence.

ALICE

The team is dead...

WHAT?

JULES

What-a-you mean dead? Dead like "They're so gonna get it when they get back" dead, or "I shouldn't have made that threat out loud because they're actually dead", dead?

ALICE

Dead, Jules.

GASPS!

NICK

And Mr. Tekashi?

Alice nods with regret. Him too.

Nick looks over to a picture on the wall of an old, SUPER ASIAN MAN. Nick bows as a Japanese FLUTE sounds off out of thin air.

Lacey chews her gum. Cringes at Nick's devotion.

BIRON

What happened?

ALICE

As you know the Epic Fantasy release was a success. It generated millions of dollars for the company.

JULES

Alright! 'Bout time I got paid for my contributions around here!

Nick and Jules high-five. Misses each other's hands.

ALICE

Millions that you'll never see because you're all just interns.

They deflate.

NICK

Oh yeah...

ALICE

While the real team was out on vacation, they got stranded on some mountain in Switzerland. Rangers found the bodies.

BIRON

They were probably frozen stiff.

ALICE

You would think so, but they burned to death.

BIRON

Wait what??

ALICE

You heard me. They were found a little passed well-done in the ass crack of a frozen mountain.

LACEY

What idiots. Only a group of cavemen can conjure fire out of nothing...

ALICE

One of them tried to start a campfire with a road flare and kerosene.

JULES

I bet it was the other alpha. He always gets things done!

BIRON

You mean that pyromaniac sound guy?

JULES

I watched him light fireworks in the booth before. Trying to achieve that perfect effect.

LACEY

You thought he was trying to "achieve" something by lighting explosives in soundproof walls?

JULES

Hey, It's not like I could stop him. I was too busy getting him a dozen coffees a day. And if it wasn't cups full of lava when I got it to him, he was burning MY face!

ALICE

Yeah, well, his face is burnt now...

BIRON

So, where does that leave us? And what about the company?

ALICE

Square Ware is thinking of just uprooting and going back to Japan.

LACEY

That would make sense. I mean, we're an American team making a Japanese game. That's cultural appropriation, and we profited from that.

NICK

Yeah. That's like Americans making food from China...

LACEY

It's called Chinese food. And they don't actually eat that stuff.

ALICE

Listen, you can all let the company go back to its roots, effectively killing your dreams of working on a big game project. Or...

BIRON

Or what?

ALICE

Or you guys could...

She DRUM ROLLS. Spins.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Develop Epic! Fantasy! 2!

She throws up the peace sign. It's meant to be a two.

Crickets from the interns.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Well, say something for Christ's sake.

BIRON

Um, We're just interns. There's no way we can produce something like Epic Fantasy. Let alone a sequel.

ALICE

But didn't you work directly under the main team?

JULES

Work is such a productive word. What we did was a lot more degrading.

(thinks)

Groveled comes to mind.

NICK

Oh, oh, and beg!

Alice's mouth swings open.

ALICE  
C'mon, guys! Where's that Can-do  
youthful spirit?

JULES  
That died with the housing market.

ALICE  
(pointing to Jules)  
You're not ropin' me into that  
argument.

LACEY  
And what's your stake in this?

ALICE  
Stake? Why do I have to have a  
stake? I'm vegan.

LACEY  
Who's going to ask a bunch of  
novices to make a sequel to a game  
that took a team of professionals  
to make?

They wait.

ALICE  
Ok, you got me. Square Ware was  
DEAD set on relocating, Leaving you  
nerdlings, and me, behind. But I  
convinced them that we had a crack  
team of developers still in-house  
that could get the job done!

BIRON  
Please don't tell me we're the  
crack team...

Alice nods enthusiastically.

JULES  
Shouldn't be a problem. I'm sure  
Biron can throw on his costume and  
"act" his way into scoring some  
crack.

BIRON  
Good one, Jules. I see why your hot  
Korean girlfriend, who doesn't  
speak a lick of English, loves you.

Jules closes his mouth.

ALICE

So, show of hands, then. Who's in?

Nick's hand is the only one that goes up. He looks like that eager kid in class trying to answer a question.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Why's the worm-looking one the only one up for this?

JULES

That's cause he's got the brain of a dodo bird. No concept of fear or danger at all. I would've eaten him already in a cannibalistic society.

Jules CHOMPS down at Nick's face! Nick throws a weak and girly punch to fight back.

LACEY

Yeah, I don't need that kind of pressure. I can make good enough money on my Only Fans.

BIRON

But don't you "despise" the objectification of women for profit?

LACEY

Only when it profits men.

JULES

I've got my own business, too. I make swords and knives out of recycled vinyl. It's called "For The Record".

LACEY

Great. Garbage made out of trash.

ALICE

Help me out here, Biron. I know you'd kill for this opportunity.

BIRON

I would. So, let the record show I was not in Switzerland during the time of that incident.

Alice nods. The court will allow it.

BIRON (CONT'D)

Guys! Now's our chance. We worked for this internship in hopes of one day doing something big! This is it! The team would've wanted us to.

Silence.

JULES

No, they wouldn't have!

LACEY

And would we even get paid for it?

ALICE

Yes! \$100,000 each!

Their eyes all but pop out of their heads.

LACEY

Wow. That's a lot of dead white guys...

JULES

Kind of like your subscribers...

NICK

And health insurance?

Alice nods with a grin.

Nick's eyes widen. He tenderly rubs his elbow. "We're gonna get you fixed soon..."

LACEY

Guess I am ready for a change. I'm actually running out of used underwear to sell. I've resorted to buying new packs and letting my dogs wear them around to fill the orders.

BIRON

Gross... Jules?

JULES

I must confess... My business hasn't been doing too well.

BIRON

Nobody thought it was.

ALICE

Well?

The interns look at each other. They're nodding.

BIRON

We're in!

ALICE

Fantastic! I knew I could count on you guys. There's just one more thing.

BIRON

Please, there can't be more.

ALICE

Oh, but there is. Since the head of development is gone--

NICK

His name was Mr.Tekashi!

ALICE

... Mr.Tekashi is gone, So the company sent you a new boss. The son of a board member.

She walks over to the door.

ALICE (CONT'D)

I give you Mr.Bo Dallas!

She opens the door. A TALL middle-aged MAN walks through. Barely getting his shoulders in. It looks like he walked straight off an NFL coaching staff. BO DALLAS.

The interns instantly shut their mouths. Nick looks scared.

DALLAS

'Sup nerds!

Dallas looks over to the beloved picture of Mr.Tekashi. Flips it off the wall. CRACK! The frame breaks.

NICK

NO!

ALICE

And I'll also need some kind of proof of concept by next month Need to show HQ that the crack team is smoking their crack!

Alice rushes out of the room. Turns back to them at the door.

ALICE (CONT'D)

And remember, if you fail, I'll  
make sure your dreams become a  
living nightmare as your  
descendants inherit your crippling  
debt. Toodles!

SLAMS the door!

The interns look to their new boss for some kind of pep talk.

DALLAS

You guys think a squat rack can fit  
in that office next door?

INT. SQUARE WARE OFFICE- DAY

Biron stands with the interns as they look out over the sea  
of empty cubicles.

BIRON

Where do we even start?

JULES

We can start by admitting defeat...

NICK

No way! You heard her. She said our  
children will be poor if we don't  
give her something by next month.

JULES

You don't have to worry about any  
children.

LACEY

Don't be mean, weeb.

Jules turns his fangs on Lacey.

JULES

Oh, are you still here? You're  
probably wearing some kind of  
hidden camera to sell your office  
POV videos.

Lacey rolls her eyes.

LACEY

Are you still dating that girl in  
Korea that no one has ever seen?

JULES

Her name's Kako and she's very busy with school!

LACEY

She's a famous K-pop artist, dude! I recognize her from the picture you keep in your wallet.

BIRON

Cool it, guys. We're on the same team. And we have no idea where to start.

NICK

We could ask Bo Dallas. He should know something about the first steps.

BOOM!

The interns look over to see MOVERS cramming a giant squat rack into Mr. Tekashi's old office. Bo Dallas inspects his package.

DALLAS

No! I asked for an SB-1 Rogue. Not that Olympic trash! If I wanted my bar to wobble like a little girl trying on her first pair of heels, I'd shop at Academy!

They turn back to each other.

JULES

Well, what now...

BIRON

I think we should start with replacing the team. Lacey, you're good with art. You're the new art director...

She nods. Got it.

BIRON (CONT'D)

Jules, you're a writer. You can plot out the game.

LACEY

Writing Power Ranger fan fic doesn't exactly make him qualified.

JULES

Hey! Super Sentai has a deep and rich lore worth exploring!

BIRON

I'll work on the score. Being so musically inclined and all...

JULES

Oh, so because he listens to Frédéric Chopin and Tupac, he's qualified?

NICK

Your Spotify wrap-up must be crazy...

BIRON

And, Nick, we'll need you to test the game. You're probably the best gamer here due to your attention to detail.

NICK

That's what the "D" stands for in A.D.D.

LACEY

We still need a programmer. None of these roles mean anything without software skills.

BIRON

I know a guy, but he's too weird for me.

JULES

Pot calling the kettle "black".

Lacy puts her hand on Biron's shoulder.

LACEY

You don't have to do anything you don't want to. Your consent matters.

Jules butts in. Knocks Lacey's hand down.

JULES

Like hell, it does! For that money, you better take that guy on! Consent or not!

INT. COMMERCIAL BUILDING- 4TH FLOOR- DAY

Biron leads the interns down the hall to the elevator.

DING!

The elevator opens and a team of off-duty MARINES steps out. No. Not Marines. Just a group of wannabes wearing tactical gear over street clothes.

BIRON  
Great... It's the tacti-cools.

Nick jumps behind Lacey.

NICK  
What are they doing on our floor?

RROYD steps forward. He's wearing shades indoors with a scarf like he landed some kind of aircraft on the roof. Behind him are his lackeys BOBBERT and GAGE. Together they represent BATTLE ZONE. The first-person shooter company.

RROYD  
We didn't know you twinks were still around. We're on our way to strip that man-child room you call an office.

BOBBERT  
We heard about the game's success and your lead team dying. Congratulations! Haha.

Wait...

BIRON  
Congratulations on the game, or our team dying?

Bobbert thinks about it. Keeps his mouth shut.

RROYD  
I guess that means "Square" Ware will be packing up and moving out if you clowns are the only ones left.

Gage throws a fake punch at them. They all FLINCH. Nick TWIRLS in a faint! Biron catches him.

LACEY

Why don't ya'll go take a toy drone  
and launch an air strike on a  
Mountain Dew factory?

RROYD

Did you ship those socks I ordered  
yet?

LACEY

I'm still wearing 'em "Rroyd".

RROYD

(pointing at Lacey's  
feet)

Can I have 'em now?

LACEY

And who names their kid Rroyd with  
two Rs anyway? Was your mom still  
on the epidural when she meant to  
use two Ls?

WHOA!

The interns quickly carry Lacey into the elevator before she  
can do any more damage. Biron smiles nervously at the battle  
buddies as the elevator doors close painfully slowly.

BOBBERT

We're not gonna let those weeps  
frag us like that?

RROYD

That's a negative. We'll be putting  
'em down for good.

EXT. NOSTALGY GAMING- DAY

A retro game store in the middle of the hood. Biron leads the  
interns up to the door.

JULES

Jeez, B. If I knew we were coming  
to your side of town, I would've  
worn my chain wallet.

BIRON

Don't you have to have money to  
worry about getting mugged?

They walk up on a gang of THUGS day drinking outside of the  
store. It's Biron's boy from earlier. Skip! He notices Biron  
right away.

SKIP

B?

Skip hops to his feet.

JULES

Whoa!

Jules pulls a knife! But not just any knife. Some weird vinyl blade with parts of the album sticker still on it. He drops it. It shatters upon impact.

LACEY

Why would you make such trash!?

JULES

It's upcycled!

BIRON

Skip? What are you doing here?

SKIP

We chill here all the time and drink.

BIRON

It's not a liquor store.

SKIP

It used to be...

They take a closer look at the gaming store. The windows are barred with an old BEER AD still on the walls.

SKIP (CONT'D)

I thought you was being a productive member of society at work.

BIRON

Oh, uh, I dipped out on that.

Skip nods. That's gangster. But then he takes a good look at Biron's "friends".

SKIP

Who the hell are these clowns?

Better yet, he takes a look at Biron's shirt.

SKIP (CONT'D)

And what the hell kind of shirt is that?

Biron looks down. He's wearing his huge-breasted anime girl shirt in public! The rest of Skip's crew joins in. They're waiting for an answer.

The interns are loving this...

Biron composes himself.

BIRON

Don't you know designer when you see it, broke boy?

Skip shakes his head. Do tell.

BIRON (CONT'D)

(popping collar)

This that knew Balenciaga X Anime girl. fall season. This shirt cost \$800!

Skip looks at his boys. They nod as a hive mind. The shirt is fire!

The interns can't believe Biron's seamless code switch. And they're buying that.

SKIP

Oh, my bad. My bad. I ain't know. So, what about them?

The interns stand there in all their nerdy splendor.

BIRON

They on the same thing, G! Designer down. You really gotta get yo closet up, man.

SKIP

Ok, Ok. So what ya'll on?

BIRON

Look, bruh. I know the owner of this store. I'm tryna handle a lil business, ight? Keep that hush. You know the feds be watching...

The crew nods again. Ain't that the truth?

SKIP

Ight, my boy. Do you!

They dap up.

The interns shuffle past the thugs with nervous smiles. Nick stops in front of Skip.

NICK

Ight my G!

Nick goes for the dap. Skip looks almost disgusted at him.

INT. NOSTALGY GAMING-DAY

The interns enter a haven of classic systems, card games, toys, and old collectibles lining the shelves.

Behind the counter sits a FAT BLACK GUY with a bushy beard and an undersized 80's band shirt. PODGE (35), eats a family-sized bag of chips as they approach.

Podge

Well, well, well! If it isn't the weeb who thinks Dragon Quest 11 is better than Dragon Quest 8.

BIRON

I don't have time to argue about that, Podge. I need your help.

PODGE

You? Need help from moi? You must be lost on your journey.

JULES

(whisper to Biron)

You're right. This guy sucks.

Nick SNIFFS the air. His nose hairs almost curl and break off. Lacey smells it too. locks eyes with Podge. Bats her lashes at him. Podge cracks a crusty grin with chips in his teeth. It's love at first whiff!

BIRON

Did you hear about what happened to the team?

PODGE

I did. It's a shame. Poor master Tekashi...

Podge looks at a portrait of Mr. Tekashi and bows. Nick bows too as a Japanese FLUTE sounds off.

PODGE (CONT'D)

Epic Fantasy is well-made. I'm on my fifth play-through.

BIRON

The game was just released a few months ago. You'd have to play it--

PODGE

Everyday?

Podge turns the register around. He's got the game running on the register screen.

JULES

He's a beta, but he seems to know his stuff.

PODGE

That's right. I even got the ultimate sword three hours earlier than you're supposed to.

BIRON

Uh-huh, great. Listen, how would you like to help us make the sequel?

Podge opens another family-sized bag of chips.

PODGE

What? No. You can't mean they're trusting you fledglings to follow that up?

He takes them in. One smoking hot chick, one pussy, one try-hard, and some confused black dude.

PODGE (CONT'D)

Are you serious?

BIRON

I wouldn't come down here and watch you drink chips if I weren't.

Podge thinks. Strokes his beard with the cheese residue still on his fingers.

PODGE

I've always wanted to lead a team. You know I've developed a few of my own games...

BIRON

(not interested)

Uh-huh...

PODGE

But what of my store? There has to be someone to peddle the entertainment of old.

The store's completely empty.

NICK

I don't think you'll have to worry about that.

PODGE

Well, then. I guess that only leaves the matter of coin.

BIRON

How's \$100,000--

PODGE

I'm in!

What!

PODGE (CONT'D)

I'll go prepare my things!

Podge rolls off his stool like hot flan and jiggles to the back.

JULES

Dude, what the hell? You going to pretend to sell drugs for that money?

BIRON

Chill.

LACEY

Chill??

BIRON

We all get 100k. If we pitch in 25 each, we could cover him. Trust me. His knowledge and experience are invaluable. We need him.

PODGE (O.S.)

Where are my cat ears?!

They look over to find Podge behind the counter trashing the place.

PODGE (CONT'D)

I'm not going anywhere without my  
cat ears!

INT. SQUARE WARE OFFICE- DAY

Podge stands tall wearing a black hat with big cat ears poking out the sides. He's watching the interns go through all the computers of the old team.

Nick scrolls through a computer. Nothing.

NICK

You sure we need a sauce code? I  
can't find a darn thing.

PODGE

That's "source code", you twink!  
Biron might be able to stitch  
together a lackluster soundtrack.  
(to Jules)  
And maybe this toxic mushroom can  
rip off a coherent story...

Jules is too focused on typing the first draft of the story. He ashes a cigarette.

PODGE (CONT'D)

But none of that'll be programable  
without the source code!

Lacey scrolls through another computer.

LACEY

I'm not seeing anything. Just links  
to closeups of chickens laying  
eggs...

Biron's scrolling too.

BIRON

I was gonna say that's weird, but  
this one's got a terabyte of anime  
porn.

Jules POPS into the cubicle.

JULES

Let me see that!

He takes control of the computer.

Scroll... Scroll... Scroll...

JULES (CONT'D)

Damn. This ain't the free stuff.  
They used money to get this.

BIRON

Why do all the girls have penises?

A deviant grin drags across Jules' face.

JULES

It's futanari. A real man's porn.

Biron looks disgusted. Podge POPS up too.

PODGE

(twiddling fingers)

Oh, futa!

INT. SQUARE WARE- LATER

The interns sit on the floor with no luck.

BIRON

Where the hell is it?

PODGE

Why would they hide the source  
code? That's like hiding the bedpan  
from yourself before a game sesh...

Nick frowns. Ew.

DALLAS (O.S.)

Those guys from IT might know where  
it is.

They all turn to Bo Dallas. He's holding a mega-deluxe bottle  
of whey protein and a small mirror with chopped lines on it.

BIRON

Is that...

Dallas glances down at the shady substance on the glass.

DALLAS

Oh, It's just protein powder.

LACEY

How exactly do you plan on  
ingesting that?

Dallas checks out Podge.

DALLAS  
Who's the fat-cat man?

PODGE  
Uh, who are you?

DALLAS  
I'm the coach-- I mean the lead  
developer.

Podge looks him up and down.

PODGE  
Do you even know what we're  
developing?

DALLAS  
Yeah, it's like a board game or  
ahh...

He looks around for help. No one's jumping in.

DALLAS (CONT'D)  
(snaps fingers)  
Card game.

BIRON  
You said IT came in here?

DALLAS  
Yeah, they helped me connect my  
peloton to the wifi. I've been  
trying to beat that smug instructor  
Gabby for months.

LACEY  
(suspicious)  
What did these "IT" guys look like?

DALLAS  
They look like they've served in  
our armed forces. God bless the  
boys in uniform...

Nick throws his hands up. It's game over man!

BIRON  
They stole it?

JULES  
Welp, that's the food chain for ya.  
The bigger the rabbit's heart, the  
more calories for the wolf.

LACEY

Maybe having hundreds of strangers  
gawking at me through a monitor  
isn't that bad...

PODGE

What? You guys take your meds  
around the same time, or something?  
Why's everyone so depressed now?

NICK

(whining)

Because this is the part where we  
have to confront bullies, Podge!

Oh? Podge code switches back to the hood.

PODGE

Ya'll ain't said nothin' 'bout no  
bullies. I'm out!

Jules' eyebrows stand up. Did no one else hear that?

All but Biron head for the door.

BIRON

Wait, guys. We can't give up now!

JULES

Yes, we can. Our parents raised us  
in debt. Why should our kids be any  
different?

BIRON

Because we were made for this! Why  
are we worried about those clowns?  
You think they're scary? We're a  
part of one of the most toxic  
cultures out there... Role-playing  
games. Hell, our own team bullied  
us.

They stop to hear him out.

BIRON (CONT'D)

Lacey. Every time you had a great  
art design, they'd just throw  
dollar bills at you and yell  
"Subscribe!". Don't you want to  
prove that you have a voice, too?

Lacey's touched.

BIRON (CONT'D)

And Jules. They'd regularly bomb your business with elaborately negative reviews, giving "For the Record" the lowest star rating in Yelp history. Don't you want to show that you can make something of quality?

He nods with a tear in his eye. Wipes it. Cause alphas don't cry.

BIRON (CONT'D)

And Nick...

Nick raises his chin high. Ready to receive his inspiration.

BIRON (CONT'D)

I, uh, won't make you relive that trauma.

PODGE

What about you, B? Your whole life is low-hanging fruit.

BIRON

They bullied me, too! Called me things that'll make Jim Crow look like a bill for quality lunches in public school. But you know what? That's OK. Because I knew as long as I stayed here, I'd have the chance to do something big.

They're coming around.

BIRON (CONT'D)

I've been unsure about a lot of things in my life. Who I am. What to be. But I know for sure what I want to do. Make games. And that's why you're here, too. So come on, guys! Let's be epic!

YEAH!

DALLAS

All right!

Dallas SNORTS the protein powder off the mirror and breaks it on his head!

Nick flinches!

INT. COMMERCIAL BUILDING- BATTLE ZONE OFFICE- DAY

An average office with people taking calls, surfing the web, and faxing papers.

Biron and the interns BURST into the office. Disrupting the peace. The battle buddies hit the deck like they're under fire! They look up. It's just the nerds.

BIRON

Give us the source code!

Rroyd stands and dusts the floor off himself.

RROYD

Dude, we're like working in here...

LACEY

Why'd you gear-queers steal it anyway? You can't use it.

RROYD

We can't, but we can take from it. It's programmed perfectly. If we can see how it was made, we can improve our own games.

NICK

Yeah, you do make the same game every year...

Rroyd growls at Nick.

BIRON

We'll just call the police.

RROYD

Wouldn't that be snitchn', B? Besides, you call the cops, we delete the code, and you'll have no hope of a sequel.

Biron looks to his team. Shrugs.

BIRON

What do you want?

RROYD

A wager. You play our new beta game with us. If you win, we'll give you the source code. But if we win...

PODGE

You never want us to show our faces  
around these parts again?

RROYD

No. We want free Only Fans content  
from Lacey. For the entire office!

Random employees POP UP. "YES!".

LACEY

(to interns)  
You guys better win!

INT. COMMERCIAL BUILDING- BATTLE ZONE- DAY

Snare drums sound off as the battle buddies LOCK AND LOAD the  
computers like finely tuned rifles.

Rroyd, Bobbert, and Gage sit pompously at their computers  
with fancy headsets and glowing keyboards. Biron, Jules, and  
Nick sit in front of computers that look like they were made  
with Windows 97.

RROYD

Rules are simple, boys. We fight to  
the last man. No respawns. No  
redos.

JULES

Not even if I want to "redo" your  
mom. Haha.

The joke falls flat. The battle buddies are too busy  
calibrating their game settings.

NICK

(whispers)  
Are we in trouble?

RROYD

Let's go!

A computer game with realistic graphics appears on the  
monitors. Everyone spawns in a war-torn city with burning  
buildings and wreckage in the street.

BIRON

(sarcasm)  
Wow! Innovative design!

JULES

Never seen this scenery before.

The interns move as a unit. Controlling three army avatars with blue flags on their backs.

RROYD

Alright gentlemen, let's show these twink's how men play games.

The battle buddies fan out sporting red flags.

Biron leads the trio out into the open streets.

BIRON

Come on out, boy scouts! No time for camping!

NICK

Find some cover, B! You're sticking out like a fat rat's tail!

Biron spots Bobbert in his sights. Aims to kill!

BANG! BANG!

Bobbert evades and aims with a much bigger gun.

BOOM!

Biron's avatar cartwheels with the speed of an industrial fan.

Lacey jumps into the arms of PODGE. He holds her tenderly. She's that much closer to belonging to those freaks.

Bobbert crouches and stands over Biron's body in a T-bag motion.

BIRON

Oh, yeah. Straight out of 2003. Just like your haircut.

Alice and Bo Dallas wander into the office.

ALICE

What the hell's going on in here?

DALLAS

Looks like the championships.

She looks at Dallas. Then to Lacey. Finds her hugging some fat cat-eared nerd.

ALICE

Lacey? Who's that?

Lacey jumps out of Podge's arms. Pretending she wasn't just wrapped in his arms.

PODGE

Afternoon, madam. I'm the lead developer for this project.

DALLAS

Cool...

ALICE

No, not cool. That's your job, idiot!

Dallas thinks. Oh yeah.

BOOM!

Jules throws his hands up as his dead avatar goes airborne.

JULES

Damn! I was better at split screen. Why don't ya'll make multiplayer with split screen anymore?

RROYD

Because split screens were for little boy sleepovers in the 90s. Grow up! Unless you're still into having little boy sleepovers.

LACEY

Time out!

The interns huddle up with the last remaining team member. Nick... Of all people.

JULES

Alright, bro. You're the last man standing. You may be uncompetitive, have no hand-eye coordination, and lack killer instinct...

NICK

But?

Silence. That's it.

Biron pushes Jules aside.

BIRON

Ok, Nick. We need you to win this. Our careers depend on it!

NICK

But these guys are pros! I'm just a game tester.

BIRON

You said they make the same game over and over, right? You've played this before!

Nick isn't convinced. Biron wracks his brain for a solution... Bingo! He brings it in close to Nick.

NICK

A kiss won't bring me luck, B.

BIRON

No! If you win, I'll let you say the word...

Nick's eyes light up.

NICK

I can say the word??

Biron nods with a grin.

Nick sits back in his chair with newfound confidence.

NICK (CONT'D)

Time in--

BOOM!

Nick immediately BLOWS Gage away! The battle buddy's jaws drop.

Nick hunts down Bobbert and blows him away, too! Rroyd swings his camera, looking in all directions. He can't find him!

RROYD

Where did he go? Where did he go!?

While Rroyd looks around clueless, Nick lies on the ground right behind him. Crosshairs aimed at his rear.

NICK

(aiming)

Brace yourself. This will feel a little cold going in...

BANG! Right in the A!

Rroyd's avatar falls over holding his face. As if it was a headshot. The interns LAUGH!

JULES

He shot 'em in the ass and he's  
holding his face? This game's  
broken!

Bo Dallas picks Nick up from the chair underarm style like a toddler and raises his hand high in the air!

"Nick, Nick, Nick, Nick"...

Nick's feeling the victory. His emotions swell. His smile is about to jump off his face!

NICK

I did it NIG--

EXT. BURGER JOINT- DAY

SUPER: One month later.

INT. BURGER JOINT- DAY

The interns sit on the edge of their seats as Alice stands before them on a call with Square Ware HQ.

ALICE

(on the phone)

Yes. I understand. I'll let them  
know. Thank you. Goodbye--

They hang up before she can finish. She sighs.

ALICE (CONT'D)

The company has decided to move...  
Forward with you guys! They loved  
the concept!

Yes! High fives all around. Jules and Nick still miss each other's hands. Lacey and Podge kiss. Jules gags.

JULES

So I guess we're just not gonna  
acknowledge these too, huh?

ALICE

I was right to believe in you  
little nerdlings. So you consume  
all the processed calories your  
young hearts desire. On me.

The store MANAGER walks up to the table and stands over Biron.

MANAGER

Alright, break time's over!

BIRON

What? I don't work here--

He looks down. He's wearing the Burger Join uniform shirt!

BIRON (CONT'D)

Wait...

The Manager drags Biron to the front counter and sticks him on the register where a line of angry people await.

MANAGER

You're on orders!

Biron looks up to see SKIP next in line!

SKIP

Aw, man! I'm glad you up here. Ay, think I can slide me a couple free burgers?

The lead team of Epic Fantasy II enjoys their fast food. Leaving Biron to suffer as the closeted nerd he is.

FADE OUT