

ONCE ITS BEGUN
CHAPTER FOUR

Written by

The Gillingham Brothers

EXT. THE DESERT - DUSK

AMONGST THE ROUGH DUNES A CONVOY OF VEHICLES IDLE IN PLACE.
THERMENTA STANDS LEAD, SCANNING THE LANDSCAPE FROM THE BONNET OF
A MODIFIED TOYOTA HILUX.

SAHN BRIGSTOCK APPROACHES

BRIGSTOCK
Whats a 'problem Sahn?

THERMENTA
No problem Brigstock, bein' sure'a
the path is all.

BRIGSTOCK
Is it tho?

Frustrated with the mans tone, Thermenta jumps down.

THERMENTA
Feelin' you'd track better is it?
Go on Sahn, lead on. True say.

BRIGSTOCK
Sor-ee Blud, I ain't sayin'
nothin', s'just at'... We been a
long time, outta tha' last town.
Supplies gettin' low an'that.

After a short, palpable silence -

THERMENTA
Don't worry Sahn, s'all good.
Reckon we're less un'a day back
from Ash. We'll be on The Charge
soon enough. Get me?

HE SLAPS BRIGSTOCK ON THE SHOULDER, LEAVING HIM AS HE WALKS ROUND
THE HILUX PAST-

A SHAPELESS PILE OF SAND AND RUBBLE AT THE SIDE OF THE TRACK,
STARTING TO MOVE. RESOLVING INTO-

KING!?! HE LEAPS FORWARD IN A SPRAY OF GRIT AND DUST, HIS SWORD AT
BRIGSTOCK'S THROAT BEFORE ANYONE CAN REALIZE WHAT'S HAPPENED.

BRIGSTOCK GOES FOR HIS GUN BUT -

CRACK - KING'S HEAD SHATTERS BRIGSTOCK'S NOSE BEFORE HE CAN DRAW.
HE GRIPS THE SAGGING MAN, PUSHING HIM FORWARD.

KA-BLAM - THERMENTA LETS OFF A SHOT INTO THE AIR, STILLING THE SCUFFLE. ALL OTHER BLUDS HAVE DRAWN IN KING'S DIRECTION.

KING

Oy oy. HOLD. If ya would... I've no wish to further harm this man. I'm sure you got use for him, and don't doubt you'd kill me if I take the privlidge. Sahn (o.s.)
Kill him, he's drover!

KING (CONT'D)

Hold ya finger blud, an' lets not call names. I'm Drover, true say, but not the one yous after.

THERMENTA

Is it now? What d'you know 'bout our goals?

KING

(in his hostage's ear)
Ere, Brigstock were it?
(Enjoying the innuendo)
You jus reach into yon pocket sweatpea an' show all.

Brigstock looks to Thermenta.

THERMENTA

Do it.

BRIGSTOCK

Ok...

KING

Oh my, wha' a delicate touch you have...

BRIGSTOCK FINDS THE UN-SPENT ROUND THAT ASH LEFT WITH HIM. HE THROWS IT TO THERMENTA.

KING (CONT'D)

Aye, young blud put it in my hand, not my head. Get me?

THERMENTA EXAMINES THE BULLET CAREFULLY, THEN LOOKS UP SMILING COLDLY-

THERMENTA

(Shouting loud for all)
HOLD BLUDS! Put ya'shooters away.
This man's a pal o'Sahn Ashen's...
So it is.

EXT. THE DESERT FLAT - NIGHT

FROM NEAR TOTAL DARKNESS, TWO POINTS OF LIGHT APPEAR IN THE DISTANCE LIKE THE GLOWING EYES OF SOME DESERT CAT.

AT ABOUT 50 FT OFF, KAI STEPS OUT-

- HE PULLS THE .22 PISTOL. TAKES AIM...

THE CAR IS ALMOST ON HIM WHEN...

HE FIRES.

THE CAR SKIDS TO A HALT.

HARTLY

(Shouting from the car)

KAI! It's me, fuck don't shoot...
YOU HEAR?

KAI

Oy oy Bruv. Whats'is? Don't look
like your ol'Two' a'me.

HARTLY

It's got a motor an' space for
three. Thought it better met our
needs.

Reaching the car, Sol opens the passenger door revealing Hartly's battered face.

SOL

What happened?

HARTLY

'Sa long story. I'd rather not get
into it.

SOL

(Ignoring Hart)

He's bleeding, look Kai, I think
you hit him...

HARTLY

(Alarmed)

What? Where?

SOL

(Ignoring Hart)

Look there, his cheek.

KAI
 (Impressed)
 I hit ya? Is it?..
 (He looks at Hart's wound)
 Ah, it's jus' a scrape.

HARTLY
 Well don't sound too disappointed.
 You shot me in the fucking face.
 (Adjusting the mirror for
 a look)
 You sure you ain't a trained
 shooter? A moving target... into
 the light?

KAI
 (Laughing)
 Lucky shot's all. Chin up bruv,
 could'a been close'a. So, whys your
 mug such'a picture? Can't blame me
 for all 'a that?... and where's ya
 Two'?

HARTLY
 I caught up with an old pal... Just
 get in.

Kai leaps over the side into the back seat. Sol slips in
 beside Hartly in the passenger seat.

SOL
 I'm glad you came back.
 (Noticing-)
 With a big gun on your hip now...
Sahn.

HARLTY
 (Off Kai)
 So, which way we goin'?

KAI
 Head for the hills Blud.

SOL
 (Quietly)
 It's time you meet your Charge.

EXT THE DESERT/INT. THE HILUX - NIGHT

THERMENTA RIDES SHOTGUN IN THE TRUE SENSE.

GLANCING BACK THROUGH THE CABS SMALL WINDOW, HE NODS TO THE MEN KEEPING WATCH, ONE PROUDLY LEANS ON THE BIG GUN, A TRIPOD MOUNTED XM214 MINI GUN FIXED TO THE FLAT BED.

ILLUMINATED IN THE HEADLIGHTS, KING AND HIS MEN RIDE THEIR MOUNTS AT A DECENT TROT, LEADING THE WAY

BRIGSTOCK DRIVES.

HE RUBS, AGITATED, AT THE THIN SLICE ON HIS THROAT.

THERMENTA

Oy Brigstock, you got summit to say Sahn?

BRIGSTOCK

(Spitting it out)
What the fuck we doin'?

Brigstock stares straight ahead, grinding his teeth.

BRIGSTOCK (CONT'D)

Ride out an' kill 'em all you said.
Now we're marchin' 'hind 'em
watchin' their horses drop turds...
I'd rather a'died with honor.

Thermenta thinks about his answer, serious.

THERMENTA

Like he says, this ain't our
country. May s'well use him while
he's there to be used. When it
comes that he ain't useful no more.
(He rubs the butt of his
gun)

'Side's. Hartly's a tricky one,
true say. I don't mean to be up
front while he lets off his first
clip. King wants t'prove he-self.
Let'im see if he can't dodge a few.

BRIGSTOCK

But once it's done? You mean to
leave him king?

THERMENTA

Do I fuck. He'll be king o'the
ground and nothin' more.

BRIGSTOCK

(nodding-smiling)
Is it fam?

THERMENTA

Aye, so it is.

They both look out to-

KING, directing his men into the desert.

EXT. HARD PAN/ THE HILLS - DAWN

THE LOW RISING SUN THROWS A LONG SHADOW OFF THE SIDE OF OUR MERCEDES AS IT TEARS ACROSS THE HARD PAN.

HARTLY SLOWS AS WE APPROACH THE BASE OF A RANGE OF LOW HILLS.

WE PULL TO A STOP BESIDE A ROUGH TRACK AND ALLOW THE TRAILING PLUM OFF DUST TO DRIFT PAST BEFORE ANYONE SPEAKS...

Hartly shuts off the engine. The three sit in absolute silence for a beat.

HARTLY

(Off Kai)

Now what?

But it's Sol that answers, getting out the car and starting towards the path.

SOL

We go up and discover the fate of humanity...

Hartly turns to Kai who just shrugs, then jumps out.

KAI

What she said.

They both follow after her.

EXT. EDGE OF THE BOULDER FIELD - MORNING

BACK WHERE HARTLY LEFT ASHEN-

Dull voices that sound a million miles away, underwater.

MUFFLED VOICE

Wm hm hm nu ha mu... sh... sh

SLAP - LIGHT BURSTS IN AS ASH OPENS HIS EYES. HIS FATHER CROUCHES IN FRONT OF HIM. SHAKING HIM-

THERMENTA

Ash, Ash. Wake up sahn.

THE CAVALRY has arrived. Amongst the rocks stands Thermenta's Sahn along side King and his men.

ASH rubs at his blood crusted face looking around, trying to shake off his daze.

WHACK -

ASH
(Still slurring)
All right! Fuck! I'm awake.

THERMENTA
Then speak wouldja! What the hell
happened here...

-MORE IMPORTANTLY

THERMENTA (CONT'D)
Where's your gun Sahn?

ASH
(Shamed)
He... he took it.

THERMENTA
(With rising bile)
He. Took. It.
(To the crowd)
Someone get this Childe some water.

His anger builds as he paces a circle.

THERMENTA (CONT'D)
FUUUUUUCK!

EXT. THE HILLS - MID MORNING

HARTLY HESITANTLY TRAILS A FEW METERS BEHIND ME DOWN THE HILL. KAI PULLS ASIDE A RUSTED WIRE FENCE THAT BLOCKS OUR PATH. THE METAL PRACTICALLY DISINTEGRATES IN HIS HANDS.

HARLTY
(Voicing his concern-)
Somethin' feels off, why but a
picket out here..?

KAI DOESN'T HAVE AN ANSWER AND, WELL, WHY RUIN THE SURPRISE NOW. IT WILL ALL BECOME CLEAR BEFORE LONG NOW ANYWAY...

WE CREST THE HILL...

THEY STOP-

AND THERE IT IS, AS I WAS TOLD SO LONG AGO THAT IT WOULD BE- WHITE PAINT FADED AND PEELING, DOMED COPPER ROOFTOP SANDBLASTED TO A DULL GREEN, THE TIME WEATHERED YET STILL MONOLITHIC, OBSERVATORY.

KAI
What is this?

HARTLY
I got nothin bruv. I mean, we got plenty a 'sky-scorers standin' back in tha Grey... But none like this.
(Off the building)
What you doin' out here?

I REALISE THAT I'M GRIPPING MY NECKLACE AGAIN BUT IF THERE WAS EVER A TIME... WELL...

SOL
This is it...

I DON'T HESITATE ANY LONGER. IT'S FINALLY TIME TO GET THIS SHOW ON THE ROAD... I DUCK UNDER A BOOM GATE THEN MARCH PURPOSEFULLY ACROSS THE CRACKED TARMAC CARPARK TOWARDS THE ODD PRESERVED BUILDING FROM ANOTHER TIME.

HARTLY JOGS PAST, OF COURSE HE HAS TO BE FIRST TO THE DOOR. HE GIVES IT A SHOVE-

HARLTY
Doors locked tight.

KAI NODS TOWARDS A SMALL BLACK GLASS PANEL WITH THE FADED OUTLINE OF A HAND PRINTED ON.

KAI
(He shrugs)
Nuthin' ventured nuthin' gained.

HARLTY
Wait, maybe we should...

BEFORE HARTLY, OR I CAN STOP HIM, KAI HAS PRESSED HIS PALM TO THE INDICATED POSITION.

A RED WARNING LIGHT BLASTS ALONG WITH A SHORT ALARM

KAI BURSTS OUT IN LAUGHTER AT THE SUDDEN RELEASE OF TENSION. EVEN HART GIVES A NERVOUS SMILE WHEN-

Hart whips his gun round-

HARTLY
(re-holstering his weapon)
Sorry.

I SHOVE MY WAY (MAYBE A LITTLE HARDER THAN NECESSARY) PAST HIM AND HIS "PIECE" AND REACH OUT TO PLACE MY HAND ON THE PANEL.

HARTLY (CONT'D)
Wait, it wont...

calm tone - *A green light flashes and the door pops a-jar.*

HARTLY (CONT'D)
You been here before is it?

I DON'T ANSWER, PERHAPS I SHOULD, BUT AT THIS POINT I DON'T REALLY KNOW WHAT TO SAY.

HA! HARTLY DOESN'T LOOK HAPPY AS HE FOLLOWS ME INTO THE DARKNESS...

INT. OBSERVATORY - COMPUTER LAB - CONTINUOUS

A SOFT LIGHT ILLUMINATES THE FLOOR AS WE ENTER. STANDING IN DARKNESS FOR A FEW SECONDS BEFORE OVERHEAD NEONS FLICKER TO LIFE, REVEALING-

A SLICK, 'MODERN' OFFICE SPACE, FILLED WITH ROWS OF DESKS.

HART AND KAI SEEM MYSTIFIED AS THEY EXAMINE THE 'ALIEN' ARTIFACTS ALL AROUND -

HUGE FLAT-SCREEN MONITORS WITH COMPUTER KEYBOARDS, LIGHT BOXES WITH ASERTONE MAPS OVERLAYING STAR CONSTELLATIONS.

ON THE FAR WALL STANDS A MASSIVE CORPORATE STONE STATUE DEPICTING THE SIGNS OF THE ZODIAC.

A THIN LAYER OF DUST COATS EVERY SURFACE - NO-ONE HAS BEEN HERE FOR A LONG TIME.

HARTLY
(Under his breath)
What the...

SOL
They're computers. I think...

I TAKE A SEAT IN FRONT OF ONE OF THE COMPUTER SCREENS, AND REACH OUT TO BRUSH THE SOFTLY PULSING LIGHT ON THE ON SWITCH-

HARTLY
(Snatching her wrist)
Wait. I reckon it's time you told me wha's gwanin' here.

A look passes between Kai and Sol. She hesitates, then nods.

KAI
 (Cautious)
 Hartly, last true Sahn o'the Blud,
 those a'the Cracked Palm, meet your
 charge.

HARTLY STARES INTO MY EYES FOR A LONG TIME, LOOKING FOR THE TRUTH OF
 WHAT HE'S JUST BEEN TOLD.

HARTLY
 (Finally finding a voice)
 But, you're just a girl.

SOL
 (Smiling up at him)
 I'm glad you noticed.

HARTLY
 But... how could you..?

KAI
 Hart...

HARTLY
 (Off Sol)
 Where is it?

SOL
 What?

HARTLY
 I don't... The power... The FUCKIN'
 Charge?

KAI GETS BETWEEN THEM, GENTLY PUSHING HARTLY BACK.

KAI
 Easy blud, jus' hold it.

HARTLY
 Who is this Kai. Answer me true.

KAI
 You know her Blud. This is Sol. She
 IS The Charge, get me.

Hartly struggles to understand.

HARTLY
 The Charge 'at holds the power to
 save all a'man? Say true, the
 reason for the Bluds of Old. HOW..?

KAI
Calm yourself fam. Trust the word
a'your father, as I did.

The statement hits him hard.

HARTLY
Aye. My father died protecting you?

SOL
(Sadly)
Me and those that came before...
Yes. He did, him and more, many
more.

HARTLY
But why? All this time I trailed...
What've I been chasing?

SOL
I don't know. But it's time we all
found out...

I REACH OUT SLOWLY AND GENTLY BRUSH THE CONTACT...

NOTHING... THEN -

A loud whirring sound, the long forgotten central server
waking from hibernation. Cooling fans GRIND, struggling with
decades... Centuries of accumulated dust and inaction.

THE SCREEN FLICKERS, A SMALL BOX APPEARS REQUESTING -

SOL (CONT'D)
(unsure)
Password...

HARTLY WALKS FORWARDS, TENTATIVELY TOUCHING THE FLASHING CURSER
ON THE SCREEN. HES NEVER SEEN ANYTHING MORE TECHNOLOGICALLY
ADVANCED THAN A JUKE-BOX.

He steps back as words begin to appear.

I type-

SOL (CONT'D)
S O L 9 2 9 5 5 8 0 7

=> **ENTER**

A STANDARD LOOKING OPERATING SYSTEM OPENS UP. I REACH UP TO MY
NECKLACE AS I HAVE SO MANY TIMES, SQUEEZE IT JUST SO AND;

CLICK.

THE "PENDANT" COMES AWAY IN MY HAND. AFTER A FEW CLUMSY ATTEMPTS I MANAGE TO INSERT IT INTO A SLOT IN THE KEYBOARD.

KAI

(Off Hartly)

Hold tight Sahn. Reckon we's
abou'to go f'ride...

A SILENT EXPLOSION OF MOVEMENT AND COLOR RUSHES TO FILL THE SCREEN FASTER THAN HARTLY OR KAI CAN FOLLOW;

A MAP OF THE WORLD WITH NUMBERS AND ANNOTATIONS ROTATES 90 DEGREES TO PLACE THE AMERICAS HORIZONTAL ACROSS THE EQUATOR; SCHEMATICS FOR ADVANCED MACHINES; FLOOR PLANS FOR UNKNOWN BUILDINGS; MORE MAPS, TRAJECTORIES, GRIDS, DOCUMENTS...

IT'S TOO MUCH, KAI LOOKS AWAY. HARTLY STANDS TRANSFIXED AS -

A VIDEO BEGINS TO PLAY; DIGITAL DISTORTION RESOLVES INTO A SIDEWAYS VIEW OF A LABORATORY THAT ROTATES AS THE CAMERA IS SET ON A TABLE.

A SCIENTIST IN A WHITE COAT WALKS ROUND INTO VIEW.

WHITE COAT

Unfortunately time is short so my explanation must be brief.

(A beat passes as he
collects his thoughts)

One month ago we completed work on a new, advanced form of nuclear fusion. It was supposed to supply the worlds energy needs for the next 1000 years. But caught up in our own 'brilliance' we pushed forwards too fast, started a chain reaction. Disrupted the Earth's gravitational and magnetic fields. The iron core destabilized and our planetary orientation has started to slip.

(Another explosion,
closer, rocks the lab)

Our last hope is to pull the plug... It should stop the slip but will cause an atomic explosion the likes of which has never been seen. The fallout will last for generations...

(A thought occurs, giving
renewed hope)

(MORE)

WHITE COAT (CONT'D)

But if you are watching this now then it means that we were able to save this record, enough time has passed that the radiation has dissipated... you are a descendent of those we will send away from here, accompanied by only a small armed guard. In this one small concession we will succeed where we have otherwise failed absolutely. We were able to create a repository of all human knowledge. It exists now in a bunker in the nations capital below a building known as 'The Pentagon'. Your DNA is the key that will unlock...

KAI IS FIRST TO NOTICE; AN ACRID BURNING SMELL. ELECTRONICS OVER HEATING. HE LOOKS AROUND FOR THE SOURCE.

KAI

Sol, somin's not right...

THE COMPUTER SERVER GIVES UP IT'S BATTLE WITH THE YEARS OF NEGLECT. DUST CLOGGED FANS FAIL. THE CENTRAL PROCESSOR BURNS OUT.

THE SCREEN GOES BLACK.

SOL

No... there was more, there was...
That can't be it, after all this
time. I have to know...

She desperately jabs at the power switch. Takes out and re-inserts her USB drive...

Nothing.

SOL (CONT'D)

NO!

She dashes away in tears, to disappear through a door, and up a flight of stairs.

HARLTY

Sol, wait, what...

KAI

Leave her be bruv. She needs time.

EXT. DESERT/ EDGE OF THE BOULDER FIELD - EARLY AFTERNOON

ASH STANDS, HIS GAZE FOLLOWING THE FRESH TIRE TRACKS ACROSS THE OPEN EXPANSE OF HARD PAN TOWARDS THE DISTANT HILLS THAT RISE AHEAD TO MEET THE CLEAR SKY.

THERMENTA COMES TO STAND BESIDE HIS SON. HE HOLDS OUT AN ANCIENT LOOKING SIX SHOOTER IN A WORN LEATHER HOLSTER.

THERMENTA

Boy. F'some reason Cooper brung this. A Sahn don't oft' make habit of needin' a spare.

ASH

Aye. I tell him thanks.

THERMENTA

Give it a good work over an' it'll shoot true. Mind you give it back in better condition than what you got it... Once it's done.

ASH

(Intentionally changing
the subject)

The hills make for a difficult assault. We'll be in the open for a good long time. Six hours to cross, a'least.

Thermenta nods,

THERMENTA

That's why we go by night, you get me? Covered by dark... King reckons there's two a'them. Young Hart's found a friend... But one or two, makes no ends, by time Big Gun's in range it'll be to late.

ASH

P'raps I should go lay a parley. If he has the charge, may be he'll see the sense a'brinin' it back to the grey. To spare more blood.

THERMENTA

Should I send all of my men, one by one to be picked off? Think Blud! No, we hit hard, an' all at once.

Ash is silent for a moment-

ASH

He's good Sahn, Real good. He'd
a'been raised full long ago if his
Da'd been around.

THERMENTA

Whatya sayin? Spit it out boy.

ASH

Best not to underestimate him. You
get me?

INT. OBSERVATORY - ROOF SPACE - AFTERNOON

HARTLY APPEARS, HEAD THEN SHOULDERS, AS HE CLIMBS THE SPIRAL
STAIRCASE INTO THE OBSERVATORY ROOF SPACE. HE LOOKS AROUND;

COMPUTER EQUIPMENT LINES THE WALLS BUT ALL ATTENTION IS TAKEN BY-

CENTRAL IN THE ROOM, A HUGE WHITE CYLINDER, ABOUT 30 FEET LONG,
WITH A CHAIR AT ONE END POINTS UP TO THE DOMED CEILING.

SMALLER METAL CYLINDERS POINT TOWARDS SMALL SHUTTERS IN THE SIDES
OF THE VAST DOME.

I SIT CROUCHED BESIDE ONE OF THESE. IT'S ABOUT A METER LONG, A FOOT IN
DIAMETER.

HART WALKS SLOWLY OVER AND SITS DOWN BESIDE ME.

SOL

I'm sorry we... I didn't tell you.
Who I was. I had to be sure I could
trust you. Not that it matters now.
The computer died. There's no way
of knowing what I have to do next.

Hartly gestures towards the screens that line the room.

HARLTY

(Struggling with the word)
Wha'bout these, 'pewtas up here?
Can they not show rest a'tha
message stored in your jewel? Here,
I brung it for ya.

He hands her the USB. She turns it over in her hands.

SOL

I tried them already. Fried. They
must all be linked to the central
server downstairs.

Hartly nods. He understands enough of what she just said to know it's not good.

HARTLY

There must be somethin' else?

SOL

Maybe there is but I don't know anymore.

(beat)

I'm not special! I thought I was. I believed I was but I can't save humanity. I don't know what to do.

AS I SPEAKS A TEAR SPILLS DOWN MY CHEEK.

HARTLY RAISES A HAND TO GENTLY WIPE IT AWAY.

I CATCHES IT AND HOLD, AS SOMEONE DROWNING AT SEA WOULD HOLD ONTO A LIFE RAFT.

WE LOCK EYES, A RUSH OFF EMOTION PASSING BETWEEN US.

ONLY A FEW INCHES SEPARATE US NOW...

HARTLY

(Breathing hard)

You are special Sol. I di'na get any a'what White Coat were sayin'... It means nuthin to me and I'll bet kai's none the wiser. You understood. The world needs you.

(With reverence)

You's the Charge. Get me.

I PULL HIM IN A LITTLE CLOSER, STARING INTO EYES... HIS SOUL. BOTH OUR HEARTS BEATING IN OUR THROATS. HARTLY STRUGGLES TO FIND SOMETHING TO SAY.

HARTLY

How'd you know what you was doin' down there? With tha'

(Struggling to remember the word Sol used)

"Serva". Scratch 'at. How's it you knew t'bring us here at all.

SOL

When I was young my father used to talk about coming here. When the time was right. "The first stop south". Like it was part of some great story. You don't know it? I thought it was part of your lore.

AT MENTION OF LORE HARTLY REMEMBERS HIMSELF, HIS DUTY.

HARTLY

All I know, is 'at the "Bluds of old protect the Charge". Have done f'long as time remembered an' more.

SOL

Then we're screwed because this is as far as the story took me and now your father *and* leader are as dead as mine...

Sol regrets saying it the moment the words leave her lips.

SOL (CONT'D)

I'm sorry Hartly. You're father was a great man.

HARTLY

(Bitter)

Is it? You knew 'im better 'en me.

SOL

He sacrificed everything for duty. I know it hurt him to be away from you all those years. Kai too.

HARTLY

Kai..? What's his part in this? He says you was his kin.

SOL

Really? No. I mean I've known him for years, since we were both little but he came with you're father.

HARTLY

True say, I don't know nothin' 'bout him. What's he to my Da?

She pauses, realizing she's said too much.

HARTLY (CONT'D)

What? What you keepin'?

SOL

I...

KAI

(from across the room)

Ay ay.

Amazed by the room and its contents-- like a kid in a toy store.

SOL
 (Quietly off Hartly)
 I think you should ask him.

Kai seems to completely forget what he was coming up to say as he saunters across the exotic space.

KAI
 My days, what's all this now?

Sol smiles, happy to change the subject.

SOL
 They're called telescopes...

She walks to the end of the one beside them to demonstrate.

SOL (CONT'D)
 You look through this end and it magnifies...
 (She trails off, suddenly afraid)
 They're comin.'

HARTLY
 How'd ya know it?

SOL
 Look for yourself, through this.

Sol guides him to look through the cylinder.

A view of the desert explodes in front of his eyes.

HARTLY
 Wah... this is... [incredible], I ken see all back t'boulders... What the fu...

KAI
 What ya seein fam?

HARTLY
 Sahns, settin camp, sharin' air with Drovers!
 (beat)
 'Bout 20 total.

Hartly pulls away from the view gritting his teeth tight.

HARTLY

Fuck!

KAI

What is it?

HARTLY

Ash is with em, he found my Two'!

KAI

(Laughing under his
breath)

Is it..? But how, it were so well
hid?

SOL

(Confused)

Your Two? What about the men!?

Hartly ignores them both, jogging for the stairs.

KAI

Where you gwan blud?

He stops and turns to answer.

HARTLY

Got plannin' to do.

KAI

You mean to stand and fight?

HARTLY

Aye.

SOL

Against 20? It's suicide. We should
run, while we have a chance.

HARTLY

(Shaking his head)

We stand here. I wont run with
trouble at my back any longer.

(Off Kai)

This is the where, this is the
when.

KAI

(Without hesitation)

Aye, I'll stand with ya.

SOL

I... don't know how to...

Hartly stares at her for a second-

-SHE NEEDS TO LIVE...

HARTLY

I'm sworn to protect you but there's dangers either way, leave now and you'll run a good lead but go lone. We'll do best we can as two and catch you when it's done. Or stay and I'd keep you outta harms way no matter what... I'd feel... better knowing you was safe. I can only know that for true if you's 'ere.

SOL

You're crazy! They'll overwhelm us. What can you do? Two... or three against twenty?

HARTLY

(With absolute surety)
More'en you would think.

Hartly stares her straight in her eyes. What she sees scares and reassures by equal measure.

SOL

You are you're fathers son. True say, you are. Fuck it, I'm in.

They walk off down the stairs together.

SOL (CONT'D)

Okay, tell me your plan, the sooner we can be ready the better.

EXT. EDGE OF THE BOULDER FIELD - EVENING

PREPARATIONS ARE BEING MADE FOR THE SPRINT ACROSS THE FLAT.

EACH SAHN RITUALISTICALLY CHECKS HIS REVOLVER, SOME LAY IN PIECES ON LEATHER CLOTH, OIL MASSAGED METHODICALLY INTO THE FEW MOVING PARTS.

ASH FINISHES REASSEMBLING THE SPARE. IT SHINES IN THE EVENING LIGHT, UNRECOGNIZABLE AS THE WRECK GIVEN BY HIS FATHER.

KING

Ho young blud.

ASH
 (Without looking up)
 You call me Sahn. Get me?

KING
 Heard you talkin' to your da'.
 Don't have the stomach to do him
 we's chasing? Tell you what. Give
 'at iron over an' I'll put one
 through his head for ya.
 (Beat)
 Heard you lost yours anyway, pr'aps
 I'd take better care...

Ash moves quick, before King finishes his sentence he has a broken lip with a fully assembled gun pressed against it.

ASH
 Shut your fuckin' mouth Drover
 before I put a slug in it. I've
 sworn to rid the world of shit like
 you. Lucky right now, you come in
 handy...
 (He smiles)
 Or stumpy, you get me? The moment
 you prove otherwise...

CLICK - He pulls the hammer back-

KING
 Big words... For a man with a big-
 bore shoved in my face. Hows 'bout
 you put down Iron, I put down steel
 and we see whats what.

ASH
 Is it? Right then.

TAKING A STEP BACK HE LAYS THE GUN RESPECTFULLY ON HIS SHAMMY,
 KING DROPS HIS BLADE CARELESSLY TO THE GROUND.

ASH TUCKS HIS RIGHT HAND DOWN THE BACK OF HIS PANTS-

ASH (CONT'D)
 How's this? Even it up some?
 Stumpy.

King licks the blood off his lips and spits.

KING
 I'd say no need... Boy.

CRACK - WITHOUT WARNING ASH WHIPS OUT A SWEET LEFT HOOK STRAIGHT
 TO KINGS JAW.

ONE PUNCH. ONE SECOND. DONE.

ASH TURNS THE FLOORED MAN OVER WITH HIS BOOT. KING'S EYES
FLUTTER OPEN.

ASH

You get me, *boy*? Now ready your
men.