

ONCE ITS BEGUN
CHAPTER THREE

Written by
The Gillingham Brothers

EXT. THE DESERT - NIGHT/ DAWN. (PRESENT)

IT'S LATE BUT I CAN'T SLEEP. ALL IS QUIET, THE FIRE LONG DEAD. MOONLIGHT OUTLINES THE SLEEPING FORMS OF MY UNLIKELY COMPANIONS. SO SIMILAR IN THE DARKNESS I CAN BARELY TELL THEM APART.

HARTLY FLINCHES IN HIS SLEEP. A BAD DREAM I GUESS, BUT I WON'T KNOW THE FULL OF IT FOR A TIME YET. ITS THE SAME NIGHTMARE HE'S HAD EVERY NIGHT SINCE HE LEARNED OFF HIS FATHERS... ILL FATE.

KAI IS SNORING SOFTLY, BUT WHAT ELSE SHOULD I EXPECT, I SWEAR THE MAN WILL SLEEP THROUGH HIS OWN FUNERAL.

I MOVE AS QUIETLY AS I CAN TO HIS SIDE AND REACH OVER TO TOUCH HIS SHOULDER...

SWIFT AND SILENT AS A COBRAS STRIKE, KAI SNATCHES OUT TO CATCH MY HAND BEFORE I REACH HIM. DID I WAKE HIM OR WAS HE PLAYING THIS WHOLE TIME? YOU'D THINK AFTER ALL THE YEARS WE'D SPENT TOGETHER I'D KNOW BUT, WELL THAT IS JUST ONE OF THE MYRIAD MYSTERIES OF KAI.

WITH THE SLIGHTEST INCLINATION OF MY HEAD I GESTURE FOR HIM TO FOLLOW ME.

EXT. THE DESERT - HARD PAN - MOMENTS LATER

THE SUN HAS YET TO CREST THE HORIZON BUT THE SKY HAS JUST BEGUN TO ILLUME A GLORIOUS DEEP PURPLE. KAI LIGHTS UP ONE OF HARTLY'S HAND ROLLED BROWN CIGARETTES AS WE WALK A SHORT DISTANCE AWAY FROM CAMP.

SOL

You know there's over 70 chemical compounds in that tobacco smoke that can cause pulmonary carcinoma...

KAI

What now?

SOL

Smoking will kill you

KAI

(He shrugs, unconcerned)
Jus' like everythin' else out here
I s'pose.

ALL THE SAME, HE TAKES ONE MORE PULL AND THROWS THE BUTT. WE WALK ON IN SILENCE TIL KAI STOPS TO PICK UP A HEAVY ROCK. HE PASSES IT BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN HIS HANDS.

KAI (CONT'D)

So why we out takin' this moonlight stroll? You ain't done enough walkin'?

After a beat Sol looks back over her shoulder.

SOL

Your new friend...

KAI

Worried we can't trus' 'im? Is it? He's who he claims, no doubt. Spit'a his Da'. Get me?

SOL

(Sadness creeping in)

Yes, I see it, the resemblance is striking. But...

KAI

Aye. He's torn good. Means to do right by us, e'self, an' by his Da' most'a all. Jus' ain't sure he knows what right is.

(Beat)

Fuck, not sure I do neither. Loyalties stick hard and when they split... Mess normally comes-a-spilling.

Kai looks back towards Hartly with deep sadness in his eyes. He turns the rock over in his hands.

KAI (CONT'D)

You thinkin I shouldn't a brung 'im... Thinkin' he needs t'be got rid? So's we go on lone, as before?

SOL

(Eyeing the rock)

Do you think you have it in you? To do it? He's all you have left now.

There's a long beat as Kai considers.

-IT'S THE LAST THING I'D WANT BUT...

KAI

Aye... If need must. Quick an' painless in his sleep. But you better KNOW must, coz, shit I ain't sure. And sure's what we'd need right now.

(MORE)

KAI (CONT'D)

It won't be easy and more I get
t'know 'im... It ain't gettin' no
easier.

He readies himself for the words he doesn't want to hear.

SOL

No.

She holds out her hand and Kai gratefully passes the rock.
Sol weighs it a moment then lets it drop.

SOL (CONT'D)

After we found... well we came
north for answers, to find what we
should do next... We've found our
answers. I trust your judgement. I
think he came to us for a reason.
He'll take up his fathers place.

I REACH UNCONSCIOUSLY FOR MY STUPID PLASTIC PENDANT BUT STOP
MYSELF.

SOL (CONT'D)

(Rueful)

He'll guard the charge.

(Beat)

The suns coming up. We should be on
our way...

The pair make their way back as Hartly begins to stir. He
sits up stiffly as they come close.

KAI

(Off Hart)

Mornin' sunshine, time's a'chacin'.
We'd best hop on. This way city
boy...

Without further preamble Kai takes off at a fast run towards
the southern horizon.

HARTLY

(off Sol)

By the Charge, he said he could run
but... he won't keep that pace
f'long. Will he?

SOL

Impressed city boy? This is
nothing. He'll run like that all
day. We better start following
before we loose sight of him.

HARTLY
 (Lost for words)
 Make you right...

Hartly gets up, stretching out his back as he walks over to his bike.

HARLTY
 (Climbing on)
 You ever rid on a two?

SOL
 No.

Sol excitedly skips over and hops on like a pro.

SOL (CONT'D)
 But I'm guessing I climb on the
 back here and hold on tight.

She hugs tight to Hartly. Creaking the leather of his jacket. For some reason Hartly feels awkward with the intimate proximity.

Sol seems to sense the tension in his posture.

SOL (CONT'D)
 Have you never taken a passenger?

HARLTY
 None... none like you.

He kicks the engine over and cranks the throttle.

HARTLY
 (Smiling)
 Don't let go...

Sol squeals with delight and hugs into Hartly hard as he drops gear and wheel-spins, drifting a wide arch after Kai.

EXT. DESERT - OIL WELL - MORNING

A DAYS TRAVEL BEHIND US, ACROSS THE HARD PAN DESERT, OLD 'OIL STAINED DUNGAREES', THE CLERK, MOPS AT HIS FORE HEAD WITH A GRUBBY RAG.

HE'S MADE AN EARLY START TO RE-REPAIR AN OLDER 'TEMPORARY FIX' ON A LEAKING PIPE WHEN HE SPOTS THE DUST PLUME OF A CAR HEADING HIS WAY FROM THE NORTH.

A MINUTE LATER ASH PULLS UP IN HIS FATHER'S OLD MERCEDES.

ASH GETS OUT OF THE CAR, BIG GUN CLEAR UNDER HIS ARM.

CLERK

My days! Well met Blud. You'd be filled up is it?

ASH

It is, if ya would.

The Clerk goes to get his gas can.

ASH (CONT'D)

I'd say you're not too shocked at seein' one a'The Blud this far out?

CLERK

Aye, true say Sahn. 'Til less'n a week gone I'da been real 'prised at you're passage, but I seen your kin through not days gone past.

ASH

(Smiling)

Is it? A friend o'mine... On a fancy Two-engine?

CLERK

A-ha...

EXT. DESERT - MIDDAY

Kai breathes hard but stead. A true picture of stamina.

Hartly and Sol ride a steady pace beside,

After a minute Kai slows to a walk then stops, Hartly skids to a halt and shuts off the engine. Sol jumps down to stand beside Kai.

The three stare, though only Hartly seems concerned.

EXT. BOULDER FIELD - CONTINUOUS

HARTLY

(Incredulous)

What... what is this?

SOL

It's called a crevasse. Formed by some kind of extreme geological event... I'd guess it's about 10 miles wide at this point...

KAI

I reckon its a big ol' hole in ground an like I say, your two aint gonna help none gettin' 'cross it.

HARTLY

We have to go through? we Could'n just skirt 'round?

KAI

You trackin' Blud or jus' guessin'? I never bin round. Don't know if there's an edge or no... This s'way to the Charge. So this s'way we gotta go.

SOL

(Squinting)

It could be a hundred miles or more to circumnavigate. Long detour.

HARTLY

Shit.

KAI

Well what'chu 'ave us do Sahn?

The thought of leaving his two'engine hurts but...

HARTLY

We trust Kai, 'Son 'a the Sand' an' track through a'foot.

KAI

Well chosen bruv.

Before they go on, Hartly re-starts his bike.

SOL

(calling above the din)

I thought you said we were going through.

HARLTY

We are, but I can't jus' leave here out exposed. I'll tuck her away somewhere close-by. Safe...

rides into the middle of a small stand of low shrubs. Sol shakes her head and starts off down into the boulder field.

SOL

Oh, yeah, in a bush. Much better. You boys and your toys...

Kai hangs back and rolls himself a smoke while he watches; Hartly attempting to hide the Two'.

KAI
 'S'long as we're s'pectin another
 blind city boy to come-a-looking,
 should be fine.

Hartly rolls his eyes and starts off after me. Kai dusts over the most obvious tire tracks before following.

EXT. BOULDER FIELD - LATE AFTERNOON

A LITTLE WHILE LATER, HARTLY HAS TAKEN OFF HIS SHIRT AND TIED IT OVER HIS HEAD. HE STILL WEARS HIS JACKET, OPEN OVER HIS BARE TORSO TO KEEP THE RELENTLESS SUN OFF HIS BACK. SWEAT DRIPS FROM EVERY PORE.

I DEAL WITH THE HEAT SLIGHTLY BETTER WHILE KAI, SEEMING UNAFFECTED LEADS THE WAY PERHAPS A DOZEN FEET AHEAD, ALONG WHAT COULD AT ONE POINT HAVE BEEN AN PAVED WALKWAY.

HARTLY
 (Calling ahead to Kai)
 We been trekin for hours, ain't you
 hot bruv?

KAI
 (Plainly)
 Nah.

Hartly stops a second to catch his breath. Sol stays with him.

HARTLY
 How's he do this?

SOL
 You mean with the heat? He say's
 it's a trick, wisdom passed down
 from his mothers side. He tried to
 teach me once, it helps but I never
 quite got the knack. You're
 supposed to 'listen to the messages
 your body tells you without letting
 them take over.' Conscious
 metabolic adjustment to an
 incredible degree.

Not sure what she just said Hart eyes her with a smile.

They start off again.

HARTLY

Some trick.

SOL

I can teach you what I know. If you'd like? Sahn?

HARLTY

(Sharply)

Don't call me that. I never received my fathers gun, was never full raised.

SOL

I'm sorry, I didn't think...

(Back tracking)

It's how he can run so far so fast too. He could go all day, ignoring the pain all the time right up until a full blown cardiac infarction.

HARLTY

You like talkin', eh?

SOL

(Defensive)

I'll try to keep quiet.

She walks briskly ahead, tugging irritably on her necklace.

HARLTY

(Off her back)

No. It's real nice, get me good. I mean most what yous ju'said's 'yond me... but it sounds fair to my ear.

She ignores him and Hartly has to hurry to catch up.

KAI

(Without turning)

Gettin' right close now Blud. Reckon we push hard today an' we'll have sight a'our next stop by sundown. Charge ain't far off.

They continue in silence.

HARTLY

The Charge, true say, what is it?

KAI

(Laughing)

Nah, is it?

(MORE)

KAI (CONT'D)

You sworn 'tecter an' y'dun even know what you're 'tectin'! That's pure jokes Blud. JOKES!

HARTLY

Easy pal. It's been generations since the charge moved south. I don't think any o'the Blud knows anymore. Get me? Maybe Ol'Blud knew... but he's gone now... Same as my father...

KAI

Soz bruv, nah, True say. Sorree. Lost mine too init...

(Beat)

As to The Charge, I'll not spoil the s'prise. You'll see 'fore long.

HARTLY

P'raps you'll tell me o'your self then?

KAI

Nout to tell Blud. Jus' a poor desert boy that di'n wanna Drove. Ma died young an' I was raised up by my Da...

He cuts off, listening hard...

Hartly un-holsters his gun expecting trouble.

HARTLY

What is it Kai? Speak...

KAI

(Whispering, excited)

Easy now. 'S'ain't a matter for bullets. 'S'a matter of the desert init.

He dashes off the "path", through the spiny undergrowth.

SOL

You get used to it... it's leaves... they're green!

Sol runs off after Kai-

HARTLY

Fuck, slow down! Where we goin?

Kai, stopped a few feet ahead, points to -

EXT. ROCK POOL - SAME

A BEAUTIFUL, CLEAR POOL OF FRESH WATER. A TINY WATERFALL TRICKLES OUT THROUGH THE ROCKS ABOVE TO KEEP IT FULL.

HARTLY

Oh, praise the Charge...WATER.

Hartly runs past us to the edge, scoops up a palm full of water and goes to put it to his lips but...

KAI

W-w-w-woah... From the flow, not the still. Remember that, Blud of old.

Kai strips as he speaks, before wading into the pool.

KAI (CONT'D)

You dun'know what mi've been in this water. You'll thank me later, after we swim.

HARTLY

Thank you? Not for the view of your bare ass I wont.

Kai laughs as he dives his head under.

Sol follows suit, already down to her underwear.

SOL

Not coming in city boy?

Hart blushes and looks away as she lifts her vest up over her head.

HARTLY

I... uh...

Over her shoulder as she walks past-

SOL

(With a knowing smile)

Looks like you've caught a bit too much of the sun. Your face is quite red... I think a swim might help cool you off.

Hartly seems paralysed, watching her slip easily into the cool water.

SOL (CONT'D)
 (Off Hartly)
 What's wrong Blud? Do you not know
 how to swim?

She takes a deep breath ducks bellow the surface. Her momentary absence breaks the spell.

HARTLY
 (To himself)
 Fuck it!

Hartly quickly undresses and hurries after.

EXT. ROCK POOL - LATER

A LITTLE LATER, KAI IS STILL WALLOWING IN THE SHALLOWS LIKE A BATHING BABY ELEPHANT. I'M "MOSTLY" RE-CLOTHED NOW, SITTING ON THE PEBBLE BEACH, BARE FEET STILL IN THE GENTLE LAPPING WATER. AS A MATTER OF COURSE I WOULDN'T ORDINARILY HAVE STRIPPED COMPLETELY NAKED TO GO FOR A SWIM, BUT I JUST COULDN'T RESIST IT. THE LOOK ON HIS FACE... SPEAKING OF, WHERE IS HE..?

I look up to find-

HARTLY, DRIPPING WET BUT STILL IN HIS UNDER-SHORTS. HE'S CLIMBED THE ROCKS AT THE FAR END OF THE POOL.

CRESTING A HIGH VANTAGE POINT HE SQUINTS TO THE WEST; THE SUN SITS LOW ABOVE THE ENDLESS DEEPENING CANYONS BUT TO THE EAST...

SOL
 (Calling up)
 What do you see?

HARTLY
 (Rueful)
 A few miles east... I reckon the
 canyon sides meet... might've been
 a way across for my two...
 (beat)
 Carryin' on south a-foot, we still
 got some ground to make, we covered
 less'en half distance.

KAI
 Aye, stop playin' mountaineer an
 get set, we got good walkin' t'do
 yet for sure.

EXT. ROCK POOL - EVENING

Sol fills an ancient plastic Evian bottle from the trickling source of the pool.

SOL
 (Calling to the others)
 I'm just re-filling my water then
 we should get moving. Are you two
 ready to go?

Kai watches, mildly interested as Hartly oils his gun, checking the action of various moving parts.

HARTLY
 (Muttering)
 Fucking sand and...

KAI
 'Ventually t'all crumbles t'nuttin'
 out here. You get me?

HARTLY
 S'long as it holds together whiles
 I need it. After that, the ground
 take it fr'all I care.

SOL
 (Walking back across)
 I thought all Sahn's loved there
 weapons like they love there own
 children. More...

HARTLY
 (Ashamed)
 The Big Guns, aye. This toy marks
 me for Childe. It's soft, the
 movin' parts jam. It WILL fail out
 here.

KAI
 Toy f'kiddies? True say?
 (Beat)
 'En let'see what yon 'TOY' ken do.

KAI PICKS UP A COUPLE OF PEBBLES AND PACES OUT 50 YARDS.

KAI (CONT'D)
 (calling back)
 Challenge enough for ya?

HE PLACES THE STONES AND JOGS BACK.

STANDING BESIDE HARTLY HE DROPS A THIRD IN HIS SLING AND ABSENTLY STARTS IT SPINNING.

KAI (CONT'D)
 Lets see it then Blud.

I TURN AWAY, UNIMPRESSED BY THEIR DICK SWINGING CONTEST. THEY DON'T SEEM TO NOTICE. KAI RAISES HIS EYE BROWS AND NODS TOWARDS THE TARGET, IMPATIENTLY SPEEDING THE SLING.

HARTLY EYES THE DISTANT STONE, NO BIGGER THAN A QUARTER, INHALES DEEPLY AND-

BRAP - THE PEBBLES'S DUST. BUT BEFORE HE CAN SHIFT HIS AIM,

KAI HAS RELEASED AND PEBBLE TWO-- FLICKS OFF IT'S PERCH.

HARTLY
 Impressive, but what's ya point?

KAI
 Would I chop off m'arm 'cause it weren't strong as my fathers? It do tha job jus as well. Get me?

SOL
 If you two are done comparing the size of your... Skills, we should keep moving. There's still an hour or two of good light left.

KAI
 (Performing a mock bow)
 Afta you m'lady. Lead on.

He picks up the pack and the pair follow after.

EXT. DESERT BAR - NIGHT

LATER THAT SAME NIGHT, BACK AT THE SHIT-HOLE SALON WHERE KAI FIRST MET HART...

Ash pulls up along side a short row of horses.

A cloud of dust follows past the stationary vehicle.

INT. SHANTY BAR - SAME

WALKING THROUGH THE OPEN SIDE OF THE SALOON-

ASHEN CLOCKS THE GROUP OF MEN CAUTIOUSLY WATCHING HIS APPROACH.

HE NOTICES ONE IS RECENTLY MISSING AN ARM, AN INSTANT BEFORE HE RECOGNIZES THE UGLY BLADE 'ONE-ARM'S' FRIEND WEARS STRAPPED TO HIS BACK- -DROVERS!

KA-BLAM

BEFORE ANYONE CAN MOVE ASH HAS DRAWN AND PUT A SLUG THROUGH THE MAN CLOSEST-

KING

(Jumping up)

Hold Blud, hold! We ain't after no trouble.

ASH

You speak quick Drover. My journeys been long, an' as you may'a noted, my patience is short jus' now. You got charge a'this band?

KING

Aye, I'm king a'these parts, true say... Now whats'is all about? You an' yours comin' through an carvin' us up with no reason.

ASH

(Laughing)

Reason! What'd you 'spect to happen when you killed a Blud? One a'the Cracked Palm?

KING

(Genuinely surprised)

That's quite a claim Sahn... True say, I killed men...

(Looking around)

Dozens, hundreds may'haps but I ain't never been fool enough to take one'a the Blud.

ASH

You... One'a your men... Don't make scratch. You'll pay all the same.

KING

It sure weren't me, nor none a'these boys here. More 'en one group out here callin' they-selves Drovers. True, most followin' me but not all. Not yet at least.

King can see he has Ash thinking... This is good, he might live to see the morning.

KING (CONT'D)

I thought yon Bluds was for Justice
an' that... dead man on the floor
What justice is this? My fucking
arm? what about this?

ASH

IF you speakin' true... Him
staining the floor we'll chalk to a
miss-understandin'. As to your
missin arm, *that* sure weren't me.

KING

Aye, but one'a you're pals. Carried
'Iron' as did this. Not pretty as
yours, true say but Iron all the
same. Rolled through on a fancy
Two' an' a wave a'blood.

ASH

(Coldly)

That man ain't Blud. I'm full Sahn,
marked by the Hard Caliber, Do you
Get me? This man'at came 'gainst
you is only Childe. An' turned
'gainst his own kin too. He runs
rampage to the south on a mission
that we would stop.

Seizing on this-

KING

Seems we 'ave common ends you n'me.

ASH

What you sayin' Drover?

Thinking fast-

KING

How's this Blud? We come together.

(Beat)

Track this fuck down for what he
done.

(Beat)

Then for good faith we help find
those as done your Kin... And see
them pay too.

ASH

What the fuck d'you think I'd need
from the likes of you?

KING

I'm sure you don't *need* shit Blud,
but still... We could help. I know
these parts, an' where t'find 'em
'at might've done your Sahn.

He pauses again to regard his missing arm...

KING (CONT'D)

An, believe Blud, I *will* be huntin'
him on the Two'. Surely we'd be
better on your side than at your
back?

Ash considers for a second...

ASH

Or I could jus' kill you all now
and be on my way.

He pulls his gun for emphasis on this point.

KING

'Spose you could an' all, but now
we spoke, you don't strike me as
the kind to jus' slaughter in cold
blood. 'Sides, why waste the lead?

There's a moment... tense and still, Kings men itching for
their blades.

ASH

We'll see on that...
(Holstering his gun)
I don't trust you Drover. But I
don't fear you neither. I'll leave
you be for now, but know this.
There's more comin' on my trail an'
you best be waving a big fuckin'
white flag when they get here.
You'll find they ain't as quick to
listen as me... now take this here
slug-

He throws King a single .50 round.

ASH (CONT'D)

Unspent, get me? It'll let'em know
we spoke.

KING

That sounds jus' fine Sahn, Blud of
Old.

EXT. BOULDER FIELD - LATE NIGHT

HARTLY ROLES OVER AND MOANS, GRIPPED BY THE SAME RECURRING NIGHTMARE HE'S HAD EVERY NIGHT SINCE... WELL THIS ISN'T THE FIRST TIME...

INT. HOUSE OF THE BLOOD - MEETING HALL - NIGHT (DREAM SEQUENCE)

HE STANDS APART IN THE VAST MEETING HALL OF HIS FORMER BROTHERS. THE ROOM IS DULL, GRIM. COLD.

OL'BLUD STANDS CENTER, SHIRTLESS, A FRAIL FIGURE ILLUMINATED IN THE DARK.

THE OLD MAN BEGINS TO TALK BUT IT'S AN UNINTELLIGIBLE MUMBLE. HIS BREATH HANGS VISIBLE IN THE FROZEN AIR.

HE RAISES HIS HANDS SLOWLY IN A "STICK 'EM UP" WAY.

ACROSS THE ROOM, THERMENTA HOLDS HIS MONSTROUS REVOLVER, POISED TO SHOOT.

THE BULLET RIPS ACROSS THE ROOM.

HARTLY STEPS DESPERATELY INTO THE BULLET'S PATH, PROTECTING THE ONLY REAL FATHER FIGURE OF HIS LIFE.

LIKE A DRILL BORING THROUGH A SLAB OF BEEF, THE BULLET PUSHES ITS SLOW PATH STRAIGHT THROUGH HIM. THE FORCE LIFTS HIM SLOWLY OFF HIS FEET, TURNING HIM-

BACK TO FACE OL'BLUD. HARTLY DOESN'T UNDERSTAND-

-WHY DOESN'T THE OLD MAN STEP ASIDE?

OL'BLUD WATCHES THE SLOWLY APPROACHING BULLET UNTIL, HEAD WHIPPING BACK, THE SLUG TAKES HIM IN THE EYE.

HART BEGINS ARCING DOWN, TOWARDS THE FLOOR-

BUT JUST AS HE SHOULD HIT, THE WORLD FLIPS AND HIS FALL TURNS INTO A SPRINT.

MATCH TO:

EXT. THE GREY - STREETS - NIGHT

HIS FEET CARRY HIM THROUGH THE DARK STREETS OF THE GREY AT A PAINFULLY SLOW PACE AS-

HIGH CAL. MACHINE GUN FIRE STARTS TO EXPLODE AROUND HIM.

TURNING HIS HEAD - HE SEE'S AN ANCIENT TOYOTA HILUX FLATBED TOTING
A HUGE, FIXED GUN -THE BIG GUN- GAINING FAST.

SEARCHING DESPERATELY HE SEE'S WHAT HE WANTS-

HIS TWO-ENGINE, STRANGELY ILLUMINATED BY A BRIGHT RAY OF
SUNSHINE, SITS HALF BURIED IN A PILE OF SAND... TOO FAR...

MORE BULLETS - HE LOOKS BACK AGAIN-

ONLY NOW THE SAHNS CHASE ON HORSE BACK. THERMENTA IN THE LEAD
RAISES HIS GUN AND SMILES.

KA-BLAM.

HARTLY'S KNEE EXPLODES AND HE SPRAWLS TO THE... THE DREAM WORLD
SHIFTS AGAIN AS HE THUMPS DOWN ONTO THE ROUGH SAWN FLOORBOARDS OF
SOME KIND OF WOOD HUT.

MATCH TO:

INT. SHANTY HUT - DAY

SUNLIGHT BLEEDS THROUGH THE SLATED WALLS OF THIS ODD LITTLE SHACK.

LOOKING UP, HART SEES-

A MAN ON HIS KNEES FACING AWAY FROM HIM. LONG HAIR MATTED DOWN HIS
BACK.

SAHN THERMENTA STANDS ABOVE, "SWORD" RAISED READY TO CHOP-

THE MAN LIFTS HIS FACE TOWARDS HIS EXECUTIONER, HE AS HARTLY'S FACE.

AND ASH WHO SWINGS THE BLADE-

DOWN FAST, JUST BITING FLESH-

EXT. BOULDER FIELD - MORNING

HARTLY'S EYES SNAP OPEN.

BOLTING UPRIGHT HE GRABS FOR HIS GUN.

BREATHING DEEPLY TO CALM HIMSELF HE REMEMBERS WHERE HE IS. HE
LOOKS AROUND TO FIND-

KAI, SOME 20 YARDS OFF, DOING VERTICAL PUSH-UPS. I SIT CLOSE AT HIS
SIDE, GAZING INTENTLY AWAY AS IF I HADN'T NOTICED.

HARTLY
I'm goin' back... For my Two'.

SOL
 (Head whipping round)
 So you would abandon your sacred
 Charge so easily?

HARTLY
 I gotta go fr'it. The Bluds are
 chacin'. If they come in motors an'
 catch us a'foot out there, on the
 pan... We got no chance. Yesterday,
 on the rise I saw a way around. You
 push on t'other side. Put to rush I
 reckon I could get back, caught up
 by night fall...

After thinking for a second Hart takes off his holster. Holds
 it out to-

HARLTY
 Kai, take it.

SOL
 Your weapon?

KAI
 (Stopping mid stretch)
 Was'at for?

HARTLY
 Push on after the Charge. Better
 you 'ave it 'an me. If you get
 caught 'fore I get back it might
 make all the difference.

KAI
 Is it? You jus' now said if we're
 caught we're done. Can't shoot
 anyway. Get me?

HARTLY
 Take it all the same. S'just
 another sling-shot. Take it.

Recognizing the significance of the gesture, Kai tentatively
 reaches out for the gun.

KAI
 Trust me with it do ya?

HARLTY
 Strange to say it out loud but I
 reckon I do.

Hartly starts back into the rocks.

HARTLY
 (Over his shoulder)
 It'll be dark when I come so be
 sure to stand where my light will
 catch you.

Kai looks dubious.

HARTLY (CONT'D)
 I'll be back. Trust fam.

SOL
 We were told something very similar
 once before... When your father
 left us. He never came back.

Hartly stops for a beat but doesn't turn back, decision made
 he takes off at a jog.

KAI
 (Call after)
 I best not find you with no head
 Bruv.

As Hartly disappears between a pair of rocky stacks-

SOL
 He left you his gun? I think he
 likes you.

KAI
 Reckon he'll be back fr'it.
 (Turning back to start
 south)
 He jus' really loves that two'.

EXT. DESERT - EDGE OF THE BOULDER FIELD - AFTERNOON

HARTLY IS EXHAUSTED, HAVING JOGGED THROUGH THE HEAT OF THE DAY, HE
 ARRIVES, ALMOST BACK TO THE SPOT WHERE HE LEFT HIS BIKE.

HARTLY
 (Muttering)
 'Listen to the messages a'your
 body. Keep control...' Bullshit.
 Now where did I leave my two? By
 the charge I swear I left her...
 There you are sweetheart...

He cuts off hearing the approach of-

Thermenta's sand-blasted Mercedes pulls to a stop a little way up ahead at the edge of the apparently endless boulder field.

HARLTY (CONT'D)

Fuck!

HARTLY THROWS HIMSELF BEHIND A NEARBY BOULDER.

ASH GETS OUT TO LOOK AROUND, ADMIRING AND CURSING THE IMPRESSIVE AND OPPRESSIVE LANDSCAPE.

ASH

Damn it is hot!

HE STOPS TO WIPE HIS NECK WITH A BANDANA BEFORE CONTINUING ROUND A LARGE BOULDER-

WHAM

A HEAVY SUCKER-PUNCH KNOCKS HIM STUMBLING BACK.

ASH (CONT'D)

You...

HE GOES TO DRAW-

HART SLAPS THE REVOLVER BACK INTO THE HOLSTER.

THEY HOLD EYE CONTACT FOR A SECOND.

IT'S BEGUN.

ASH SNATCHES HARTLY UP IN A BEAR-HUG.

CRACK - HART THROWS A HEAD-BUTT,

CRACK - ANOTHER, ASH LOOSENS HIS HOLD.

HART DROPS GASPING TO THE GROUND.

ASH DRAWS.

COCKS

HARTLY SNATCHES THE BARREL ASIDE.

KA-BLAM

THE MUZZLE BURNS HIS HAND

with an audible SIZZLE.

HE TWISTS TO THE SIDE, CRANKING ASH'S WRIST.

THE GUN DROPS.

HARTLY KICKS THE IRON AWAY.

BOTH MEN ROLL AWAY FROM ONE ANOTHER AND BEGIN SLOW CIRCLES.

30 SECONDS IN.

ASH (CONT'D)

(Gasping)

What you doin' Hart? Why'd you turn
your back on the Blud?

HARTLY

The Blud? Ain't no more Blud Sahn.
Blud died when Thermenta killed The
Old Man.

ASH

You're wrong Fam, my Da' 'as saved
us. We was dying out, slow but
sure. But with the Charge back in
hand... We'll be strong again!

HARTLY

Nah bruv... Was the Ol'Ways made us
strong. Without 'em you're just a
bunch o'thugs with guns...

The truth of the statement angers Ash.

ASH

You can't match me Childe, we saw
'at when I was raised. Beatcha good
blud. Init.

HARTLY

You fuckin' waste man. I LETCHA
WIN! Aye, true say. To keep face
a'front a'your father.

ASH CHARGES IN, NOW WITH SOMETHING TO PROVE:

RIGHT HOOK,

DODGE

LEFT

BLOCKED-

ROUND 2 IS ON. 5 SECONDS IN.

HARTLY SWINGS A ROUND-HOUSE KICK-

-ASH GRABS THE LEG, LIFTING.

THUD.

HART LANDS A KNEE TO THE RIBS ON HIS WAY UP, DROPS HARTLY AWKWARDLY TO THE GROUND.

ASH GOES FOR HIS GUN.

IS TRIPPED.

SPINS, LEVERING A POWERFUL FOOT INTO HARTLY'S CHEST.

BOTH ARE WRECKED ALREADY, BUT THEY FIGHT ON.

23 SECONDS...

PUNCH-DRUNK - THE BLEEDING, EXHAUSTED FRIENDS BATTLE ON AMONGST THE JUTTING ROCKS.

31 SECONDS...

HART SWINGS A WEAK PUNCH -

ASH CATCHES HIS ARM AND PULLS HIM IN.

ASH HAULS THE MAN UP OVER HIS HEAD. READY TO THROW HIM LIKE A RAG DOLL AGAINST THE ROCKS.

SENSING HIS LAST CHANCE, HART ROLLS BACK, WRENCHING ASH'S SHOULDERS, STRAINING HIS ALREADY THROBBING WRIST.

HARTLY DROPS, DIGGING DEEP, HE SHOULDER BARGES ASH WITH ALL HIS MIGHT.

CRUNCH, FACE FIRST INTO AN UGLY LOOKING BOULDER.

ASH SLUMPS, TRAILING BLOOD ON THE STONE, BROKEN TO THE GROUND.

1 MINUTE. IT'S DONE.

HARTLY STUMBLES ACROSS FOR ASHES GUN.

STICKING IT IN HIS WAIST BAND HE WALKS TO ASH'S MERC.

ASH (O.S.)
(Weakly)
Finish it, put a bullet in me you
fucking coward.

HARTLY DRAWS HEAVY REVOLVER. IT FEELS... RIGHT IN HIS HAND.

THE GUN WAVERS ONLY SLIGHTLY BEFORE -

KA-BLAM

THE FIRST TIME HE'S EVER FIRED THE HARD CALIBER. HIS EYES SHIMMER WITH UNWEPT TEARS.

HARTLY

Kill you? How could you ask it? I
'ready lost a father, I'd not loose
a brother too.

ASH

One'a us be dead 'fore it's done.

CRACK -

HARTLY PISTOL-WHIPS HIS FRIEND ACROSS THE HEAD, KNOCKING HIM UNCONSCIOUS.

HARTLY

Reckon there'll be chance enough
for one'a us to meet th'others
lead.

Hartly stumbles to the Merc and leaves a cloud of dust as he wheel spins away.