

ONCE ITS BEGUN  
CHAPTER TWO

Written by  
The Gillingham Brothers

INT. ABANDONED APARTMENT - THE CITY - DAY (ONE MONTH AGO)

HARTLY SAT ALONE ON THE FLOOR OF A ONCE LUXURY APARTMENT. NOW CRACKED AND BROKEN LIKE THE REST OF THE WORLD.

SHAFTS OF LIGHT SHONE IN THROUGH DRAWN BLINDS LIKE BEAMS OF CHURNING LIQUID GOLD THAT CUT THROUGH THE HEAVY, TOBACCO SMOKE FILLED AIR.

THIS WAS ABOUT A MONTH AGO, AND ONLY HOURS SINCE HARTLY HAD BEEN SHOWN THE GREWSOME REMAINS OF HIS FATHER. TO BE BLUNT, THERMENTA HAD RETURNED FROM A SUPPOSED SUPPORT MISSION WITH HIS DADS HEAD IN A BOX. PRETTY FUCKED RIGHT? SO HARTLY WAS DRINKING...

HE TOOK A SWIG FROM AN OLD LABEL-LESS BOTTLE, WELCOMING THE SLOW FOG THAT HAD BEGUN TO NUMB HIS FRACTURED SOUL.

IN THIS STATE HE LOOKED A LITTLE LIKE KAI. NO SHIRT OR SHOES. EVER SO SLIGHTLY UNHINGED. DRESSED ONLY IN HEAVILY WORN JEANS AND OF COURSE, THE EVER PRESENT HOLSTER THAT HUNG AGAINST HIS SKIN.

A FOOTSTEP outside his door.

HART SPRANG TO HIS FEET, SHAKING THE FOG CLEAR FROM HIS MIND AND LAID FLAT ACROSS THE WALL, GUN HELD AT HEAD HEIGHT. WAITING.

The door opens slowly. Ash stands on the other side.

HARTLY

Ash...

Hartly slumps back down against the wall, snatching up his bottle.

HARTLY (CONT'D)

(he takes a swig)

How'd you find me?

ASH

C'mon now, don't insult me bruv.

(Off the gun)

Put your piece away so we can talk.

HARTLY

I could... Or I could just put a bullet straight in your brain.

ASH

You could try if you werent seeing two of me. How much you had Hart?

HARTLY

No way near enough. still? You doubt me Sahn.

ASH

Oh no doubt that you could, only that you would. Get me?

HARTLY

Revenge for my father not enough of a reason?

ASH

And why should I pay for that blud?

HARTLY

Justice? Father kills father. Son kills son.

ASH

My Da' did'n kill yours...

HARTLY

...Is it? May as well 'ave.

ASH

He means to recompense for leaving him as he did. He's making for a vote to go out in force, with THE Big Gun and bring the charge back.

HARTLY

As he said he would.

ASH

You get me. As he said he would... He wants you with us.

HARTLY

My father died 'tecting The Charge in its place. If it were s'posed to be brung back to this place he'd 'ave done it long ago. There be a reason, Sahn, that it hasn't happened before.

ASH

Aye, Ol'Blud spouted some mystic Ol'Blud bull shit 'bout it. "The charge wouldn't last here. Would draw the dregs of society down on us like flies on shit." An' some other wank.

HARTLY

So he speaks, so is law. As has always been, shall always be.

ASH

You don't really believe that shit.

HARTLY

There's duty to be done and none but us to keep up and do it. Get me good Sahn.

Ash's expression says he ain't so sure.

ASH

So I'm told... What you doin here Hart? It's crazy fam.' Come home. Accept my father an' his name. He means to make you Sahn. True say, tonight if ya will.

HARTLY

That's jokes bruv... Why the FUCK would I swear Thermenta?

ASH

Easy blud, remember who you speakin' to.

HARTLY

(Shaking his head)

A trap laid by drovers? One that killed a Sahn, and chased one away... An' how is it yours found time to stop n' grabs mines scull but not his gun Sahn? HIS GUN! It jus' don't make sense.

ASH

I don't know Hart. Come an' ask. He's wantin' the chance to run it out for ya. Make you understand.

HARTLY

I've seen my father only a few times in my life. Most'a them I can't remember... The man can't be gone like THIS.

ASH

So you'll sit tight is it?... When you could avenge... Coz'a some half 'membered fuckin' stupid superstition... Duty is it?

HARTLY

Get me good Sahn, coz duty may be  
all I got left. So fuck your quest.  
You go and have fun... Fire a few  
shots from the hard caliber for me.

ASH

(Drawing his revolver)  
'Bout this is it? Daddy weren't  
here to give his name? Well he's  
dead now Blud and his name died  
with him, you get me?.. You know  
what, I say Thermenta's a fine  
name, but you'll not take it? Well  
FUCK YOU *CHILDE* HARTLY!

For reply Hartly just takes another swig from his bottle.

ASH (CONT'D)

Fine. You know where we are if you  
change your mind, but I tell ya,  
don't wait long fam', we sit  
session tonight to form the chase.  
Most like' we'll be gone come  
mornin'.

We stay with Ash as he slams the door and descends the  
echoing stairwell, bursting out the fire escape onto-

EXT. ABANDONED APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

-The street.

Sahn Thermenta waits in his desert blasted topless Merc.

THERMENTA

What's he sayin' son?

Ash gets into the passenger seat.

ASH

(Sadly)  
He ain't sayin' shit.

THERMENTA

Is it though?

ASH

Yeah... he don't believe your  
tellin' of it, that's for true...  
Don't get how you got the head but  
not the 'Six'...

Thermenta ignores his son's implied question. Nods for him to go on.

THERMENTA

And?

ASH

He'll stick with the ways of old,  
as he thinks all should...

THERMENTA

Will he come tonight?

Ash thinks for a second.

ASH

We'll play that hand when it comes.

THERMENTA

Aye... Then lets go and convince  
OL'BLUD a'our quest.

Thermenta smiles at a troubled Ash.

THERMENTA (CONT'D)

You done good boy, you done good.

Then drops the car into gear and wheel spins away.

EXT. THE DESERT - NIGHT (PRESENT)

ACROSS THE HARD PAN DESERT, AS THE LAST OF THE SUNS LIGHT FADES FROM THE INFINITE OBSIDIAN SKY, A DISTANT SPEC OF LIGHT APPEARS ON THE HORIZON, A MOTORBIKE, KICKING UP A TRAIL OF DUST.

I SEE IT LONG BEFORE I HEAR IT-

FUCKED IF I'M GONNA STAND AROUND WAVING AT WHOEVER IT MIGHT BE COMING. BUT I AND HAVE PLENTY OF TIME, SO HIDE AMONGST SOME BOULDERS.

I'M SCARED OKAY! YOU WOULD BE TOO IF YOU'D SEEN WHAT I'VE SEEN RECENTLY. I DON'T HAVE MANY FRIENDS AND SURE AS SHIT AIN'T EXPECTING ANY NOW.

I GRIP MY NECKLACE, JUST A PIECE OF PLASTIC ON A RAWHIDE STRING, BUT I'VE HAD IT ALL MY LIFE SO I FIND ITS PRESENCE REASSURING.

THE BIKE'S COMING CLOSER. IT'LL PASS IN A MINUTE, THEN I'LL BE ABLE TO RELAX BUT...

SHIT, IS IT SLOWING DOWN? THEY CAN'T KNOW I'M HERE, HOW COULD THEY?

Kai, perched on the back, hops off before the bike stops.

Hartly skids to a halt and shuts the engine off.

KAI (O.S.)

Sol? SOL!

Her eyes open and she breaths a heavy sigh of relief.

SOL

Kai you imbecile you scared me. You said you wouldn't be back until tomorrow.

(Turning to Hartly)

Who's this?

For the first time her features are clearly visible in the bike's headlight. Hartly is silenced by her beauty.

KAI

Ain't fully sure. I come by 'im causin' a stir with yon drovers up at the drinkin' spot. Figured that made him right enuff fir a visit. Told you I'd find somin' there worth the stop.

Sol steps curiously towards him.

SOL

Is he a mute?

HARLTY

I... mute? What?

SOL

Shall I introduce myself?

(As if he might be slow)

My name is Sol. It's Spanish for sun. Strange don't you think? To be named in a language no-one will ever speak again after a burning mass of hydrogen and helium almost 92 million 956 thousand miles away. I think...

HARLTY

(Interrupting)

I'm Hartly...

He doesn't know what else to say so the two just stare at each other in silence. Thankfully Kai steps forward.

KAI  
 Recon it's late. Say we stop up a  
 while?

CUT TO:

EXT. THE DESERT - NIGHT - LATER

Hartly and Kai sit quietly beside a small fire.

KAI  
 (Feigning annoyance)  
 She snorin' bruv, ain't goin'  
 nowhere. You ken stop starin if it  
 please ya.

HARLTY  
 Sorry. I didn't mean to...

KAI  
 Ahh, S'all good Blud, you feel free  
 t'look all night if it do ya.

After a long beat.

HARLTY  
 So you twos together, is it?

KAI  
 She ain't mine if that's what you  
 arksin'. We's kin. You get me?

Hartly just nods, then throws another stick on the low fire.  
 A shower of excited embers drift up into the black sky.

KAI (CONT'D)  
 A struck flint be seen for miles  
 out here pal. Most would rather  
 stay hid.

HARLTY  
 Most would. Aye.

KAI  
 You lightin' a trail then? Who  
 follows?

HARLTY  
 An old friend.

Hartly narrows his eyes, gazing back towards the star filled  
 horizon, unconsciously reaching for the gun at his side.

KAI

An ol'friend 'at wants you dead?

HARTLY shoots a suspicious look to Kai. His grip tightens on the .22

HARTLY

In the end one of us will be. Once it's begun... For now he follows. To have at somethin' he knows I can find better than he. You get me?

KAI

Aye... The Charge is it?

Hartly is taken aback- makes an instinctive lunge towards Kai-

KAI (CONT'D)

Easy Sahn, I know some about some. An I know the lore a' your kin. Ain't no secret is it?

Hartly looks down realizing that he has his gun cocked and drawn on Kai. He slowly holsters it.

KAI (CONT'D)

And what would you do when you find it Blud?

HARTLY

I do as my kin before me. Protect it.

KAI

From what I seen o'ya I reckon you'd do it with a level head... But you may lose it in the doing.

HARTLY

You seen such a thing.

KAI

(Cautious)

I seen the half got left behind. A friend a'yours eh?

HARTLY

The man you found was my father. You knew him? Tell it true.

KAI

Father you say?

(Looking closely at Hart)

(MORE)

KAI (CONT'D)  
 Yeah, I see the 'semblance. Knew  
 him? Aye. So I did.

Hartly waits for Kai to go on.

KAI (CONT'D)  
 Knew him well 'n trust his word as  
 truth even when he assumed his-self  
 to be wrong. He arks me go...

(Beat)

To The Charge. Track it south 'n  
 keep it safe. He said time were  
 almost upon us for the change.  
 F'tha Charge to fix what's bin  
 broken.

(Off Sol)

After a time we come back 'n his  
 head was missing. That's it.

Sol ain't sleeping after all but listens to the conversation.  
 A single tear rolls down her cheek.

HARTLY  
 Why'd he not go himself?

KAI  
 He got to feelin' some'un were  
 comin... He'd not reveal the  
 position of the charge, not to no-  
 one... 'cept me I 'spose. He needed  
 t'see who'd approached.

HARTLY  
 Not King n' his men - The Drovers

Hart sneers contempt as he says the word. Kai barks a laugh.

KAI  
 Sharp as old Kings blade were he'd  
 never a'got the creep on *your*  
 ol'man... Nah, yon drovers is  
 tough'n clever n'all. But not nuff  
 for all dat. Get me?

(Understanding dawns)

Is'at why you went to trouble  
 a'fightin it out with the boys,  
 leavin' your shooter. Test was it?

HARTLY  
 A test they failed.

KAI

True say Blud, true say. Well if  
I'd come by an hour a'fore I  
could'a saved e' the effort.

(Beat)

See, I recon it were the bullet in  
his chest as killed him, long 'fore  
his head were snatched.

Kai watches Hartly's reaction to the news keenly. The tension between the men growing like a tightly coiled spring.

KAI (CONT'D)

As you already knew, eh? This is  
wha'troubles me some. Only ones I  
know as carry 'em shooters is  
Blud... Like yous, like yous old  
man... Like him who must'a did it.

(Off the fire)

So why set the trail? Pr'aps you'd  
lead em straight to the Charge.  
Pr'aps you're with 'em still...

Hartly casually moves his hand to his side, nearer to his gun. A move that Kai openly follows, shifting his weight slightly. Ready to act.

HARTLY

It's Blud 'at follows aye. Might be  
we had a fallin' out.

KAI

'Might be' you say? What's might?  
S'there a question as to what you's  
called to do?

HARTLY

(Bitterly)

I know my duty well enough, it's  
cost me heavy, an will for more  
before it's done.

Kai thinks for a second... before he slinks back down to a relaxed posture and goes on with the easy manner of an old friend.

HARTLY

They'll come if I lead or no. At  
least if they follow, I'll know the  
when and where...

KAI

Well, seems we got common goals.  
I'd trail on with ya if you will?

Hartly is totally thrown by how the quickly the mood has changed.

HARLTY

Is it? An' what's your stake in this?

KAI

Jus' a promise I made to your Da'

HARLTY

(Shaking his head)

I only got the two'engine. Can't carry three. You willin' to leave little sis behind?

KAI

She ken ride, I'll dash beside. I'll slow you some but less than you reckon. The pan ends less 'en ten miles on. Your two'll be slowin' us then.

Beat. Hartly's about to refuse but...

KAI (CONT'D)

I know where it is, the Charge. I ken take ya.

(Hartly's unsure but-)

Trust goes down both sides of the street. You get me?

Beat.

HARTLY

Get you good, sometimes all a man has to live by are his feelings. I'd trust mine if you'd do the same.

(They shake hands)

Hartly. Childe of the Blud, those of the Cracked Palm.

KAI

Kai. Son of the sands and steward of the Charge... or so it would seem. Nice to meet you so it is.

(Settling down)

Must be quite the tale you got to tell Childe Hartly. 'bout how ye' come to find you'self out here on your lone, chase by dem you call fam'ly. I'd hear it some time but not now.

(MORE)

KAI (CONT'D)  
 We got a span til sun up, and hard  
 tracking tomorrow. Recon I'll put  
 my head down for some.

The two men settle down. Hartly still not entirely sure why  
 he should trust this strange man.

HARTLY  
 Ill take watch if it...

But Kai is already snoring loudly.

HARTLY  
 (Quiet, to himself)  
 Hmmmm... "Trust goes down both sides  
 of the street". Get you good. But  
 my story... you may hear it yet...

INT. THE HOUSE OF THE BLUD - ASSEMBLY HALL - EVENING (ONE  
 MONTH AGO)

IT WAS LATE IN THE DAY, THERMENTA STOOD CENTER IN THE HUGE  
 WAREHOUSE SPACE BEFORE THE BLUD'S ASSEMBLY- ABOUT 20 SAHN'S IN ALL  
 INCLUDING ASH.

HIGH SLENDER WINDOWS LET IN ONLY A LITTLE LIGHT, CASTING LONG  
 SHADOWS ON EVERY SURFACE.

AN UNEASY DIVIDE SPLIT THE GROUP.

A SAHN FROM THE LARGER PARTY APPROACHED THERMENTA-

SAHN  
 Where is the old bastard?

THERMENTA  
 Patience Blud, he knows the hour.  
 He'll be along short.

EXT. THE HOUSE OF THE BLUD - ASSEMBLY HALL - SAME

OUTSIDE, OL'BLUD APPROACHED WEARING HIS MOST FORMAL REGALIA. HE  
 CLEARLY MEANT TO MAKE A STATEMENT.

ALERT TO SOMEONE'S APPROACH, HE HAD HIS GUN COCKED AND DRAWN  
 QUICKER THAN YOU'D BELIEVE POSSIBLE OF A MAN HALF IS AGE.

OL'BLUD  
 Ho, who goes there?

HARTLY (O.S.)  
 Wait Sahn, it's me.

OL'BLUD

(re-holstering his gun)  
Hart, Blud, what you doin' skulkin'  
out here in the shadows. You not  
heard? Assembly been called. You  
got rights to be in on the talk.

HARTLY

I heard. Sahn Ashen called for me.  
I know what we here for but it  
don't feel right, you get me?  
Reckon I'll scout out here for now.

OL'BLUD

Get you good Blud, sometimes all a  
man has to live by are his  
feelings. Trust yours well and do  
as you must.

(Eyeing the dark doorway)  
This should be quick anyhow.

He walks through, leaving Hartly alone.

INT. THE HOUSE OF THE BLUD - ASSEMBLY HALL - CONTINUOUS

The room quiets as Ol'Blud appears.

OL'BLUD

Well Sahn, it would appear that all  
that would come, have. We'd hear  
what you have to say. So why don't  
you get on with sayin' it.

THERMENTA

I reckon most'a the blud know too-  
right what I wanna say. And I know  
most o'them agree.

OL'BLUD

Well would'ja be kind enough to  
tell me, if it do ya o'course.

THERMENTA

I think Ol'Blud, that you also know  
what I'm about.

OL'BLUD

Humor an ol' man an' lay it out  
nice and easy.

THERMENTA

...Time has pushed on, and taken  
the old ways with it.

(MORE)

THERMENTA (CONT'D)

We were once men with a great purpose... Protecting The Charge an' all that fell under, but that number dwindled as did ours.

(Beat)

HARTLY QUIETLY DRIFTED IN, HE KEPT TO THE SHADOWS AT THE BACK OF THE DARKENING ROOM. UNSEEN.

THERMENTA (CONT'D)

Then, f'reasons known not by me... nor any here, the Charge pushed south. A few followed, to 'tect what once was. But most'a us... most o' us stayed to 'tect what we IS, to stave off the madness that came. You get me? Some might even say we've succeeded. The civs 'yond our door fears us. Fear us proper. But that, that ain't enough.

(Beat)

The world around us crumbles to dust an' th'only thing we know that could help now lingers deep to the south...

OL'BLUD

I believe most heard the rest some days gone when you returned. You'd journey south is it? Wipe out what Drovers got in your way and bring the charge back here?

THERMENTA

I would take EVERY Sahn, an' kill EVERY Drover! I say we bring the Charge back to the Grey, where it belongs!

OL'BLUD

You would leave The Grey to eat it'self? Take every one of us to fight your crusade..?

THERMENTA

Is it not what we're for OL'BLUD? Our very purpose? Yes I'd leave The Grey and let it tear it-self apart. Once returned, we'd hold THE power. Build new this land and then all Lands.

(MORE)

## THERMENTA (CONT'D)

Long we've 'tected this world from  
the darkness that's risen and never  
taken for our trouble... We can no  
longer stand by as guardians. We  
must rise and place ourselves  
a'front of what's t'come. Forge the  
world a-new from the scrap and shit  
of what once was.

## OL'BLUD

And who'd you place a'top this new  
world? For there can be but one  
King if that is what you're to  
make.

## THERMENTA

Aye, so it is Ol'Blud. For always  
one must sit a'top, as you always  
have. A fine leader you 'ave been  
but aged and rooted in the ways of  
old. Would you not move aside and  
let one more capable take the  
reins? Would you sit and wait 'til  
all'a our heads a'turned to us in  
boxes?

## OL'BLUD

You speak not as Sahn. We be  
Veterans... An' I'm your General,  
there ain't no King! You get me  
true?

## THEMENTA

Is it? A General to what? To whom  
do you answer Sahn?

## OL'BLUD

To the ways of old. The ways set  
upon us by our fathers that we  
shall pass to our sons...

Ol'blud looks to Ash, who stands uncertain between the  
groups.

## OL'BLUD (CONT'D)

What you sayin' young Ashen? Would  
you be a prince to your father.  
Would you stand at his shoulder  
while he reigns supreme a-waitin  
your turn to sit a'throne and rule  
the land that you have sworn to  
'tect?

ASH

(With forced conviction)  
 ...Aye. I would Ol'Blud. Time's  
 come. The charge'll serve and we'll  
 rule with the power it grants us by  
 right. Would you deny us this Sahn?

OL'BLUD

I would. A'til my last breath I  
 would.

THERMENTA

(Regretfully)  
 Well then... Have it so.

Thermenta draws quick.

KA-BLAM.

The sound echoes like thunder around the silent hall.

HARTLY, STILL HID, WATCHED, FROZEN BY SHOCK AS OL'BLUD CRUMPLED TO  
 THE FLOOR.

LOYAL SAHN

Thermenta you bastard I'll...

KA-BLAM BLAM BLAM.

ASH SHOOTS THE MAN. HIS FIRST KILL.

ASH

(Shaken by what he just  
 had to do-)  
 He drew, I had no choice.

THERMENTA

S'all good sahn, all here saw how  
 it played out  
 (Surprised how quickly the  
 new status quo has been  
 accpeted)  
 Anyone else that would stand with  
 our... Former General?  
 (Thermenta is genuinely  
 saddened as-)  
 Two step forward. Why Sahn's? You  
 know what this means. Would you not  
 be part of the force that rules  
 this world for good instead of  
 serving it blindly into the ground?

CONDEMNED SAHN 1

I know you not at all Thermenta.  
I'll not call you Blud nor Sahn  
again. Who are you to break a line  
that stood for generations?

CONDEMNED SAHN 2

This is madness, there is much  
you're yet to understand, to learn.  
The charge is not the power you  
believe it to be.

THERMENTA

Madness? I say it's madness to  
follow tradition that would lead us  
all to extinction. I do this to  
save us, to protect us all. For a  
good that you will now fail to see.

CONDEMNED SAHN 1

Is it? I say you're a coward. One  
that failed even to save a lone  
brother, let alone the rest. I say  
true and I'll say no more.

THERMENTA

So be it...

KA-BLAM-

-BLAM...

Echoes overlap as the two fall to the concrete.

HARTLY REMAINED HIDDEN AT THE BACK OF THE ROOM. BUT THE FINAL  
CONCUSSION OF SOUND SNAPPED HIM FROM INACTION...

HARLTY

NO!

BRAP BRAP

THE TWO EXECUTIONERS PROMPTLY FOLLOWED THE MEN THEY JUST KILLED  
INTO THE DARKNESS.

*BRAP*

HART CRASHED THROUGH A SIDE DOOR AS HE FIRED HIS THIRD SHOT-

THERMENTA WAS SPUN BY THE SMALL CAL. NOW LODGED IN HIS SHOULDER.

BULLETS START TO FLY

INT. THE CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

HARTLY RAN, HUNCHED LOW AS BULLETS CHASED HIM DOWN THE DARK HALLWAY.

HE ROUNDED A CORNER, OUT OF SIGHT AS THE 'SAHNS' (IF ANY COULD STILL BE CALLED AS SUCH) GAVE CHASE.

EXT. THE HOUSE OF THE BLUD - YARD - CONTINUOUS

HARTLY BURST OUT TOWARDS THE COMPOUNDS DILAPIDATED BOUNDARY WALL.

NOT SLOWING AS HE REACHED THE CORNER HE LEFT-

STEP

STEP

UP

-HE JUST MANAGED TO SNATCH THE TOP LEDGE OF BRICKS WITH HIS FINGER TIPS AND PULLED UP-

SCRAMBLING OVER HE RISKED A FINAL GLANCE BACK TO SEE...

ASH, MAYBE 30 FEET BEHIND,

GUN POINTED STRAIGHT AT HIM.

THE TWO LOCKED EYES, NEITHER ACTING, NEITHER BREATHING... BOTH KNEW THAT THERE WAS MORE THAN BRICK AND MORTAR BETWEEN THEM NOW. THEY'D CHOSEN SIDES AND THINGS COULD NEVER BE AS THEY HAD AGAIN.

HARTLY LOWERED HIMSELF TO SAFETY AS.

CRACK, CRACK.

BRICKS TURNED TO DUST ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WALL.

EXT. OVER THE WALL - CONTINUOUS

HARTLY GRUNTS-

IGNORING HIS AWKWARD LANDING, HARTLY LIMPED TO HIS BIKE - LEFT PARKED IN SHADOW BESIDE THE WALL.

Jumps on.

Kicks the ignition.

And accelerates **HARD**, away into the night.

EXT. THE HOUSE OF THE BLUD - YARD - CONTINUOUS

ASH HAD KNOWN THAT HIS SHOTS WOULD NOT HIT TRUE. THE LEAD HE SPENT WAS SYMBOLIC, HE OWED HART THE GESTURE. SHIT, HE OWED HIM MORE THAN THAT BUT IT WAS ALL HE COULD GIVE NOW.

HE TURNED BACK AWAY FROM HARTLY, TOWARDS HIS FATHER, FOR BETTER OR WORSE, TOWARDS HIS FUTURE.

INT. THE HOUSE OF THE BLOOD - ENTRANCE HALL - SAME

The heavy door opens and Ash jogs back into the room.

ASH

Father?

Thermenta GRUNTS as the small caliber .22 is dug from his shoulder, releasing a squirt of blood.

THERMENTA

It's nothin', a scratch.

SAHN

Fortunate it weren't a hard cal...  
A 50'd 'ave taken your arm off...  
If you was lucky.

THERMENTA

(Dripping with sarcasm)  
Well bless the charge for my good  
fortune.

Thermenta gives the man a cold stare and he shrinks away.

ASH

Hartly, he... he got away.

THERMENTA

He'll head south and stop little as  
possible, you get me? Go straight  
f'the Charge. Follow him.

ASH

(Eyeing Thermenta's wound)  
You?

THERMENTA

A few days to ready and we'll be on  
your back trail.

ASH

And if he clocks me?

THERMENTA  
Let him turn and fight.