

# PHAROS FOR THE BROKEN

PUNK RAWK PARADISE



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Where  
Brodie broke  
his

Sewer  
strict

Dute  
Perfume

2015





# PHAROS FOR THE BROKEN

PUNK RAWK PARADISE

Angela Daley



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Angela Daley

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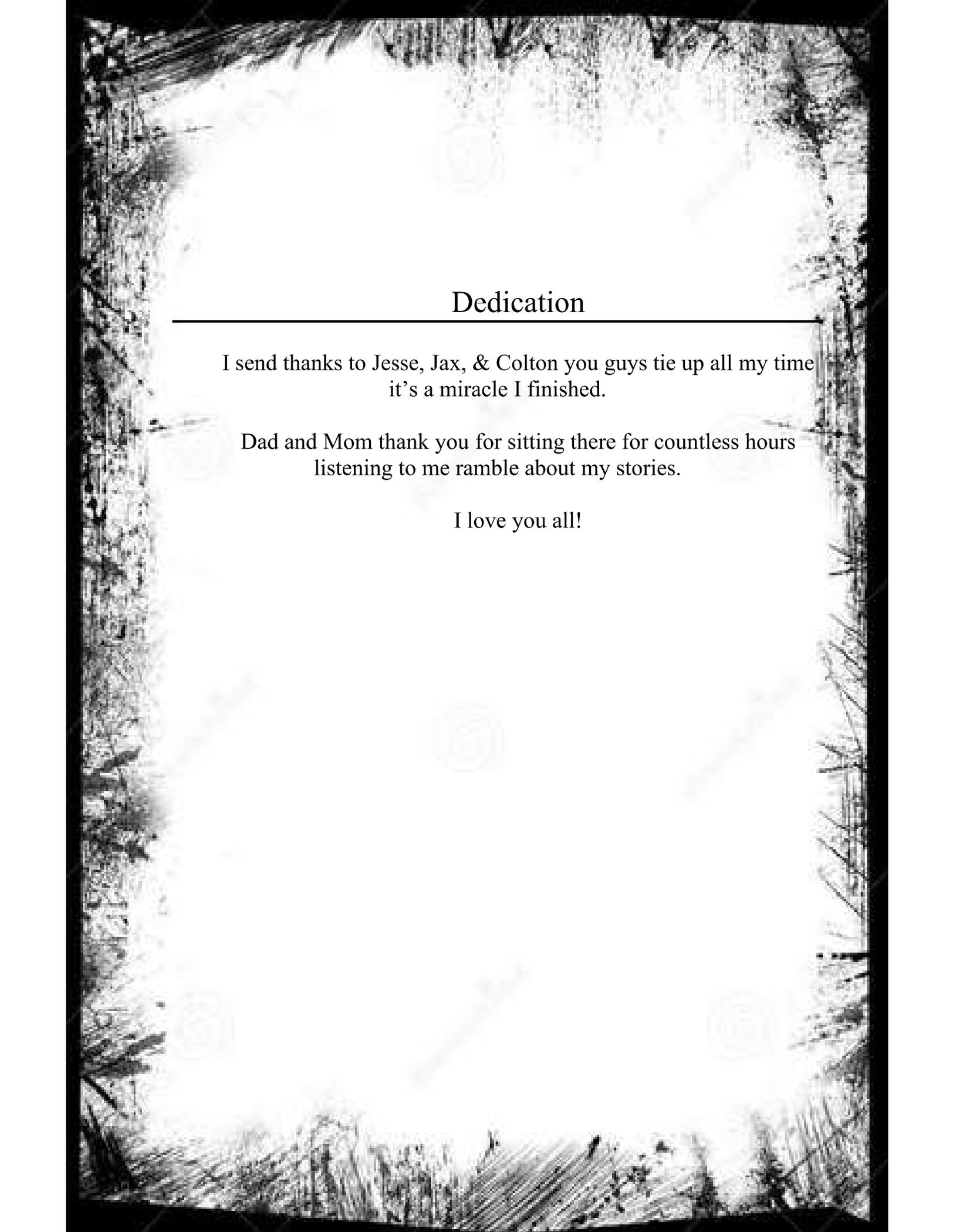
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Angela Daley Tel: (860) 278-6428 email: [adaley94@yahoo.com](mailto:adaley94@yahoo.com).



## Dedication

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I send thanks to Jesse, Jax, & Colton you guys tie up all my time  
it's a miracle I finished.

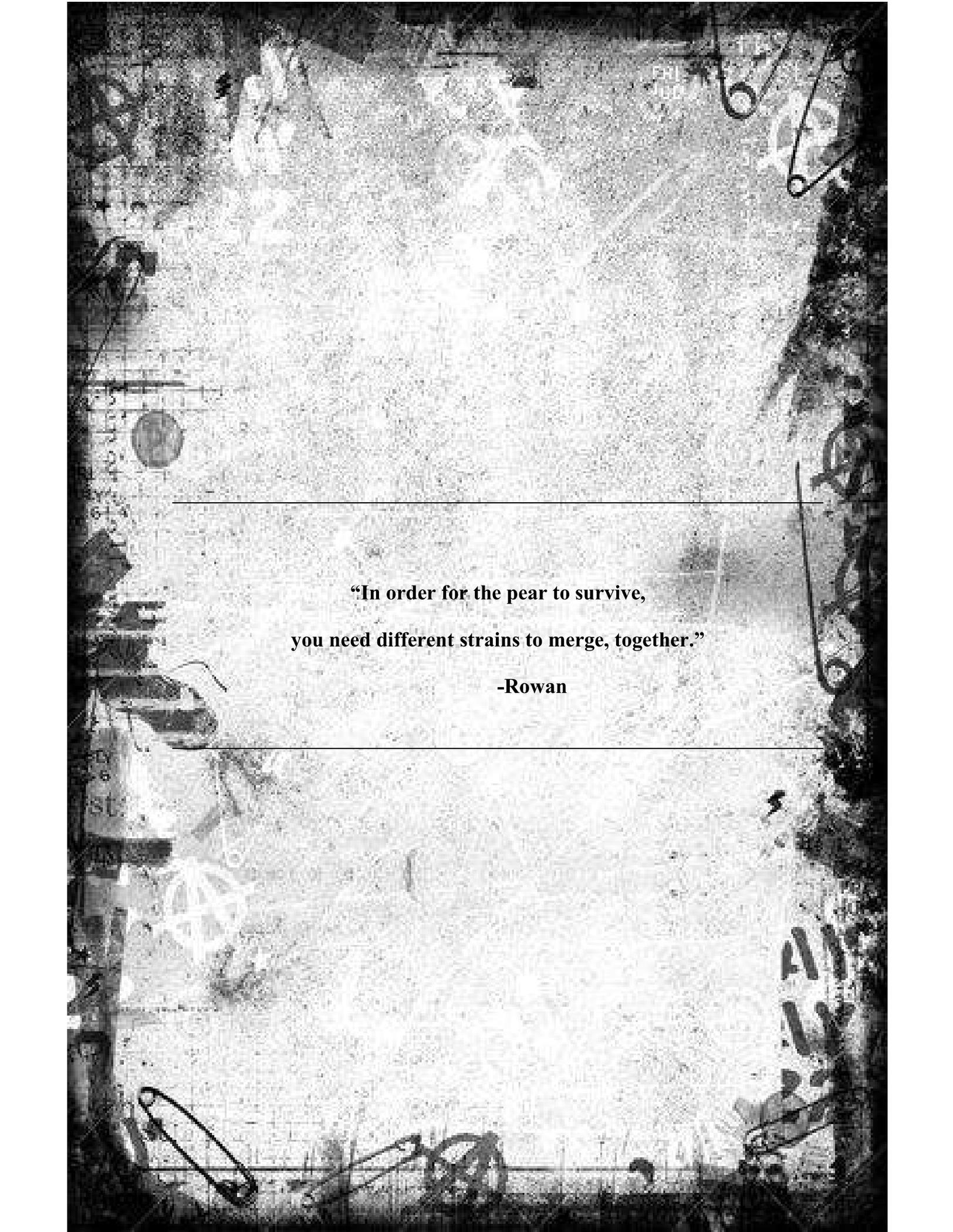
Dad and Mom thank you for sitting there for countless hours  
listening to me ramble about my stories.

I love you all!









**“In order for the pear to survive,  
you need different strains to merge, together.”**

**-Rowan**







## The Commencement

---

*“You see what I’m about to show you is the most disgusting – most gut-wrenching thing that I’ve ever experienced. No – not all the attacks on American soil, or the terrorists within our borders. Not even the massacres. No, this sight is far worse than any of that. This is the ultimate sacrifice I’ve made for the sake of my dumbass punk fam.”*

Hundreds of cubicles squish together in one gigantic hellhole. Bland-on-bland tapestry divides the mindless suckers. People of all ages, hunch over the keyboard; the only noise is their fingers rapping against the keys. A single boy suited up in a plain grey uniform and buzzed head stares at a small computer screen in a comatose state of mind, *“See I’m down there somewhere in the mix of suits and ties. Fittin’ in like a normal Joe Schmoie. Ugh, I can’t even look at myself. The button-down white shirt with iron-pressed grey slacks and matching over coat. And a tie! A damn tie! My fam has to appreciate this crap or I’m gonna pound each one of their faces in.”* A pop rips through the quiet office and a thrilling smile grows on his countenance. He slips a makeshift mask over his face completed with duct tape, rubber bands, and a middle finger. *“Okay, before I give out the spoiler, I haveta bring you punks back to the beginning.”*

~



2024



booming city rushes around at full speed. Cars gun it, swerving about. Taxis and pedestrians voice their loud opinions about one another. As people stride down the searing busy street, young pickpocketers swoop in undetected. Buildings on every block tower over the streets forming an industrial tunnel as far as the eye can see. A storeowner steps out into the grubby streets and starts scolding a foul old man lying down in front of the wall-length windows. The storeowner shouts again and sacks the scruff with the butt of his broom. The dirty old man yowls incoherently at him and mopes away, dragging his existence in the sewage.

Above the store are a few dozen apartments crammed next to one another like a slick-packed cargo bin. The paper-thin, grungy halls pilfer the privacy of its residents. Inside a dank corner apartment, a dimly lit room mimics the hall's tone. A young boy sits on a torn couch greased and zoned like every other damned soul in the city. The greyish green wallpaper torn at the seams, reveals the moldy-looking

sheetrock decaying by the second. Masses of clutter pile on the counter behind him next to the mound of dirty dishes.

The boy shovels an over-filled spoonful of cereal in his mouth. The excess milk and loops spill back into the bowl, as he scoops another. His wild shaggy hair hangs just over his eyes as he stares through the strands intently at the television. A news reporter, showing a little more cleavage than should be acceptable, leans forward on the counter as if she were whispering filth directly into the viewer's gaping ears. And let's face it; this is the only reason why young Colvin watches this mind numbing news.

A shout booms behind him. Colvin shutters at the clamor, but he doesn't advert his eyes from the TV - he learned better. He doesn't have to look to see his father's drunken pathetic self, trying to bully his brother. And Alan standing his ground prideful and staring him down with distain. His father looks like you can smell him from a mile away, with greasy hair slicked back and receding against his will and his sloppy clothes too tight for his beer belly. Alan doesn't move a muscle waiting for even a flinch from his father. But his father just scoffs and bats his hand at Alan as a pathetic excuse for a son and shoves past his failure knocking him against the small table. The mail, stamped past due, topples as he picks up another beer and slams the door behind him knocking the stuff off the shelf nearby. Alan rubs his wrist mumbling under his breath and pulls the headphones over his ears. His eyes dart towards Colvin who didn't take his eyes off the television even though his attention was stolen by the fight. Alan shakes his head before retreating to their bedroom.

Colvin looks up at his brother through the hole in their plywood door. He's sitting on his bed scribbling on his shoe. Unlike Col, Alan is clean cut, his thin beard trimmed up perfectly framing his face, and muscular. Col witnessed his brother take on two guys twice his size. Granted it was for their lives, but he wouldn't be able to do it if he had to. He works out every night before bed. Runs for miles, probably

trying to escape this pathetic shithole of a life they were dished out. Alan was always the better looking out of the two, but Mom always says he looks like their father. Col doesn't see that. Alan hated her for just saying that. The only thing they share is DNA - nothing else. Alan's strong jaw line bulges as he grits his teeth together. Alan nods his head to a strong beat; he always retreats to his music as an escape from his life. Colvin thinks it was because of the anger in the base drum kick or the relevance of the lyrics. Whatever was bothering him, Colvin knew by the song he had on repeat. Col, on the other hand, didn't find anything that he could use as an escape. He was left to be a pathetic sponge to the boob tube.

"Another threat hit the media last night," Colvin looks back to the busy news reporter, "We do not have all the details, but President Drumpf assures us not to panic, it's most likely just another empty threat." See this wasn't news worthy anymore, so many countries around the world and even people inside America pushing it to dilapidation. A threat is as normal as the homeless vets waiting outside the corner shelter.

A rumble shakes Colvin's cereal bowl in his hands. He looks down and sees the ashtray dance across the coffee table. Alan rushes into the room; Colvin looks up stupefied, he's about to say something when Alan rips him from the couch and drags him out the door. Chaos immediately erupts around them. The estranged neighbors pour into the unhinged halls, all cohering for once. Col watches in awe, as the temperaments grow more chaotic with each step they take through them. One lady; still laced up in her apron and holding her mixing bowl over Col's head as they duck around her. A man who normally likes to avoid every single person here, especially the landlord, stands just in earshot of all of them. The walls crack and splinter as it displaces and wrenches from its foundation. Alan grips Colvin's shirt and drags him past the hysterics. The elevator overflows into the hall; grid-locking the floor. Colvin looks up at his neighbors for the first

time as they turn to one another for security from the shaking building.

Alan tugs him to the left into the stairwell. People, from the floors both below and above, race around frantically shoving past them. They pry Colvin from Alan's grip. Colvin loses sight of his brother and terror blankets his heart. Alan fights the sea of people pulling him in the opposite way of Colvin. A man, with heavy sideburns, as if his cheeks caught the fallen hair from his balding head, scoops him up and starts down the stairs. Alan rips through the masses and intercepts them - punching the man in the temple and grabbing hold of his brother once again. The man staggers back and catches himself on the railing, "The hell with you," he drops Colvin and follows the horde out the lobby floor. Alan clutches Colvin's collar so strong Col thought Alan would just lift him above all the chaos.

Colvin's eyes stay on the door, his anxiety awaits with a knot in his throat, but instead, Alan continues further down the stairs. He bursts out of the stairwell and into the dark arcane basement. Alan lets go of Col and walks into the darkness. Panic surges over Colvin with the pounding sounds from the herd above them. He squints trying to make Alan out from the existing shadows, but is only welcomed with shadows and darker shadows. He shifts towards the darkness when Alan flicks on a small light. The light dances towards Colvin and he tosses him a mask. Colvin looks down frightened, the mask seems to be forged with leftover paint and damp dust, and then gazes back up to Alan, who is strapping a mask to his face. He mimics his brother.

Alan takes a seat on the discarded box as Colvin takes up space on the ground around it. They sit quietly listening to the cries for help and the rumbling of the crumbling buildings. Colvin tries to shake the horrific sounds from above, but the noises and cries only grow worse. He looks up at Alan's hardened mien, he decides not to ask for him to go up and get his headphones. A hundred questions roll around his brain, but one thing sticks. *Shut your pipe.* Alan always told him that

when things got bad. So, instead of rambling off a bunch of annoying questions that are bound to get him smacked, he sat in the cold harsh basement that smelt a little too much like moldy sour sewage for what seemed like forever. Colvin could only imagine what happened to them out there; earth quake, attacks, the sun crashed down to earth, aliens, he thought about aliens for a long time before falling into the dark deep trenches of his imagination.

Colvin, dazed in his little fantasies, soon became in tune to the world around him like waking from a dream into a deranged unfamiliar nightmare. Something really unfamiliar for them sinks in at once; they look back at each other as the silence rings in their ears. The screams died off. Alan turns away from him and drapes his hood covering his face; curling up into a little ball. Colvin sighs, *how is he ever going to fall asleep?* He rests his head against the stoned wall and stares into the darkness.

Colvin's eyes flicker awake to the under lit basement; lit up only by the dim light as the small dirty glass windows zooms into view like a broken camera. He sits up as panic washes over his heart; he scans the room for Alan. He spies him shuffling around the trash. His heart eases as he stretches trying to shake the stupid fear from his face before walking up to Alan. He stands up from the dirty old sheet, "What are you doing?"

Alan balances himself on a pile of junk peering out the cellar window. He rubs his sleeve on the glass and looks closer, "I can't see shit." He looks down at Colvin with conviction, "Let's go." Alan leads him through the musty basement Colvin ducks around loosely hanging cobwebs, he looks up admirably at Alan how could he just trudge through this basement like it's nothing. Alan jimmies the door handle, but it doesn't budge. He takes a step back and kicks it a few times. He groans in annoyance as he readies himself before shoulder-checking the steel like it is going to budge under the weight of a hundred and fifty-pound boy. He mumbles something under his breath before leaving Colvin alone in the very faint light. His feet shuffle; a

slam sends Colvin back an inch before Alan comes back. Holding in his hand a large pair of pliers. He pries and twists at the handle, Colvin glances over at the hammer and picks it up in his clammy palms. Alan nods and together, he squeezes the pliers as Colvin slams down the hammer snapping the lock right off the hinges. A proud smile grows on their dirty faces and Alan throws back the metal hatch and pauses. Alan's smile drops almost instantly and he shuffles out of the basement as if an unknown presence controls him.

Colvin follows looking at the ground until his eyes adjust to the bright light, but when he looks up the haunting scene hits him hard; followed by a stench so intolerable Colvin couldn't bring himself to take normal breaths. No building in a five-block radius is intact. Their apartment building sways unsteadily behind them, crumbling piece by piece into the smoldering asphalt. Fear settles in their hearts as the two boys shuffle further out, Colvin covers his face with the mask hanging around his neck, forcefully coughing as they stare in dread at the deathly silent city.

*“Okay, whoa, a little too far back. Okay, so that was the beginning of the American fallout. Of course, my city was the first attacked. Bastards. I swore that these terrorists would pay for what they did to my city, but if you think this story is all ‘bout me, then get the fuck outta here. I’ll tell you right now. This shit, all of it, has zilch to do with me. All right, well maybe a little.*”



dirt-stained hand latches onto a broken stony edge. An older Colvin pokes his face over the ledge into the cool morning light. Halfway over the overhang, he looks down through his unchanged shaggy hair at two men covered in rainbow paint. Laughing like a jackal he pushes himself over the ledge. He adjusts his backpack before fleeing across the rubble. Leaping from one large stone to the next, he could feel the thrill pumping through his veins as he climbs up, the once twelve-story, building's debris. He latches on one unhinged piece to the next. His shirt snags on a rusty beam sticking out from the brick graveyard and rips a hole through the skull logo, he pauses cursing himself as he hangs by one hand examining his shirt with the other. The men shout at him from below. He smirks skipping across the rubble. He plants his hands on the stone lip and launches himself across a large gap. His black shirt waves against the wind and he lands in a roll before bouncing back to his feet. He looks back and sees the two disgruntled men stuck at the gap. They curse him trying to scrape the colors from their faces. "Yahoooooo," he shouts jumping to the metal pole sticking out of the debris. He swings and launches himself into a building held up by the wreckages.

Colvin steps lightly through the broken windowpane and slides down the fire escape. His converse splashes in the muck below. He jogs through the shadows, casted by the buildings, and towards the edge of the concrete wall. Sneakily peaking around the corner, he watches as the two men argue in the street one smacks the other on the back and shoves him towards the city line. Colvin laughs and then leans his back against the wall opening his backpack. He pulls out a spray can smiling proudly as he spins it around his palm spraying two large green Xs and a large crooked smile.

Colvin peaks around the corner again – *perfect - not a soul in sight*. He steps into the sunlight and strolls down Main Street. He's made it his job to chase away any and all adults who step foot in his city. Those selfish bastards don't deserve to live here comfortably. The buildings begin to tower over him. He pauses and peers over his shoulder at the collapsed blocks behind him. Sadness blankets his face he can't fathom any reason why someone would do what they did to his city – to America – *to all those people*. He bows his head and turns his back on the ruins.

He hates going in that part of town. He hates having to remember that day. But most of all, he hates feeling these feels. He smirks, pulling out his iPod and plugs it in his ears. A rush of fast paced punk music bleeds into his skull. He smashes his head against the air in front of him as if the adrenaline alone could wash away all his hurt. And as quickly as the nuke hit – the music shuts off. He looks down at the iPod and groans out loud throwing his head back dramatically, “son of a-“ He glances over to a store at a large smiley-faced t-shirt winking at him. He walks through the window, the soles of his dirty shoes crunch over the broken glass sending them into a hundred more hopeless pieces. Tracing the clothes with his fingers he roams the isles. He takes off his shirt revealing his fit stomach covered in scars and bruises of his latest and failed attempts on his skateboard.

He reaches over and pulls another black shirt from the rack, examining the logo, he shrugs pulls the new shirt over his head and rips another one off the hanger. He snatches a skateboard off the wall. Pockets a few solar charging pads from the glass case and flicks the doggie bobble head as he walks away. Solar pads saved his soul these past couple of years; he stuffs everything in his bag. It was this big thing when they first came back – put a lot of businesses under, but it was eco-friendly and when the masses joined together, they won. Much like the world against the USA. Funny huh, it's business 101. Colvin watched the news like Alan listened to music. He absorbed all the bogus reality just to escape his own messed up world, sucks that basic was the only thing Alan was able to steal from the neighbors. And that lame basic shit was mainly news and Spanish stations. Now, Colvin doesn't need that shit, he found music that really gets him.

Colvin kicks off the ground and picks up his pace down a hill. The plain-bricked buildings tower over him as he turns the corner wide and kick flips over the curb. His brother always told him he was quick on his feet; that's why he was always the one sneaking into places to get their meals for the day. Once he snagged them both chicken parms at this high-end Italian restaurant. Needless to say, they never went back for seconds, but that's beside the point. He grinds the bench by the former bus stop and lands with a slap on the cement. The point is now, there's nowhere he can't go. Nothing he can't do, and no one that gets in his way. The wheels roll over the imperfect pavement sending a constant vibration up his legs.

The heat intensifies as the sun rises in the smog. He wonders how odd it'd be to see this city filled with people again. Only a few years ago he wished for just the opposite. He shakes the thought from his head as he skids to a stop glancing up at a large hotel. He smiles and walks through the hole in the wall strolling inside like he owned the place – *well, he doe,s doesn't he?* He glances over at the molten vending machine, snatches up a bag of chips, and pops it open heading towards the stairwell. Emerging from the never-ending stairs, he ap-

proaches a large oak door and twists the gold-painted doorknob. Sucks how much of a poser he found the 'rich' to be. Gold-painted, glossy furniture. But nothing lasted; eventually, everything corrodes. He drops his backpack on the couch and flops down next to it. He pulls out what seemed like random shit; a few key chains, a large jawbreaker, a bag of paintballs, and a butterfly knife. He reaches in his pocket and tosses an old pocketknife on the table.

The knife flips around his left hand, like butterfly wings fluttering in the wind, as he reaches in the bag again, this time pulling out a medicine bottle. He lets out an exasperated groan flopping his body dramatically over his backpack. Snatching up his backpack, he walks back out. He doesn't mean to feel annoyed with dropping things off to his brother, but it just doesn't make sense why he wants to be left in their old shitty apartment when he could live anywhere in the city. Hell, they could have room next door to each other, but that stubborn punk wants to sit alone in his own depression. Emerging from the double doors he glances around at the silent street. Letting out a heavy sign, he walks slowly back up the street.

Colvin strolls down the center of his old street. A sign from the corner market hangs on the hinge by a rusty old screw. He used to love that store, he and Alan were always able to steal so much from the toker behind the counter. Colvin waltzes inside the store stepping over the door as he pushed through the recently collapsed shelves. And the best of them all - titty magz. Colvin smiles like a horny little boy as he picks up a magazine with a busty blonde on the cover. He tucks it in his pack and moves carefully out the back door.

The bomb set off close to this section. It should be inhabitable, but the stubborn ass wants to stay here. The buildings on either side of him crumble in on themselves. An eerie feeling creeps up through the soles of his converse as he treads through the rubble. He glances over at the charcoaled bricks and remembers back then, the fires didn't go out for weeks after the blazing rockets struck down on them. When

Alan got sick this is the only place he wanted to be. Colvin's just surprised it held up so long, stubborn as its only occupant.

He pushes past the sheet metal and ducks into the building, moving quietly through the narrow halls refusing to look up at the caving ceiling. He cringes, cursing his brother for making him go into this death trap. Something about this place always creeped him out. Whether it was because of all those people who died here or the missing walls and ceilings that flirted with the creep factor, whatever it was, he didn't like hanging out in this joint. He finds the door with a biohazard skull spray painted on it. Knocking a few times then walks in when there isn't an answer, "Hey. So, I think those two pricks will be outta here quicker than—" Alan groans on his bed. Colvin rushes to his side to help him sit up, "You really shouldn't try to—"

"What am I supposed to do Col?" he snaps. Colvin tries not to let it affect him. He risked so much for Colvin and got him outta lot of trouble, especially when everything fell down the shitter. Alan groans again and looks at the ground, "Look Col, I'm not going to last much longer. The infection is too much." Colvin bats him away, this isn't the first time Alan gave him this speech. "I've been thinking about this for a while. There's probably dozens of kids out there like us." Colvin nods, rummaging through his bag. "You need to do something for me. Make this place a home for kids like us," Colvin's face hardens briefly then lightens up.

"Al, you know us punks don't play well with others."

Alan smirks, but continues, "I'm serious. This city can be so much more than it is," he grips Colvin's shoulder tightly, but Colvin refuses to wince at the pain knowing that Alan endured so much more than he could ever imagine, "Do that for me, will ya?" Colvin nods. But there's no way he wants to share this city with anyone. People are just as bad as the nukes themselves. They manipulate and torture for fun. They get off on it, so why would he let anyone else hurt him? No, F that - they don't deserve this city. His city. He unpacks a few bottles of medicine and snacks, but Alan turns away from his brother. Colvin

hangs his head before turning tail, leaving him to his misery. Col reaches the door before leaving he could hear his brother, “Please bro, just do it for the ones we couldn’t save.” Colvin slams the door behind him, what’s his problem anyways? Alan didn’t give a shit about anyone, but themselves even before the nukes hit. He did try to help before he got sick, but it was too late for them. Maybe it's hero's remorse? Survivor's guilt? Whatever it is, there's no way he's creating a beacon for kids to come into his home. No one comes here. It did make Colvin happy that finally after all these months Alan was starting to sound happier. After he got sick, all he wanted was to be left alone. Col drops the skateboard back on the pavement and kicks off.

He kicks continuously until he hits a hill. He bends his knees, eyes focused on the overturned bus at the bottom of the hill. He squints, and everything around him zips on by like the blur of his life. He hits a ramp and launches over the bus. His fingers grip the edge of the board and he lifts it over his head.

He quickly moves it back underneath his feet just before he slams onto the pavement on the other side of the bus. He swerves to the right and a smile stretches across his face, he looks back over his shoulder, “Alright!” He slams into somebody. He tucks and rolls as his board ricochets into a nearby window, “Watch where you’re going.” He stands up dusting off his pants.

“Me? You’re the jerk-off who was lookin’ behind you!”

That somebody removes her hoodie and glares at Colvin with her dark brown eyes.

“I – uh shit, I’m sorry.” A rush of hotness floods over his body as he steps back awkwardly. He can’t remember the last time he saw a girl. She smiles seductively at him and steps closer. She unzips her hoodie and exposes her tight-fitted skull candy shirt. He tries his hardest not to look down, “I- uh...”

“You uh... have a name?”

“Colvin Mikelson.”

She giggles; her laughter mesmerizes Colvin, “Well,

Colvin Mikelson,” she steps around him, “I’ll see ya around.” He couldn’t help himself, he foolishly smiles at her, but the smile droops when he realizes she’s gone, and so was his backpack.

“That little—“ He scans the area for her. At least he didn’t have anything important in the bag. Then it hits him; he facepalms himself, “The mag.” He shakes his head glancing over at the smashed window. Whelp too late now, he tosses his head back puffs out another groan and shuffles his feet across the sidewalk. He carefully steps through the window frame; the glass crunches underneath his weight. His eyes scan the platform and spies his board wedged in the glass display case. He rips it from its holder and races back to his brother. A thousand thoughts bounce around in his head. *Who was she? Will he find her again? Will she even want to talk to him after seeing the mag?* But more importantly, *why does he care so much?* He needs to talk to his brother.

He pushes past the sheet metal and raps at the door. Welcome to the Black Parade pulses through the thin walls fear ignites inside his heart, the last time that song played... He hesitates only a second, “Al—“ he collapses back into the wall as if a bullet pierced through his chest. He stares, wide-eyed, at the sight of his brother hanging from the exposed rafters. He rushes to his aide pulling out the knife from his pocket he cuts the tarnished rope. Alan’s body free falls; Colvin lunges to stop him from hitting the floor. Everything happens in slow motions to him. He tried to move faster, but it was like his body was stuck in quicksand.

Tears stream down his dirty cheeks as he rocks Alan silently mourning him until dawn. The cold sun radiates its heavy rays through the poorly boarded windows. He wipes the tears from his puffy red face and turns away. Slowly he moves through the destructive room. He scoops up the sheets and wraps Alan in them. Carefully covering his head. He walks expressionless through the taunting city blocks. He finds a small desert area in the center of what used to be

their park. He parks the wheel barrel of to the side; he scoops up a shovel and slams it into the hardened ground. Hit after hit he lets loose all of his anger and agony. Tears mix with his sweat, but he doesn't stop until he couldn't reach the top. He tries to get up but loses his footing and falls on his ass. He punches the dirt wall – kicking it as hard as he could, but it doesn't buckle. It's as stubborn as the apartment building – as his dumbass brother. He wipes his nose leaving a smudge to mix with his sweat. He should just stay in the grave. Nothing matters anymore. His brother abandoned him, *why should he even live? What's left for him?* He looks up to the sky from the depths of his misery. No one knows he's alive and no one cares. He buckles and cracks, sobbing uncontrollably like a hysterical hyena. Then the words rung in his head - *shut your pipe*. Colvin glances up, expecting Alan to peak his head over the top grinning stupidly at him like he used to when they were kids. But nothing. He steps on the shovel's handle and pulls himself topside. Glancing around the city the emptiness and silence seems all too heavy for him. Dirt shakes off of him with every stomp over to Alan.

Unable to look at him again he drags his brother to the hole, “Good riddance.” He drops him into the grave and shovels the dirt back. He slams the shovel on the top and drops to his butt as it pings back and forth. He feels the presence of somebody behind him, but at this point he was either too weak to fight back or honestly doesn't care what happens to him anymore.

“Who was he?” her voice pulled him from his misery.

“My brother.”

“I'm sorry,” she places her hand on his shoulder. She pauses, “Do you want to say anything more than *good riddance?*”

“Doncha have any more packs to lift?” she retracts her hand.

A backpack drops next to him, “Sorry I—“

“It's okay. Sucks, but we can't care for others anymore – not in this world anyways.”

“That’s not true,” he wipes the tears from his eyes and looks up at her. Her black hair knotted up in a ponytail, dirt mimicked her life’s story and her combat boots scuffed perfectly over her skinny jeans that hugged her figure. She was pretty, but hid behind her attitude and silent glares. She still rocked her skull candy shirt, but this time he could see the scars on her arms, “This whole city is ours.” She throws her arms up, “People are too afraid to come back here cuz of that first nuke, but we can make it home.”

“That’s what he said,” he kicks the dirt towards the freshly dug grave, “He wants this place to be a home for the broken. Always a savor never a survivor.” He says with aggravation. The sun is now high in the sky beating down at them with the intensity of a thousand suns, but neither one of them moved as they silently stare at the grave with a sense of unspoken agreement.



## One YEAR Later



olvin tosses back the sheet onto the curved figure next to him and steps onto the shaggy throw rug. He stretches his six-pack; extending his arms over his head letting out a roar of a yawn before stepping into his long black shorts. His apartment isn't anything like his old one. He dulled down the dream house and settled on location rather than luxury. But it's a step up from a hole in the ceiling and rats, so he was happy. The paint – fresh-ish, plumbing - worked for now, and solar pads up the ass. Helped keep his little paramour happy. He looks back at a blonde messed up in his covers. Her perfectly flawless skin glistened in the morning light like diamonds. He swears when she sneaks away everyday to the Richie-rich section to pamper herself, she does some voodoo magic or some shit. The smell of lavender will haunt him in his deepest little nightmares if they ever split. She moans quietly and shifts her body away from him. He smirks at her tiny underwear peeking through the sheets. He walks zombily across the hall; ignoring the toothpaste stains and knotted hair on the sink he leans over to the bucket inside the ceramic sink splashing his face with cold water and wiping the tiredness onto a shirt. He sniffs the shirt and shrugs before throwing it over his head. He stares at his reflection blankly before

making a joker face tongue and all. He would love to punch the thing into a million of pieces, but he'd have a handful of blonde crazy at his throat.

He emerges from his apartment building snatching his skateboard on the way out. Slapping it on the ground he takes off down the street. "Morning Col," Colvin nods at Tink, her bright dyed red and orange hair curls loosely in a bun with loose strands framing her face. The extra large band shirt drapes over one shoulder extending past her shorts making it look like she was going commando from behind. The front of her shirt is tucked inside the front of her shorts revealing a broken heart buckle.

She pulls out a large computer from a wheel barrel grunting as she walks with the bulky machine into the computer shop. Tink is one of the few that Col can really go to. If it weren't for her they'd probably all be dead – or worse, conformed. He shudders at the word and kicks off faster down the hill. Punks in their clicks meet up in the streets. The upbeat city flashes by him, *"See when this whole thing started a group of adults decided it was their city. If it weren't for Tink's ingenious fence the city you see today would probably be another Jesus worshipping – military damned hellhole. Let's all pause now and give her a round of applause. Now, don't get your patties up in a bunch, if you believe in that sorta shit then kudos to you. You can believe in whatever shit you want to and do whatever you want to, that's one of the perks to being a punk and not giving a fuck what anybody else thinks or does. That's where people get confused and start becoming a prissy hater – when they start hating on the roots of why punk was started. You see no matter what any other fucking 'punk poser' or 'true punk' says; punk is about family and sticking by someone who is going through some shit - not just sticking it to the man, but also sticking it to society in the most brutal, hardened ways. It's about bringing the truth, of today's fucked up world, to the forefront even if it's uneasy to swallow.*

*Even though the style was a sell out, used up, and spit on by the bosses of the industry; the style was never even the point. The true point is to give a voice to the used, abused, and abandoned and fuck the shit out of corporate politicians, to shed a pharos on the shadowed secrets hushed by people who betrayed us and manipulated us into being their sheep. We are a family as different as we are we scream out united taking back our lives and not end up in the dead pool. The reason why we've taken up the punk brand to shove it up the asses of the adults who damned this nation to the hell pits you see today. All of us are trying to stomp through the shit dumped onto us from NARC and the rest of those corrupt bastards that damned this country and our lives to the gutter."*

Colvin cranks past the old construction buildings close to the uninhabited part of the city. A few punks like to explore there and test the strengths of the rickety buildings, but as for Colvin – haunting memories of Alan cease any thoughts a venturing towards it.

Colvin slows as he rounds the corner spotting two punks standing outside a bulldozer arguing. The punk with a spikey red Mohawk and ripped tatted up arms, Lenox, shoves the plumped one, Donny, to the side as he grabs a shovel. Colvin shakes his head and cracks a smile as he kick flips over the sidewalk lip and kicks off the board. It rockets down the street, as Colvin strides into a bar, "How's Jekyll and Hyde out there?" Colvin walks past a lean boy with his hair tied tight into cornrows.

He dishes out a couple of glasses from underneath the counter and pours a shot into each one, "Who?"

"Seriously?"

"Col, you know I don't get your pre-fallout references," he says with a half-cocked smirk before downing the shot.

Colvin laughs, "And you are so unaware of your own gaming reference." Dwight looks at him blankly then a crack outside stealing their attention, Colvin gawks at the squabbling punks; "Man when they get at it it's like a whole new segment on SNL."

“I bet by lunch they’ll be scrapping in the pits.”

“No way. Two hours tops,” they stare down each other from across the counter like an old Wild West showdown. Dwight stands taller than most, but his skinny sparse exterior sends no signs of threat especially when he talks. He’s just a big-hearted teddy bear, the kind you confide in when the day is eating you alive. They quickly draw their cards and slam them on the counter. Two thin sheet metal molds face head to head.

Dwight’s card; a time clock head attached to a woman’s bust, and Col’s, a hot model body with a lion head, “Holy shit. You know I’ve always wanted that one.” Colvin winks at his friend; he never understood why Dwight kept such a stupid name as Dwight. He insists it’s cuz of a girl, but who knows, “So you goin’ to the pits tonight?”

“I might.”

“Brodie’ll be there.”

“Yeahhh and I bet Sparky back there will be too,” Colvin nods over to Lenox shutting Dwight down immediately. “Yeah, I’ll probably be there.”

“Ya know who’s banding there?”

Colvin smirks, “Pharos for the Broken,” Lenox slams Donny against the widows behind them sending a crack up one of the panes.

“Oh hell no,” Dwight slaps the counter and races out the door. Colvin laughs picking up Dwight’s card and slips it in his pocket. Dwight rushes up to Donny and Lenox as they wrestle to the ground. Donny jabs Lenox in the ribs a few times before he shoves him off. He backs off a little before lunging again at Lenox. They tuck and roll down the hill into the construction zone.

A crowd forms all around them; Lenox thrives in their attention. He shakes it off first quickly charging Donny and throwing a punch against his jaw. Donny rolls over gripping his chin. He grabs a handful of sand and glares at him sideways. Lenox stands over him and kicks his gut. The chains on his long shorts smack against the back of

his legs. Donny rolls to his back trying to catch his breath. Lenox adjusts his Rolling Stone's belt buckle and leans down.

Donny tosses the sand in Lenox's eyes then up kicks him off. Lenox screams out in more anger and annoyance than pain, "You little prick!" He tries to wipe out his eyes, but the dirt rips underneath his lids. Donny walks up to him ready to throw another punch. Lenox puts up his hands in surrender, "alright alright chill man. Grimy piece of shit." Lenox shoulder-checks him out of the way and crawls up the hill. He covers his eyes and grabs onto someone nearby, "Bring me inside." The boy leads Lenox through the crowd and into the bar.

"Shit man. Donny, you rock!"

Donny fixes his clothes and glares up at Dwight, "You guys are insane," he stomps off like a pissed off toddler, past the stage, further into the construction zone. Everyone hollers after him. Donny is about the only one who doesn't show the same excitement towards their antics.

A red Mohawk peaks from behind the bar. The sun shines through the dusty bar windows. "Ready to get going?" Monkey, a gear head with a steampunk twist, walks into the bar with a vintage backpack flipped over one shoulder. Lenox leans over the counter and looks back at her with puffy blood shot eyes. "Holy shit, what happened?" Monkey smirks, "Visit Ro lately?"

"Fucking Donny boy," he dumps the rest of the water bottle over his eyes and growls out in pain. He shakes his head vigorously like a rabid dog. He smirks up at her, "Don't worry I'll get him back."

Monkey smiles, "I'm sure you will, now lets go." She turns out of the bar; he jogs after her scooping up a duffle bag on the way out.

An engine revs up stealing the punk's gazes as two go-carts speed towards them. A multicolor hair punk steps out in front of the carts. The two drivers slam the pedal to the metal and gun it at the crowd. The punks cut the wheel quickly spraying the crowd with gravel. Lenox races towards a punk in a sick game of chicken. He

drops his duffle bag and rips out two cans of spray paint. “Chump!” Lenox tosses a can to the punk next to him.

A go-cart reaches Lenox; he jumps as the last second kicking off the go-cart spraying the pink paint on the guy’s head. The go-cart spins out of control, and rockets off the cliff down the rocks and into the construction zone. Dwight peaks over the edge as the driver rolls out of the destroyed cart. The other go-cart reaches Chump, but this guy – idiot - catches his foot on the front rail of the go-cart and gets dragged half way down the street.

The punks holler and cheer after them; cracking up like drunken hyenas with the poor attempt to help. The dumbass rolls out of the go-cart and into the curb. He pushes himself up and throws up his fist before stumbling back to his ass. Lenox, Colvin, and the others shout out amping up the dumbass punks.

Colvin laughs and looks back at Lenox and Dwight, *“Ya see our world isn’t as scary as they make it seem. Yeah, we’re freakin’ crazy ass punks, but we’re all right though. We are family and isn’t this what life’s supposed to be about. Livin’ it up and lovin’ it? Fucking adults think they know their asses from their mouths. No, they’d rather fight and kill for the sake of power, fame, or freaking fake ass religion. Fucking idiots.”*

Dwight, still laughing, glances over at Colvin, “Wanna go to the pipes?”

Colvin peers up towards a tall hotel, “I should check on Olivia,” Lenox strides by them making a whiplash sound.

“I wouldn’t be talking, Brodie’s got you by the balls!” Lenox flips them off walking back towards Monkey, who’s propped up on the dumpster.

“She’ll be fine bro, come on.” Colvin’s gaze drifts back to his friend. Dwight slaps him on the back, “Come on.” He knows Olivia would probably be fine. She usually takes her trip to the cosmo shops

when she gets up. Colvin shakes his head in dismissal and smiles at Dwight. They race over to their boards and speed down the street.

“You done?”

Still laughing, Lenox walks by Monkey with her hand on her hips, “Shit Monk, chill out, got someone to do?”

“Yeah actually.” Lenox glances back over at Colvin and then at Monkey, “You’re treading something fucked right now Monk.” Monkey glares at him and then walks away. He jogs after her and grips her arm, “Monk, chill out. How long have we been friends for?” Monkey shrugs, “huh?”

“I don’t know, Lenox, step off.” Lenox stares her down. This isn’t like Monkey she’s always so serious, always looking out for others. He knows it’s that little tramp that has her claws in his best friend.

“I’m just saying this right here,” he stretches out his arms, “this is worth a million times more than that military pit shit we were in before.”

“I know...”

“Then you know not to fuck it up. Cuz you’ll be fucking it up for me too and I’ll haunt you for the rest of our lives if you do”

“I wouldn’t ask you to-“

“You don’t have to. Just like that piece of shit commander, I’ll get all these punks to go suck a big one if they fuck witchu.” Lenox leads Monkey around the corner to a row of quads. She smiles back at him. She couldn’t ask for a better bigger brother if she tried. Her real brother was a piece of shit like the rest of her family. All men around her were shit, maybe that’s why she roots for the opposite team, but who really knows. Lenox jumps on a larger one with a trailer in the back, “Ready?” He smirks daringly at her.

“Me!?” Lenox’s engine cuts her off and he peels out the parking space. Monkey shakes her mind of the matter and for now straddles a heavy utility quad and spays the debris behind her as she catches up to Lenox.

Lenox and Monkey open up the cylinders when they hit the deserted lands behind the fence. The vast lands, manipulated by the bombs, try to tug and form covering up the wretched leftovers strung out over the debris. I guess this is what the third-world countries look like; they were just giving us the taste of our own medicine. Lenox slaps the gears and jerks forward. He glares around him, just thinking about all the shit we've done to other worlds, and what they've done to us ignites a hateful spark underneath him every time. He doesn't understand, like Donny boy gets under his skin and no matter what he does to him, Lenox would never get to the point where he'd blow up his block. Monkey glances over at Lenox, he notices her, sticks out his tongue, and lays on the gas more. She knows all too well that those silent dazed moments in Lenox, isn't just Ro's medicine. He's contemplating some heavy shit. Maybe she should stop seeing her damsel, but there's just something about her she can't stop.

Lenox cuts in front of her. She tries to go around him, but he blocks her. They compete for the front as they rip through the gnarly weeds overgrowing the outlands. Lenox skids to a stop at the tip of the highway ramp. Monkey cuts off her engine and rolls up next to him. He chuckles and shakes his head, "What?" He laughs a little more, "Lenox..."

"You just – I donno nothing." Monkey glares at him, "The military just comes outta ya sometimes."

Monkey smacks him, "Don't you dare."

"Hey, it's not all that bad. You were there way longer than I was..." He pulls out his binoculars. The small city presented with countless buildings above the streets try to mask its vulnerability compensating with the skyscrapers and building-by-building blocking out the sun. A large dome shaped building lies just shy of the halfway marker.

"Anything?"

"Nah, nothing, where are we?"

Monkey pulls out her map, “About six clicks south of Punk Rawk.”

“Clicks?” Lenox shakes his head and smirks, “Man, those fucked military pricks would be so proud of you.”

“Fuck you, you don’t know when to stop, do you?” She folds the map up and tucks it loosely in the side pouch or the quad, “If I’m right, and I know I am, this is Tink’s old stomping grounds.”

“Tink... no shit,” Lenox looks back at her with a seeping wet look of thrill in his eyes.

“No.”

“What-”

“No, we’re out here for salvaging. Nothing else.”

“And we will. After we mess up a few douche bags for fucking wit Tink.” He squeezes the clutch in and the quad eases off the ramp and glides towards the center of the intersection, “Come on, its for Tink.” He pops the quad into gear and rips around the corner.

“No, it’s for your dumbass,” Monkey groans as she follows him.

The cityscape towers over them as they zip in and out of dead traffic. Monkey stops in front of a gas station and tries the pumps.

“I got it.” Lenox disappears inside. Monkey tugs at her short shorts and as the wind picks up her baggy MCR shirt ripples away from her body. She squints and glances over at a dome-shaped building. “That’s it huh?” Lenox walks up to Monkey chugging down a beer, “Tink said it was the dome from hell that kept her imprisoned. I dunno I thought there’d be more to it.”

“Lenox, we don’t know anything about their security. Maybe if Tink was with us-”

“She’d just talk us outta it.”

“And I’m not?”

“You’re trying too.” She switches the red tanks, “Plus you owe me one.”

“Since when?”

“Since...” he slowly backs away, “Shit, I don’t know I’ll owe you one then. Come on.” He bolts towards the dome. His baggy black trip pants and black tee makes him stick out like an anime cosplay in an Emo mosh pit as the sun gleams down at him. Monkey groans and locks up the pump handle and races after him, “You already owe me.”

Lenox creeps up behind the large hanger in the back of the dome. He peaks in to the hanger and glances around.

"It's a ghost town." Lenox puts his hand up. He jumps off the top of the cliff and parkours scaling down into the base. Monkey smirks. "Always a showoff." Lenox sneaks in and out of the large crates. He steps lightly around the corner covering his mouth and ducks back around the crate. Monkey races up on him. She walks around the corner. She lets out a scream; Lenox rips her back and covers her mouth. He rests against the crate; in a hushed frantic voice, she asks, "what the hell happened? Who were they?"

Lenox peaks back around, "I think they were Tink's old coworkers." He points to the opened door. "She said they were petrified of leaving cuz of the radiation." Lenox nods and walks with paranoia-soaked steps as he tiptoes quickly around the corpses. The stench of cooking corpses burns the insides of their nostrils. Lenox looks down and grimaces at the melting flesh. They must've been out here for months. He smirks back at Monkey and gives her a thumbs up. But when he turns his back on her again his smile quickly flops. He maneuvers around the bodies and breaches the doorway. He peaks through the crack into the darkness. He whistles listening as it echoes into the cavity. Lenox flips out a pocketknife and steps inside.

“I don’t think we should go in there.” Monkey hesitates at the doorway.

“I’m not making you.” His body bleeds into the void of darkness.

“Yes, yes you are,” Monkey’s eyes flicker around with paranoia, “Lenox, get back here.” Lenox yells out in agony, “Lenox!” She races in after him.