

THE VOID

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COLD OPEN

**EXT. SMALL TOWN - DAY**

**A VACANT PARKING LOT**

is all we see with a WOMAN (early 20s), African-American, laying on the asphalt unconscious.

Curled up in the fetal position.

NAKED.

Skin and hair *moist*.

With a cobalt-colored VINE that stems from the ground into her chest *like an umbilical cord*.

A long beat of silence. Then she JOLTS to life --

Gasping for air. Wide-eyed, gazing around her like a fish out of water. This is ALIYAH.

She rises, sluggish and disoriented. Face worn and fraught with panic. It's rare to see her like this. Usually she's capable and fierce.

Aliyah notices the vine merged with her skin -- she shrieks and tugs but it pulls like a leech. Slower speed does the trick and peels it off -- it leaves a large *diamond-shaped mark on her chest*.

Aliyah lingers on the mark and vine. *Strange and baffling*. She then stands to her feet to see an

EMPTY RURAL TOWN around her. *No cars or people in sight*. Everything in the distance engulfed by fog.

Confused. Panicked. So much so it hasn't registered to her that she's naked. After a beat it does, and she tries her best to cover herself as she walks onto the

**STREET**

looking for any signs of life.

ALIYAH

Hello?!

Her cry echoes through the town and falters.

She then sees up ahead a PILE OF CLOTHES on the ground that leads into an

**ALLEY**

She approaches to find a sight that resembles some bizarre biblical rapture --

CLOTHES (two pairs of long-sleeves and pants) covered in dust. Aliyah notices something odd about them -- worn, tattered, and handmade with imperfections. *Dystopian like*.

She notices one of the pairs is close to her size...

MOMENTS LATER

Aliyah pats dust off her borrowed garments. Now if she could just find some shoes...

She looks around -- a gas station. A park. A NAKED MAN lays lifeless on a bench. Wait, ANOTHER PERSON?!

ALIYAH

Hey!

Aliyah marches with authority toward the

**PARK**

ALIYAH (cont'd)

Are you alright --

She STOPS.

The man's skin is gray -- it cracks and peels like chipped paint. His eyes are completely black. A CRATER-SHAPED WOUND in his chest leaks blood.

Aliyah steps back, petrified.

The peels from his skin start to change shape -- like a *metamorphosis*. They start to resemble FLIES.

But not ordinary flies. More so alien. Other-worldly. As large as mice. Wings like dragonflies. Small hair-like strands sprout from their abdomens.

Then one by one these creatures flake off the skin and hover gracefully in the air. They glow gold *like fireflies*.

Aliyah retreats to the street running. Looking for help. Anyone that can explain this madness around her.

A TROTTING SOUND emerges from behind.

Aliyah spins around -- nothing but road and fog. But the sound gets louder.

She treads towards it with caution...

A BEARDED MAN (40s) on a horse appears from the fog several blocks ahead. He rides towards Aliyah. His horse's eyes are *completely white like a ghost*.

ALIYAH (cont'd)

Hey! Help!

The man comes to a halt. He wears a hooded cloak over his clothes, which are also handmade and dystopian like. He has a hardened look with suspicious eyes that judge Aliyah.

BEARDED MAN

Did you just wake up?

ALIYAH

Yes! I don't know what's going on!  
I saw a dead body. And there were  
these things on it, these bugs!

The bearded man looks behind Aliyah then smiles.

BEARDED MAN

It's alright. I'll explain  
everything. But we should go some  
place safer. C'mon.

He offers his hand. Aliyah hesitates. Something doesn't feel right. She then sees a *pistol on his waist*.

BEARDED MAN (cont'd)

What's wrong?

Aliyah back pedals --

WHACK! She's hit from behind by an OLD MAN!

Aliyah crashes the ground. The old man (60s) grabs her arms, pulls them behind her back. The bearded man throws him ROPE.

Both wear the same hooded cloaks. These guys are some type of BANDITS.

The old man stands Aliyah up -- a red ribbon of blood streams down her face. He proceeds to tie her.

BEARDED MAN (cont'd)

She already found her some clothes.  
A resourceful one, ain't she?

OLD MAN  
 (to bearded man)  
 Something crazy must have happened  
 to get this many **arrivals** in one  
 place --

In a burst Aliyah HEADBUTTS him!

He topples backwards. She takes off, hands still tied behind her back. The old man springs up after her. The bearded man watches amused.

The old man YANKS Aliyah before she can get far. She spins and kicks his genitals! He barely contains his scream and grip on Aliyah as they tassel.

ALIYAH  
 LET GO OF ME! SOMEONE --

The old man covers her mouth -- she CHOMPS down hard. Now he screams like a wounded animal and throws Aliyah down. The bearded man laughs --

BEARDED MAN  
 You let a tied woman do that to  
 you?

The old man gives him a glance to fuck off. Aliyah scrambles. Her fight-or-flight response in gear. She's obviously the latter. The old man lunges and snatches her just as she gets to her feet.

OLD MAN  
 Fucking bitch. She might of  
 attracted **reapers**.

BEARDED MAN  
 You might of attracted reapers. You  
 were louder than her.  
 (beat)  
 It'll take more than a few screams  
 to alert a reaper. If they're any  
 nearby.

The old man drags Aliyah towards the horse --

BAM! He's SHOT through the back! Blood sprays Aliyah's shirt as they both collapse.

The horse TOSSES the bearded man off its back as it rears in fright and gallops away.

Aliyah escapes the old man who wails and swears. The bearded man scurries behind a nearby tree, draws his pistol. He searches into the distant buildings and fog.

BEARDED MAN (cont'd)  
Whoever you are you're gonna get us  
all *devoured!*

BAM! Chunks of bark explode by his feet. At the same time --

#### **A FEW BLOCKS AWAY**

a WAGON AND HORSE occupy the street.

A THIRD BANDIT approaches the wagon carrying a NAKED WOMAN (40s) over his shoulder. Her hands and feet tied. Mouth gagged. Unconscious.

As he nears the wagon it's revealed that there's a handful of OTHER NAKED PEOPLE laying inside. Some unconscious, others awake and squirming. All tied and gagged. And everyone bares a diamond-shaped mark on their chest.

BAM-BAM! Gunshots echo from afar.

The bandit perks up, concerned. He adds the woman to his naked collection, then leaves to investigate.

One of the naked leans up and watches the bandit leave -- a man, mid 20s, disheveled blonde-hair, frightened blue-eyes. But he sees an *opportunity of escape*.

This is OSCAR. Off his hopeful expression back to --

#### **THE PARK AREA**

where the bearded man still hides behind a tree. Aliyah tries to free herself on the ground. Across the street, *the man who initiated the gun fight* -- hiding around the corner block, armed with a RIFLE.

This is WILBUR (mid 40s), flat cap, old-fashioned spectacles and satchel. He sports a vest over a button-up, pants and boots. All handmade like the others, but with sophistication.

Wilbur has a bookish, scholarly look about him; someone you least expect to wield a gun.

The third bandit emerges from a nearby alley onto the street. He reads the situation, draws his pistol, and aims at Aliyah --

BAM! But it's a *misfire*.

Something STRUCK the bandit. He reaches for his neck --

A SHARD protrudes from it -- thin, jagged and needle-like. Blood trickles down his cloak. He chokes and collapses.

Then his body PARALYZES.

Aliyah starts to run but WINCES -- a shard now lodged in her back. Then the same follows -- choking, collapsing, paralysis.

Wilbur and the bearded man look for where the shards are coming from. They then spot a *tall, dark figure lurking in the distant fog*. It walks towards the third bandit.

OLD MAN  
It's a REAPER!

The bearded man's hardened look is now one of terror as we hear muffled screams from the third bandit.

The bearded man lunges onto the street, aims his pistol at the figure and FIRES --

OLD MAN (O.S.)  
That won't work!

He empties the entire clip -- NO EFFECT. Then he WINCES. Chokes and collapses...

The old man looks on in horror. He musters enough might to reach his boot, pull out a KNIFE and

STAB HIMSELF right through the heart?!

Aliyah can only hear their screams. She's stuck. All she can see are clouded skies as she lays lifeless on her back.

The screams cease instantly. A long beat of silence ensues.

Then footsteps. Closer. Louder.

A shadow casts over Aliyah. She whimpers and tries to tilt her head to see what malicious fate awaits her --

A TERRIFYING CREATURE.

Skull-faced, mouth-less, all-white eyes, decrepit body, skin like a rhino's -- a REAPER.

Aliyah's whimpers bolster but in vain as the creature holds her wrists and aligns its chest with hers. Only inches apart. Then its chest PRIES OPEN like a crevice!

A frail CLAW slowly sprouts out! It grazes Aliyah's shirt --

BAM! The creature flinches and retracts its claw back into its chest, turns around to see --

WILBUR WIELDING A REVOLVER with metal coils that spiral around its elongated barrel. Its wooden grip as curved as a horseshoe. Some special kind of weapon. *Steampunk-esque*.

He squints one eye, bits his lower lip, traces the creature with the front sights -- his aim is a meticulous calculation as he FIRES AGAIN, hitting the creature as it flees into the fog.

It leaves a *trail of blue blood*.

Wilbur tucks away his weapon and runs to Aliyah. He kneels, digs in his satchel and pulls out a rusted-glass capsule of liquid. He removes the top and pours it in Aliyah's mouth.

Aliyah draws a long breath, then coughs as she regains control of her body.

WILBUR  
Are you alright?

She looks at the men who tried to take her -- *their skins now gray, eyes blackened, gaping holes in their chest*.

WILBUR (cont'd)  
We should go. That creature will return.

Aliyah's too overwhelmed to respond. Wilbur unties her and ushers her away from the bizarre sight.

Off Aliyah's bewildered expression back to --

### **A FEW BLOCKS AWAY**

inside the WAGON where Oscar cuts the rope around his wrists on a bent nail from the ledge. His feet already freed. He's a few strands away from freedom --

FOOTSTEPS. About a block away.

Oscar hastens -- the rope snaps. He hops off the wagon. The others still in bondage plea for his help. He grabs the tied ankles of one WOMAN --

CLOSER FOOTSTEPS. Ice in Oscar's veins. He eyes around him. Then back at the naked people. A hesitant beat then --

He jumps off the wagon and RUNS AWAY.

**EXT. SMALL TOWN, SCHOOL - MOMENTS LATER**

Aliyah follows Wilbur through the empty lot of a school. As they pass through a CRY FOR HELP echoes from afar -- an older woman. Aliyah looks on concerned.

ALIYAH

Stop! Someone needs help!

Both come to a halt.

WILBUR

Sorry but we can't help them. More of those creatures might be out there and I can't fight them all.

Wilbur continues walking. Aliyah follows --

ALIYAH

Wait! I don't know what the hell's going on. Who are you? What happened here? And who were those assholes?!

WILBUR

Listen, I know you have a lot of questions. But if I tell you now you won't believe me --

ALIYAH

Tell me!

Aliyah braces for the worst.

Wilbur thinks his words carefully. Then --

WILBUR

*This is the afterlife.*

(beat)

***We're dead.***

Off Aliyah's expression of disbelief --

**END COLD OPEN**