

CHILDREN OF ATOM

Written by

Devin Durocher

INT. SUBURBAN DETROIT HOME, LIVING ROOM - DAY

It's a quaint townhouse filled with teal furniture, which is surrounded by scarlet walls and white trimming.

A WOMAN, pregnant, lies across a love seat in front of the *Philco Predicta* Television, watching a melodrama.

Her eyes are looking through the television, instead of at it. She's barely awake.

A MAN, sweating, walks in from the front door. Dressed in a tank-top, jeans, and thick gloves, he walks over to the woman.

They share a kiss, and the man walks over to the kitchen.

KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

In the kitchen, a large CLEANING ROBOT is wiping off the counter.

The man takes off his gloves, and washes his hands. He looks back at the television periodically.

LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The woman is nodding off, until eventually her head slumps down, and she's asleep.

KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The man looks at the woman and smiles. He twists off the water, and rubs his wet hands on a TOWEL beside the sink.

He walks back into the living room.

LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

He sits down next to the sleeping woman, and looks down at her.

He rubs her pregnant stomach.

A loud BEEP comes from the television.

The man's head swivels to the television to see a test-pattern on screen.

The noise causes the woman to furrow her brow and roll over.

The beeping stops.

A NEWS ANCHOR in a suit is on the television screen, his face reads of grief.

He's reading from a sheet of paper.

NEWS ANCHOR

(calm)

We are awaiting confirmation. . .
 Reports of blinding flashes off the
 west coast. . .

The man leans in.

The cleaning robot exits the kitchen and comes into the living room, looking at the television.

NEWS ANCHOR (CONT'D)

Followed by the sounds of
 explosions. . . No confirmation
 still. . .

The news anchor looks up.

NEWS ANCHOR (CONT'D)

We seem to have lost contact with
 our affiliate stations. Wait-

He's handed another piece of paper, and starts reading that.

NEWS ANCHOR (CONT'D)

(quivering)

W-we do have confirmed reports
 coming in. That's, um, I repeat
 confirmed reports of nuclear
 detonations in California and
 Washington. More incoming. . .

The man's eyes widen. He looks at the sleeping woman.

He starts shaking her shoulder.

NEWS ANCHOR (CONT'D)

Oh god. Oh my god.

She slowly turns to the man, upset for being woken up.

But the man's expression strikes enough fear into her to snap her out of any slumber.

She snaps to the television.

NEWS ANCHOR (CONT'D)
Get to shelter, don't look outside-

He's handed another paper

NEWS ANCHOR (CONT'D)
Confirmed explosions in Texas and
Colorado. . .

The news anchor buries his face in his hands.

The man and woman look at each other, and leap off of the couch.

They run into the hallway.

BASEMENT - SECONDS LATER

FOOTSTEPS boom from above. They gain in treble until a door CRASHES open and the man rushes down the steps.

The woman follows behind, though she has to take the steps cautiously.

The man gets to the bottom of the steps. The only light comes from the hallway above, shining down from atop the stairs.

The woman is almost at the bottom, when a heavy RUMBLE comes through.

She stumbles, and collapses on the ground.

The man rushes to her.

She clutches her stomach in pain, but the man is able to get her to her feet.

The RUMBLING intensifies, and the man leads the woman to a dark corner of the basement.

They huddle together on the floor, holding one another.

The RUMBLING is overwhelming, and they grip each other tighter to brace for whatever is coming.

A FLASH OF WHITE.

EXT. SUBURBAN DETROIT NEIGHBORHOOD - MIDDAY

Rubble covers the area. Homes are covered in holes, and trees have uprooted, spreading dirt and concrete around the area.

The grass is sun bleached, and dead.

The atmosphere has turned a tinge of green, uglying the world around it.

The man and woman take a few steps out of their ruined home.

They look around, distraught.

The man looks to the woman, and the woman to the man.

They both look down to her pregnant stomach, then back to each other - tears building up in their eyes.

BLACK.

EXT. SUBURBAN DETROIT NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

The Sun. Its light is diffused by a thick layer of soot covering the world.

A scarlet-colored piece of dry-wall, lying on the concrete.

A small, dirt covered hand snatches it from the ground, and runs off with it.

CHILD'S VOICE (O.S.)

Dent! Come on, man! You're laggin' behind!

A 10-year-old boy, LYLE, calls from afar. He wears long, tattered clothing and a beat-up satchel, with his ebony skin peeking through the holes at every corner of the cloth. He lifts his arms up and down, holding very large rocks in each hand.

He's standing in the middle of the ruined street, with crumbling buildings at either side, and forestry behind the neighborhood.

Another 10-year-old boy runs over to Lyle, DENT. He's bigger than Lyle, wearing swimming-goggles around his neck, and a torn button-up that is much too large for himself. His nose is skewed and his forehead has a fossa near his temple.

He's an ugly child, but still has a look of innocent wonder.

LYLE

Oh, c'mon, man, you've only got one rock. What if we lose some?

DENT
 B-but I really like this rock.
 Look.

Dent presents the dry-wall to Lyle.

Lyle reaches for it, but Dent reels it back to his chest.

DENT (CONT'D)
 I said *look*, Lyle.

LYLE
 Okay, fine.

Dent shows it again.

LYLE (CONT'D)
 (sarcasm)
Cool.

DENT
 I've never seen something so red.

Dent puts the 'rock' into one of his pants pockets.

Lyle waits for Dent to be looking away to roll his eyes.

Lyle shoves his two rocks into his satchel.

LYLE
 (pointing)
 Come on, it's this way.

The boys disappear into dense shrubbery surrounding the urban decay.

EXT. SUBURBAN DETROIT, GREENERY - CONTINUOUS

They hop through the dense overgrowth, away from the buildings and the road.

The boys smile as they swat away branches and plants in their way.

All the plants cluster in strange, twisted formations.

DENT
 You sure you know where we're going, Lyle?

LYLE
 Yeah, sure I am. I been here a million times.

They get to the edge of the shrubbery. Light pours in between the leaves and branches.

They push aside the branches and step onto tall grass.

EXT. PALMER WOODS, DETROIT AREA - CONTINUOUS

Large, 2 story buildings sit along the edge of a fallen highway. Growing plants crack the cement, but the homes are in slightly better condition than the suburbs.

LYLE

Whoa.

DENT

I thought you've been here before.

LYLE

Yeah, I lied.

Dent looks at Lyle funny.

They continue staring for a moment.

LYLE (CONT'D)

Come on.

They bounce across the highway over to the stretch of neighborhood.

LYLE (CONT'D)

See, the windows are still standing.

Lyle reaches into his bag and pulls out one of his rocks.

He takes a few steps back, and reels for the pitch.

He whiff his throw, it hits the brick wall, and crumbles.

Lyle tenses up at the sight of his throw.

LYLE (CONT'D)

Well, Dent, maybe it's your turn.

Dent runs over to Lyle, and Lyle hands him one of the rocks.

Dent's posture is less affected by the weight of the rock than Lyle's.

Dent brings the goggles from his neck up to his face, and snaps them into position.

He sticks his tongue out, takes a 2 step drop back, and hurls the rock into the window, shattering the glass.

They both turn their heads to avoid any shrapnel.

Lyle looks at his friend

LYLE (CONT'D)
Woo, nice.

Dent smiles.

LYLE (CONT'D)
Here, boost me up.

The boys go over to the window, and Dent props Lyle over his head.

DENT
Be careful.

LYLE
I've got boots, don't worry.

Lyle climbs over the window sill, and drops into the dark building.

Dent runs over to the door of the building, and waits.

After some JINGLING of metal from the handle, Lyle opens the door.

Dent enters the house.

INT. PALMER WOODS HOME, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The home is dark, littered with cobwebs, and damp.

Lavish furniture has browned from mold and rot.

The boys look around, their only light comes from the windows at each end of the home.

Lyle nods his head to lead the way forward.

They carefully watch each step they take.

A spider darts across the floor, Dent jumps back a bit, but brushes it off.

They reach the kitchen.

KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Lyle and Dent high five each other. They begin climbing onto grimy countertops and reaching into the cupboards.

They toss rotten SLUDGE and organic MATERIAL onto the floor.

Lyle finds a CANNED ITEM. He shakes it and picks at the top.

He puts it into his satchel.

Dent finds a soggy paper bag and dumps it onto the counter top.

2 cans roll out along with wrinkly, shriveled up VEGETABLES.

Dent picks at the lids of these cans.

He tosses them to Lyle.

Lyle puts them in his bag.

Lyle hops down from the counter and opens up the refrigerator.

It's mostly empty, but 1 can sits amongst the unidentifiable sludge.

Lyle reaches for it, picks the lid, but this can opens.

Lyle reels back and retches.

LYLE

Nope, not that one.

He throws it back in and closes the fridge.

DENT

I don't see anything else.

LYLE

Let's check upstairs, maybe there's more there.

Dent hops down, and they walk out of the kitchen.

STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER

They reach a stairwell. The light of the living room window shines on their backs, but nothing can be seen at the top of the stairs.

Lyle takes three steps up, but Dent stays at the bottom.

Lyle looks back.

LYLE (CONT'D)
C'mon, man, there's nothing to
worry about.

Dent takes a one step up, and then nervously reaches for
Lyle's bag, and holds onto it for support.

They both climb to the top.

UPSTAIRS - CONTINUOUS

They get to the top, but can't see anything.

DENT
Lyle, I don't like it up here.

LYLE
It's fine, we'll be able to see
eventually.

They stand still for a moment. Lyle squints.

LYLE (CONT'D)
Are you good yet?

DENT
Yeah, I think so.

Dent takes a few steps forward.

DENT (CONT'D)
It's a bedroom.

LYLE
Oh, good, let's just take the
blankets and get out of here.

Lyle moves forward to the bed.

He flings the disgusting, matted SHEETS off the small bed,
and pushes them into the already full satchel.

Removing the covers causes a TEDDY BEAR to fall to the floor.

Lyle walks towards the stairs with his treasure, but Dent
takes a few steps toward the bed.

Dent is fixated on the bear.

Lyle looks back

LYLE (CONT'D)
Dent, what're ya doin'?

Dent stares at it.

He snaps out of it.

DENT
Oh, nothing.

Lyle nods his head in the direction of the lower floor, and they walk out.

LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The boys walk away from the staircase.

LYLE
Here, you hold this, you're stronger.

Lyle hands the satchel to Dent, who puts it on his shoulder.

Lyle starts a leisure, childish run out of the building, and Dent follows behind.

The door is open.

Just as they almost reach the door, a ROBOT with a single, glowing red eye pops out from the door frame.

It startles the boys, and they jump back, collapsing onto the ground.

They SCREAM.

The robot's eye turns blue, and he gently returns to a non-intimidating stance.

The boys' cries fade as they realize it's RANDALL, a cleaning robot.

RANDALL
What the hell are you two doing out here?

He speaks with a posh, British accent.

DENT
We-we-

LYLE
Just exploring, Randall.

Randall walks into the home.

RANDALL

Goodness, gracious. I've told you
in the past, you two cannot storm
off this far without any
supervision. I've been look all
across the wasteland for you.

The boys get up and dust off their backs.

DENT

Sorry, Randall.

Randall turns to Dent. The boy looks ashamed.

RANDALL

Come, let's get you back home.
(shaking head)
Goodness, the sun is about to set.

Lyle becomes annoyed.

Randall clasps the boys' hands, and walks them out of the
building.

EXT. PALMER WOODS, DETROIT HOME - CONTINUOUS

The robot walks to boys through the empty, desolate world
around them.

BEGIN MONTAGE

EXT. FORMER METRO DETROIT - GOLDEN HOUR

Trees grow high above buildings, with branches twisting and
turning around each other.

Vines grasp the walls of homes and buildings, all displaying
varying degrees of destruction.

The cloudy green sky hangs over hideously-deformed flowers
and shrubs.

END MONTAGE

EXT. THE WOUND - DUSK

A beat-up sign - outside the small community - reads "Welcome to Wo-" in cursive type-face, with rust and erosion fading the rest of the words away. "UND" is shoddily spray-painted onto the empty space.

10 Fire pits sprinkle the land, some blazing and other left cold.

Frames of former homes graze between overgrowth and trees. A large building sits at the center of the village, beaten and broken, but standing better than the homes.

20 VILLAGERS in tattered clothing all sit by the flames, cooking, conversing, and warming up.

Randall, with the boys still in hand, walks behind the sign and towards one of the fires.

The robot reaches a group of 4 - JONATHAN (37), MURIEL (36), ROXY (59), and TONY (26), all around one of the fires.

Johnathan and Muriel sit close by one another. They turn to see Randall, then the boys.

They both sign in relief

MURIEL

Lyle, where in god's have you been?

LYLE

I-I-

RANDALL

He took Dent to the Palmer District.

Randall releases Lyle's hand. Lyle rubs his wrist in discomfort.

JOHNATHAN

Boy, come here.

Muriel and Johnathan reel the child in.

Randall releases Dent, and takes a seat beside the fire. Each of the robot's movements lets out a rusty SQUEAK.

Dent stays still, watching Lyle get scolded by his parents.

MURIEL

Do you realize how close you coulda been to dyin'? Do you know what's out there?

JOHNATHAN

And what the hell were you thinkin' bringing Dent along with you? You're not even responsible enough to watch yourself, let alone two people.

Dent keeps watching.

RANDALL

Dent, I'd like it if you ate before we go in for the night.

Dent turns around.

Randall is sautering a component on his wrist with an attachment on his opposite hand.

He looks up.

RANDALL (CONT'D)

Now would be ideal.

Dent scurries to take a seat next to the robot.

Once seated, Roxy pulls a stick from the edge of the fire. A CHARRED RAT with 3 tails is skewered onto the pike.

ROXY

Ooo, boy. Here you go, sweetie, I saved a big one for ya.

She hands him the mutant-rat-kabob.

Dent begins eating.

RANDALL

I know it wasn't your idea, but you can't let Lyle convince you to go out that far, and especially not that late. Only the worst things come out of the wasteland at night.

Dent swallows and sits still for a moment.

Beat.

DENT

But I wanted to go.

RANDALL

I'm sure Lyle convinced you that it sounded fun, but I've lectured you enough on the dangers south of here.

Dent looks at Randall.

DENT

No, I really wanted to go there.

Beat.

Randall looks at Dent, the glow from his blue eye bounces off the boy's face and puts a glare on goggles.

RANDALL

Of course, Dent. It's everyone's dream to die, after all.

Randall returns to sautering the wires in his wrist.

Dent holds his stare at the robot, but slowly returns to eating.

THE WOUND - NIGHT

The sun has fallen behind the horizon. The ugly green tint has disappeared, leaving behind a plain, black sky.

Dent, beside the smokey fire pit, looks at the world through his goggles.

All of the villagers around him begin to stand up, pack their things, and walk away.

Randall stands.

RANDALL

Come, it's time to go in.

Dent keeps looking around, the world looks like a fish bowl.

RANDALL (CONT'D)

Dent.

Dent snaps out of his trance, and hurries over to Randall's side.

The village converges into the large building in the center. Faded letters above the front entrance read "LIBRARY"

INT. COMMUNITY LIBRARY - MOMENTS LATER

Bookshelves are torn apart, but the books are all stacked nicely on what remains of them.

Make-shift beds are spread across the floor. Wooden planks from the bookshelves are stacked up with various cloth, cotton, and material layered on top.

The only light shines from a hole in the top of the building.

Lyle catches up with Dent.

LYLE

Hey, man, sorry I got you in trouble.

Dent turns around.

DENT

Oh, no, it's okay. You probably got in way more trouble than I did.

Lyle brushes it off.

LYLE

Nah, my mom and dad don't know what they're talking about. I've heard that stuff like a million times. And I'll probably hear it a million more.

DENT

Are we gonna go back?

Lyle leans in and brings Dent closer to himself.

LYLE

(whispering)

My mom said that we don't know what's there if we go farther south.

DENT

(whispering)

Is that bad?

LYLE

No way, man. We can see can find out together.

Dent smiles

Lyle reaches into his satchel.

LYLE (CONT'D)
But hey, take these. I want them
outta my bag.

He pulls out the RED DRY WALL and a BLANKET.

Dent smiles.

MURIEL (O.S.)
Lyle!

LYLE
Come on, we gotta go.

Lyle runs over to his bed. Dent follows behind

DENT AND LYLE'S BED AISLE - MOMENTS LATER

Dent is lying on his bed.

He takes his goggles away from his eyes and rests them around
his neck.

He looks at the drywall, and stuffs it under his blanket. He
looks to his left.

Lyle is climbing a bookshelf, reaching for a book while
trying to remain silent.

Randall is walking around the complex.

DENT
(whispering)
Lyle, what're you doing.

LYLE
(whispering)
I'm looking for a book, what's do
you think?

Lyle's hand clamps one of the BOOKS positioned above his
head.

Randall walks up to Lyle's side.

RANDALL
Please get to bed, Lyle.

Lyle is startled, and jumps off the shelf.

LYLE
Alright, fine.

Randall walks away.

Lyle climbs onto the wood-and-cotton structure, and lies down.

He opens the book and flips through the pages.

The cover page, in tattered leather, reads "STRAY BIRDS."

DENT
What's in that book?

LYLE
I don't know I haven't read all of
it. It's just a bunch of words as
far as I can tell.

DENT
Then why read it?

LYLE
There's one part I like.

Lyle keeps flipping through pages.

Lyle stops flipping and stops.

Beat.

DENT
Did you find it?

LYLE
(under breath)
Yeah. . .

DENT
What is it? Read it to me. Please?

LYLE
(reading)
Clouds come floating into my life,
no longer to carry rain or usher
storm, but to add color to my
sunset sky.

Beat.

DENT
What does that mean.

LYLE
The sky must have colors. All sorts
of them. Like red, purple, or blue.

DENT

But it's just green. Except when it rains, then it's black.

LYLE

It happens at a sunset.

DENT

A what?

LYLE

I don't know.

Lyle looks over to Dent.

LYLE (CONT'D)

Maybe that's what's south of this place. A sunset.

Beat.

LYLE (CONT'D)

I wanna see it. One day.

Dent looks up at the hole at the top of the library, where the black sky sits. Randall walks toward the boys.

They close their eyes. Randall reaches them, and tucks Dent in.

INT. COMMUNITY LIBRARY - HOURS LATER

BLACK.

A painful ELK CALL in the distance.

Owls HOOT.

Strange noises build up.

Heavy breathing.

Dent opens his eyes. He looks around. His fellow villagers are all asleep.

Randall is far away, patrolling the inner perimeter of the library.

Dent brings his goggles from his neck to his face.

Some of the animal CALLS still come in through the walls, albeit muffled.

Dent looks up at dark hole in the ceiling.

A small, round silhouette sits at the edge of the hole.

The figure brings its head into the light.

An OWL, COOING quietly, stares at Dent with 4 glowing, yellow eyes.

It blinks its lower eyes, but the upper eyes remain open, watching the boy.

Dent looks back.

The bird lifts up, and flies to the south.

Dent watches it fade into the trees from the nearest window of the library.

Randall is getting closer, so Dent pretends to be sleeping. The blanket rests at his knees due to all of his movement.

Randall walks beside Dent, brings the blanket over his torso, and continues his patrol.

EXT. THE WOUND - DAY

Dent and Lyle are seated by a cold fire pit, poking stick in the ash.

The community of twenty is going about their daily routines. Gardening, small-scale farming, and boiling water.

The boys are drawing something out in the ash of one of the empty fire pits.

LYLE

So if we follow the birds, that'll take us down here, which is where we were the other day. They usually go further, so if we keep following them, we should end up here.

DENT

(Pointing)

But the trees are too tall over here, we can't see the birds. Then how will we get home?

LYLE

You're right.

(hand over mouth)

Hmmm.

Dent looks down.

DENT
What if we left a rock trail?

LYLE
Huh?

DENT
We just drop a rock every so often
so we can find our way back.

LYLE
Yeah, yeah. That sounds like a
plan.

Lyle looks around. Nobody is paying them any attention.

LYLE (CONT'D)
We should leave now, while nobody's
looking.

Lyle stands up and slings his bag over his shoulder.

He reaches into the bag and pulls out the red piece of dry
wall, and places it on the ground.

DENT
Wait! I want to keep that.

LYLE
Well then it's a good thing we're
using it first. You can pick it
right back up when we get back.

Lyle turns around.

LYLE (CONT'D)
Start picking up rocks and setting
them down, I've only got a few
more.

Dent scurries behind him, looking at the ground for rocks.

BEGIN MONTAGE.

EXT. WOODED AREA - MOMENTS LATER

The boys are bouncing around the shrubbery, placing large
rocks in obvious places as they go.

EXT. URBAN STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Walking across the cracked concrete, they place a rock dead center in the road.

EXT. PALMER WOODS, HIGHWAY - MOMENTS LATER

They pass the neighborhood they visited days before.

Dent watches the house as they walk past.

They enter a dense tree line, entering another forest. Lyle places a rock behind them.

END MONTAGE.

EXT. DENSE FOREST - CONTINUOUS

The trees twist and turn around each other. Their leaves are enormous and a pale green. Bugs BUZZ.

The boys look around.

LYLE

Leave a lot more rocks here, it'll
be harder to see.

Lyle pushes forward, Dent follows.

Dent is afraid, but places a hand on Lyle's bag to stay together.

Lyle grabs a rock from his bag and places it beside his path.

Something in the greenery SHUFFLES.

Lyle spins around to the source of the sound. Dent hides behind Lyle, barely looking at the area.

Lyle sways his hand back and forth, swatting at the bush.

Nothing happens.

LYLE (CONT'D)

It was probably just a bug or
something. Come on.

They push forward.

DENSE FOREST - MOMENTS LATER

It's beginning to get darker.

In the distance they see a black mass, and they stop.

LYLE (CONT'D)

Shh.

The mass brings its head up, revealing itself to be a Black DEER, with blood red eyes. Its antlers are twisted out of shape.

It sees the boys and runs away to the left.

DENT

(pointing to the right)

Let's go that way, I don't wanna see that thing again.

LYLE

No, we have to go forward, that's where south is.

They keep going, and walking.

They finally reach a point in which they can see a dim light in between the trunks of the trees.

Lyle drops a rock.

LYLE (CONT'D)

Come on!

They run to the light.

EXT. DOWNTOWN DETROIT, OUTSKIRTS - CONTINUOUS

They pass the tree line, and reach a large highway. Destroyed cars scatter the road.

The boys are high up on a hill. A building sits at the bottom of the hill, just at the edge of the highway.

Off in the distance, clouded by the dense atmosphere, is a city skyline. Buildings. There is a faint light emitting from its center, illuminating the near-dusk sky.

They stand at the edge of the forest, caught in wonder.

DENT

It's so pretty.

They stand, and Lyle places another rock, then returns to his stare.

LYLE

We have to go see it.

Lyle starts to run down the hill, Dent follows.

INT. MYSTERIOUS BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Something watches the boys run down the hill from a window of the building. It breathes heavily.

EXT. DOWNTOWN DETROIT, OUTSKIRTS - CONTINUOUS

The boys hook a turn. Onto the high way.

From around the corner of the building, they are ambushed.

A MAN, dressed in metal and various automobile parts, leaps out from behind the building.

He holds a SPEAR, made from a tire iron and scrap metal. A REVOLVER sits on his hip.

A metal helmet adorns his head, covering any humanity he may show. His heavy breathing is muffled.

The boys collapse to the ground, and start crawling away.

The man circles them, spear pointed in their direction.

The boys get up and away. The man whistles, and two OTHER MEN in metal armor come out from the house.

They get back into the forest.

FOREST - CONTINUOUS

They hide in the dense shrubbery, and the man comes in behind them. He swaps his spear for the gun, and points it around him, searching every direction. The other two come shortly thereafter.

The leader of the masked men, as he spins around sees one of the rocks out in the open, and picks it up. He looks to the north, and sees the trail of rocks.

He looks back at the rock in his hand.

LEADER GUARD

(muffled)

There's a settlement nearby, that's where they came from.

GUARD 1
(muffled)
Probably some food there, too.

Dent and Lyle watch in horror.

The three men follow the rock trail.

DENT
Lyle-

LYLE
Shh.

Lyle looks in the men's direction.

LYLE (CONT'D)
(whispering)
Wait for them to go away.

DENT
(whispering)
But the monsters are going back
home.

LYLE
It'll be okay, man. Don't worry.
It'll be okay. Just wait here.

They huddle together, and wait.

EXT. THE WOUND - DUSK

Dent and Lyle follow their rocks, step by step, out of the forest. They reach just outside of "The Wound" sign.

They slowly saunter up to their village.

Dent sees the red drywall.

He picks it up and holds it close to his chest with two hands.

They come over the hill.

Crops are set ablaze, the homes have collapsed, and nobody is in sight. The door to the library has been smashed open.

They quietly tip toe through the grass.

INT. COMMUNITY LIBRARY - MOMENTS LATER

All the books are gone, and the beds are left a mess.

Dent has tears rolling down his face. Lyle is distraught.

Dent sees that the cellar door to the basement is ajar. He walks toward it.

LYLE

Where are you going?

Dent says nothing.

Lyle follows behind him.

Dent reaches the hatch, and opens it up.

Lyle runs over.

They both lean over to see.

Randall, and five villagers, are huddled up in the cellar.

RANDALL

My goodness, Dent, you're alive.
Are they gone?

Dent nods.

Randall climbs up to the surface, and hugs Dent.

RANDALL (CONT'D)

I thought you'd died.

DENT

No, Randall, I'm okay.

The other five villagers come up as well.

Johnathan is one of the five, and he comes to wrap his arms around Lyle.

JOHNATHAN

You're alright.

LYLE

Were's mom?

Johnathan squeezes Lyle tighter. Lyle realizes what happened.

Randall stands up to address the crowd.

RANDALL

I believe it to be in our best interest to split up - find new settlements. We can't stay together - for fear that they'll track us once more.

The crowd reluctantly nods.

RANDALL (CONT'D)

We will part ways in the morning, it's too dangerous to go now.

Dent and Lyle look at each other, worried.

RANDALL (CONT'D)

Get some rest, the beds are ruined, but we'll have to make due for the night. It's been a pleasure.

The crowd disperses, except for Dent and Lyle.

They walk to one another.

DENT

It's our fault.

Lyle places a hand on his shoulder.

LYLE

Don't blame yourself, man.
(sniffling)
It's my fault.

He lowers his head.

LYLE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

Dent hugs Lyle and sobs.

Beat.

DENT

Will I ever see you again?

Lyle pulls away slightly, still hanging on to Dent.

LYLE

(tearing up)
Yeah. Of course.

Dent nods his head. He hands Lyle the piece of drywall, and Lyle takes it.

They re-embrace.

LYLE (CONT'D)
Don't cry, man, you're better than
that.

EXT. THE WOUND - EARLY MORNING

All the villagers are gone. The sun has yet to rise.

Randall and Dent stand outside the library - bags at their feet.

Randall places a hand on Dent's shoulder, prompting Dent to look up.

Randall nods in the other direction.

He lifts the boy up, and places him onto his metal shoulders.

Randall picks up the bags, and walks north.

Dent looks back at the library.

The 4 eyed owl sits atop the edge of the library's roof, watching Dent.

The owl turns its head all the way around and takes off, heading south.

Dent keeps looking as Randall pushes forward.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS - 10 YEARS LATER

The sun is muted in the sky, as soot still shrouds its rays behind a green overcast.

Plant-life has taken over every building, with thick vines embedding into the brick.

A tree with sprinkles of red sits in front of one of the buildings.

Enormous CHERRIES, deformed and lumpy, grow from the branches.

A HAND comes toward the cherries, and plucks them from their stems.

DENT, now twenty-years-old, brings the cherries closer to his face.

His nose and titular dent are still prominent, and swimming goggles still adorn his eyes. He wears leather clothing, beaten and dirty.

He inspects the berries, and tastes one. He smiles.

Dent pulls a KNIFE from his waist, and saws off a small branch, containing a cluster of cherries.

EXT. WARREN NEIGHBORHOOD - MOMENTS LATER

Dent scurries across the decayed street, food in hand, and enters a plant-covered home with a missing door.

INT. WARREN HOME - CONTINUOUS

Dent walks in. The only light comes from the door frame and through openings in the vines that cover up each window.

Dent creeps through the darkness, looking side to side, hands still together.

He enters a bedroom.

Randall is propped up against a wall, using a night stand to keep himself up.

His eye-light illuminates the room, bouncing off the white walls.

He is covered in rust, and his light flickers from time to time.

Randall hears Dent coming in, and looks to the door frame.

DENT

Randall, I-I found some food not far from here.

Dent takes his goggles off.

Randall slowly turns his head. His metal joints SQUEAL.

RANDALL

Let me see them. You didn't eat any, did you?

Dent reels back, embarrassed.

DENT

N-no, not yet.

RANDALL

Good.

Dent presents the cherries to Randall.

He shines the light on Dent's hand.

RANDALL (CONT'D)

They're fine.

Dent starts shoveling the cherries into his mouth.

Dent takes a seat on the wooden bed frame, eating his cherries.

DENT

How are you, Randall?

RANDALL

I'm fine, Dent. You didn't go too far to get those, did you?

Randall's voice has some distortion and static in it.

Dent shakes his head.

DENT

No, no, they were relatively close.

RANDALL

Relative to what?

DENT

Um, closer than the next village but farther than the big buildings.

RANDALL

Goodness gracious.

DENT

I wish you could come, so you could help me find more.

RANDALL

I would if I had the ability to, Dent.

Randall labors his head back forward.

RANDALL (CONT'D)

I'd suggest you go retrieve some more, Dent. It may be some time before you can find another resource like that.

Dent swallows. He stands up.

DENT

Okay, I'll head out. See you when I
get back.

RANDALL

Take care, Dent.

Dent leaves the room, and Randall is left standing in place.

EXT. WARREN NEIGHBORHOOD - MOMENTS LATER

Dent positions a bag over his shoulder, and hurries down the
steps.

INT. WARREN HOME - SIMULTANEOUS

Randall hasn't moved.

His light dims, and he slouches. Each movement is accompanied
by the SQUEAK of rust.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS - MOMENTS LATER

Dent is cuts the mutated cherries off the tree, putting each
one into his bag. He reaches up to get the higher ones

A DRONING sound comes from the distance.

Dent doesn't notice at first.

The DRONE grows louder, prompting Dent to look around in
confusion.

He stops picking his cherries, and gently places them in the
bag.

He continues to look around, unsure of the sound's origin.

He snatches his bag and goes behind the nearby house.

He looks over, as the droning is now accompanied by a slight
rumble.

Over the hill, an automobile leaps into the air at full
speed. Its sleek, powder blue frame is rusted and beat up,
and the suspension CREAKS on landing.

Dent snaps away, hiding his entire frame behind the brick
wall in fear.

The car zooms past Dent's position, and the droning quickly fades away.

Once the sound goes away, Dent comes out from his hiding spot.

He looks around, and then fixates on the road ahead.

He looks back, and then starts walking in the direction the car went.

EXT. DECAYING ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

Dent keeps down the road, impressions from the tires mark the weeds that grow in the cracks of the cement.

KNIFE in hand, Dent creeps through the empty town.

He reaches a hedge of vines stretching across the road. Trees hang over the green wall.

A hole has been smashed into the center, crushing all the vines in the middle to the ground.

Dent peers into the hole, and sees the car, stopped.

Two GUARDS, once again clad in metal armor, reveal themselves from behind the car. They hold spears.

Dent watches them from between the vines. He sweats.

GUARD ONE

(femine voice)

Fusion core's out of juice, it seems.

GUARD TWO

Damn, far as I knew, those things lasted forever.

GUARD ONE

Hit the radio, let the boss know we're stuck here.

GUARD TWO

Can do.

Dent watches nervously.

Guard Two reaches into the car, and flips on the radio.

He puts his wrist up to his masked face, and extends an antennae from his bracer.

GUARD TWO (CONT'D)

(to wrist radio)

Control, this is Jameson, our patrol car has run out of fuel. We're in the norther border of the territory.

RADIO CONTROL (O.S.)

Gotcha, just start walking, you've got enough time before night hits.

The introduction of another voice startles Dent. He frantically looks around, unsure of its location.

GUARD TWO

Nobody has settled in the territory yet, so we're clear to start moving in.

RADIO CONTROL (O.S.)

Roger. Leave the car, we can pick it up later.

GUARD TWO

Alright.

The guard brings his hand back to his side.

GUARD ONE

Let's get moving.

The guards walk away from the car.

Dent panics and leaps into the vines for cover. The thorns poke into his skin and clothing.

He holds in his pain, wanting to scream but knowing such a noise would be his death.

GUARD ONE (CONT'D)

I think I saw something bright growing down the road if we get hungry.

Dent is PANTING in pain.

He watches them disappear and looks at the car.

He gets out of the vine bush, and SCREAMS. He starts plucking thorns from his forearms. Tears build in his eyes, but he wipes them away.

He walks past the hedge, to the car.

He puts one hand forward, as to keep the car at bay.

Dent swallows, and pushes closer.

He circles the car, inspecting it.

A rusty ornament on the side door reads "FORD UTOPIA"

He brings a hand to the driver side handle, and pulls on it.

It opens.

He instinctively goes in.

INT. 2051 FORD UTOPIA - CONTINUOUS

Dent sits in the driver's seat. He is in awe of the technology around him.

He pushes all the buttons on the dashboard, but nothing happens.

He tries to turn the steering wheel, but it's stiff.

He pushes a button directly behind the steering wheel, and the engine ROARS.

Dent reels back a bit, but collects himself as the engine dies down.

He looks behind himself in the back seat. Metal scraps, some tools, and a bag are placed on the cushions.

He snatches them and brings them to the front of the car. He shoves them into the cherry bag.

He hops out of the car.

EXT. DECAYING ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Dent flings open the hood.

He sees a dull FUSION CORE, front and center in the mess of automobile parts.

He reaches for it, and yanks it out of its compartment.

He puts in his back with the cherries.

Dent checks his surroundings, and runs through the opening in the hedge.

EXT. WARREN NEIGHBORHOOD - LATE AFTERNOON

Dent, bag over his shoulder, runs toward the brick house.

INT. WARREN HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Dent rushes through the house, into the bedroom.

BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

DENT

Randall!

Randall slowly turns to Dent.

DENT (CONT'D)

Randall, I found something.

Dent drops the bag to the ground and rummages through it.

RANDALL

What is it? Why are you covered in
thorns?

Dent dumps out the contents.

Metal, cherries, and the fusion core pile on the floor.

Randall shines his light on the pile.

RANDALL (CONT'D)

Where did you find that?

DENT

A square robot came from down the
road, it flew by. Oh man, you
should've seen it.

Dent picks up the fusion core.

DENT (CONT'D)

It's broken, though, and this is
what we need to get it running
again.

Randall looks at Dent.

RANDALL

A fusion core.

DENT

Yeah!

Randall looks away from Dent.

RANDALL

Well, I imagine you'll be glad to hear that I have one. I'm not sure how much is left, though.

DENT

We can go anywhere with this thing! We can find new places, you'll be able to move again! I'll carry you to the place, and then you won't be stuck in this room anymore!

RANDALL

Yes, yes.

Dent is breathing heavy in excitement.

Beat.

DENT

Maybe we'll find where Lyle went.

Beat.

DENT (CONT'D)

You think he's still alive out there?

RANDALL

Johnathan was a smart man, and Lyle was plenty resourceful. I'm sure Lyle's out there.

Dent nods his head.

DENT

Yeah, that's what we'll do.

He puts all his stuff back in the bag.

DENT (CONT'D)

Come on, where is it? We have to head back before anybody else finds it!

Randall looks back at Dent.

Beat.

Randall wearily moves his arms. They shake as they reach toward his chest.

He unlatches a compartment, and a door flaps open.

A glowing FUSION CORE sits in the center

Dent looks confused.

RANDALL

I'm not sure how much is left.

DENT

But-

RANDALL

I was purchased with a twenty-five year guarantee.

DENT

What?

RANDALL

My circuitry is degrading faster than I hoped, though.

Beat.

RANDALL (CONT'D)

Before my master died, I promised him one thing. That I would ensure his son was able to survive. That I would raise you. It was his final program input.

Dent looks at Randall, upset.

Dent looks down in shame, but comes closer to Randall.

DENT

Randall, it'll be fine. I'm sure there's another fusion core somewhere out there. Once I get you in that car, you can go anywhere and everywhere with me.

RANDALL

Perhaps there is another, but time may be short. Please, Dent. Take it.

Dent furrows his brow and puts a hand on Randall's arm.

DENT

Randall, I can't go without you.

RANDALL

If I'm to believe I succeeded in my master's request, you must be able to go on. Without me.

Dent swallows.

Beat.

Randall takes out the core, and powers down.

The light slowly dims, leaving the core as the only source of light.

Dent puts two hands on the core.

DENT

I love you, Randall.

Dent pulls it out of Randall's metal hands.

Randall stands there, stiff and lifeless.

Dent looks at the core, and walks away. He shakes his head.

EXT. DECAYING ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

As the sky starts to dim, Dent is crouched behind the rubble of a building.

Pulling his knife out and bringing it to his side, he advances forward.

He reaches the road, and looks over his shoulder.

He reaches the wall of vines, and peers over the top.

The car is still there, just as he left it.

He brushes past the vines, and scurries to the hood of the car.

He opens up the hood.

Out of his BACKPACK he pulls out the FUSION CORE. Its glow bounces off the metal innards of the car.

Dent gives it one last good look, then moves his eyes over to the open road.

Between the hole in the hanging trees, vines, and ivy; the ruined concrete disappears into the horizon, meeting the soot-covered sky.

Dent nods his head, and places the fusion core into the carriage.

He closes the hood, walks toward the door.

INT. 2051 FORD UTOPIA - CONTINUOUS

Dent takes his seat on the leather chair, and once again takes a look around the cabin.

He pushes the button behind the steering wheel.

The engine ROARS, but instead of dying out, this time it REVS to a steady beat.

The car is on.

The lights of the dashboard rise to a dim glow. The headlights shine onto the trees in front.

Dent looks underneath himself, and looks at the two pedals.

He pushes on one, but nothing happens.

He pushes on the adjacent one, and the wheels spin, kicking up dirt behind him and REVING.

Dent looks around the cabin, and finds the gear shift.

It's on "P."

He shifts it down one notch, to "R."

He tries both pedals again.

The second pedal sends the car backwards.

Dent is startled, but only for a moment.

He is checking his surroundings as the car backs out of the grove.

EXT. DECAYING ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The car emerges from the greenery, and is now on the road.

INT. 2051 FORD UTOPIA - CONTINUOUS

Dent reaches for the gear shift again, this time going to "N."

He pushes on the acceleration pedal, but nothing happens.

He shifts it again, to "D."

The car jolts forward. Dent is startled, and quickly releases the pedal. The car slowly rolls forward.

He shifts the gear back into reverse, and turns the wheel.

EXT. DECAYING ROAD - CONTINUOUS

He slowly backs out, turning to be perpendicular with the road, and then hits the gas in drive.

He bumps forward, but then starts to roll again.

INT. 2051 FORD UTOPIA - CONTINUOUS

Dent takes a deep breath.

He puts his goggles over his face, and swallows.

Placing his foot back on the pedal, he eases it forward.

The car accelerates ever-so-slightly.

He pushes further, and the car begins down the road.

He rolls up the hill. It gets steeper with each inch.

At its crest, he lets go of the accelerator.

There in front of him, way off in the distance, the skyscrapers he saw so many years ago peer overtop the trees. The lights of the city pop in front of the darkening sky.

He is stopped in awe, the car completely still.

A familiar HOOT comes from off-screen.

Dent snaps out of his trance, and starts looking around.

From the darkness of the woods, four eyes glow.

Dent relaxes, as a sudden comfort overtakes him.

An OWL flies out from the trees, and onto the hood of the car.

His eyes watch Dent, as he creeps forward.

The owl reaches the windshield, and stops.

Dent leans in from inside the car.

Face-to-face, they pause.

The owl blinks.

It turns around, and walks toward the edge of the car.

One at the edge, it spins its head around, looks dent in the eye, and takes off.

The winged figure glides toward the city.

Dent sits there, staring.

He turns his focus from the bird to the city, and hit the accelerator.

EXT. DECAYING ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The car rolls down the street, and heads toward the city.

EXT. DETROIT OUTSKIRTS - NIGHT

The headlights of the car illuminate the road ahead.

Everything else is dark. The moon's light is diffused by the thick soot.

Dent is cruising through the road, as overgrowth hits the car.

CHATTERING overtakes the quiet night.

Dent's heart is pounding and his breath has become labored, but he pushes forward.

The CRY of an elk comes from the distance.

The wind WHISTLES through the road.

The NOISES become too much, and dent stops in the middle of the road.

He's panting.

He looks around frantically. The noises stop.

He takes off his goggles, and squeezes his eyes shut.

Dent spreads his body onto the passenger seat, eyes still closed, and tries to sleep.

He relaxes.

Beat.

THUMP.

Something slams into the side of the car.

Dent GASPS, and jumps up.

He looks out the window.

Nothing.

Another, louder THUD comes from the hood of the car. Dent snaps to the windshield.

A pitch black BEAST, with glowing green eyes and irradiated skin, digs its claws into the hood of the car.

It SNARLS.

Dent reels back into his seat. The beast slashes the windshield, leaving claw marks behind a loud SQUEEL.

It BARKS, like a dog, but with a terrible gurgle in the back of its throat.

Another beast comes into the light of the headlights, revealing its dog-like shape.

The first beast leaps off the hood, and the two monsters circle the car.

Their glowing green eyes bounce between the windows.

One pounces on the driver's side door with a ROAR, shaking the car.

Dent has his face covered up, and is quivering in fear.

One of the beasts WHINES, Dent looks between his fingers.

A BLACK DEER, with twisted antlers and red eyes, just like the one a decade before, has entered the fray.

It uses its antlers to keep the beasts at bay.

They combat until one of the beasts runs away, whimpering.

The other one follows.

Dent sits up straight, and looks the deer in the eyes.

The deer doesn't look back for long before returning into the forest.

Dent, still breathing heavy, returns his head to the passenger seat, and rests.

INT. 2051 FORD UTOPIA - THE NEXT MORNING

Dent wakes up from his slumber inside the car.

He rises and cracks his back, discomfort covers his face.

He rubs his eyes, and looks around.

The trees on the horizon block the skyscrapers that were once visible from the hill.

The world around him is green - the sky, the plants, and even the concrete in the road is covered with weeds.

He pushes the ignition, and puts his foot on the accelerator.

EXT. RIM OF THE CITY - MOMENTS LATER

As Dent rolls to the top of an overpass, the whole of the city is clear.

He steps out of the car, and stands beside it.

Skyscrapers, rugged and broken, stand tall. The city is quiet, as sprawling highways converge into the center of the downtown area.

Lights flicker occasionally, lights of which dent has never seen.

Blue, red, and yellow neon flashes on the edges of buildings and through the windows of the towers.

Dent has the same face of wonder he did as a boy.

He stops to look around, nervously looks around.

He has the high ground, and uses it to survey the land separating him from the city.

Empty.

The exit route to one of the highway bridges is to the left.

Dent gets back in the car, and turns onto the highway.

EXT. HIGHWAY TO DETROIT - MOMENTS LATER

As Dent gets closer, the car radio begins to emit STATIC.

He tries to shut it off, but none of the buttons will make it go away.

The static dampens, and a voice comes over it.

RADIO CONTROL (O.S.)
Hello, I've received your signal.
Is this the recovery team for the
vehicle from last night?

Dent tenses up. He keeps driving.

RADIO CONTROL (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Hello? Answer if you can hear me.

Dent looks straight ahead.