

EXT. THE WASTELANDS - LATE MORNING

Just beyond the mouth of a cave stands a Gem dressed way too warm for the heat around her. Every inch of her skin is covered save for her right arm, where her sleeve is rolled up and she wears no glove. She adjusts the sights of her helmet to better see into the distance. She wears a shirt tucked into her pants, boots, and an overcoat that reaches down to her ankles. She takes in the surrounding before setting off into the wastes.

If she has a name, it's been forgotten. With the exception of her right arm and her head, she is mostly made of mechanical prosthetics, though, you wouldn't be able to tell at a glance. You'd just think her to be a bit broad and unhealthily skinny. Hidden under her overcoat, along with her body, is her Gemstone fixed snugly into a mechanism in the center of her chest. Judging by the look of it, it's not technically shattered, but a good punch would do the job. She lives only because of the mechanism keeping her Gemstone steady in her chest and applying pressure to it, as well as her will to keep that mechanism functioning.

Her overcoat blows in the wind as dust ensnares her feet which, too, are mechanical and step with the faint sound of compressing gases. A large knife knocks about her right hip beneath her overcoat, and a rifle is slung from her back. The knife, which is almost more like a machete, is a blade that vibrates rapidly when striking something. It vibrates fast enough, and finely enough, that it can push through most materials, separating atoms at the molecular level, including most armours and many stones. There is no other blade like it.

She passes through an old battlefield flush with craters and rusted weapons of war. Shattered gems twinkle as she disturbs the sand beneath her. She pays little mind to any of it. Small flurries of dust continue to wrap around her legs. She doesn't realize that she's walking past four C.O.M (Children of Minerva) who have hidden themselves amongst the wreckage. The click of their rifles bring them to her attention. She pulls her coat over the hilt of her blade.

She turns and faces her ambushers. Three on the ground with weapons drawn, and their leader standing atop the carcass of an old vehicle. From this point hence, for clarity, our protagonist will be known as, WANDERER.

THE CAPTAIN looks over Wanderer as her troops hold. She speaks with familiarity and authority. Wanderer speaks with

reservation and acceptance.

THE CAPTAIN

Morning.

WANDERER

Morning.

Wanderer assesses her situation. Only three rifles.

WANDERER (CONT'D)

Traveling light?

THE CAPTAIN

I bring what I need.

WANDERER

Sure. I saw some thugs off over that hill there. They look like they might cause a bit of trouble.

THE CAPTAIN

They can wait.

WANDERER

Sure.

THE CAPTAIN

I'm gonna need you to unclip your rifle and let it fall.

WANDERER

I'd rather not. There's thieves around and I'd hate to lose it.

THE CAPTAIN

We'll keep it safe. Just drop it.

Wanderer hesitates but undoes a snap where the gun's strap connects at her chest. Her rifle hits the sand with a dull *thunk*.

THE CAPTAIN

Kick it back behind you.

Wanderer complies and lobs her rifle a few yards back with her heel. It's well out of range now.

THE CAPTAIN

If I toss you the cuffs, will you put them on yourself?

WANDERER

If you toss me the cuffs, I'll toss them back. I'm not doing your job for you.

The Captain, slightly disappointed, looks down and motions for the soldier closest to Wanderer to go ahead. That soldier begins moving up, rifle trained on Wanderer's chest. Wanderer speaks to the soldier, loud enough for everyone to hear.

WANDERER

Do they pay you enough?

The soldier stops, scared.

WANDERER (CONT'D)

To die in a desert?

THE CAPTAIN (Impatient)

We're bringing you to The Court. In chains or in shards; it makes no difference to me. You made your choices, now live *with* them or die *by* them. Cuff her!

The soldier breathes deep and continues up to Wanderer until she pokes Wanderer in the Gemstone. The soldier freezes. The wind is picking up around them.

THE CAPTAIN

I'm sorry it has to be like this.

WANDERER

You will be.

The wind blows through and pulls Wanderer's overcoat back, exposing the blade. Wanderer knocks the soldier's rifle aside, then draws out her blade and cuts across the soldier's eyes. She kneels down, still in the same motion, and grabs the soldier's pistol from it's holster. As she stands back up, she drives the blade through the soldier's breastplate and shatters the soldiers Gemstone.

Wanderer sends the sizzling body to the side and shoots the soldier straight ahead of her in the neck, sending that soldier onto her back. She winds back to throw her knife at The Captain while also turning her pistol over to the last soldier. She fires into the soldier's hip, causing the soldier's shot to pass through where Wanderer's kidney would be. At the same time, she throws the blade at The Captain, who's drawing her own pistol. The blade slides through her breastplate and pierces only just into The Captain's Gemstone. The Captain stumbles back, dropping her weapon, and tumbles off the vehicle, landing on her back. Wanderer turns and finishes the last soldier off with a bullet to the chest just above her breastplate.

Wanderer walks casually over to that last soldier, picks her up by her Gemstone with her left hand and crushes it, tossing the shards out into the sand. She walks over to the other soldier, passing The Captain and kicking away the pistol she was reaching for. She crushes the other soldier's Gemstone in the same way. She comes to stand over The Captain and, with her left hand, rips the breast plate off. The blade wiggles and remains embedded in The Captain, causing visible discomfort. Wanderer grips the blade and begins to twist. The Captain raises her hands and begs.

THE CAPTAIN

Wait! Wait! Please don't! I'm sorry! I'm so so sorry!
Please! I'm sorry! PLEASE!

A beat.

WANDERER

See?

WANDERER twists the blade and the Gemstone bursts from the pressure. She looks over the ammo and armour that she can scavenge and gets to work looting the magazines and taking a breast plate from one of the soldiers. She removes her overcoat and shirt, exposing that she is, in fact, largely mechanical. Her chest is like a cage of bars and tubes, culminating in a Chrysocola Gemstone that looks as though one flick could destroy it entirely. Some flesh still descends from her head like tree roots amidst the mass of metal, but it's unclear if there's enough there for her to even be called by her own name, or if she's just a machine pretending to be a Gem. We don't know, but can surmise, that the substantial damage to her Gemstone has prevented her from being able to regenerate her missing portions. She slips the breastplate on over her Gemstone, then her shirt, then her overcoat. She acknowledges the hole in her clothes from where she was shot. She'll sew it up later. She rolls up her right sleeve, takes one last look at her work, and

carries on into the vast expanse of The Wastelands.