

AETHER TORRENT #12
"THE TRIO'S ESCAPE"

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. EAST GRANBRIDGE - NIGHT

Night falls over the enormous octagonal city-state. The white and gray mile-wide causeway bridge extends from the western point of the octagon to parts unknown.

The bridge and the western point meet at the edge of a dizzyingly steep continental rise. We've seen the drop-off of the land before, but not from this side.

The hangars look tiny from this height. Boxy delivery trucks leave the landing site.

AVANI (V.O.)

You want to steal the airship?!

EXT. FIRE DISTRICT - NIGHT

TORI rides KLAUSER and AVANI rides CIRRUS (wind tiger) down a Fire District street. Cirrus runs, not flies. Power lines crisscross the dark blue sky, still distinct in this light.

TORI

Sure! It's the fastest way to leave, aside from the bridge, but the bridge has monsters.

The blue in Cirrus's face fades into the white again.

CIRRUS (V.O.)

Whatever gets us away from here is fine with me. If I'd known your mom was a Nexus executive, I'd never have joined this little party.

Avani rubs her forehead, still sorting everything out.

AVANI

And this Nexus is some sort of elementalist mafia, right?

CIRRUS (V.O.)

Well--

TORI

Car!

Avani hangs on as Cirrus DODGES around a boxy delivery car.

Tori maneuvers Klauser around the other side. The car HONKS.

Cirrus and Klauser converge in the road, still running.

CIRRUS (V.O.)

The Nexus wants to get as many warm bodies as possible throwing around the elements at any cost. So, it needs a constant stream of vessel materials and cash.

AVANI

And we interrupted that stream.

Cirrus recites Karrun's title like a fearful invocation.

CIRRUS (V.O.)

(shivering)

The Beast of Water, Division One
Executive Cirein Cròin the
Whale-Eater. She'll murder us.

Tori takes her eyes off the road.

TORI

So I guess you're in the Nexus?

CIRRUS (V.O.)

Yeah, basically. I can explain later.

AVANI

Car!

The party evades another delivery car.

Its DRIVER shakes a fist out the window and HONKS the horn.

EXT. LANDING SITE - NIGHT

Floodlights on the hangars SNAP ON and illuminate the scene.

KARRUN stands, lit from behind. She holds her long curved sword (*nodachi*) like a cane with both hands in front. The middle hangar behind her is closed up tight.

Tori and company enter the landing site. They can see Karrun.

Tori eases up on Klauser's saddle's handlebars.

Klauser slows but keeps walking. So does Cirrus.

Karrun and her limo are the only things on the landing site. The site itself is flat yet heavily cracked, evidence of Earth-magic repairs after this morning's fight.

Karrun is barefoot, for once. The dress of her suit BLOWS noticeably in a breeze.

Karrun stretches her tail, resulting in a few JOINT CRACKS.

Avani dismounts Cirrus. One of the pockets in her new cargo pants bulges suspiciously.

Tori stays on Klauser.

Karrun smiles in harmless-looking welcome. Ten yards or less now separate Karrun and the party.

Tori grips Klauser's handlebars.

TORI

Move, Mom. The air's humid
enough for Water magic.

Karrun drops her smile. She lifts her sword and takes her time unsheathing it. It contains no carapite. The long blade is very finely crafted.

KARRUN

I did not come here, nor did I
dismiss the cargo loaders, to
get in a splash fight with you,
Tori dear. I will execute those
who have harmed the Nexus.

TORI

Then you'd better kill me too.

Karrun tosses the scabbard off-screen and points her sword at us. Despite its length, she holds it in her right hand only.

KARRUN

I could never. But removing you
from my way is another matter!

Karrun CHARGES Tori and Klauser, blazingly fast.

Tori reaches for her knife --

SLOW MOTION:

Klauser REARS BACK, just far enough for his throat to evade a
SLASH from Karrun's sword.

The blade's tip cuts off the tips of some throat feathers.

Tori topples off Klauser's side, duffel bag and all.

REGULAR SPEED:

Tori LANDS HARD on her butt.

Karrun SPRINGS at Klauser, raising her sword for a vertical
slash --

Only to be TACKLED out of frame by Cirrus, who HEADBUTTS her
hard in her exposed right side.

Klauser wisely runs away.

Avani helps Tori to her feet.

TORI

(to Avani)

Lock her legs in the ground!

Karrun SLASHES at Cirrus, who DUCKS to evade. At the word
"hold," Cirrus BLASTS Karrun with strong wind, summoned from
a FLAP of her collar-wings. Karrun braces against it.

CIRRUS (V.O.)

No, I'll hold her! Just get to
the airship!

The wind passes. Karrun charges Cirrus --

And SLASHES twice in very quick succession. Air WHOOSHES behind her swings. Cirrus evades both times.

Tori takes off toward the middle hangar, her bag bouncing on her back. Avani follows for a few strides before turning around.

Thanks to the hangar lights, Klauser's head is still faintly visible above the large wake he makes the tall grass.

Tori makes a quick beckoning gesture at Avani.

TORI

He'll be fine, come on!

Tori and Avani run.

TORI (CONT'D)

By the way, nice pants.

Karrun moves to follow, but braces against another sudden WIND BLAST.

EXT. AIR DISTRICT - BRIDGE GATES - NIGHT

Police cars and OFFICERS flank every gate in the massive white wall blocking the bridge.

ROFUN, in full police chief regalia, stands on the roof of a police car and surveys some of the cars. He rests his hand on the dark blue hilt of a scimitar on his belt.

The brown-on-white SERGEANT looks slightly embarrassed by his high-perched chief.

SERGEANT

Uh, Chief Rofun sir, maybe you can stand somewhere else?

ROFUN

The archon ordered me to watch the gates. I will not fail her as my twin brother often does.

The Sergeant sighs and scratches under his hat.

ROFUN (CONT'D)

(narrows eyes)

We must remain vigilant.
Sergeant! Sweep the area for the
stolen dire kiwi and bring
anyone you find near it to me.
Remember that the wind tiger can
change her form.

SERGEANT

Yes sir.

INT. HANGAR - NIGHT

A door-shaped section of hangar entrance SHEARS OFF on three sides and FOLDS IN like an accordion. Avani and Tori enter. Avani pockets her mythril ingot.

The turtle-shaped airship barely fits in the titanic hangar, lit dimly from within and sharply by lights in the hangar's ceiling. Its cargo entrance is open.

Tori leads the way. It's quiet. Some forklifts remain.

AVANI

I guess that fall didn't hurt?

Tori rubs her posterior.

TORI

No, I landed on my ass.
(jostles bag)
I didn't want to break that
treasure you got me before I had
a chance to play it.

INT. AIRSHIP - CARGO HOLD - NIGHT

Some widely-dispersed ceiling lights are on in the hold.

AVANI

I was surprised when he told me
you played the violin. You still
don't seem the... violin type.

They walk past some remaining crates and several stacks of wooden barrels. The barrels are stacked on their round sides and tied to half-rings on the floor.

TORI

Thanks. I like surprising people. But who told you?

AVANI

Um, Somer was his name, I think.
Your mother's driver?

Tori halts. A shadowy object on top of the barrels in the background seems out of place.

AVANI (CONT'D)

What's the matter?

TORI

Her limo was outside.

Right on cue, SOMER leaps from the barrels and into the sparse light. He wears his chauffeur's uniform, jacket and shirt unbuttoned for freer movement.

SOMER

Third try!

Tori and Avani turn around. They only complete half a turn before Somer COLLIDES with Avani --

SLAMMING her to the floor.

Somer raises his left arm and TENSES his claws.

Avani shuts her eyes tightly. A second passes. She opens them halfway.

Somer still kneels over her, left arm raised, right arm and knees pinning her down. His eyes look to his right.

Tori, behind him and to his right, holds her knife against his neck gills. She makes a "get up" gesture with the knife.

Somer rises slowly. Avani crawls out from under him and takes her ingot out.

Somer's tail LASHES out and HITS Tori behind her knees --

And he STRIKES Tori in the sternum, open-palmed.

Tori lands on her duffel bag. It arches her back and causes her to HIT the back of her head on the floor. She GRUNTS in jaw-clenched pain and drops her knife.

Tori clutches the back of her head and rolls off her bag.

Somer lolls his head around to Avani, GRINNING toothily.

Avani retreats a step or two.

EXT. LANDING SITE - NIGHT

A SLASH of Karrun's sword goes over Cirrus's ducking head.

Karrun circles around Cirrus. Cirrus rotates to keep their eyes locked.

CIRRUS (V.O.)

I know why you're not using
Water magic on me, Whale-Eater.
You can eat bones, but you hate
dry meat. Will you eat Avani
too, or will she remind you too
much of Tori?!

Karrun advances on her and SLASHES TWICE, impressively fast.

Cirrus SHOULDER-TACKLES Karrun in the chest before she can bring her sword back for a third swipe.

Karrun GRABS Cirrus's left front leg and SINKS her claws in, drawing blood.

Cirrus CRINGES and makes a SOUND like a wind gust mixed with a muffled tiger's roar.

Karrun HURLS Cirrus away by the front leg --

And Cirrus lands on her other three with a wind-assisted turn to keep facing Karrun. Summoned wind begins drying the flow from her five fresh puncture wounds.

Karrun tightens her one-handed grip on her two-handed sword.

KARRUN

Do not speak of my daughter.

Cirrus's voice is solid, but she trembles visibly.

CIRRUS (V.O.)

Then how about I speak of *my*
daughter? And my son? If I can't
save them from the Nexus, I'll
save those girls from *you*.

Confusion flickers across Karrun's face before melting into a smile. Her limo sits far in the background.

KARRUN

You have a strong will, wind
tiger. Your children must be
fine soldiers for us.

Cirrus GROWLS and DASHES for Karrun.

INT. AIRSHIP - CARGO HOLD - NIGHT

Avani points the flat side of her ingot at Somer.

AVANI

Don't come nearer. Earth magic
can break you with one touch!

Somer reaches into his jacket and pulls out his long curved knife.

SOMER

Then I won't touch you.

Somer STABS the air in the direction of the stacked barrels.

Avani sees the barrels, guesses what's coming and DUCKS --

Somer SWINGS his arm --

A barrel SHATTERS into large jagged pieces carried in a WATER DRILL made of red wine. The barrels above it shift down, but the ropes keep the stack from collapsing.

Avani already holds her ingot on the floor. A metal curve of a shield rises between her and the drill with a SHEARING NOISE, muffled by the SPLASH-POUNDING of the drill.

The deflected wine flows over Tori's knife and bag. Tori's hand picks up the knife --

And she SWINGS it at Somer while rising from a crouch, throwing a portion of the wine and splinters back at him.

Somer sees it just in time and SLASHES his knife. The wine drill SPLASHES to one side in midair.

SOMER
(points knife at Tori)
Stay out of this!

Tori points her knife at Somer.

TORI
Make me.

She PULLS her knife back fast --

Two of the barrels leaning against two of the ropes EXPLODE into wine and splinters, SEVERING the ropes.

Somer turns around, looks up, reacts to impending doom --

And quickly vanishes under an AVALANCHE of wine barrels.

Avani peeks out over her barrier and RUNS AWAY an instant before the barrels reach it.

Tori runs too.

She joins Avani and they run side-by-side. Some stray rolling barrels "chase" them comically.

AVANI
Are you all right?

TORI
(points to eyes)
Depends. Are my pupils uneven?

AVANI
(leans in, looks)
No...

TORI
Then I'm fine.

EXT. LANDING SITE - DAY

Karrun advances on Cirrus. Cirrus JUMPS off-screen --

Hovers fifteen feet in the air and SPINS around, summoning a small TORNADO on top of Karrun.

Karrun braces as the wind TEARS at her suit-dress.

Karrun takes a second or two of this abuse, crouches down, LEAPS UP over ten feet in the air --

SLOW MOTION:

And SLASHES her sword in a wide arc. Cirrus attempts to evade, but the arc cuts through her right wing and two of her sensory tendrils, severing all.

Cirrus cranes her neck back and HOWLS in pain.

Still in midair, Karrun uses the angular momentum of the swing to KICK Cirrus in her ribs.

REGULAR SPEED:

Karrun lands gracefully in a crouch. The tornado unravels.

Further away, Cirrus HITS GROUND hard enough to BOUNCE once.

INT. AIRSHIP - COCKPIT - NIGHT

The cockpit door SHEARS OPEN. Avani and Tori enter.

They're alone. A lone piece of paper rests on the controls.

Tori approaches the controls and snatches the paper. It's illegible to us. Tori reads it.

AVANI
What does it say?

TORI

It's in raizan. "Good luck flying?"

Tori looks at the controls. Nothing seems amiss.

She ducks under the controls. A mess of wires hang, severed.

Tori CRUMPLES the paper and KICKS the pilot's chair.

TORI (CONT'D)

Damn it Mom!

Avani turns to leave. She stops.

Somer, bruised and dripping with wine, grips the door frame. He hunches over and SNORTS angrily, knife in hand.

EXT. LANDING SITE - NIGHT

Cirrus struggles to get up on her three good legs, BREATHING HEAVILY and bleeding from her stumps of wing and tendrils. Neither the wing nor the tendrils seem to contain bones.

Karrun walks slowly towards Cirrus. She holds her sword in both hands now.

INT. AIRSHIP - COCKPIT - NIGHT

The tip of Somer's knife CLANGS into Avani's ingot. She holds it over her heart.

Tori drops her bag and draws her knife.

Avani PUSHES her ingot at Somer. Somer's knife ROLLS BACKWARD like a pencil shaving.

Somer drops it and SWIPES at her with his claws, which Avani incredibly BLOCKS by catching the space between his thumb and index finger with the edge of her left hand.

Tori watches, slack-jawed.

Avani thrusts her ingot at Somer. He evades it and CHOPS her wrist. She drops the ingot.

Avani grabs Somer's right wrist in her left hand and TWISTS his arm --

PUNCHES him in the stomach with her right, UPPERCUTS him in the nose when he doubles over, lets go of his arm and PUNCHES him twice in the chest, left-right.

Somer staggers backwards, holding his nose.

SOMER

Is that it? The archon gives me worse!

Avani hits the wall with her ingot.

A ridge of metal rises angularly into Somer's shins, knocking him forward. A pillar of metal then LIFTS Somer straight up with a HORRIBLE SHEARING NOISE.

Tori covers her ears.

The pillar pins Somer to the ceiling with a WHUMP. He flails and struggles uselessly, stuck fast.

Avani nonchalantly picks up her ingot and steps back into her sandal. She notices Tori staring at her.

AVANI

What? I learned to defend myself long before the Great One made our paths cross. Now shall we go save Cirrus?

Tori sheathes her knife with a "Damn, she's good" expression.

EXT. LANDING SITE - NIGHT

Karrun is in killing range. She lifts her sword overhead.

KARRUN

Breathe your last, wind tiger.

Cirrus GASPS, not in fear but realization.

Karrun tenses her grip --

Cirrus lifts her head --

And spits a powerful AIR DRILL into Karrun's chest.

Karrun takes the hit full-on. The wind SHREDS a hole in her suit and BLASTS her backwards towards the hangar.

Karrun lets go of her sword as she flies back.

Cirrus's legs give out and she COUGHS CONVULSIVELY.

Karrun's sword CLATTERS on the pavement. A SHEARING sound is heard far off-screen.

Karrun LANDS rolling.

She rights herself on all fours, glares at us and releases a DEEP GROWL. She has never looked more bestial.

The pavement under her hands and feet suddenly RUMBLES and PILES UP around them.

Karrun GRUNTS in wild confusion.

Several yards behind Karrun, Avani holds her ingot to the ground outside a second makeshift door in the main door of the hangar. Tori, with bag, stands inside the "door."

KARRUN (CONT'D)

How dare you...

Karrun YANKS her hands free of the pavement. The ground RUMBLES and more of it piles over her legs and tail.

AVANI

I've got her! Go!

Tori tightens her lips.

TORI'S P.O.V.:

Karrun struggles to free herself. Cirrus, further away, doesn't move. Karrun's limo remains parked off to the side.

Tori SPRINTS for the limo.

Karrun BREAKS OUT of the pavement holding her abdomen and waist. She rises to a kneeling position and PUNCHES at the rocks around her legs.

Avani presses harder on her ingot --

A pair of EARTHEN JAWS break out of the pavement and WHUMP closed over Karrun, burying her up to the neck. Her arms BURST OUT and furiously DIG at the earth around her.

Tori reaches the limo. Looks in the driver's-side window.

A set of keys dangle from one in the ignition.

TORI

Somer, you dumbass, I could kiss
you.

Karrun BREAKS FREE of her dirt mound and RUNS toward Avani.

Avani's forehead sweats.

Numerous smaller earthen jaws BITE at Karrun's feet, but she deftly evades each one.

Avani's fingers CLENCH her ingot tremulously --

Karrun closes in on Avani, claws TENSED at her sides --

REPEAT TWICE, DIFFERENT ANGLES:
The limo SLAMS into Karrun.

Karrun rolls over and off the long hood.

The limo stops between Avani and Karrun. Tori opens her door.

TORI (CONT'D)

Get in back! Hurry!

Avani hurriedly stands up and enters the limo's back door.

Karrun GROANS, temporarily stunned. The sound of a SLAMMED DOOR comes from the other side.

The limo drives away. Its back wheel "accidentally" RUNS OVER Karrun's tail with a THUMP-THUMP sound.

Karrun CLENCHES her jaw and GRUNTS.

She rises to her hands and knees and shakes her head to clear it. Holds her head and looks up.

Tori stops the limo by Cirrus.

LIMO

Avani helps Cirrus into the spacious back seat.

Tori looks in the rear-view mirror. Her bag rides shotgun.

Seen in the mirror, Karrun stands up, but makes no other movement.

LANDING SITE

Karrun's expression betrays a hint of sadness. Only a hint.

LIMO

Tori JERKS her head away from the mirror --

And STOMPS on the accelerator.

In back, Avani pulls Cirrus the rest of the way in and closes the door.

LANDING SITE

The limo leaves. It heads for the road back to the Fire District.

Karrun watches it go.

KARRUN

You think you can escape? The
Aether is everywhere, Torrent.
As is my power.

EXT. AIR DISTRICT - RANDOM DINER - NIGHT

The blue-on-white raiza MESSENGER mopes his way past an unimportant diner somewhere in the Air District. He talks to himself in **raizan**, subtitled as always.

MESSENGER

(forlorn sigh)

**Klauser is gone, gone forever.
Oh, if only!**

He stops in front of an alley and cries to the heavens:

MESSENGER (CONT'D)

If only I had tied him down!

The sound of HEAVY RUMMAGING comes from down the alley, attracting the Messenger's attention.

Klauser RUMMAGES in a big garbage bin behind the diner.

His head emerges with a four-inch COCKROACH pinched in his beak. He tilts his head back and gobbles the bug down.

The Messenger emerges from the alley. He SMILES BRIGHTLY.

MESSENGER (CONT'D)

Klauser, my little bird!

The Messenger HUGS Klauser around the neck. Klauser GWARKS.

EXT. AIR DISTRICT - NIGHT

The limo drives on. The front bumper and grill, and part of the hood, are dented where Karrun struck and rolled.

INT. LIMO - NIGHT

Avani puts away a roll of gauze in a first-aid kit and puts the kit in Tori's open bag. Cirrus's leg is wrapped, but her wing and tendrils aren't.

AVANI

You're sure about your wing?

CIRRUS (V.O.)

It's not a limb. It'll grow back if it touches air directly.

Tori keeps driving. She looks a little dazed. Understandably.

TORI

Cirrus. I forgot to thank you, so... thank you. You almost died to give us the chance to escape.

CIRRUS (V.O.)

It's nothing. Just that you two remind me a little of my cubs.

AVANI

(excitedly)

So you are a mother! What are their names?

Cirrus closes her eyes, exhales slowly and rests her head on Avani's lap. Avani starts petting her after a moment.

CIRRUS (V.O.)

For all I know they have new names. The Nexus...

(pregnant pause)

Through my evil lying bastard of a mate, they promised to train my cubs to be stronger than me. I found out years too late that they were made into mercenaries.

Tori listens. Avani keeps petting Cirrus.

CIRRUS (V.O.)

I don't know where my cubs are. Every day I check the wind for a trace of them. No luck yet.

TORI

Once we're past the bridge, why don't we help you look for them?

Cirrus lifts her head.

AVANI

That's a great idea!

CIRRUS (V.O.)

You're serious?

Tori breaks into a smile, equal parts helpless and hopeful.

TORI

Sure. I've got nowhere to be, and Mom wants you two dead. If we keep moving, you can look for your kids, Avani can preach, and I can build up my museum.

AVANI

You mean steal things?

TORI

Not necessarily. You and Cirrus
count as...

Tori trails off, sees something up ahead and SLAMS on the
brakes.

EXT. AIR DISTRICT - BARRICADE #1 - NIGHT

The limo stops in the middle of the road.

A barricade, a police car and two officers block the street.
The massive white wall to the bridge stands far in the
background.

LIMO

Tori grips the wheel.

TORI (CONT'D)

Damn it Mom.

BARRICADE #1

The limo accelerates.

EXT. AIR DISTRICT - BRIDGE GATES - NIGHT

The Messenger sits in Klauser's saddle and addresses Rofun. A
ring of sword-wielding officers, plus the Sergeant, surrounds
the Messenger.

MESSENGER

This is ridiculous, Chief Rofun!
Klauser belongs to me!

ROFUN

Of course he does, *Cirrus*.

MESSENGER

That's not my name, I'm--

ROFUN

--A wind tiger can take human form. It can't be much harder to take raiza form!

The limo PLOWS through the first barricade and drives by in the background.

Rofun and his half of the circle of officers simultaneously turn their heads toward the limo.

Rofun draws his scimitar and points it at the Messenger.

ROFUN (CONT'D)

Dismount in the name of the law!

LIMO

Tori drives toward the nearest gate in the massive white wall. It's closed and guarded by police.

AVANI

Tori? The gate is shut!

TORI

Gonna need your help with that.
You okay enough to walk, Cirrus?

A stream of water suddenly SLAMS DOWN into the hood of the limo and THUNDERS against the windshield. Tori, Avani and Cirrus REACT in surprise.

BRIDGE GATES

The limo has a crater of a dent in the hood over the front axle. Its speed plummets.

Rofun rides a reluctant Klauser, holding his handlebars in one hand and his sword in another.

ROFUN

Officers! Surround that car!

The officers at the gate Tori aimed for run off-screen. GUARDER PAVISSIS, the lurutt from episode 8, looks back and forth, unsure of whether to leave his post.

LIMO

A wave of officers closes in on the limo.

TORI

It's Somer's brother Rofun.
Crap, I never knew he had an
elemental depth like that!

AVANI

What do we do?

TORI

(grabs forehead)
Um... Avani! Break a hole in the
floor and do some earth-moving!

BRIDGE GATES

The limo's undercarriage SHAKES and a hole PEELS OPEN in it.
Avani's hand reaches through the hole and touches her ingot
to the pavement.

The pavement ROLLS out and away from the limo like a ripple
in water, revealing a pale white surface under it.

The pavement-ripple stops just short of colliding with the
officers, causing them no harm.

ROFUN

Earth magic. Drag them out, men,
but don't hurt the redhead!

The officers pause and climb over the knee-high ridges.

LIMO

Tori leans on the divider between the front and back seats.

TORI

What's wrong?!

AVANI

The pavement is too shallow! I
can't control the foundation
material below it!

The officers reach for the limo's doors.

Avani pulls her hand up and touches her ingot to the floor.

The doors and door frames BEND into each other on the bottom, locking them down tight.

TORI

Great, now we're *really* trapped.

CIRRUS (V.O.)

Come on, Avani, you can still make the surface vibrate!

AVANI

But what good will that do?

One of the officers SMASHES the driver-side window with the hilt of his sword.

Tori draws her knife and SLASHES the officer's arm as she speaks. The officer YELLS OUT and withdraws.

TORI

Try it and find out!

Another officer BREAKS the rear window, scattering some glass over Cirrus.

Avani presses her ingot through the hole in the floor with both hands and wrenches her eyes shut.

BRIDGE GATES

SLOW-MOTION:

A tight series of SHOCKWAVES, true ripples in the ground, race away from the limo in all directions and loosen the pavement.

REGULAR SPEED:

The limo and officers are THROWN a foot or so in the air and LAND HARD. The windows CRACK and the officers fall down.

Klauser GWARKS and falls over, taking Rofun with him.

The shockwave makes the white wall RUMBLE. Thousands of flakes of white paint snow down from its façade.

Guarder Pavissis notices the paint falling.

BRIDGE GATES

The limo doors SHEAR open. Tori, Avani and Cirrus exit. Tori and Cirrus deliberately STOMP on some of the officers on their way out. Tori carries her bag.

Klauser FLAILS on the ground. Rofun stands up before Klauser can and raises his sword over Klauser's neck.

ROFUN

You useless bird--!

Avani sees him.

AVANI

Klauser!

Avani hits the white ground with her ingot --

A second, more MASSIVE SHOCKWAVE ripples the ground, throwing up great piles of pavement chunks --

Knocking down a few more officers --

And Rofun --

And further away, WOBBLING the handcuffed Messenger and the Sergeant who was escorting him towards a police car --

And SHAKING some buildings further away still.

The huge wall RUMBLES dangerously.

More paint snows on Guarder Pavissis. He looks up, visibly worried.

GUARDER PAVISSIS

Oh my... oh no-no...

Cirrus hobbles towards the gate. Tori lingers behind her.

TORI

Avani?!

Avani stares down Rofun. Klauser stands up a little unsteadily behind him.

ROFUN

Now I see why the archon found
you dangerous. Prepare to die!

Rofun raises his sword and runs at Avani.

Avani DUCKS down and STRIKES the loose pavement with both hands on her ingot.

SLOW-MOTION:

The ground under Avani RISES UP a foot in height and SLAMS itself back down in another shockwave.

The shockwave catches Rofun on just the right footfall --

REGULAR SPEED:

And THROWS him up and over Avani.

The shockwave RUMBLES many more buildings.

The top of the wall RUMBLES and RAINS DOWN BRICKS.

Tori and Cirrus leave the gate as fast as possible.

Guarder Pavissis looks up, runs panicky back and forth and retreats to a duck-and-cover position. Painted bricks FALL all around.

Rofun watches the wall upside-down, sprawled on his back.

ROFUN (CONT'D)

Such elemental depth...

Tori, Avani and Cirrus meet by Klauser. The pavement has become gravel.

TORI

Okay, listen, I've got an idea!

Guarder Pavissis still huddles on the ground.

Avani touches her ingot to the gate --

EXT. BRIDGE-SIDE GATE - NIGHT

And CRACKS it open. It turns out it was made of wood, if the design of it suggested otherwise.

Cirrus and Tori hurry through. Avani stays at the gate with Klauser. Klauser looks nervous.

The titanic causeway bridge stretches from the wall to the horizon. The giant wall has a partner that meets it at an angle to form East Granbridge's western point.

EXT. AIR DISTRICT - BRIDGE GATES - NIGHT

Rofun yells at the Sergeant and officers while pointing his scimitar towards the wall.

ROFUN

Are you mad?! Just follow them!

SERGEANT

But the foundation feeds
vibrations straight to the wall!

EXT. BRIDGE-SIDE GATE - NIGHT

Tori and Cirrus stand far away from the wall and Avani.

Avani licks her lower lip.

AVANI

Just once more, O Lord...!

She touches the wall with both hands over her ingot.

THE ENTIRE WALL SHAKES.

EXT. CITADEL - NIGHT

The Citadel RUMBLES.

EXT. WATERGATE - NIGHT

The blue-fractal-framed arch in the east wall RUMBLES softly.

EXT. LANDING SITE - NIGHT

Karrun's arms pin Somer's wrists over his head on the cracked pavement. Somer's face is inexplicably bruised and he isn't wearing his jacket or shirt. The ground RUMBLES softly.

Karrun looks up for a full second. In that second we see she isn't wearing at least the top half of her suit. Presumably not the bottom either, but we can't tell.

EXT. WESTERN WALL - NIGHT

All along the sharply-bent western wall, the top three meters CRUMBLES OFF and FALLS DOWN in a shower of bricks.

EXT. BRIDGE GATES - NIGHT

The officers still guarding gates (re: outside Rofun's shouting range) RUN AWAY deeper into the Air District.

Pavissis abandons his huddle and runs as fast as his stubby legs can take him.

EXT. BRIDGE-SIDE GATE - NIGHT

Avani and Klauser both PANT for breath as they stand by Tori and Cirrus. Avani sits in Klauser's saddle.

The party watches the last bricks fall.

EXT. AIR DISTRICT - BRIDGE GATES - NIGHT

A long, 7'-tall-or-less pile of bricks blocks every gate as far as the eye can see.

Rofun stares, slack-jawed. The officers glance at each other nervously. The Sergeant COUGHS.

SERGEANT

If it helps, sir, your brother has had a greater *quantity* of failure.

ROFUN

Shut up, Sergeant.

EXT. BRIDGE-SIDE GATE - NIGHT

Tori SIGHS. The brick pile isn't quite as thick on this side as it is on the other.

AVANI

Praise below. I hope I didn't hurt anyone.

CIRRUS (V.O.)

Either way, tell your god I said thanks.

AVANI

I will. Tori? Are you all right?

Tori stares a mile through the wall. Tears mark her cheeks.

AVANI (CONT'D)

Tori.

TORI

(voice trembles)

Huh? Oh, I was, just, admiring your work. I can't think of a bigger *eff-you* to Mom. Thanks.

(rubs eyes, coughs)

It's a lot of stuff to get through, but it won't stay forever. We'll be safe if we keep moving.

Tori inhales a SHAKY BREATH and turns her back towards the partially-crumbled wall.

TORI (CONT'D)

So.

Avani turns Klauser around. She, Tori and Cirrus look down the mile-wide bridge. There isn't a light to be seen, except in the night sky.

TORI (CONT'D)

Where to?

Seen from above, the bridge points only one direction. Away.

FADE OUT