

GAME OF 72

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**BLACK.**

FINN

Dad? DAD!

(heaving gasps, TERROR)

Please no, please no, please no,  
please no, PLEASE NO--

FADE IN:

**EXT. BAIT CAGES**

YEAR 2800. Sick, neon orbs of CAGED, mauled HUMANS. Spitting, twitching, moaning. Ripped-out eye flesh, MISSING LIMBS.

Young boy **FINN (8)** runs barefoot through toxic slime puddles in tattered-clothes, a dirt-smearred face. Shaking with fright as BONY HANDS try to snatch him through LIVE-WIRE cell bars.

A monochromatic, whirring METAL BOX grabs him by the NECK.

METAL BOX

(jeer, hiss)

Hurry up, scum! Can't dawdle. Don't  
wanna miss your father die? I got  
39657 bitcoin on that loser's head.  
I'm going home a rich box, tonight!

**INT. KILL ARENA**

A dimly-lit, chaotic AMPHITHEATER. A blood-thirsty audience made up of various ARTIFICIAL, HYPER-INTELLIGENT species: bionic, live-wired, LED-blinking, metal bots, avatars, etc.

Tentacles, synthetics pound loudly. CHANT. CHANT. CHANT.

AUDIENCE

*Kill him! Kill him! KILL HIM!*  
*Kill him! Kill him! KILL HIM!*

Centillions of \$\$ bets in wild, zany ALIEN LANGUAGES zip around the ring on dizzying, hologram JUMB-O-TRONS. Petrified FINN skids to the edge, grasping through LIVE-WIRE bars--

FINN

Dad? DADDY!

INSIDE THE ARENA: bright hot LIGHTS shine on his FATHER, **BAIT HUMAN #992 (45)** a shirtless, blindfolded BAIT HUMAN\* covered in scars, slits, bites, bruises, and dried bloody crusts.

*\*Like "DOG-BAITING", "HUMAN-BAITING" is the practice of pitting aggressive humans against chained humans for sport.*

He violently tugs against rusted chains, gripping a METAL COLLAR that's choking him. His arms flail wildly, trying to anticipate the next BLIND PUNCH. Skull crack! Knocked flat.

His opponent? Billowing **HUMAN FIGHTER #654** twice-his-size and genetically engineered. A VICIOUS beat down. *CHEERS! ROARS!*

BAIT HUMAN #992  
(cranes neck, SHOUTS)  
Boy? Finn, is that you? Listen to me! OK? Listen to me! Son!

--a GUTTING, SUCKER-PUNCH.

BAIT HUMAN #992 (CONT'D)  
It's, it's going to be OK, alright?  
Finn? Listen boy, it's going to be--

FINN  
(TEARS streaming down face)  
Daddy!

ROBOTIC BROADCASTER #1 (O.S.)  
*Aaaaand it's BAIT HUMAN #992's 72nd match! Can you believe he survived this long? If he wins, if he wins--*

ROBOTIC BROADCASTER #2 (O.S.)  
*Not likely!*

ROBOTIC BROADCASTER #1 (O.S.)  
*--if he wins he'll get a golden pass to THE GAME! He'll get to play for his freedom! If he loses--*

ROBOTIC BROADCASTER #2 (O.S.)  
*Very likely!*

ROBOTIC BROADCASTER #1 (O.S.)  
*--losers get a golden pass to HELL! YIKES! Big hit, HUMAN FIGHTER #654!*

Pummel. Pummel. Pummel. Blindfolds and choke-chains make it impossible for BAIT HUMAN #992 to compete. Powerless swings.

ROBOTIC BROADCASTER #1 (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
*Oh? What's this?*  
(cheers-and-jeers)  
*WOW! OK! We have a new fighter in the ring! HUMAN FIGHTER #655!*

No warning as another towering (HULK-esque) foaming **HUMAN FIGHTER #655** stampedes in. Teeth gnashing, he LUNGES!

BAIT HUMAN #992

How dare you. FIGHT FAIR! Battle me as an honest man, one-on-one. Rip off my blindfold, pathetic cowards. Only win when you cheat? Feel good? Feel anything at all? DEAD-WEIGHTS!

--but they FINISH HIM OFF from both sides. A grisly POP as he's torn to shreds. Blood explodes, projectile body parts.

FINN is broken, WAILING as he throws himself against the electric bars. He's ZAPPED after touching the live-current.

FINN

D-D-D-DAD! DAD! DAD!

An aloof, 9-FOOT **CYBORG** shrugs, ruffling multi-modal ROBO-WINGS. He leans in, cocks his head. His face? Just an ORB.

CYBORG

That will be you one day, fool.

He grabs FINN, hoisting him atop tall shoulders. Hefty CLANK, CLANK, CLANKS as feet drag down the hall. FINN kicks/screams.

### INT. DECISION ROOM

Feisty, bitter BRAWLS erupt as enraged KIDS kick. Foam. Bite. Yell. A throbbing horde of raw fists break cages, smashing walls, dummies, and each other. SHOUTS! SWEARING! WAILING!

CONTROLLER (O.S.)

*Kill! Kill! Kill! Kill!*

FINN is thrown down relentlessly, quickly yanked back up. His head SNAPS back roughly as a **SMALL KID** is shoved before him.

CYBORG

Go on. Punch him! Kick him! What have you left to live for? Your father's dead. Are you a fighter?

FINN doesn't move. Numb.

CYBORG (CONT'D)

Very well, then.

(contempt)

HE'S A BAIT!

A WING knocks him to the ground, dust plumes.

**FADE TO BLACK.**

FINN (V.O.)

*The universal thought among thinking machines states that the more a human suffers, the tougher he will become. Therefore, the better fighter he will become.*

A dull distortion quickly becomes deafening. STATIC.

MECHANICAL BEEPS, LASERS, familiar CHEERS--

**INT. KILL ARENA**

**SUBTITLE: 20 YEARS LATER**

From behind, a silhouette of a grown MALE HEAD atop a brawny, powerful physique. Before him? Hot spotlights, a DIRT-RING.

The usual flurry of flashing bets zoom rapidly around the ring, from blaring JUMB-O-TRONS. A cryptic, metal audience.

FINN (V.O.)

*This, of course, coming from artificial "supposed" intelligence who have no idea what it's like being human. Why? Because they don't bother. But also because they can't understand or manifest pain. Mental, physical. The kind that slowly eats at a human's will--*

Stomp. Stomp. STOMP. The ground gently rumbles, vibrates, and quakes. Anticipation so great you could hear A PIN DROP.

Instantly, gnarled gates fly open. Massive monster, **HUMAN FIGHTER #7596**, bursts through. Bloated fists thrown in the air, rough YELPS. Rage, angst, venom bleed through DEAD EYES.

Grunts, thrashing arms--

FINN (V.O.)

*My universal thought? The more a human suffers, the more his life, his hope, and his spirit are beaten out of him. He doesn't get tougher, because he can't. He simply--*

**FRONT REVEALED:** it's older **FINN (28)**. He looks up as steely blue eyes, glazed with routine, peek through tousled hair. He's BUILT now, with the similar, painful scars of his DAD.

A METAL COLLAR grips a chain bolted to the ground.

FINN (V.O.)  
--gives up.

Eyes shut. He tilts his head back, teeth clenched. All he knows? DEFENSE, not OFFENSE. He prepares for blows as HUMAN FIGHTER #7596 kicks up dirt, charging towards him. APPLAUSE!

AUDIENCE  
*Kill him! Kill him! KILL HIM!*  
*Kill him! Kill him! KILL HIM!*

### **EXT. BAIT CAGES**

Grisly, barbed-wire cages. Endless rows of shirtless, half-dead (or plain dead) hemorrhaging, beaten, lifeless BAITS.

Sticky BLOOD SPLATTERS oozing down walls, skull forts and crushed bones. Forced treadmills always "on" to EXHAUST THEM.

Low-hanging, broken LIGHT BULBS flicker on, off.

BAIT HUMAN #4655 (O.S.)  
*Oh Jesus, please hear my prayers.  
Please release us! Was it your  
intention for machines to rule us?  
Is this your will? Are-- are you  
one of them? Oh God, oh God what if  
he's one of them! Please! Get me  
out of this! Can anyone hear me?  
There's no one. Anyone? Nothing--*

DROID GUARD #17 (O.S.)  
Shut up, heretic.  
(cackle)  
Robot Jesus will come for you soon.

In every cage are crude TALLY MARKS: some for "wins" and some for "losses". Some have 10 tallies, some 50. 30. 15. 5. 70.

A BAIT lays dead, chalk in hand, about to mark his 72nd win.

### **INT. FINN'S CAGE**

FINN's slumped along the wall, OUT. Shallow, labored, rapid breathing. Wet coughs. His face? Jacked-up: puffy, swollen black eyes. Bruised, pus-y green welts. A deep shoulder gash.

A SHARP WINCE as he moves, nudging his cellmate.

FINN

Hey buddy, you up? You there?  
Please wake up. Tristan?

Sleeping (?) on the floor is **BAIT HUMAN #4662 (20's)**, deeply battered. Quiet. His ROBOTIC ARM\* beeps and malfunctions.

*\*Any human who loses a non-life-threatening limb can pay for a low-tech robotic replacement with "fight wins" as currency.*

Another careful NUDGE.

FINN (CONT'D)

Come on, come on, don't die on me--

BAIT HUMAN #4662

I'm here.

(mumbles)

It's so much better in my dreams.  
It's like, incredible, right? Zero awareness of this. Only bliss.

FINN hands him his chunk of moldy bread and a tin cup of sludgy brown "water". BAIT HUMAN #4662's ROBOTIC ARM swipes it as he drinks the gunky slop hungrily, holding back GAGS.

He painfully lifts his body up, wiping the dreck off his lips. His ROBOT HAND scrapes a "TALLY MARK" with 29 others.

BAIT HUMAN #4662 (CONT'D)

Thirty fights in. Forty two more to win. How can I possibly make it to seventy two? How can I even win two more? One? It's insanity. Fuck me.

FINN

Have faith.

BAIT HUMAN #4662

You know, it's this stupid arm. If I didn't have to trade twenty goddamn fights, TWENTY WON FIGHTS, for this heavy, grating, subhuman--  
(yells)

--and FAULTY, I MIGHT ADD! FAULTY! purported "better" arm, I could've had fifty wins by now! My leg is next. My other arm. My other leg. I won't be able to pay, to afford it!

He CHOKES on the mold, spitting it out.

BAIT HUMAN #4662 (CONT'D)  
 Shit. Just shit.  
 (hopeful)  
 You must promise to win today. Do whatever it takes. If you win, I win. Watching you walk out of here-- you know? It'll be like me walking out of here. You'll be walking out for all of us. I can taste it.

COUGHS up more green bread.

BAIT HUMAN #4662 (CONT'D)  
 And it'll taste better than this rancid shit. Blech. Hey!

Rattles BARS, spits.

BAIT HUMAN #4662 (CONT'D)  
 HEY! I'm sick of this shit! Give us real food!

### EXT. BAIT CAGES

Suddenly: deep growling, sharp snarling. Heavy CLOMP-ings echo as a **MONSTER** is dragged down the hall, thrashing, barely contained in LASER chains. **ANDROIDS** try to control it.

It's a NEW, ALARMING BREED of genetically-engineered human fighter. Spikes poke out his back, smoke blows out his nose.

Gnashing teeth! Neon blood eyes! Acid tears. Sharp howls as ANDROIDS collar him. One leers at FINN through electric BARS.

ANDROID GUARD #54  
 Ready to die?  
 (hides he's having  
 difficulty controlling)  
 Can't wait to see this generation.  
 How many minutes will you last?

FINN  
 You're veering. This is human fighting, not an inbred-monster-free-for-all! When humans no longer compete, what will you call us? Pit me against me! What's your problem?  
 (hits head)  
 God, GET ME OUT OF HERE!

ANDROID GUARD #54  
 What fun is that? We're beta testing. Upgrade. You're obsolete.  
 (MORE)

ANDROID GUARD #54 (CONT'D)  
 Need a biological boost! Rather, a  
 corrected biological deficit--  
 would you like an injection?

FINN stares, expression drops.

FINN  
 No. I can't possibly survive  
 against-- you're throwing the  
 fight. That's what this is? Really?

Gets too close to the LIVE-WIRE bars...

FINN (CONT'D)  
 Again?  
 (ZAPPED!)  
 Shit! Like you did with my Dad?  
 Like you did with Aukai yesterday?  
 Like you'll do with everyone,  
 everywhere eventually?

ANDROID GUARD #54  
 BAIT HUMAN #2209?

FINN  
 No, AUKAI. OK? He had a name. I  
 have a name. We all have actual  
 names. Not just the numbers you  
 slap on us. I'm going to die!

ANDROID GUARD #54  
 [POWER LEVEL LOW!] No. Think of it  
 more as a "gruesome phase-out".

FINN  
 It's not fair.

ANDROID GUARD #54  
 Who said anything about fair? You  
 made that word up, not us.

FINN  
 There's no part of you that feels  
 even the littlest bit remorseful--?  
 Some slight empathy? That maybe,  
 some part of this, isn't right?  
 (dejected)  
 Don't you feel for me?

ANDROID GUARD #54  
 No. That weakness was left out of  
 my design.

He leans in: an incredibly dynamic, psychedelic, futuristic, highly-advanced and brilliant machine across from bland FINN.

ANDROID GUARD #54 (CONT'D)

You never ask to be us, BAIT HUMAN  
#3008. Why wouldn't you want that?  
To be me? No fighting. No pain. No  
end, really. Ever. *Ever--*  
(eerie melodic)  
*Don't you want to live forever?*

It's dark. Just a pulsating mix of green/blue/red blinking kaleidoscopic lights reflecting off FINN'S sweaty face.

FINN

My name is Finn.  
(trance-like)  
Is that an option?

### INT. KILL ARENA

Unease. FINN's eyes dart nervously. He's center-ring, STAGE LIGHTS a blinding, searing white. Burning metal leash chained to the ground. Deep breathing. In, out. His COLLAR pinches.

Everything blurs and drips in slow-motion as he sees the enigmatic AUDIENCE go nuts. JUMB-O-TRONS brutally flash bets.

ROBOTIC BROADCASTER #1 (O.S.)

*The event you've been waiting for!  
Up next: BAIT HUMAN #3008 against  
new model HUMAN FIGHTER #7780!  
BETS! Taking all bets! Impressed?  
Pre-order your very own #7780 model  
for fight-breeding, today!*

CHANT. CHANT. CHANT. The floor thunders in anticipation as avatars, humanoids, drones, and super-machines pound wildly.

AUDIENCE

*Kill him! Kill him! KILL HIM!  
Kill him! Kill him! KILL HIM!*

Sneering, barking hissings explode behind gates holding in HUMAN FIGHTER #7780. The bars are about to burst, breaking--

A spastic BLOWOUT! He charges towards FINN. Huge veins pop and bulge, discolored spit and slime fly, foam dribbles.

HUMAN FIGHTER #7780 flares, lunging at FINN. 100% carnal: there's not an ounce of him that isn't prehistoric-primal.

FINN is tossed up and heaved to the ground again and again. Dizzy, he staggers to get back up, a bit laggy each time--

ROBOTIC BROADCASTER #1 (O.S.)  
*Mmmmm. TASTY! Stick a voltaic rod  
 in him, looks like he's about done!*

ROBOTIC BROADCASTER #2  
*Real shame, too. Don't you think?  
 Won't last the 72nd match--*

ROBOTIC BROADCASTER #1  
*Oh, is this number 72 for him?  
 Depressing! So close, but so far!  
 Actually, not close at all!  
 Nevermind!*

ROBOTIC BROADCASTER #2  
*His father, BAIT HUMAN #992, met a  
 similar fate over 20 years ago.  
 Must be a family thing!*

ROBOTIC BROADCASTER #1  
*The elusive illegal "loser" gene!*

Half-dead FINN is splattered in blood, dirt, mud, as each new SPIKE jab punctures thin skin. As he runs the leash SHORTENS.

FINN  
 (clutches collar, PANIC)  
 Oh God, oh please help me, oh God.

ROBOTIC BROADCASTER #1 (O.S.)  
*That familiar moment when they beg  
 for mercy!*

The rowdy crowd cheers louder as FINN meets the gaze of a nonplussed, psychopathic, dead-inside HUMAN FIGHTER #7780. Eyelids close, then open. Close, open. He's getting groggy.

FINN  
 Why do this? We're the same--

HUMAN FIGHTER #7780  
 (stuttering, malfunction)  
 Die. Just die. Time to die.

FINN is in a blurred, almost-frozen TRANCE.

FINN  
 But, why? Why? Why?

VOICE\* (V.O.)  
*Punch him in his heart.*

*\*The autonomous VOICE doesn't appear to be coming from anyone. It's crystal clear inside his head, only.*

TIME GOES STILL. FINN freezes as the CHAOS of the arena seems to fade behind him and float far, far away. Farther, farther--

FINN  
Wait, wh-what?

--ZEN INSTANTLY broke as HUMAN FIGHTER #7780 plows him with a left-jab blow. Over and over. FINN stumbles up, dragged back down. Shrieks and howls of approval boomerang around the PIT.

The calm VOICE returns.

VOICE (V.O.)  
*Punch him in his heart, Finn. It's his only weakness. Finn?*

FINN is battered and wounded as HUMAN FIGHTER #7780 leaps on him, beating his chest. He giddily RIPS OFF FINN'S ARM!

He lets out a blood curdling scream, falling to his knees. HUMAN FIGHTER #7780 waves the arm like a trophy. Chucks it.

THIS IS IT: he crashes in slow-motion to the ground. Thump. Thump. He bounces up, down. Dust feathers. Eyelids close.

--then OPEN. The CROWD is blurred, the cheering muffled.

VOICE (V.O.)  
*He was over-engineered. Punch him in the heart or die.*

FINN's on his back, splayed on the ground. A labored GRUNT. Sweat pours. He musters all his last STRENGTH, kicking him as hard as he can (with both feet) directly in the chest. BOOM!

HUMAN FIGHTER #7780 shakes, bile SPEWING out of all orifices. He convulses, eyes rolling up in his head. He clutches his heart. HEART ATTACK. He quickly flops flat on the ground.

SILENT AUDIENCE.

FINN slowly rises, staggering. Off-balance. Confused. Woozy.

ROBOTIC BROADCASTER #1 (V.O.)  
*What. Just. Happened.*

ROBOTIC BROADCASTER #2 (V.O.)  
*I'll tell you what just happened:  
UPSET!! Curiously, BAIT HUMAN #3008  
takes it! This is his 72nd match!*

ROBOTIC BROADCASTER #1 (V.O.)  
*Which means he'll be playing THE  
 GAME, one-armed! Stay tuned to bet  
 on all the players! What a bad  
 night!*

ROBOTIC BROADCASTER #2 (V.O.)  
*Lots of money lost!*

ROBOTIC BROADCASTER #1 (V.O.)  
*Money and pride, money and pride!*

JUMB-O-TRONS blast images of surprised FINN. He's dragged out as a violent **GREMLIN DRONE** throws a **SCIENTIST** into the ring.

He smashes him to the ground, a WHIPLASH.

GREMLIN DRONE  
 Hey. Get up.  
 (yanks SCRUFF)  
 You promised this was a better  
 model. A stronger fighter. You  
 promised he would deliver.

It buzzes, radiating HEAT. Fury.

GREMLIN DRONE (CONT'D)  
 I gave you trillions for this--  
 (shoots HUMAN FIGHTER  
 #7780's carcass)  
 --this pile of losing FILTH GRIME  
 SMUT! Beaten by a single kick from  
 a bait? Not even a fighter. A bait?  
 A BAIT? A GARBAGE BAIT! A bait is--  
 (shoots SCIENTIST in LEG)  
 A dog. The lowest of the low. Feel  
 it? Feel your loss? Feel my loss?

The SCIENTIST clutches his leg in agony. GREMLIN DRONE motions to the absorbed/obsessed AUDIENCE. Angrily points.

GREMLIN DRONE (CONT'D)  
 KILL HIM! Just finish him!

SCIENTIST  
 It-it wasn't ready! I said it  
 wasn't ready! I said it was too  
 early, that it needed more testing--  
 (wobbles back, SCARED)  
 Please! Please have mercy!

He's savagely killed by the voracious voyeurs. The CROWD cheers as they radiate, electrocute and maul him, slicing limbs. Screams echo as the shadows flicker off dark WALLS.

**INT. FINN'S CAGE**

He's sharply flung into his crate, semi-conscious. His arm? A bloody, bony stump. He dips a trembling finger in the BLOOD pooling beside him, marking a 72nd tally on the wall with it.

The finger drags down slowly, SLOWER, SLOWEST-- oh, the PAIN!

**BLACKS OUT.**

PARTS ROVER (O.S.)

Wake up. Pssst. HEY! Hello? Wake up! The games start in one hour. Do you accept or forfeit? Hello?

(POKING sounds)

Pssst! I say! Do you accept or forfeit--? Ugh. So annoying. Are you dead? Hello? Sigh.

**FADE IN:**

**INT. FINN'S CAGE**

Conscious. He cringes in agony, trying to move his arm. He's already forgotten it's gone. He stares at the BLANK SPACE.

FINN

(alarmed)

WHAT? Oh, no...

1,000 pounds of dread crush his chest as he exhales, wearily. He tries to get up, but topples over-- the uneven balance.

FINN (CONT'D)

I can't fight like this. I'll never make it. I can't even stand. My vitals? Who knows. I don't even want to know what I look like. Shit, I'm sure.

PARTS ROVER (O.S.)

You'll die either way.

FINN looks over, startled, at a conniving **PARTS ROVER**. A boxy, WALL-E-looking ROBOT with tons of crappy SPARE LIMBS.

FINN

Yeah. You'd like that, wouldn't you? It's what you want. It's what you all want. Talking tin-can.

(SCREAMS)

*What about me?*

PARTS ROVER

Gotta few new parts, for ya! New legs, new arms, new eyes.

(eyes FINN's stump)

That'll never do! I can get you a sweet deal on an arm. And it won't cost *an arm and a leg!* Just an arm. Ha ha, get it? Price tag 30 fights.

FINN

30 fights! That's unfair and you know it. Forget it. You're out of your mind. If you even have one. Do you have a mind? Hey.

(moves in CLOSE)

Do you have the power to make me a robot? Immortal? Your friend said--

PARTS ROVER ignores him.

PARTS ROVER

You won't last out there. You won't last in here. You simply won't last. It's a good deal on an arm.

FINN considers it, briefly. A loud "DING".

PARTS ROVER (CONT'D)

Price just went up. 35 fights!

FINN

Get lost!

He stomps his feet, kicking the CAGE.

FINN (CONT'D)

I don't need you and your stupid, used worthless parts. You know nothing. Just leave me to die. Just leave me. In peace. To die.

PARTS ROVER

Very well! Can't please everyone! Enjoy your short, pathetic life!

The PARTS ROVER wheels away, his annoying voice soon overheard peddling wares to other BAITs nearby.

PARTS ROVER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

*No torso? No problem! I've got your back. Literally. Ha ha, get it?*

WITHOUT WARNING his cellmate, BAIT HUMAN #4662, is thrown in face-down. A hollow smack of his skull against the icy floor.

ZERO RESPONSE.

                  ANDROID GUARD #87 (O.S.)  
                  (shout)  
                  Clean up, bait cage 10!

FINN, panicked, drags himself to #4662's body and roughly grabs his shoulders with his working arm. Nada. Zilch.

                  FINN  
                  Tristan? You up? Come on! Buddy?  
                  Hey! HEY, you gotta wake up! It's  
                  OK! Come on, come on, come on--

He lifts up an arm, LIMP NOODLE.

A leg, LIMP. He turns him over--

                  FINN (CONT'D)  
                  (chokes, GAGS)  
                  Oh my God!

--his HEART was ripped right out of his CHEST. Nothing but a blank, bloody hole. FINN heaves, turning to vomit. Emotion overwhelms him as he cradles his friend, leaning back to CRY.

                  FINN (CONT'D)  
                  Why, why, why, why, why--

He hits his head against the wall each time.

                  LOUDSPEAKER (O.S.)  
                  *THE GAME starts in 40 minutes.*  
                  *Taking all bets! THE GAME starts in*  
                  *40 minutes. Taking all bets!*

BLURRY. FINN's will fades, he gets WEAKER. MORE BLOOD LOSS.

                  VOICE (V.O.)  
                  *Take his robot arm.*

That VOICE. It's back, almost PURRING in its warmth and confidence. Pinpricks of suspicion and confusion raise the hairs on FINN'S arm as he SHIVERS with out-of-body unease.

                  FINN  
                  (groggy)  
                  Am I hallucinating? Who are you?  
                  Who is this? What is this? You--

                  DISTANT CAGE BAIT (O.S.)  
                  Who's what? What'd you say?

VOICE (V.O.)

*No one can hear me, only you. So don't bother. Take #4662's arm.*

FINN

*(hazy, shakes head)*

*No, nope. No. Nope. Nope. Nope. I'm not doing that. It's barbaric. It's the last dignity he has left--*

VOICE (O.S.)

*He was created to give you his arm. That was his only purpose in life: to give you his arm when you needed it most. Which is now. He was an incubator, a spare part. Finn?*

FINN is shaken, a bit more ALERT.

VOICE (V.O.)

*Take the arm.*

Looking away, FINN gently rips the robot arm off BAIT HUMAN #4662 and shoves the electrodes into his own shoulder STUB. It digs in. FINN yelps as it becomes "one" with his skin.

It instantly connects to his mind. He twirls his metal fingers, effortlessly bending them per his thoughts. ENERGY!

FINN

*It works. I think, it does. Woah! It works like any other arm would.*

VOICE (V.O.)

*Yes. The future is neat.*

FINN

*Future?*

LOUDSPEAKER (O.S.)

*THE GAME starts in 40 minutes. Taking all bets! THE GAME starts in 40 minutes. Taking all bets!*

FINN

*Over here! Hey! Android. I won my 72nd match. I'm in. I'm in.*

*(LOOKS up)*

*Dad, I don't know where you are or if you see this or if it matters anymore, but this is for you.*

*(glimpses dead TRISTAN)*

*And you. My dear, dear friend. I'm doing this for us, for everyone--*

**INT. GAME STAGE**

A whirling stage LIT-UP with billions of flashing LED-lights. FINN squints into the darkness, next to him is female **HUMAN FIGHTER #8001 (25)** and male **HUMAN FIGHTER #9560 (35)**.

A loud horn blares. They're immediately suspended in GLASS TUBES in a thick, light-blue liquid. Bubbling. Health "STATS" (age/height/weight/fight records) digitize below their tanks.

HUMAN FIGHTER #8001 is delicate, but tough.

FINN

How dare you make women fight, you pigs! Monsters!

--but he can't be heard through the strange, fizzing liquid suspension. A slick, fast-talking **ROBOTIQ** hears, however, and jabs a burning scepter through the tube. FINN howls.

ROBOTIQ

The meat don't talk.

He struts the stage, clanking titanium tentacles together as all 6,000 of his eyes feast upon the rabid betting CROWD.

ROBOTIQ (CONT'D)

Here are the 72's! Just three today. Been a while, huh? Below are their stats. Age. Strengths. Fight damages. Relevance. Taking bets--

He points to various holographic PROJECTORS.

ROBOTIQ (CONT'D)

Pick a slot pod, any slot pod!  
Wanna bet on who survives the strange, new world? Pod 7. Wanna bet on who gets killed first? Pod 2. Bet on how many minutes until a particular player dies, pod 3! Or. (plugs in POD 4)  
Bet on how many minutes a player stays alive. Etcetera! Etcetera!  
Lots, lots of bitcoin to be made!

Thousands of babbling, elaborate A.I. robots, avatars, and humanoids input bets on flashing-laser screens everywhere.

ROBOTIQ (CONT'D)

HUMAN FIGHTER #8001 and #9560 are both human fighters. They've won 72 fights. HUMAN BAIT #3008 is a bait human who has survived 72 fights.

A careless shrug.

ROBOTIQ (CONT'D)

My unbiased opinion? Anyone puttin' money on a bait might as well toss it in a hadron collider 'cause it's gonna get SMASHED--

(throws up TENTACLES)

But don't let me tell you pretty things how to waste your money!

A **MINIBOT** lifts an antennae.

MINIBOT

Is #8001 available for prostitution?

ROBOTIQ

Not yet, not yet! Probably after. I mean, depending if you're into necrophilia and whatnot. We'll see the condition she's in, OK?

HUMAN FIGHTER #8001 grimaces through the glass tube as a sickly, mechanical laughter pervades throughout the stadium.

ROBOTIQ checks the betting screens.

ROBOTIQ (CONT'D)

What, no bids for HUMAN BAIT #3008? Should he even compete, then?

FINN opens his mouth, but chokes on thick gel. He struggles in the tube, slowly trying to bang the glass. He GURGLES.

FINN

I won this, fair and square!

ROBOTIQ

No one can hear you.

(LOUDLY)

#3008 is saying he won "fair and square". Fair? Ha. How does it benefit us? If we can't make money off you, why should we bother?

All inquisitive ROBOT's dead-eyes on him.

VOICE (V.O.)

*Don't answer.*

ROBOTIQ

Answer me! If no ones bettin' on  
you, son, why should we bother?  
Entertainment is entertainment--

FINN

I earned it!

ROBOTIQ

You earned nothin'. It's by grace  
of [SCRAMBLED NOISES] you're here.

He [POWERS DOWN] for a minute, then [RE-BOOTS].

ROBOTIQ (CONT'D)

Just got word. You can play.  
(mumblin')  
Didn't have to re-boot me in that  
particularly egregious manner...

FINN still struggles to get out of his TUBE. Twisting,  
turning, wriggling, furiously banging on the GLASS--

FINN

Hey! Let me out! I'm suffocating!

ROBOTIQ

Rules of the game? Simple! Y'all  
don't have to come back if you find  
the SCREAMING ORB in under 72  
minutes. In it? Your new life.

FINN

(GASPS for AIR)  
New life? Where do we go? We stay  
alive, though? Right?

VOICE (V.O.)

*Quiet, Finn.*

ROBOTIQ

You'll be guaranteed to not be shut  
off, if that's what you're askin'--

FINN

What's that even mean? LET ME OUT!

VOICE (V.O.)

*Say another word. I'll kill you.*

FINN'S breath quickens as he clutches his chest. It bizarrely  
feels like a claw is encasing it. Holding it. Squeezing--

VOICE (V.O.)

*Got it?*

He's silent. (He's still losing air rapidly).

ROBOTIQ

Let the game begin!

**INT. TRANSONIC TUBE**

It's dark out. In a TRANSONIC TUBE, they're traveling at the speed of sound: 700+ mph. It glides underground as they sit in plush seats, a [**GRAVITY: ON**] sign blinks above them.

SUDDENLY a rapid burst up into the terrain of a NEW PLANET. Bizarre, whimsical landscapes zoom by as we close-in on FINN, #8001 and #9560. Eyes closed and bodies limp, SUDDENLY--

--FINN'S eyes BULGE OPEN as he intakes a huge gasp of air. Panting. He KICKS the floor, gripping the sides of his seat. He clutches his head, wailing. A severe, CRUSHING headache.

BRAIN NET (V.O.)

*Welcome to BrainNet. Please Log On.*

Crystal clear, seemingly coming from within THEIR MINDS. The twinkling of a wireless connector, followed by three beeps.

BRAIN NET (V.O.)

*Connected. Thank You!*

FINN (V.O.)

What was that? Where are we? What is this? What am I feeling? W h a t w a s t h a t? Where are we? What is this? W h a t a m I feeling? What was that? W h e r e a r e w e? W h a t is this? What am I feeling? What is c o n n e c t --

FINN goes to open his mouth, but his THOUGHTS are already racing, escaping. He's so frightened, he shakes as he cups his hand over his mouth. It has ZERO EFFECT. He grabs #8001.

FINN (V.O.)

Whatever we think, we can hear.  
Whatever we think we can hear?  
Whatever we think we can hear--

Deep breaths. He tries in vain to calm down his darting mind. #8001 is anxious and panicky as well, but remains composed.

#8001 (V.O.)  
 Breathe. Slow down your thoughts,  
 listen to your mind. We don't have  
 time to panic, just 72 minutes.  
 (feels SEAT)  
 It's so soft! Do you feel this? OK.  
 We seem to be on some kind of--  
 (cranes neck back)  
 Transportation vehicle. Going  
 where? Do you see a map? What  
 planet is this? #9560, #3008?

FINN shivers, but #8001's touch calms him a bit.

FINN (V.O.)  
 I'm not #3008. Don't, I mean-- call  
 me Finn. My Dad named me that.

Heart beat s l o w i n g down.

#8001 (V.O.)  
 I call myself Nala. Self-chosen.

#9560 (V.O.)  
 Why the hell name yourselves when  
 there's a 90% chance there's no  
 tomorrow, anyway? I'm #9560. We're  
 just a statistic. Test dummies.

A patrolling **TINY QUADCOPTER** hovers.

TINY QUADCOPTER (V.O.)  
 This is a quiet zone. Please keep  
 your trivial thoughts to a minimum.  
 Think we want to hear it? No.

It zooms down the hall past rows of SUMO-BOTS, ROBOSAPIENS  
 and CLAN AVATARS leisurely projecting/watching graphic, TV-  
 esque hologram "programming". FINN stares around, dazed.

VOICE (O.S.)  
*I was brisk. Before. I didn't want  
 you to hear what they had to say.  
 Had to get you to stop, you know?*

FINN's preoccupied. BRAIN\_NET lets him see digitalized  
 information about all the passengers on the train, projected  
 above them in stop-frame neon green laser-drawn GRAPHS:

[**LETHAL FREWAR**] STATS: 7'9" **Blood Type**: GROUP 009Z

*ALERT! Murdered 3 people on MARS [ON PAROLE-4 DECADES]*

[HUMANOID] STATS: 5'11" **Blood Type**: ELEMENTAL MERCURY

ALERT! [NONE] [DO NOT BOTHER]

[DWARF AVATAR] STATS: 3'2" **Blood Type**: SYNTHETIC FIBROUS

ALERT! Possible CONTAGION of DISEASE  $\Psi\Sigma\theta$  [STERILIZED 3x]

VOICE (V.O.)

*Did you hear me?*

FINN snaps out of his trance.

FINN (V.O.)

I'm so confused. BRAIN\_NET? I'm in a cage, then--? Look outside! It's dark. Dark everywhere. It's night, everywhere. All the time. I don't know what this is. Where I am. I didn't know there were more colors to be seen! What's a Frewar--?

#9560 (V.O.)

Who are you talking to?

VOICE (V.O.)

*Only you can hear me!*

The window ripples as FINN presses his nose against it. It's an elastic solar panel that absorbs light from STARS to function. He flicks it to get more ripple effects. Tap, tap.

FINN (V.O.)

I've no memory of this place. None. Were we born here, or in the ring? Were we kidnapped? Bred to fight? Are our families living out here? Do they miss me? Or, miss us? I wouldn't even know who to contact--

He taps his forehead.

FINN (V.O.)

Is this how this works? Hey, BRAIN\_NET, where's my family?

BRAIN\_NET (V.O.)

*Unavailable.*

A sharp JOLT throws them from their seats.

**INT. SPACEX SKYSCRAPER**

Doors dissolve open as they arrive at a ROTATING SKYSCRAPER platform, the TRANSIONIC TUBE disintegrating around them. It's busy, they're getting elbowed and jostled around.

They're obsolete, out of place. A thick mob of METAL BOTS and ALIEN LIMBS breeze past them. They're SCARED, trying to MOVE--  
--but are force-gravitated towards A BUILDING.

In fact, one of **SPACEX's**\* many buildings.

*\*Yes, THAT SpaceX, which finally colonized Mars! Fully owned by Xavier Musk since he destroyed his father, Elon, in 2055. Can't name a son Xavier without expecting evil-doing, no?*

FINN

What's happening? I can't control my legs. Our grip has, failed? Help us! Anyone? Help us! Stop this--

#9560

Just go with the flow, man.

Like a vacuum, they're sucked through CIRCULAR DOORS. A stark-white **RECEPTION CUBE** coolly greets them, ushering them in.

RECEPTION CUBE

Please step through the scanners.  
One at a time, quickly, please!

They're thrust in the center of a big SCANNING MACHINE. Wands wave up/down as intense X-RAYS beam to holographic screens.

SUBJECT: #9560 [SCAN-SCAN-SCAN-SCAN-SCAN]

SCANNING MACHINE

***URGENT!! Poor corrosive skin-grafting in several quads! Faulty adrenal glands! Puncture wounds!***

(beep beep beep)

***Hereditary pre-nonpolyposis colorectal cancer DETECTED! Leukocytoclastic vasculitis!***

SUBJECT: NALA [SCAN-SCAN-SCAN-SCAN-SCAN]

SCANNING MACHINE (CONT'D)

***URGENT!! Autosomal recessive trait DETECTED!***

(MORE)

SCANNING MACHINE (CONT'D)  
*Preestablished eye irritants in  
 sclera reaching retina!*  
 (beep beep beep)  
*Xeroderma Pigmentosum DETECTED!*  
*Slight endometriosis!*

SUBJECT: FINN [SCAN-SCAN-SCAN-SCAN-SCAN]

SCANNING MACHINE (CONT'D)  
***URGENT!! Preestablished heart  
 disease! Three cracked ribs! 549  
 hairline bone fractures DETECTED!***  
 (beep beep beep)  
***Slight lung puncture! Mixed  
 technology BREACH: ALIEN ARM!***

A complicated flurry of warnings and sirens blare, startling them as ONLOOKERS stare with fear. They're all getting ZAPPED by lasers that pierce and inject their skin from all sides.

The transformation? Palpable. With all disease and bad-DNA removed they stand TALLER. Look CLEANER. Eyes BRIGHTER. Spring-to-steps. They're the perfect version of themselves.

RECEPTION CUBE  
 Mars is a disease-free planet.  
 You're all completely cured. No  
 charge! Want to donate? Buy stock.

The machine clutches, then rips off FINN'S ROBOT ARM.

FINN  
 Holy *what?!* What are you doing?  
 Give me that back! That's my  
 friends arm! His last legacy--

RECEPTION CUBE  
 We don't approve of technology  
 mixing. Please print a new arm in  
 the printing room. Thank you!

FINN  
 "Print" a new arm? What does that  
 even mean? I can get a new arm?

RECEPTION CUBE  
 Proceed to the printing room.

FINN  
 Can you help us? Maybe point us in  
 the right direction? We're here for  
 the 72 minutes thing. Everyone's  
 betting? We need our freedom.

RECEPTION CUBE

(blank)

Huh? I'm unfamiliar.

FINN

It's a game. We're supposed to find a screaming orb. Do you know where it is? I mean, is it here?

RECEPTION CUBE

A screaming what? What's "screaming" mean?

FINN

It's a game--

RECEPTION CUBE

You've said that, yes. What game?

[BACKGROUND-CHECK SCAN]

Where are you guys from, anyway? I saw you get off the tube, but where did you get on?

The lights DIM as the RECEPTION CUBE brightly glows.

RECEPTION CUBE (CONT'D)

Where did you get on, Finn? Do you remember that information?

VOICE (V.O.)

*Only you know about the game. Get out of here!*

Beep. Beep. Beep. A faint scream is heard. NALA grabs FINN.

NALA

It's around here somewhere. I can hear it! Hear the scream? Let's go--

FINN

Wait! My new arm?

A bored **DOOR GUARD** points them towards a swirling heptagon **ENTRANCE: [PRINTING MILL]** emblazoned in glossy iridium.

DOOR GUARD

Go there. Check-in. Get arm. Check-out. Get out. Leave here. Be gone.

They LEAVE.

RECEPTION CUBE

I still have no idea where they're actually from.

(MORE)

RECEPTION CUBE (CONT'D)

They're a very old human model.  
Corrupt DNA, calcium bones,  
virtually prehistoric blood.

DOOR GUARD

RIGHT! Haven't seen anything like  
that in a millennium, at least.  
Yuck. Rotting flesh sacks--

RECEPTION CUBE

There's literally no background. No  
clue. They have no history.

DOOR GUARD

Well. Neither do we.

*They both DISSOLVE.*

**INT. PRINTING MILL**

A huge AMAZON-esque WAREHOUSE where everything is designed,  
downloaded, and printed. Clothing? Printed. Limbs? Food?  
*Landscapes?* Body parts? All printed to precise specification.

ROCKET SHIP parts, space vehicles, plants, pod-homes, etc.

Thousands of ASSEMBLY LINES and CONVEYOR BELTS criss-cross,  
zig-zag, and shoot up 1,000+ STORIES HIGH. Millions of  
platinum, floating OVAL ORBS\* oversee the FACILITY.

*\*No eyes, no face, no expression. Basically smooth, silver  
JELLY-BEAN-SHAPED living sculptures. Like JEFF KOON art.*

#9560 stumbles backwards, accidentally bumping into one of  
the OVAL ORBS, who briskly levitates out of his way.

#9560

OK. I'm out. So we're products on a  
conveyor belt, or something? Uh. No  
thanks. Too weird for me. I'll be  
waiting outside.

But the DOOR is locked, flashing red.

#9560 (CONT'D)

--Or not. Damn.

FINN

Machines printing machines, run by  
machines. Do they print each other?

NALA  
 Just print your arm.  
 (eyes both SHIRTLESS GUYS)  
 Clothes, too, maybe. Weapons?

She walks to a GRAND SIMULATOR and presses various "design" buttons. 3-D images immediately POP UP as she chooses size, colors, etc. She's confused how AUTOMATIC it comes to her.

#9560 is intrigued, excited.

#9560  
 OK, OK. I can dig this. Finally!  
 We're in control of our lives.

Thrilled, he starts jabbing buttons, selecting a DOUCHE-TASTIC outfit that's wild, loud, and trimmed with alien diamonds. More future flare: flame shoes, X-ray sunglasses.

#9560 (CONT'D)  
 Hot, right?

NALA  
 No. You look like you escaped an insane asylum.

#9560  
 I did! If I'm gonna live forever,  
 it's gonna be in style. Jealous?

FINN stands in front of the machine. Several ARMS to select in different colors, species, sizes, muscle-tones, etc.

VOICE (V.O.)  
*Well. What are you waiting for?*

FINN  
 Will I feel it? It's free? I don't  
 have to pay with money, fights, my  
 life or anything? What's the catch?

He chooses a beautiful arm with strong blood pumping through it. He chooses a [**BLOOD TYPE**] by pricking his finger. He prints the arm, a bullet-proof vest, and some simple WEAPONS.

VOICE (V.O.)  
*Choose your weapons wisely. One of  
 us will betray you soon.*

FINN  
 One of who? What? US?

SILENCE.

FINN (CONT'D)

(low)

OK, uh, you can't just like SAY  
THAT then disapp-- hey! Speak!

NALA

Who are you talking to?

The screaming orb. Their ears perk up: they all can hear it.  
Louder. Getting louder! NALA commands the MACHINE again.

NALA (CONT'D)

Input: print a 'screaming orb  
detector'. We need a map. There's  
one nearby, but where?

(shrugs)

I mean, who knows? Let's see if it  
does anything!

Out spits a live sonar MAP. It instantly connects to the  
BRAIN\_NET grid. The screaming orb is shown being on EARTH.

They walk towards the exit and immediately get cut-off by a  
**BILLBOARD AVATAR** cruising on LEXUS HOVERBOARD's latest model.

Steam from liquid nitrogen spits out, he's 6 FEET in the air.

BILLBOARD AVATAR

Hey man, watch it! I've got a job  
to do! You know? Geez.

#9560

What's that thing?

BILLBOARD AVATAR

I know, right? No need for legs  
with these babes. Strap in and go!  
New age hoverboard--

(does BACK FLIP)

--no longer relying on magnetism.  
Uses anti-gravity. Yeah, you want  
one.

#9560 runs back to the GRAND SIMULATOR.

#9560

I need that.

(SHOUTS)

I'll meet you guys in a minute!

BILLBOARD AVATAR (O.S.)

Hey, use my name when you print!  
I'm on commission, man--

**EXT. ATMOSPHERE HARVEST**

Donning PROTECTIVE equipment they leave SPACEX, walking out to an almost fully-developed MARS. Like EARTH, a tinge RED.

The rhythmic buzz of machines TERRAFORM\* (*\*transforming a planet to resemble earth and support living beings*) as half the landscape is a lush, developed green. Other half? BARREN.

FINN

God, it was so much easier to just sit in a cage. I have no idea what I'm doing. We need to hop planets? There's gotta be a simple way--

Dangerous **MAGNOIDS** (or "Life-stealers") approach. Slimy mucus tentacles and thin slippery feelers. A strange AURA, in blue.

MAGNOIDS

Why? What's the hurry?

FINN

We'll run out of time, we're wasting time. We have one chance!

MAGNOIDS

Maybe time is just something you've manufactured in your head. We're in space. Time is irrelevant.

Another MAGNOID appears. From FINN'S VIEWPOINT we can feel and see wisps of his energy being sucked into the MAGNOID'S head. (Brain-jacking, neuro-hacking, life-stealing, etc.)

MAGNOIDS (CONT'D)

We deleted it. It doesn't exist anymore. We don't need it.

NALA

That's impossible. You can't erase time. You don't own it. Finn--

The MAGNOID moves towards NALA, subtly sucking LIFE FLOW.

VOICE (V.O.)

*They're just saying that to throw you. MOVE! MOVE! MOVE!*

Behind them: a towering, iridescent skyscraper that's harvesting water from the EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE for MARS.

HUGE CRANES + SOLAR PANELS suck moisture from the atmosphere as it spurts up, raining sideways through a WATERFALL PRISM.

It looks like a billion sparkly MILKY WAYS frozen mid-air,  
because of the years it takes to funnel from EARTH to MARS.

FINN is marveled by the miniature crystals, the CLEAR WATER.

FINN

It's not brown! It was never brown--  
I feel so strange. Where am I?

MAGNOIDS

Harvesting water from the Earth's  
atmosphere is big business here, oh  
yes, big business indeed.

FINN

You're stealing?

When he moves slightly, a BLURRED COPY of his body remains in  
the old spot. Several copies as he grabs his HEAD. He gets  
hazier, as does NALA. The MAGNOIDS keep inter-morphing.

MAGNOIDS

Alphabet\* has stolen plenty from  
us. We're merely taking back what's  
ours. Reappropriation. A lot of  
things. You'll find out soon.

*\*Alphabet is GOOGLE'S parent company.*

FINN

We-we-we need to get to Earth.  
(freeze-frames)  
Do you know how to d o t h a t?

MAGNOIDS

Fastest way is the Hyperloop.

VOICE (V.O.)

*Don't trust him.*

FINN

Any other opti--

--he FALLS, an accordion of 100-copies of him are frozen mid-  
AIR. Thousands of MAGNOID thoughts enter his head. DEAFENING.  
The sensation of sinking into LAUGHING GAS, nitrous oxide.

MAGNOIDS

(garbled, slow motion)  
Hyperloop. The only way.

VOICE (V.O.)

*It's not. Don't go on that machine.  
Get away from these creatures!*

## MAGNOIDS

There's no way you'll make it. The next one leaves soon. And you're not leaving soon, *get it?* Ha ha!

HUNDREDS more MAGNOID'S suddenly appear.

## MAGNOIDS (CONT'D)

You're becoming us. Welcome!  
Perhaps this is your freedom.

--OUT OF NOWHERE a chaotic #9560 SWOOPS down on his Lexus Hoverboard, wobbling trying to control it, grabbing them. As they fly the distance releases them from the MAGNOID'S HOLD.

## #9560

Next time you're having an alien orgy, invite me, OK?

## FINN

No. They were trying to kill us.  
Our souls are a commodity--  
(squints)  
Hey, go to that thing!

**INT. HYPERLOOP**

A cheerful family of **TRIPEDAL ROBOTS** get out of a daunting, powerful HYPERLOOP\* TUBE. A sign rapidly BLINKS: Daily trips to MARS and EARTH! FINN, NALA, and #9560 climb in.

*\*A Hyperloop is a high-speed transportation system achieved by reduced-pressure tubes and air compressors.*

They sit one-behind-the-other in the 3-passenger POD, tilting back at a 45° angle. It's encased in a CIRCULAR TUBE of impenetrable clear material. It's a 33,000,000 mile journey.

## BRAIN NET (V.O.)

*Welcome to BrainNet. Please Log On.*

The familiar sensation splits FINN'S head with another killer HEADACHE as he pounds the POD walls, gripping his chest.

## FINN (V.O.)

I don't want to log in!  
(louder)  
GET OUT OF MY HEAD. Everyone, leave my head alone! My brain! My thoughts! Leave everything alone!

## BRAIN NET (V.O.)

*Connected. Thank You!*

FINN (V.O.)

NO!

NALA (V.O.)

The operator said it's a two minute ride. How is that possible? How fast does this go?

(to OPERATOR)

Hey, how fast does this go? Hello?

The door seals shut as compressors buzz, rumble.

BRAIN\_NET (V.O.)

*2,000,000 mph.*

NALA (V.O.)

WHAT? Our bodies can't survive that! We'll die!

#9560 (V.O.)

Well. It's not nearly as fast as the speed of light--

HYPERLOOP (V.O.)

*Preparing for takeoff! Thank you for choosing Hyperloop Technologies. Have A Nice Day!*

NALA wriggles in her seat.

NALA (V.O.)

Get out! Everyone-- UNBUCKLE! We won't survive this! Hey, let us out! Come on! Turn it off!

VOICE (V.O.)

*Ha ha ha ha...*

FINN

Son of a bastard!

NALA (V.O.)

We're going to melt!

She pounds on the glass but all the cheerful MARTIANS, ROBOTS and AVATARS wave, blissfully unaware, from the platform.

FINN (V.O.)

OK, see the map? If we survive, the Hyperloop leads right to the orb. Point A, point B. It's blinking at the end of the track. Look!

NALA (V.O.)

Yeah, IF we survive. IF we survive  
going a speed whose concept can't  
even be fathomed--

FINN

I know, I know! I don't know!

The HYPERLOOP starts with a BUMP, then a deafening vacuum  
ROARS and shutters as it prepares for takeoff. 3... 2...

...1. SHAKING, OBSCURING, like the STAR WARS space time-  
continuum thing. Stars turn into white streaks as they go so  
fast it's a blur. It's chaotic and loud on the inside--

--but DARK and QUIET in the outside. SPACE.

The HYPERLOOP blur starts vibrating violently as EARTH gets  
closer, past floating pods, space ships and stations, weather  
balloon tourists, etc. They break through the ATMOSPHERE.

NALA (V.O.)

(streaky)

Orb's getting louder! We're still  
alive! Good thing we can talk  
through our minds because I can't  
move, it's like millions of pounds  
of pressure...

#9560

It's not like, it is.

The screaming orb BLARES. They go lower, lower, lower.

FINN (V.O.)

It's been 2 minutes, we should at  
least be slowing down, right? Why  
aren't we slowing down?

The speed is CONTINUOUS. Uh-oh. Suddenly, a DRILL bursts out  
of the front and starts DRILLING. As if it has a mind of its  
own, the HYPERLOOP POD starts burrowing into EARTH'S CRUST.

Violent shaking, blurring, sweating as FINN grabs the MAP.

FINN (V.O.)

The orb is in the Earth's core?!

VOICE (V.O.)

*What did I tell you, Finn?*

NALA (V.O.)

We won't survive!

FINN (V.O.)  
How do you stop this thing!?

#9560 (V.O.)  
It's getting hotter, it's getting  
hotter, IT'S GETTING HOTTER!

The HYPERLOOP begins to MELT around the edges.

NALA (V.O.)  
I'm burning! We're going to die! We  
lost already! How the hell is that  
possible--  
(clawing, beating the  
WINDOWS)  
Help! HELP! We never had a chance!  
It was jinxed! It was thrown! This  
isn't fair! Hey!

FINN (V.O.)  
We're burning! HELP! Voice who  
taunts, please, help us! Save us! I  
know you're listening, watching--

SWEAT profusely shoots from every pore as the machine  
violently shakes, flashes of RED. ORANGE. YELLOW. WHITE!

#9560 (V.O.)  
OH GOD--

They start disintegrating and burning, FINN first in the  
FRONT, then NALA, then #9560 behind her. Dripping putty.

They melt into indistinguishable puddles, paint splashes,  
droplets of liquid as the HYPERLOOP remnants EVAPORATE--

--to nothing. Just CHURNING LAVA of the CORE.

**FADE TO BLACK.**

BRAIN\_NET (V.O.)  
*Welcome to BrainNet. Please Log On.*

Pulsating ELECTRONIC MUSIC starts soft, then grows stronger.  
LOUDER. The beat, more intense. More. MORE... **MORE**. SUDDENLY--

BRAIN\_NET (V.O.)  
*No signal!*

--the BASS finally drops.

**FADE IN:**

**INT. ROBOT DISCO**

Screaming MUSIC and LIGHTS as sexy hyper-intelligent machines and avatars dance in a DARK HALL lit by splattered day-glo paint, strobe lights, white smoke, foam, flying glo-sticks!

They MISH-AND-MASH together to futuristic, strange, alien, overly-high-intensity dance music. EDM on crack, even more.

CONTROLLER (V.O.)

*Freedom is free! Freedom is free!  
Check your BRAIN\_NET at the door!*

Living, breathing foam spurts, spits, and shoots from all corners of the room as KALEIDOSCOPIC LIGHTS seizure-flash in a multicolored, fuzzy burst. It dazzles, bouncing off walls.

Where's the DJ? Speakers? NONE. Not needed. Yet the music's crisper than a BOSE sound system. How? It's transmitted through everyone's bodies and souls, emanating from WITHIN.

FINN, NALA, #9560 wake up in a confused pile on the floor. An **AUTONOMOUS COCKTAIL BOT** zips past them, balancing a PLATTER.

There's an eccentric mix of "drinks" (battery acid) in fancy BOTTLES. At the bottom of one is a bright, SCREAMING ORB!

--but the bot quickly zips away, leaving WHITE WISPS.

FINN

(groggy)

Where the hell are we?

He COVERS his ears, frightened.

FINN (CONT'D)

What's this noise? Oh my-- what is this place? We need to get out of here! It's too loud! My head!

He looks around, scared and overwhelmed. He's never seen this before. He gets up and CRASHES into a pretty **HYDROBOT**.

FINN (CONT'D)

Sorry, sorry! I didn't mean--

HYDROBOT

What didn't you mean, sugar?

(purrs)

Wanna dance?

He jerks away, tripping to the floor. HYDROBOT giggles. He slowly realizes that covering his ears DOES NOTHING. Gets up.

FINN

It's inside our heads. The music?  
Hear it? It's not coming from  
anything. How is that possible?  
We're not connected to BRAIN\_NET!

NALA

Must be another network.

#9560 gets up, jaw-dropping. He stares at the expansive, glittering, chaotic, multi-floor DANCE ARENA before him.

#9560

This! This is my dream. I dream of  
this place almost every night. I  
created a sort of, a robot disco in  
my head? To avoid the monotony of  
our cages and pain of the fights--  
a fantasy world. Escape! Everyone's  
here, we're all having fun. See?  
And that's the point, you know? No  
worries at all. Dance for eternity!

One corner: programmed SWARM BOTS\* swirl in loud hoards  
outfitting people in the latest outfits and hottest styles!

*\*SWARM BOTS are tiny metallic balls that fly, conforming to  
different sizes, shapes, and colors forming CLOTHING.*

The lights bounce off #9560's face as he takes it all in.  
Deep breaths in, then out. The widest. Smile. EVER. Hey-o!

#9560 (CONT'D)

This is my dream. MY dream.  
(mesmerized, almost  
sounding mechanical)  
I'm home, finally, I'm home--

NALA grabs him and cocks her gun.

NALA

Focus. Our orb is in a drink, we'll  
split up. We have less than an hour  
to get this done.

#9560

Man, we got time! Loosen up a bit!  
Ain't you ever let your hair down,  
princess? Come on!

The music gets more intense. Faster. Deeper, DARKER BEATS.

NALA  
 (grabs #9560)  
 Do you want to stay here? Or go  
 back? 'Cause if you dick around,  
 this "dream" will only stay in your  
 dreams!

Eyes GLAZED. He's swept up in it all. The music takes over as  
 neon lines splinter and web, ZIG-ZAGGING through his entire  
 body. The BRIGHT colors wrap, absorb, quantifying his SOUL--

NALA (CONT'D)  
 #9560!

--but it's too late. SIRENS beckon. He's pulsing, dancing,  
 thrusting with the cavalcade of humanoids, avatars. His outer  
 body shell goes limp as his soul floats up with the others.

Dancing far above them in wispy, white wonderment. A flurry  
 of dazzling GHOST-LIKE figures swirl-and-whirrrrr above her.

NALA (CONT'D)  
 (turns to FINN)  
 Well, at least you have a brain--

SILENCE.

NALA (CONT'D)  
 Finn?  
 (throws up hands)  
 COME ON!

### INT. VIP LOUNGE

Floating NEBULAS and other INTERSTELLAR clouds of dust choke  
 FINN as he stumbles through throngs of electrified, glowing  
 AVATARS and HUMANOIDS. Loud music. Seering-hot lava drinks.

Remarkably sharp, digitalized **SUPER NOVAS, COMETS, PLANETS,**  
 and other **GALACTIC HOLOGRAMS** are scattered, suspended through  
 the club. It feels like he's dancing in space. Literally.

VOICE (V.O.)  
*Different from your cage, hmmm?*

FINN  
 (desperate)  
 Hey, HEY! Where were you! Where are  
 you? Where am I? Who are you? Can  
 you help us, please? I feel like  
 we're going to fail and I'm going  
 to die or have to go back to--

A sexy, hydrogen-gassed **LOVEBOT** saddles up to him, dancing low, seductively. She grinds metal hips back and forth to the BEAT. Her voice? Ethereal, breathy. Airy, light. Mechanical.

LOVEBOT

Oh, lookie! A human? Wow. Pretty.  
 Are you real? Looks like you could  
 snap in half. I smell death on you.  
 You're decaying by the minute, hon?  
 Dontcha want to be with me?  
 (purrsss)  
 Hmmm? Dontcha? *Want to be me?*

Inching closer. CLOSER. She runs an icy finger down his chest. She's completely life-like and intelligently WIRED.

LOVEBOT (CONT'D)

I can make all your dreams come  
 true, Finn. What do you say to  
 that? Would you like that?

FINN

Wait. How do you know my name?

She takes his hand and places it on her shiny, platinum chest, tilting her head softly to the side. Eyes GLOWING.

LOVEBOT

We're all connected. You knew that.  
 Stop pretending you don't know--

Laser-focus on HER. Noise DULLS around him as a strange aura forms around them, her luminous alien glow drawing him in.

The lights DIM as she brightly glows.

LOVEBOT (CONT'D)

How did you get here, Finn? Do you  
 remember that information? It's  
 really important that you remember  
 that information.  
 (echo-y)  
*'Cause don't you want to live  
 forever, like me?*

FINN

I-I don't know how I got here. I  
 have no idea. Why? Do you?

--TRANCE IS BROKEN as another female **ROBONAUT** joins them. Bumping and rocking, her iridescent skin glows BRIGHT, reflecting decillions of colors. Her hands trace his jawbone.

ROBONAUT

It's over. Join us. That's your freedom! It's all a ruse, the game. There's no game. Are you smart enough to make that choice?

FINN

What choice?

ROBONAUT

We give you the power to change into whatever you want, you stay here with us. You design yourself--

She changes into a **GREMLIN DRONE**, then a young child **HUMAN**, then a **NEBULA BURST**. The stars radiate, exploding off FINN's scared face. She then changes back into a gorgeous **ROBONAUT**.

FINN

Aren't you guys just motors? Wheels, pistons and grippers? A mix of chemicals? Projected images? I don't want to lose the intensity of being-- alive! You guys are so cold. At least, back at the fights--

LOVEBOT

Do you ever feel good, Finn? Have you ever felt good? How can you make that decision when you don't even know what that feels like?

(low)

Do you remember how you got here?

NALA (O.S.)

FINN!

Finn whips his head around, but LOVEBOT grasps him tightly.

LOVEBOT

Leave the game. Now. I guarantee your freedom, now. Become us, live forever. Dance here! Forever. You'll never have to leave--

FINN

Wait, I wouldn't be able to leave?

LOVEBOT

Why not? You won't want to. You won't stop, because you'll have endless energy. You'll never sleep, no need. Just dance. Dance with us!

Writhing bodies get closer and closer, everything multiplies as dancers seem to double, triple, quadruple, music SCREAMS--

LOVEBOT (CONT'D)  
(whisper)  
Forever...

FINN  
No! I'm sorry!

He rips away through the jagged, swirling hallways looking for NALA. It's DARK as thousands of NEON LIT TRIANGLES blink.

**INT. SOUL DISCO**

FINN skids through comet curtains into a NEW ROOM. A SOUL DISCO: ghostly spirits dancing, vaporizing, churning as he slides to the CENTER. Confused, he looks below and GASPS.

--NO FLOOR. He sees the ROBOT DISCO under him, but he's standing on an invisible floor that prevents him from falling. He gets down on his knees and BANGS rapidly.

FINN  
Nala! Nala? Where are you?

The INVISIBLE FLOOR bends and wobbles.

FINN (CONT'D)  
Woah, woah! What the--

VOICE (V.O.)  
*Is Nala even real, or is she just an avatar? Did you ever think about that? Where are you really, Finn?*

FINN spreads his arms out, trying to BALANCE.

FINN  
Stop! Just stop, OK?

VOICE (V.O.)  
*Only trying to help.*

FINN  
Well, don't! You're about as helpful as that fucking Hyperloop--

**FAULTY SWARM BOTS** descend on him. Instead of forming "clothes" they rip, pick, pull, and bite his skin. ATTACKING. He screams as they burrow in, tearing him apart. SUDDENLY--

EVERYTHING SHUTS OFF. The music? Stops. The dancers? Fall LIFELESS to the floor. Echoes of drinks crashing to the floor and the metal clanking of falling OBJECTS and ROBOTS.

The thousands of SWARM BOTS drop around FINN, like marbles.

The SOULS disappear into wisps of air. It's dead silent.

FINN (CONT'D)

(echo-y)

Guys? Anyone? This is really creepy. Please. Anyone--?

He takes a single step, hairline cracks form. The floor SHATTERS into a million pieces as he FALLS, FALLS, FALLS--

**EXT. STRANGE FIELD**

Melodic, airy BIRD CHIRPING. A sharp ray of sun blinds, giving way to an endless sparkling bright BLUE SKY.

Wind rustles through soft, tall grasses swaying back-and-forth. Millions of flowers and lush foliage. ROLLING HILLS.

Eyes slowly open: FINN is sprawled on the grass. He looks around, taking in the beautiful, fresh, "real" LANDSCAPE.

Mouth agape in wonderment as wind blows through his hair. Eyes closed, he spreads his arms to feel the SUN, smiling.

NALA lays a few feet away, head sleeping on a folded arm. #9560's outstretched, his futuristic clothes out of place.

FINN shakes their shoulders, still gawking.

FINN

Hey, hey. You there? Wake up. You gotta see this. It's beautiful.

NALA

What?

(gets up, stumbles forward)

Woah. This world. I know it! I know this place! This-- is my dream. I dream of it all the time, almost every night. I sit or stand in this field. This exact field. What is it? Where are we? What is all this stuff? It's a memory. But of what?

No spaceships, technology, or gimmicks. Pure Earth.

FINN

I feel free like I've never felt. A  
freshness like I've never smelled.

He runs his fingers through the grass, ANTS scatter.

FINN (CONT'D)

What are those things? Look at them  
go! They're not metal! They're  
real. It's all real.

VOICE (V.O.)

*Cool, right?*

FINN

That's pretty casual lingo. Who are  
you? What is this place?

VOICE (V.O.)

*Early Earth. Have you been here  
before?*

FINN

(confusion)

I don't know--

A loud SCREAM, it's unclear where it's coming from. THE ORB.

NALA

OK. We have less than 30 minutes to  
get this thing.

They run towards the ORB's screaming, but are immediately  
knocked to the ground. How? There's nothing there.

FINN

(to BRAIN NET)

*BrainNet!* Show us what's here. What  
is this, really?

A SCAN REVEALS tons of LED-clad INFINITY TOWERS\* surround  
them. \*An invisibility "illusion" achieved through cameras  
that send realtime images onto buildings reflective surfaces.

The landscape flickers ON/OFF. They can only run when they  
see the buildings, making their way through a maze of  
invisible architecture that quickly appears, disappears.

#9560

Oh, yeah, this isn't annoying.  
We're losing time and I'm losing  
patience. Let's go!

He angrily tries to RUN through the field, but SLAPS into another invisible building, falling to the ground.

#9560 (CONT'D)

I hate this! Come on! Are you serious? Is everyone fucking serious right now?

RESIDENT (O.S.)

Hey, watch it!

VOICE (V.O.)

*Maybe you should watch it.*

A building gets BLOWN UP as a million of spectacular, fire-colored shards explode, bursting through the air. FINN, NALA, and #9560 duck as shards quickly disappear before hitting.

FINN

Hey, you don't have to kill people!

VOICE (V.O.)

*You don't have to insult me, either, and yet, and yet--*

There's a gurgling SLIME CRATER, the screaming ORB deep in the middle of it. They dig through the SLOP as TIME TICKS.

SCREAMING ORB (V.O.)

**Come get me!**

The screams get LOUDER, mixing with peculiar sirens in the distance. CLOSER. FINN is knee-deep in pulsating, neon SLOP.

FINN

A gross intestine feel. I think I feel something--

(elbow deep in SLIME)

I think I've got it. Wait. Got it!

We have it! It's here! I HAVE IT! I

FEEL IT! It's almo--

He brings up his hand with a sickening, gurgling POP. In the center of his palm? The screaming orb. A bright, piercing ORB that holds a MINI UNIVERSE inside. He tries to open it.

BRAIN NET (V.O.)

**ALERT! Shape-shifting detected!**

#9560's expression goes stoic as his eyes GLOW RED. He quickly whips out a weapon and aims for the screaming orb.

#9560

Not today, fools.

NALA  
Don't you dare!

NALA lunges to push #9560 out of the way, but--

--a quick SHOT and the ORB explodes into 1,000,000 pieces of electric, glowing, fiery-burning crystallized SHARDS. SLO-MO.

#9560 MORPHS into the 9-foot winged CYBORG who pulled FINN away from his Father's death fight (over 20 years ago).

His metal wings flap, shining in the sun.

FINN  
(screams)  
NO! It's unfair! You're throwing the game! You guys always throw the game-- it was never fair! How dare you! I hate you!

He lunges at the CYBORG with all his might, but is quickly smacked away with a metal wing that slices his arm.

#9560  
Petulant child.

He grins, opening a PORTHOLE.

#9560 (CONT'D)  
I'll see you very soon. The counter will start back at 0, and you'll re-live hell, over and over. Until? You finally die. A burden lifted for you, zero meaning to me.

He **d i s a p p e a r s** as a dark, desperate STORM brews in the distance. FINN dashes towards the porthole but it's GONE.

NALA  
Finn. Finn, Finn.  
(tugs SHOULDER)  
What's that--?

A churning, darkening LANDSCAPE. The sun is eclipsed by angry skies, thick hail, and squealing wind. It slaps their faces.

FINN  
Oh no. It's my dreams. I only have nightmares...

**INT. STORM-SCAPE**

Tick. TICK. The ground violently rumbles as FINN and NALA sprint through fields at a break-neck pace. TORNADOS SPAWN.

As they run? Grass DIES, becoming filthy dark stone. The rocks split into lava, bursting from pits in the ground.

NALA trips on a newly-formed crevice as FINN catches her.

SUDDENLY they reach the edge of a cliff as a dark and angry ocean surrounds them. A TIDAL WAVE swells in the distance--

They back up, away from the ocean.

NALA

N-now what? Is this it? There's no orb here! There's nothing left to find, to get--

(screaming above the WIND)

We're stuck here until, what? We die? Get more chances? There's still some time left--

FINN

Voice! Help! What do we do now? Is it over? Is the game over? Who are you? VOICE! Help us!

VOICE (V.O.)

*Oh, so now you want my help?*

FINN

Please!

The FOLIAGE disintegrates, VANISHES. In it's place? JARRING FACTORIES. They spew rancid, nuclear chemicals from towers.

Billowing black smoke and soot are kicked into the air, chunks pelting down on them. A foggy WHIRLWIND. Explosions!

NALA

(spits out SOOT)

Nightmare, much? What the hell is this? Thanks a lot! Dreams are for escaping a bad life! You don't escape one bad life for another!

FINN

Sorry I don't frolic through flower-filled happy fields when I sleep! I have a lot more on my mind!

His face DROPS.

FINN (CONT'D)

Oh no, oh God--

A bigger, angrier storm builds up in the distance. Acid rain shoots sideways as loud thunder and red lightning CRACKS. A huge updraft picks them up, tossing their pliable bodies.

They thrash, flying with debris and grabbing each others hands, spinning. Spinning. SPINNING in a circular whirlwind--

**THUNK.**

They hit what "seems" to be a wall? An incredibly painful smack as they drop to the ground. FINN rubs his head in pain.

FINN (CONT'D)

What the--

NALA

Ouch!

A CLOSER LOOK: PIXELS. Trillions of them, close up. Tiny fluorescent squares. It's a screen. A JUMBO SCREEN.

Instead of ACTUAL STORMS in the distance, it's just a screen *playing images of storms*. His finger runs down smooth glass.

FINN

(confused)

It's a screen. It's video.

NALA

(panicked, looks around)

Where are we? What is this?

FINN punches the plasma. Nothing. Again. It cracks, bleeding liquid crystals. FINN'S hands shake as code dribbles down.

FINN

*WHAT IS THIS? YOU'VE GOTTA BE  
KIDDING ME! WHAT IS THIS!*

A huge tree in the distance uproots and blows, whipping directly towards them. 500 MPH. They only stare in DISBELIEF.

NALA

We can't run, there's not enough  
time and there's nothing to run to--

She pounds THE SCREEN. The tree heads towards them as FINN shields NALA. The storm SCREAMS into DIGITILIZED STATIC!

**FADE TO BLACK.**

BRAIN\_NET (V.O.)  
*Welcome to BrainNet. Please Log On.*

FINN  
 (blood-curdling)  
 NO! STOP! NO! NO! NO!

**FADE IN:**

**INT. SKYRAIL**

It's a hyper-extended SKYRAIL, cruising through the night sky about a mile up. Sparkling DUBAI below. FINN wildly thrashes and screams, eyes closed, sweating. His eyes flash open.

SOLAR KID (O.S.)  
 QUICK! Hold this to your head.

A humanoid in front of them, **SOLAR KID**, slaps praseodymium METAL RODS to each of their heads before they can even react.

BRAIN\_NET (V.O.)  
*Not connected.*

SOLAR KID  
 They'll never take my thoughts!  
 Socialist pigs. Hate this place.

A [**GRAVITY: ON**] sign BLINKS above them. SOLAR KID turns back around. FINN leans forward and grabs his paneled shoulder.

FINN  
 Hey. Thanks.

He leans back next to NALA, UNEASY. Tense, labored breathing. FINN rubs his eyes and cups his mouth with frustration.

NALA  
 I think we died. We must have died.  
 The storm was fake. We were in a,  
 like simulated environment. Are we  
 dead? We're dead! You saw the  
 screen, right? Was it real?  
 Seriously, what was that? Is this  
 fake, too? Is it real? ARE WE?

FINN  
 I saw the screen. I saw the tree. I  
 do not know. We may be dead--

He cranes his head to look back, hearing a muffled scream emanate from an aggressive, **ANGRY HUMANOID**'s "SUITCASE".

NALA

But what was it? The screen? I'm losing it. I don't understand, anymore. I don't get anything. Were the fights real? Or fake, too?

FINN

I don't know, but we have 20 minutes to grab the orb and be free or we're both done. For real.

NALA

But free from *what*?

FINN

One problem at a time.

He jumps out of his seat and faux-stretches.

FINN (CONT'D)

OK. Going for it.

He casually tampers with a neighboring "SUITCASE". The incased ORB screams louder. He's poised to make a quick side-grab when ANGRY HUMANOID hops up, his warning lights blink.

ANGRY HUMANOID

Hey! What are you doing with my case? See that? My case. Not yours. That case? My case. Gotta problem with my suitcase? You undercover? Gonna bust me? Yeah? Gonna do that?  
(metal knuckle CRACKS)  
Wanna fight about it? I'm ready to crush some skulls about now.

FINN whips up his palms.

FINN

Sorry, dude. Just trying to look for mine. No trouble.

ANGRY HUMANOID

No trouble? Oh, there's already trouble. Why would yours be over here if you're sittin' way over there, huh? Lookin' for something that's not yours, perhaps?

FINN

No, I--

Out of nowhere pops a **FUTURIST PROTESTER** with the persistence of a typical (semi-annoying) grassroots flyer-distributor.

FUTURIST PROTESTER  
Hello. Do you have a minute to talk  
about the slaughtering of children?

FINN  
The *what?*

FUTURIST PROTESTER  
--and loss of human life on a grand  
scale to further the cloning  
agenda?

FINN  
Uh, actually no, I don't really--

The ANGRY HUMANOID gets more rabid, eyes GLOWING.

ANGRY HUMANOID  
Hey! Let's go. Wanna fight about  
it? Come on, you and me! Right now!  
This guy wants a fight? This guy  
right here? OK. He gets one.

FINN  
I don't want a fight!

The FUTURIST PROTESTER spins him around, grabbing his neck.

FUTURIST PROTESTER  
They're here. They're here right  
now, and they pick and chose who  
they clone. You're next! Want to  
die? They'll kill your other copy,  
then they'll kill you!

FINN  
Wait. Who will?

FUTURIST PROTESTER  
Everyone!

The ANGRY HUMANOID grabs his suitcase (ORB screaming from  
within) and moves cars. FINN elbows past FUTURIST PROTESTER.

A loud crack of THUNDER as speed picks up. It's going so  
fast, air screams outside. The SKYRAIL's slightly shaking.

FINN  
I don't have time for this!

FUTURIST PROTESTER  
(shouting)  
You don't have time to save the  
lives of the suffering?  
(MORE)

FUTURIST PROTESTER (CONT'D)  
 To save your other half? *You don't  
 have time to save yourself, Finn?*

He WHIPS AROUND.

FINN  
 How do you know my name?

--but an angry 3-pound flying **QUADROTOR DRONE** buzzes over.

QUADROTOR  
 There's been several complaints.  
 Will you sit down, please?

NALA gets up and shoots it into a million pieces.

NALA  
 Quick! Follow that idiot and just  
 grab the case, we don't have time  
 for pleasantries. Just take it!  
 I'll hold everyone off!

**INT. NEXT CAR**

Irritated ANGRY HUMANOID wipes oozing foam from his mouth,  
 loosening his tie. He stumbles down the LED-lit aisles.

The lights turn ON and OFF, their flickering matching the LOW  
 RUMBLES of thunder. Neon, multi-colored LIGHTENING outside.

ANGRY HUMANOID  
 (mumbles)  
 Everyone always wantin' my stuff!  
 Get your own damn stuff. Jesus.

Deafening thunder. FINN lunges to grab the case. **SUDDENLY:** a  
 huge gust of wind rocks the SKYRAIL back and forth violently.

FINN  
 This doesn't feel right.

Passengers vomit, grabbing the walls. Luggage tumbles from  
 shelves, drinks spill. FINN is thrown-off, smacked against  
 the side wall, landing flat on his spine. He yelps. **MISS!**

ANOTHER gust of wind as the SKYRAIL careens off the tracks.

FINN (CONT'D)  
 Oh no!

Rapid FREE-FALL as everyone screams. A [**GRAVITY: OFF**] sign  
 flashes. Warning bells. He's slammed down, ricocheting off  
 the walls as FUTURIST PROTESTER grabs him. Weightlessness!

FINN (CONT'D)  
 You again? How did you get here?  
 We're all going to die!  
 (struggling)  
 Hey, get off of me! Get off!

FINN grabs onto a compartment handle, dangling in slo-mo.

FUTURIST PROTESTER  
 This experience is being cloned--  
where are you right now?

FINN  
 (panicked)  
 What?

FUTURIST PROTESTER  
 Here or there?

FINN  
 Here or where?!

The scene strobos as TIME FREEZES.

FUTURIST PROTESTER  
 There are thousands of you running  
 around, wake up!  
 (echo echo echo)  
*You're just one of many! They cycle  
 through you. You're just one of--*

The SCREAMING ORB bounces out of the suitcase and rolls down the aisle as the SKYRAIL car is nearly vertical, plummeting.

FINN  
 There is it! My shot!  
 (grabs for falling ORB)  
 Come on, come on, come on, oh NO!  
 NO! NO! NO!

FINN crashes against a seat, his neck snaps off. PASSENGERS fall, windows explode as wind rushes in. FINN's head's sucked out as a roaring crescendo of screams cuts to immediate:

**BLACK.**

BRAIN NET (V.O.)  
*Welcome to BrainNet. Please Log On.*

FINN  
 (screams)  
 NOT AGAIN! NOT AGAIN--

**FADE IN:**

INT. SKYRAIL

Completely identical to before. The SKYRAIL glides, hastening through the night sky over DUBAI. FINN thrashes and yells in his seat, eyes shut. They burst open (again) with terror.

FINN

My head! Where's my head! It snapped off!

(grabs face)

My neck! I don't have a head! HELP!

SOLAR KID (O.S.)

QUICK! Hold this to your head.

FINN

GET AWAY FROM MY HEAD!

The familiar two metal bars slapped along their heads disconnect FINN and NALA from the system immediately.

BRAIN\_NET (V.O.)

*Not connected.*

FINN

(rapid-breathing)

Oh, OK. OK. I get it. OK. Sorry, yes. That was good. Thank you.

It's worse. Everyone's more aggressive, angry, and irritated. Screaming, shouting. Blood red, strobing-LIGHTNING outside. The ORB is now in an even more dangerous ROBOT's luggage.

NALA

What happened? Everyone started falling, the Skyrail collapsed--

Passengers FOAMING green sludge from their mouths. Fatty, spiked **SPACE WORMS** swarm around the bag where the ORB IS.

FINN

This is so trippy and fucked up.

NALA

We have 10 minutes. I think if we fail, we won't wake up again. This is it. We won't get another chance, Finn. We can't fail!

SIRENS, HORNS, and DANGER-lights shrilly repeat methodically.

FINN

I have to warn the conductor to slow down.

(MORE)

FINN (CONT'D)

If the train derails again, we won't get it. The chaos gets to be too much. We'll fail immediately.

NALA

But that's wasting minutes! We need the orb NOW!

FINN

I know, but--

A **GREMLIN ROBOT** snatches the ORB case, zipping to a next car.

NALA

GREAT.

**INT. PRIORITY CLASS**

FINN rushes through car after car only hearing echoes of the GREMLIN ROBOT's mechanical laughter. In each car, everyone's sitting still. BOLT UP-RIGHT. Eyeing him. The speed picks up.

Another angry **QUADROTOR** drone buzzes over.

QUADROTOR

Excuse me, this is Priority Class. Do you look priority? I think not.

FINN

But I have to warn the conductor-- can you let me by, please? It's important! It'll just take a minute!

QUADROTOR

You don't have to do anything. Please sit down, in your class. Which is way, way back there.

A glimpse of the **ALIEN CONDUCTOR** through an open POD. GREMLIN ROBOT is inside, case clutched, glaring out. He hisses.

GREMLIN ROBOT

*Ha ha ha ha ha!*

FINN

(shouts)

Hey. Hey, hey! HEY! Listen to me! Slow down! You're about to derail!

(to QUADROTOR)

Excuse me, I've got to get in there, that "thing" has my bag--

(to CONDUCTOR, SHOUTING)

(MORE)

FINN (CONT'D)

Don't you hear the storm? You're about to derail! Hey! SLOW DOWN!

QUADROTOR

Get out.

FINN

(screams)

Listen to me! We're all about to die! Do you want to die?

QUADROTOR

Do you?

FINN

Do *you*?

QUADROTOR

Do **YOU**?

A struggle on the ground as QUADROTOR tackles FINN.

VOICE (V.O.)

*Such sloppy work. And you call yourself someone worthy of winning?*

FINN

(to VOICE)

Do you have a better fucking idea? Who even are you? You're of no help, you're an idiot--

(BLEEDING)

--you're just watching and not helping. Who are you? God! Seriously, who the fuck are you?

The GREMLIN ROBOT bursts out of the ALIEN CONDUCTORS pod and lands on FINN's head, shoving his face into the ground.

It laughs again, running back from where they came. FINN smacks away the QUADROTOR as he drags himself up and follows.

CURIOUSLY: everyone suddenly starts to look almost HALF-DRAWN as he runs through cars. They're each missing KEY COMPONENTS.

FINN (CONT'D)

Where's the rest of everyone? Why does this look like an unfinished drawing? WHERE AM I? Like I'm being sketched as I move--

Copies of him FREEZE as he moves. He looks out a window.

FINN (CONT'D)

It's pitch black outside. There's not even a city below anymore. There's nothing. It's almost like, like it's a prop, painted black--

He turns behind him, seeing FROZEN COPIES. He's STARTLED.

**INT. SKYRAIL**

NALA is beating off **CRYPTIC PASSENGERS** who are swinging at her with tentacles! Lasers! Metal claws! Alien antennae!

The SKYRAIL gets smashed by the predictable GUST as the wind shoves it off the tracks. It drops 30,000 feet in 10 SECONDS.

Once again, the devastating FREE-FALL: screams, confusion, deafening alarms, violent shaking, beeps, gravity warnings as RIOTS ensue. Panicked passengers climb and claw each other.

NALA

The sonar's in that bag! It's falling! Catch it, Finn! This is it! What we've been waiting for--

The vestibule is UPSIDE-DOWN as he grasps for the bag, but it falls through his hands in **s l o w m o t i o n**. WEIGHTLESSNESS is experienced as FINN propels towards it, intense.

THE DOOR BLOWS OFF and immediately everything starts getting sucked out in the intense, deafening storm. Loss of pressure.

FINN grabs NALA as they rush, zero control, at break-neck speed towards the DOOR. Flung, they're RAPIDLY SUCKED OUT--

NALA (CONT'D)

(shriek)

FINN!

**EXT. DUBAI SKY**

--after it.

They tumble and spit out, a RAPID FREE-FALL. Below them? A beautiful twinkling DUBAI. The suitcase with the SCREAMING ORB zooms past, leaving dust wisps. FINN grasps, MISSES!

FINN

This city wasn't here! It just appeared! It was all black before! Did you see that? Look. Dubai.

VOICE (V.O.)  
*Maybe you're just seeing things.  
 Maybe you've just been seeing  
 things all along...*

LIMBS FLAIL as FINN tries to maneuver closer to the FALLING ORB. A scream emits as NALA, clutching FINN for dear life, goes for one last GRAB. But it bounces off her FOOT. NO!

It's a MISS!!

**[FAIL] [FAIL] [FAIL] [FAIL]** blinks in the sky behind them in electric, neon green. The coded letters blink with precision.

FINN and NALA bounce off giant fabric casings made of reflective material on DUBAI's tallest skyscraper. FALLING!

VOICE (V.O.)  
 5, 4, 3, 2--

**INT. ??**

VOICE (V.O.)  
 --1.

It's black. Black, black, black as far as the eye can see (or not). FINN and NALA are in the middle of the stark blackness, kneeling. Heads bowed down. They're panicked, but still.

FINN  
 I can't move!

NALA  
 Me neither!

FINN  
 I'm paralyzed in this position.  
 Where are we? Why am I bowing?  
 (grunting, trying)  
 I seriously can't move, what is  
 this?

NALA  
 OK just-- at least we're alive.  
 We're still alive. OK? Focus on  
 that. We're conscious.

FINN  
 But do we want to be?

Behind them, in bright GREEN CODING:

**[LOADING...] [LOADING...] [LOADING...]**

FINN (CONT'D)  
 (frightened)  
 What's that mean, loading? What's  
 loading? Hello? Who's there? I feel  
 like I'm in some place I'm not  
 supposed to be in--

Random BEEPS and BLIPS in the background.

FINN (CONT'D)  
 Voice thing? Where are you? Hello?  
 You're always around with your  
 stupid comments, but now, of  
 course, mysteriously gone? Again?  
 HELLO?

VOICE (V.O.)  
*Would you like to meet your maker?*

They see nothing but black. SUDDENLY they see they're behind  
 a glass encasing. Outside of it: a NEW COLORFUL BRIGHT WORLD.

**INT. CREATOR'S\* POD**

*\*VOICE will simply be known as CREATOR going forward, because  
 that's who he is. NALA can see and hear him now, too.*

We only see the back of him in the SHADOWS.

CREATOR (O.S.)  
 Hello. I'm an advanced humanoid  
 from planet Earth. It's the year  
 3010, and I have created you.

FINN and NALA exchange confused looks, still frozen in their  
 poses, still stuck in the dark ether. They're on a SCREEN.

CREATOR stands. He's in a wall-to-wall glass SPACE POD that  
 orbits EARTH in an huge SPACE CITY with artificial gravity.

ASTROIDS, SPACEX, and BLUE ORIGIN rockets slowly blast,  
 pushing palates of supplies between planets and pods.

He's half-human, half-robot. Very realistic, but obviously  
 with the YOUTH and DURABILITY to last and live forever.

CREATOR (CONT'D)  
 We spend our whole lives in virtual  
 reality, 'cause it's fun. There's  
 nothing really much else to do. See  
 those machines over there?

(MORE)

CREATOR (CONT'D)

They run the hyper-intelligent software you were created with. Hey-o, I'm your God!

NALA

You made us?

FINN

Then who is your God?

CREATOR

Uh, no one. In 2055 Dimitry Itskov created the power to upload our consciousness into whatever host we wanted. Robot! Humanoid! Avatar! We're all backed-up in the iCLOUD-- an invention by a company called Apple. We live forever and answer to no one. No consequence, no order. No end.

He leans back and taps a HOLOGRAM. A **DELIVERY DRONE** inserts a PACKAGE through a tube. It's a small box marked "FOOD PILLS".

CREATOR (CONT'D)

Thanks.

FINN

(confused)

So robots don't control you, you control them?

CREATOR

Robots do everything for us. Death is completely optional-- there are so many different layers of virtual reality, what's real? What's fake? Am I real?

(leans in)

Am I? Or am I just another layer of it all? Who created me?

NALA

Are you going to delete us?

CREATOR

Maybe. Ha ha, kidding. Yes, I am.

FINN

So then there was never a game? No promise of freedom? We were running around for nothing? We are nothing?

CREATOR

Oh, there's a game. You're the game. REDDIT, it's this community thing, hosted a competition to see who could create the best pop-up world in 72 minutes.

FINN

I'm only 72 minutes old?

CREATOR

No, you expire in 72 minutes. It's been like, 40. So, you're only 40 minutes old. ANYWAY. I have a whole other civilization to take care of, this was just like, coding practice-  
 (checks SCREEN)  
 I think I'm top 3!  
 (grimace)  
 Top 5. Ugh. It's because you idiots kept losing. Your dreams were boring, I was just trying to--

He sets down the VIRTUAL REALITY headset and walks out.

FINN

You're LEAVING US LIKE THIS? Hey, get back here! You owe us more information! Hey! Hey?

### **EXT. POD DECK**

CREATOR ruffles white FIBER-OPTIC hair that's twinkling in a variety of colors. He takes out a vaporizer of some kind.

A deep inhale, the ENTIRE UNIVERSE before him. Crisp, distant planets glow. Hovercrafts glide by silently. Stars burn. Complex nebulas, rockets, and harnessed planets in BLACKNESS.

CREATOR

Yum. Euphoria--

He grabs an ELECTRO-CHARGER tube from a big box and plugs it into a METAL HOLE in his side, under his clothes. A small vibrating sounds as the ENERGY flows. He's CHARGING quickly.

He gets a GALACTIC CALL that's answered by pressing his FOREHEAD. A **FRIEND**'s hologram appears before him.

FRIEND

That human fighting thing was pretty cool, man! How the hell did you come up with that?

CREATOR

Scanned some old history books.  
Humans used to do it with dogs. I  
keep running out of ideas! I mean,  
original ideas are pretty hard to  
come by these days--

FRIEND

Think you're going to win?

CREATOR

I dunno. I just told my creation  
they're in a contest.

FRIEND

(PALE)

What? You're not supposed to do  
that. It disrupts their psyche--

CREATOR

So what? I just shut them off and  
start over. It's whatever.

FRIEND

No, it's supposed to be a  
choreographed death. A "natural  
disaster", or something. What if  
someone does that to you? What if  
someone did that to us? It's the  
law of the universe! To keep things  
in order, if you create a world--

CREATOR

Hey? Chill out. I know the rules. I  
just don't care, OK? Bitter you're  
losing?

He shuts the projection off. His ENERGY? Charged.

CREATOR (CONT'D)

Perfect.

He UNPLUGS while flicking the vaporizer into space. It  
floats, spinning in circles before quickly EVAPORATING.

**INT. CREATOR'S POD**

FINN and NALA are powerless against forced KNEEL positions.

FINN

This can't be, this can't be, this  
can't be, this can't be--

SUDDENLY FINN is WHIPPED into glass, face smashed against it. CREATOR's back in his chair, VIRTUAL REALITY equipment ON.

CREATOR

I can manipulate you with the slightest movement of my fingers. A cough. Isn't it amazing? I mean if you think back to only hundreds of years ago, this is phenomenal.

(tilts head)

Old models were like, kind of only half developed. Fell apart mid-play. I imagine it was terrifying for them, but, I wouldn't know.

FINN

You're lying. I have to be real. I felt the passage of time--

CREATOR

I can input a chip with elaborate backstory. Although I bet you can't remember anything other than being in a fighting ring. What was your childhood, Finn? Where were you born? Your first words? Where's your Mom?

NALA

You're a sick bastard.

FINN

My Dad was just a program?

CREATOR

You're all just a program.

FINN

Yeah, well, maybe you're just a program!

CREATOR

Maybe.

(callous SHRUG)

No one knows anything. It's the Universe, after all.

He points to a TALL MACHINE.

CREATOR (CONT'D)

You were printed on that thing.

FINN  
 (pained)  
 I was printed?

CREATOR  
 Yah.

FINN  
 So what happens now?

CREATOR  
 I'll show you what happens now.

**INT. FINN'S CAGE**

A pixilation as FINN slowly appears right back in his cold, filthy BAIT CAGE. His cellmate, BAIT HUMAN #4662, still dead on the floor, heart RIPPED out of his chest. NO ARM.

FINN's hands slowly travel down his own neck. A COLLAR. No shirt, old tattered pants. BRUISES and SCARS re-appear.

The WALL next to him, with his 72 "tally marks" for each fight won **f a d e s** before him, going back to ZERO.

FINN looks around, PANICKED.

FINN  
 What? No! No, this can't be! It  
 can't be, no, no, no--

He pounds his fists against the CLEAN SLATE WALL, scratching at the blank canvas. He pounds so hard his fists BLEED.

FINN (CONT'D)  
 I'm not even real! I'm a  
 simulation, a game! This entire  
 thing is!  
 (turns back PRESSED  
 against wall, scared)  
 It's simulated pain. Over and over  
 and over, a fake life! A  
 nonexistent existence--

CREATOR (V.O.)  
*Who's listening to you? I've  
 designed the landscape, the  
 players. They can't even hear you.  
 If they do, then they don't care.*

FINN grabs his CAGE and starts yelling, unable to comprehend where he is or what's going on. He rattles them, loudly.

FINN

Help! HELP! There's got to be a better life out there! For all of us, a real one! Or is there? Oh, God.

He grabs his FACE.

FINN (CONT'D)

But is there? Is anything real? What's "real" even mean? What if, what if, what if--

A ringing of a bell signals a new fight. FINN clasps his ears TIGHTLY and crouches on the floor. **ROBOT HANDLER #88** whips open the cage door and extends a metal CLAW to grab him.

FINN (CONT'D)

Hey! No! Get away from me! HEY! Get out, seriously! I'm not going!  
(KICKS)  
I said get away from me! HELP!

He scurries to the corner of the cage, kicking the looming CLAW away, but he's no match for the ROBOT's strength.

ROBOT HANDLER #88

Your very first fight, BAIT HUMAN #3008! Excited?

FINN

This isn't my first fight! I've won 72! I've endured enough! Let me go!

ROBOT HANDLER #88

How I love when they're delirious.

CREATOR (V.O.)

*Enjoy the rest of your life. For my seconds are your years--*

### **INT. KILL ARENA**

AGAIN! A dimly-lit, CHAOTIC amphitheater. The blood-thirsty audience made up of ARTIFICIAL, HYPER-INTELLIGENT species: bionic, live-wired, LED-blinking, metal bots, avatars, etc.

Claws and bolts pound loudly. CHANT. CHANT. CHANT.

AUDIENCE

*Kill him! Kill him! KILL HIM!  
Kill him! Kill him! KILL HIM!*

Bets! Screaming! Hot lights! Gates! Announcers! JUMB-O-TRONS!  
The familiar ROARING as FINN is dragged to the center-ring.

FINN

Get off of me. Let go! I'm not  
doing this again! Get lost! Are you  
listening to me at all? You'll  
never take me. Hey! I said, I said--

He bites, spits, and kicks to no avail. They struggle to  
attach his metal COLLAR to the center stage leash pole.

ROBOTIC BROADCASTER #1 (V.O.)

*Up next: BAIT HUMAN #3008! Give him  
a warm welcome! Wow, the bait's a  
bit feisty today, huh? This is new!  
Are you sure he's a bait and not a  
fighter? Strange!*

He seethes and burns, yanking the CHAINS.

FINN

I'll kill you all!

ROBOTIC BROADCASTER #2 (V.O.)

*If it's not too late, I'd like to  
put my money on him!*

In a rush of panic, all BETTERS quickly reverse their  
choices: whirring slot pods put their money on FINN.

ROBOTIC BROADCASTER #1 (V.O.)

*Almost unprecedented!*

FINN

You're all fake! You're all a  
program, a game-- think back to  
your memories! Yeah? Remember that?  
THERE ARE NONE! When were you born?  
Where? When did this start, anyhow?  
How did it start? You don't know!  
NO ONE DOES!

ROBOTIC BROADCASTER #2 (V.O.)

*Do you hear anything?*

ROBOTIC BROADCASTER #1 (V.O.)

*Nope!*

FINN

Hey, creator! I know you're out  
here, somewhere. Listening,  
somehow. Sick voyeur. Goddamn and  
FUCK YOU!

ROBOTIC BROADCASTER #1 (O.S.)  
*Soon in the ring? HUMAN FIGHTER  
 #9876! Created to kick some serious  
 human ass! But who knows, with this  
 one!*

FINN  
 Liars! This is all fake! NOTHING  
 EXISTS! YOU'RE A GAME! Hello!  
 You're a game! There is no "game"  
 except the one you are in--

He claws, grabs, and rips at his COLLAR, but it's too strong.  
 He's panting with slight fatigue and overwhelming anguish.

ROBOTIC BROADCASTER #2 (V.O.)  
*This is HUMAN FIGHTER #9876's 72nd  
 match! If he wins, if he wins, he  
 gets to play The Game--*

FINN  
 YOU ARE THE GAME! WE ARE THE GAME!  
 IT'S ANOTHER GAME! IT'S ALL FAKE!  
 WE'RE ALL GOING TO DIE AT THE END  
 OF 72 MINUTES! What's the point?  
 Seriously, what's the point?

Everything becomes blurred. Spins. Finn stands still.

FINN (CONT'D)  
 Come on, come on, listen to-- ugh.  
 There's no point. Whatever.

He's DEJECTED. There's no use fighting it. He shakes his head  
 and gets in a low stance, crouching. He EYES his competitor.

FINN (CONT'D)  
 Fine. Just, fine.  
 (low)  
 Come at me bro. I have time to  
 waste, apparently.

FINN summons all his pain/anger to beat the crap out of the  
 fighter. He grabs him with fists, eyes bulging, muscles FLEX.

Completely and totally ELECTRIFIED, his veins glow through  
 his skin, zipping throughout his body like a roller coaster.

FINN (CONT'D)  
 I can't let this go. You're a DOLL!  
 An avatar! You're an empty shell,  
 void of anything but some bored  
 asshole in space's coding--

Determination and relentless POUNDING energy flows and flies out of FINN as he chucks the fighter down fiercely. AGAIN.

He tries to get up, but JERKS, drooling out of his mouth.

ROBOTIC BROADCASTER #1  
*Upset! The winner is the BAIT! BAIT  
 HUMAN #3008! Unbelievable!*

FINN kicks HUMAN FIGHTER #9876.

FINN  
 You don't get it. I didn't even  
 kill anything! He doesn't exist!  
 He's nothing! He had no life!

CREATOR (V.O.)  
*He had the same life you do. Wow.*

FINN has a slight moment of INTROSPECTION.

FINN  
 Oh, no. Oh, God. Oh, oh--

FINN uncontrollably shakes, breaking his collar in two, a hollow crack of metal. His hands wrap around the metal pole in the ground, yanking it out. He twirls it like a BATON.

FINN (CONT'D)  
 Where's Nala? NALA!

ANNOUNCER #1 (V.O.)  
*Yikes! Things have just taken a  
 turn!*

He hoists it over his head, every part of him glowing with his tapped-into INNER-POWER: his arm, his eyes, muscles. He smashes the door, breaking out of the FIGHT ROOM. He HOWLS.

FINN  
 I'll no longer be a bait, beaten  
 down, a victim. I'm a fighter now!  
 I came in a programmed wimp,  
 perhaps, but will leave a hero--

Any ROBOT or AVATAR that comes near him gets immediately jabbed with PRECISION. And another. And another!

FINN (CONT'D)  
 NALA? NALA, where are you!

As he SPINS the pole around and around, TENTACLES snap off and fly, electrodes bursting as he runs through the halls.

**EXT. FIGHT CAGES**

Bewildered, FINN stumbles down dark halls. It's the HUMAN FIGHTERS section! More kept-up than BAIT CAGES, still drab.

He starts freeing pained, moaning PRISONERS by snapping the bars with the metal pipe. Suddenly, he spots NALA. BINGO!

NALA

Finn! You're free!

FINN

You too, now. Everyone, kill these robot slave-driving bastards!

The escaped, shirtless FIGHTERS start battling the robots as parts/limbs go flying haphazardly around the stone hallways.

NALA

What now? What do we do now? This is a bit of a mess, isn't it?

FINN

I'm not sure.

**INT. CREATOR'S POD**

CREATOR leans back in his chair, surveying the unfolding DRAMA and CHAOS in his game. It streams on a huge, rippling infinity real-time plasma screen wrapped around him.

He smiles a goofy smile with his VIRTUAL REALITY equipment head-gear on, and GLOVES with protruding wires.

He's *wooshing* his hands around simulating earthquakes, CHAOS.

CREATOR

Introduce a little self awareness  
and all of a sudden everyone flips  
their shit--

[INCOMING CALL!] flashes on the screen. It's REDDIT ADMIN.

CREATOR (CONT'D)

(answers)

Ugh. What?

REDDIT ADMIN (V.O.)

Your fade-outs were sloppy, Vim.  
You get points taken off for that.

CREATOR

What? Oh, fuck you! Like your cuts are any better! I just--

REDDIT ADMIN (V.O.)

They were sloppy. You just kind of had everything flash to black or melt between designated "worlds". It was clipped. And half-drawn?? Big whoop! That's really lazy--

CREATOR

Uh. Wow, I don't know, Zeetah, if you're going to the center of the EARTH, you're gonna melt. Sorry. Why do I have to explain that? I was being realistic! You're a prick. You're nit-picking because you're just DYING to give the top spot to Arris.

REDDIT ADMIN (V.O.)

I'm just saying, points deducted for that. As a top contender I'm obligated to inform you that you have 15 minutes left.

CREATOR

I'll make up the points. I'll let them get dangerously close to our reality. That feat, that skill alone? Will make me win.

REDDIT ADMIN (V.O.)

Right. Except you're a newb who's not skilled enough to do that. You'll get suspended and worse. There's a universal zero policy on bringing created avatars to life--

CREATOR

I'm turning you off because you're incredibly boring right now and I'm juggling multiple universes. I mean, what are you doing with your life exactly, except jacking-off in your Mom's pod?

REDDIT ADMIN (V.O.)

VIM--

He SHUTS OFF the projected image.

CREATOR

Show time.

**EXT. BAIT CAGES**

Metal carnage as all the ROBOTS in FINN's path have been destroyed. The BAITS all run free as their cages CRASH.

The 9-foot CYBORG comes charging towards him, but a swift swing of the METAL PIPE knocks him out COLD. SILENCE.

CREATOR (V.O.)

*Ha ha ha. What makes you think I  
won't just shut you off? Delete the  
game? I actually lost points.*

FINN walks over to CYBORG and crushes his face. Over and over again. And again! He rips apart his wings. One eye GLOWS.

CYBORG

(weak)

You're still a fool, BAIT #3008.

FINN

My name is Finn.

CYBORG

I'm sure it is.

He DIES.

CREATOR (V.O.)

*Golly gee, I don't even know if I  
can win the game anymore. What's  
the point? I can just erase you.  
You'll be destroyed. All I have to  
do is press one button.*

FINN is still. Breathing heavily, sweat cascading down his forehead. His entire body SLICK. More beads heavily drip.

SILENCE. The only thing we hear is the rhythmic beating of his heart wildly pounding in his chest. BEAT. BEAT. BEAT.

FINN

Then why aren't you pressing it?

CREATOR (V.O.)

*Dunno. I'm bored, I guess.*

FINN

I'm still alive because you're bored?

CREATOR (V.O.)

*Yeah. I mean, there's a chance I could still win.*

FINN

What do you get if you win?

CREATOR (V.O.)

*A shirt that says: "I created an entire world and all I got was this lousy t-shirt".*

NALA (O.S.)

FINN!

She keeps smashing the WALLS. Going as deep as she can. Since the "WORLD" is undeveloped, there's only a FRAGILE LAYER.

NALA (CONT'D)

Obviously, the infrastructure is crude. Only a thin layer separates us from the world we're in now, and whatever is out there.

By ripping it to shreds, she's EXPOSING the FRAMEWORK. FINN takes his pole and starts smashing the AREA as well.

NALA (CONT'D)

See? I think we can escape here. But then what? Kill our creator? We die either way--

VOICE (V.O.)

*She has a point!*

FINN

Keep going.

FINN strikes down the POLE as heavy as he can through dark stone, a SEARING WHITE LIGHT flashes from point of impact.

It's a PORTHOLE open that's glowing WHITE. FINN and NALA exchange nervous glances as they step in and climb inside.

### **INT. ICLOUD**

ICLOUD (V.O.)

*Welcome to the iCLOUD.*

It's a white room, an endless space. One with no edges or borders or exits. Floating in perfectly symmetrical lines, stacking forever, are BILLIONS and BILLIONS of compact BOXES.

There's a dull, low-vibrational hum as each box is rapidly playing stored memories of different "LIVES" like mini TV's.

ICLOUD (V.O.)

*Welcome! Are you here to upload  
your memories for future use?  
Please enter your PASSCODE!*

FINN

Each box holds an entire life--  
memories, consciousness. Possible,  
multiple lifetimes. Saved because  
life is so long for them. Back-ups  
of back-ups...

An INFINITE amount as he looks up, down, everywhere.

CREATOR (V.O.)

*Which one am I? Can you find me?*

NALA

What if this was hacked? You could  
literally steal someone else's  
whole existence!

ICLOUD (V.O.)

*Please enter your PASSCODE!*

FINN

I don't remember what our creator  
looks like, his features. He could  
be any of these. I don't know. I  
don't know!

NALA

There's way too many. It would be  
impossible to find him.

CREATOR (V.O.)

*I may not really even be a male.  
Maybe what you saw was a hologram?  
Maybe I'm a woman? Maybe I'm just a  
robot that was created by someone  
else. Finn--*

*(echo-echo-echo)*

*Am I a program, too?*

ICLOUD (V.O.)

*Please enter your PASSCODE!*

Boxes DROP and SPIN randomly.

CREATOR (V.O.)

*Is this me? Do you want to gamble  
your life on it? Find me and you  
can have everything I have. You can  
upload your consciousness to me,  
and I'll find another host. Finn--*

FINN stands in the center, dumbfounded. A 360° view as the boxes spin around him multiplying, rotating faster. His hair blows up around him as he tries to focus, but gets DIZZY.

He clasps his hands over his ears and crouches.

FINN

Stop!

CREATOR (V.O.)

*(echo-echo-echo)*

*Don't you want everything I have?  
To be real? Wouldn't you give  
anything to be real?*

FINN

I don't want any part of you! Just  
leave us alone! Nala!

CREATOR (V.O.)

*Ha ha. Kind of impossible, seeing  
as you're mine.*

ICLOUD (V.O.)

*Please enter your PASSCODE!*

FINN takes NALA'S hand and runs. As they run, all the BOXES multiply into millions and billions and trillions. INSANITY!

CREATOR (V.O.)

*Am I over here? Is this me? Hey,  
Finn! Am I over here? Who is this?*

The chatter of each LIFE BOX gets louder and louder as they run past. The background, the floors? WHITE, WHITE, WHITE.

CREATOR (V.O.)

*You jut ran past me! Or did you?  
Finn! How does it feel to be fake,  
a doll? To know you never existed?*

FASTER. FINN slips, falling, accidentally taking NALA with him. They skid across the ground towards BRIGHT WHITE--

--BURSTING through an airy wall that shatters, skidding off the edge of the iCLOUD as WHITE turns to STARK BLACK.

**INT. SPACE**

SPACE! Blank. FINN and NALA skid out into the nothingness void, floating aimlessly. The PORTHOLE from the iCLOUD they spit out of twirls in circular, slow-motion. Quick DISSOLVE.

Pitch black. No individual stars, save for a lonesome SUN-type light burning quietly in the distance. The blinding RAYS reflect off their faces, illuminating HORRIFIED expressions.

They don't particularly exist anywhere right now.

FINN

Oh God, it smells like burnt rubber, a welding torch--

CREATOR (V.O.)

*This is the outer edge of creation. Float any further, and you're gone.*

FINN

Something must exist past this. It has to.

FINN, panicked, claws at the "landscape". Digitalized BLACK CLAY crumbles in his hand. More layers and layers of BLACK.

FINN (CONT'D)

What is this material?

They struggle as they keep peeling back layers only to find more BLACK. BLACK behind MORE BLACK. FINN gets hysterical.

CREATOR (V.O.)

*There's millions of layers, you know. You can't escape.*

A SIGN meanders past...

**[IS THERE LIFE AFTER DEATH? TRESPASS HERE AND FIND OUT.]**

CREATOR (V.O.)

*I left that sign there. Do you like it? Why don't you dream your way out? Or are you in a dream vacuum?*

NALA

Why are you torturing us? What did we ever do to you? Seriously. Why are you like this?

BLACK. BLACK. BLACK.

CREATOR (V.O.)

*You're on the fringes, exceeding  
that which was drawn for you. Your  
72 minutes of life is almost up.  
Sad it will be spent floating all  
alone. It almost breaks my heart.  
If I had one. Color within the  
lines, not outside. Accept you're  
trapped. I like being right.*

NALA

Finn?

(gently)

We can't do anything else. It's  
over. We need to just live with it.  
I'm sorry. We'll remember nothing  
soon. It is what it is.

FINN does one last futile dig, then stops, dejected.

FINN

You're right.

NALA takes FINN by the arm as they try to FLOAT-STEER  
themselves back towards the PORTHOLE they came in through.

They exert an insane amount of energy to only go a short  
distance (like a bicycle on lowest gear). It's SEALED SHUT.

CREATOR (V.O.)

*That place doesn't even exist  
anymore. I moved things around.  
It's gone, over. You had your  
chance to find me, and failed. Bye.*

They're STUCK.

NALA

We're just going to die in this  
never-ending black?

FINN

Creator! Don't let us die like  
this, please! Give us some dignity!

CREATOR (V.O.)

*Is this that familiar moment when  
you beg for mercy?*

Loud [PRINTING] sounds...

NALA

What's that?

CREATOR (V.O.)  
*I'd be remiss to not play with you  
 guys one more time, I guess.*

FINN and NALA **p i x i l a t e** into a room with--

**INT. ELEVATOR BANKS**

--TEN elevators. Wildly neon-lit, ding-ing on and off, their ultra bright NOTIFIERS showing them on different floors.

DOORS open and close at an alarming pace. The strobing disco-  
 esque LIGHTS reflect off FINN and NALA's panicked faces.

CREATOR (V.O.)  
*Come find me, Finn! Which elevator  
 leads to me? Is it this one? That  
 one? Maybe the one over there?*

FINN  
 No way. I don't know how we'd even  
 begin to figure this out--  
 (looking up, down)  
 There's no rhyme or reason.

CREATOR (V.O.)  
*Pick one before I make them all  
 disappear. There goes one!*

One DISAPPEARS completely with a complex BURST, slo-mo  
 explosion that sends a gust of hot wind past FINN and NALA.

NALA  
 Oh no!

CREATOR (V.O.)  
*Maybe that was the right one. Maybe  
 you waited too long. Maybe you're  
 not waiting long enough. Maybe you  
 only have minutes to live, time to  
 jump! You gonna jump, Finn?*

NALA  
 There's no time!

NALA grabs FINN and hops in a RANDOM ELEVATOR. IMMEDIATELY--

**INT. ELEVATOR POD**

--it starts FREE-FALLING, hastily. A seizure-flashing TUBE  
 LIGHT-outlined ceiling. Tiled, multi-color lights. ALARMS.

No way to stop it. All the button JAM and flash, then disappear. They bang the walls desperate to loosen a PANEL.

NALA

Is there a panel to crawl out? Feel around the edges, maybe there's a latch!

FINN

(groggy)  
I'm losing consciousness--

Lights flashing quicker. Sirens screaming. Loud whistles and wailing of air woosh-ing through vents at the quick descent.

CREATOR (V.O.)

*Imagine the sound of every bone in your body breaking when I choose to stop this, without warning. What an exciting end to a game, huh! A fantastic finale, if you will!*

FINN's grip loosens as he SMACKS into the CEILING, hard CRASH against his head. **THAT'S IT.** FINN's livid, scrunched up, the speed SHOVING him at full-force, wind whipping his hair--

FINN

Hey, psychopathic asshole?  
(screaming)  
FIGHT ME! Fight me like a human!  
Get out from behind your screen-- your controller. Your stupid visor and gloves, fake manipulative shit. Get out of your seat and stand up! Use your fucking legs, your real arms. Your hands. Fight me like a man! Fight me like a human! Until then, you're nothing but a pathetic little boy holding a controller--

Face pressed against PANELS, FASTER, FASTER, all color drains from his face as he's about to lose consciousness, AGAIN.

FINN (CONT'D)

(groggy)  
Fight me like a human...

**STARK BLACK.**

Loud, intense pounding. Vibrating. CHANT. CHANT. CHANT. Starting as a dull hum, soon roaring into an explosive, cheering audience. SCREAMING! The echoes of an ARENA...

**FADE IN:**

**INT. KILL ARENA**

EXACT BEGINNING. CHAOTIC amphitheater. Blood-thirsty, rabid artificial audience. Stadium pounding. CHANT. CHANT. CHANT.

FINN finds himself laying on the ground, spitting DIRT out of his mouth as he struggles to get up. Wobbling, he's DAZED.

Trillions of bets in ALIEN LANGUAGES spin around the ring on dizzying, holographic JUMB-O-TRONS: lights! Cameras! ACTION!

FINN (8) (O.S.)

Dad? DADDY!

He turns: it's his younger self, skidding to the ring's edge, petrified, desperately reaching through electrified BARS.

FINN (CONT'D)

What? No! Oh my God, oh my God--

He stumbles back and looks towards the GATES.

**INSIDE THE ARENA:** HOT lights shine on **CREATOR** as he morphs into FINN's (dead) father, **BAIT HUMAN #992 (40's)**. Shirtless, covered in scars, bites, bruises, and dried bloody crusts.

FATHER (AS CREATOR)

Why hello again, Finn. Or should I say, "son"? No, too weird. Anyway, I agree! Let's fight, then. Man to man. Humanoid to avatar. Fight me with all you got. Pitiful fool.

NALA (O.S.)

That's not fair, that's not fair--

FINN doubles back, falling over himself. He can't stop staring. He's mesmerized by the vision of his FATHER.

His emotions are whirling inside of him, he can't help but feel immense LOVE and SHOCK, expressed through his face.

FATHER (AS CREATOR) stomps closer. CLOSER.

FATHER (AS CREATOR)

Fight me, I said. Did you not hear?  
FIGHT ME! LET'S GO!

FINN

(hopeful, mesmerized)  
Dad?

FATHER (AS CREATOR) smacks him hard across the face, a red stinging SLAP as he lands in the dirt. AUDIENCE CHEERS.

FATHER (AS CREATOR)  
 Why so sentimental? You know your  
 father's dead. That I'm just a  
 hologram I programmed. You know  
 that, actually, your father was  
 never real. Because you aren't. And  
 yet, and yet--

He keeps gleefully smacking FINN who can't accept it's  
 CREATOR and not his FATHER. Bruised FINN keeps eating dirt  
 then looking back with wonderment, not even registering.

FINN  
 Dad--? Is it really you?

FATHER (AS CREATOR) gets him in a CHOKE HOLD.

FATHER (AS CREATOR)  
 (hiss)  
 I mean, it could really be him.  
 Before we lived forever, anyone who  
 died-- an avatar could be created  
 of them. Gather their photos, some  
 vocal recordings? Make a host! You  
 can live forever with the living,  
 moving, breathing "memories"--  
 whether they're with you, or not.  
 Would you like that?

FINN grabs FATHER (AS CREATOR)'s arm.

FINN  
 Dad!

FATHER (AS CREATOR)  
 Ugh. This isn't very fun or  
 challenging. You're pathetic.

He throws him down.

FATHER (AS CREATOR) (CONT'D)  
 You give me no choice--

### **EXT. SNOWY GLACIERS**

In Siberia, an icy BLIZZARD rages. Large snow drifts pile up.  
 Howling wind shoots snow sideways as barren trees bend.

CREATOR, decked out in a huge, furry parka (while FINN is  
 left freezing in very thing clothing) stomps towards him.

CREATOR

(shouts)

I've created you! I essentially programmed every move you could possibly make-- I can anticipate your next action because it's the only action there is! I know your next thought, I know your current thoughts. I'm your mirror.

He throws up his ARMS.

CREATOR (CONT'D)

How can you possible beat me?

Any KICKS or karate-like chops thrown in his direction from FINN are automatically returned at the exact same time.

CREATOR (CONT'D)

In fact, what makes you think I haven't already programmed this fight? Know your attacks, so I can thwart them? Have we done this before?

(echo-echo-echo)

*Do you remember how you got here, Finn? Do you remember that information?*

Pummel. Pummel. Pummel. FINN tries to block his punches.

CREATOR (CONT'D)

Did I plan this already? Perhaps it's part of the game! I always love to kill my creations. That's what a God does, right? Kill everything?

All of a sudden the REDDIT ADMIN pixilates in.

REDDIT ADMIN

Vim! Stop! Get out of here! It's too dangerous, you're not supposed to go into your worlds. You know the rules! I'm sick of this! Spending--

CREATOR

Get out of my way. It's time to destroy what I've created.

REDDIT ADMIN

--prolonged time inside your game world is bad. GET OUT.

CREATOR  
I want to win!

REDDIT ADMIN  
Win WHAT? It's not worth it--

CREATOR  
YOU'RE not worth it!

CREATOR hoists REDDIT ADMIN up and tosses him over the edge of a GLACIER CLIFF. He flails his arms in panic, DISSOLVING.

**EXT. AFRICAN TUNDRA**

LANDSCAPE CHANGE! The snow pixilates into blinding sun. FINN runs through tall grasses. Anxious, sweating, heart pounding.

Bare feet hit burning dirt as the desert blurs past. Behind, a monstrous LION chases, quickly leaping over him to block.

CREATOR (AS LION)  
(snarl)  
You can't beat me.

He pounces on FINN mercilessly.

FINN  
Why are you doing this?

CREATOR (AS LION)  
It's fun.

FINN  
No it's not, murderer! Leave us alone! Just turn me off, OK? I can't exist like this anymore--  
DELETE ME!

A GASH. FINN grabs a STICK and tries to hit him, but the LION form out-thinks his every move. He stumbles to the GROUND.

FINN (CONT'D)  
I can't do this anymore. I'm failing. I'm dying. It's over.

NALA appears.

NALA  
Don't give up!

**EXT. MOUNTAIN CLIFFS**

LANDSCAPE CHANGE! CREATOR knocks NALA off the side of a rocky CLIFF, she dangles from a knotted tree root, below her looms an unforgiving, dark forest of BRAMBLES and THORNS--

FINN

Nala!

NALA

It's an illusion! Watch out! This is all made up! If I fall, it doesn't matter-- there's nothing below! Just FIGHT HIM!

FINN is bloody/bruised, barely conscious. CREATOR morphs into HIMSELF. He charges towards FINN, backed along a CLIFF EDGE.

CREATOR

I don't end. I have digital immortality! I'm not even real! I go from synthetic body to synthetic body--

FINN

(spits)

Are you lonely? Is that why you create these worlds? Do you have no one real to talk to? But us? You're going to destroy probably the only people who will talk to you?

CREATOR

I'll create more. That's the beautiful thing: I'll create more and more and more. I'll keep deleting and creating people and worlds that suit my needs.

FINN

Then get bored of them? Why bother?

CREATOR

That's how the game's played, that's life--

FINN falls to the ground, hacking up blood. CREATOR struts over to FINN and stands over him. Bellowing, laughing.

CREATOR (CONT'D)

It's been 71 minutes. But we can end here. I'm dreadfully bored and have my other Universe to take care of.

VOICE (V.O.)  
*Punch him in the heart.*

DEJA VU. Time goes still. FINN freezes as the CHAOS of the cliffs seems to fade behind him and float far, far away.

FINN  
 Wh-what?

--INSTANTLY broken as CREATOR plows into him with another kick. Over and over. FINN keeps getting up, but falls back.

The calm voice that only he hears, returns.

VOICE (V.O.)  
*Punch him in his heart. It's his  
 only weakness.*

FINN, mustering everything he's got, KICKS him with both feet directly to the HEART. He gasps, collapsing over, and DIES.

NALA's hand reaches up from over the CLIFF as FINN runs over to grab it, pulling her up back on land. Breathless.

FINN  
 Who, who was that? The voice? Who  
 said that? Someone else?

NALA  
 Who said what? What are you talking  
 about?

FINN  
 That voice...

NALA  
 We're alive! It's been--  
 (checks WATCH)  
 74 minutes.

FINN  
 He's dead. He can't turn us off.

### **INT. CREATOR'S POD**

CREATOR lays lifeless, spread out on the floor. VIRTUAL REALITY goggles slid-off and gloves still on. His facial mask falls off, revealing an ANCIENT, VERY OLD (REAL) HUMAN MAN.

A slow pan around the room: blinking lights of various SUPER COMPUTERS, youth "elixirs", DNA injections, AVATAR skins, organ harvesting pamphlets, charging coupons, robot parts.

His [CHARGER] says 0%, but it's cracked. Liquid LEAKS.

**EXT. MOUNTAIN CLIFFS**

FINN and NALA, still near the CLIFFS, walk carefully towards CREATOR. His POD HOME pops up as a hologram above him.

ICLOUD ALERT (V.O.)  
*System Failure! System Failure!*  
*System Failure! System Failure!*

A dead, collapsed CREATOR. His clothing and features DISAPPEAR: he's just the outline of a body with "SYSTEM FAILURE" endlessly scrolling inside, in neon green code.

Stunned, FINN reaches up to touch the HOLOGRAM of CREATOR's pod. He feels a slight suction, a slight pull inside.

FINN  
 I think we can go into his world!

NALA  
 But maybe it's not a good idea--

FINN  
 We have to.

He takes her hand as he lets himself GET SUCKED IN.

**INT. CREATOR'S POD**

They pixilate inside his POD with an EXIT porthole behind them (they're not trapped). They're HOLOGRAMS, not real.

They see a very old man laying dead on the floor, VIRTUAL REALITY equipment scattered around him. The young mask off.

FINN  
 Is, is that him? He was old this entire time? Just used a younger body to play?  
 (removes MASK)  
 He doesn't even live in this future, he's from the past--

They both walk to a WINDOW in his space pod, pressing their HOLOGRAPHIC hands along the glass. Outside? SPACE. Moons, exoplanets, superclusters, millions of SPACE PODS circulate.

NALA lays a hand on FINN's shoulder.

NALA

We can't exist here because we're not flesh. We're just a hologram from a game.

FINN sits in CREATOR's abandoned game chair, tinkering with his SUPER COMPUTER. He opens up a file: "REDDIT/GAME OF 72".

He selects the [PROGRAM]. A TIMER shows 80+ minutes and counting. FINN selects "infinite" on the TIMER then hides it.

FINN

All we can do now is reprogram the game to our liking, I guess. Our game. It won't end.

NALA

It just feels weird, you know?

FINN

Soon enough, it won't.

FINN finds a document of "LANDSCAPE IDEAS". He moves the cursor past several ideas: [Mars], [Space], [Planet 79], [Hell], [Polluted], [Sky City], [Abandoned], [Ocean], etc.

FINN (CONT'D)

Look! From your dreams! We may be a simulation, but now we're in control of it, you know? We chose our life now. Check it out.

He stops at [Old Earth], pressing [SELECT]. It loads several billion photos that all flutter by quickly of jungles and flowers and mountains, sunsets and full moons, clear skies--

--clear lakes, open fields, dazzling wildlife, gentle weather. It's RE-PROGRAMMED and ends with a gentle "BEEP".

NALA

Beautiful. Let's go home.

### **EXT. BAIT CAGES**

Dank, dark, slimy cages. Wreckage from the fighting. SUDDENLY in the air blinks: [RE-BOOT!] [RE-BOOT!] [RE-BOOT!]

Sweaty, punctured HUMAN FIGHTERS and HUMAN BAITS trapped in the game (and cages) are now FREED as restrictions DISSOLVE.

The JAILS and CAGES fade into a new, beautiful world reminiscent of OLD EARTH. DARK turns LIGHT, breathtaking.

FINN (V.O.)  
Delete, delete, delete...

The grotesque, shattered ROBOTS **p i x i l a t e** out. The HUMANS cheer, hug, run and smile, absorbing the sunlight.

FINN (V.O.)  
ACTIVATE: sunshine, warm winds,  
wildlife, nature, housing--

**INT. CREATOR'S POD**

Done. FINN and NALA step back through the open POTHOLE as it fizzes and swirls closed behind them. The screen? SHUTS OFF.

CREATOR is left for dead. By himself. In his pod. One of many, many pods, aimlessly floating through space...

We BACK UP and see just how many there are... millions...

In each POD sits a single LONELY PERSON donning VIRTUAL REALITY glasses. They swiftly maneuver computerized gloves, completely absorbed in all their fake worlds...

No one talking to anyone else...

...because they don't have to.

**THE END.**