Rebel

A decade after the events of *Champion*, *Rebel* reignites the *Legend* saga with a new generation of heroes—and villains. Set in the Republic-turned-united **Antarctic States**, the story follows:

- **Eden Wing**, Day's brilliant but troubled younger brother, who resents his family's legacy.
- **Daniel "Day" Altan Wing**, now a fading legend struggling with chronic illness and fatherhood.
- **June Iparis**, a high-ranking official balancing power and family loyalty.

When Eden uncovers a conspiracy tied to Ross City (a corporate-ruled metropolis), he's drawn into a dangerous game involving AI, class warfare, and a shadowy figure from Day's past. As old wounds reopen, the Wings must confront whether their hard-won peace was built on lies—and whether rebellion is worth the cost.

With cyberpunk-inspired tech, morally gray villains, and explosive action, *Rebel* expands the *Legend* universe while delivering the heart-wrenching character drama fans love.

Chapter 1: Ross City: Eden 1

The chapter introduces Eden Bataar Wing, a brilliant and inquisitive young man who excels academically at Ross University of the Sciences. Despite his achievements, he feels overshadowed by his older brother, Daniel Altan Wing, a revolutionary hero from the Republic of America. Eden's identity is often reduced to being "Daniel's younger brother," a label he has reluctantly accepted. He reflects on his passion for

understanding how things work, from machines to natural phenomena, but laments that his true self remains unseen by others, who only recognize him through his brother’s legacy.

Eden harbors deep emotional scars from the war in the Republic, which haunt him in the form of recurring nightmares. He masks his trauma with a cheerful demeanor, avoiding discussions about his past or his grief over losing his mother and brother. While Daniel appears to have moved on, Eden remains trapped in memories of their homeland, unable to reconcile the horrors they endured. His decision to pursue an internship in the Republic stems from both a desire to rebuild it and an unresolved need to confront the ghosts of his past.

Ross City, Antarctica, where Eden now lives, is depicted as a futuristic utopia, starkly contrasting the Republic’s turmoil. The Sky Floors, where he and Daniel reside, are a marvel of technology and luxury, featuring biodomes, virtual displays, and stunning auroras. Despite its beauty, Eden feels like an outsider in this alien environment. His curiosity extends to the city’s infrastructure, though some aspects, like the biodome’s mechanics, remain frustratingly elusive to him.

The chapter concludes with Eden at Ross University, sneaking out of class amidst the neoclassical architecture that symbolizes Antarctica’s homage to ancient civilizations. This setting underscores the disconnect between his past in the Republic and his present in this advanced society. Eden’s internal struggle—between his intellectual pursuits and his unresolved trauma—paints a poignant portrait of a young man caught between two worlds, yearning for understanding yet grappling with the inevitability of loss.

Chapter 2: Ross City: Daniel 1

Daniel Altan Wing, formerly known as Day, is a former fugitive turned agent for the Antarctica Intelligence Service (AIS) in Ross City. The chapter opens with him attempting to call his younger brother, Eden, who doesn't answer, leaving Daniel frustrated yet protective. Reflecting on their traumatic past—losing their parents and surviving a revolution—Daniel tries to rationalize Eden's silence, wondering if he's busy with friends or school. His thoughts drift to June, a figure from his past, but he pushes them aside to focus on his mission in the Undercity, the poorest and most dangerous part of Ross City.

Daniel's current assignment involves tracking a woman linked to Dominic Hann, a ruthless crime lord terrorizing the Undercity. As he waits in the shadows, he contrasts his current life as a law enforcer with his past as a street rat in the Republic. His colleagues, Jessan and Lara, view him with curiosity, unable to relate to his harsh upbringing. Daniel's familiarity with poverty and crime fuels his determination to bring down Hann, whose brutal tactics—extortion, murder, and illegal activities—mirror the injustices Daniel once fought against. The irony of his role as a lawman isn't lost on him.

The Undercity's grim reality is starkly different from Ross City's luxurious Sky Floors. Daniel observes the impoverished residents, their virtual "Levels" marking their social status, with Level 0 denoting the most marginalized. The system theoretically allows upward mobility, but few escape the cycle of poverty. Daniel's empathy for the Undercity's residents stems from his own experiences in the Republic, though he acknowledges Ross City is still an improvement. Despite his hero status, he remains driven by a simple desire: to protect his family and those vulnerable to exploitation.

The chapter culminates with Daniel spotting his target, the woman connected to Hann, and preparing to pursue her. His focus shifts from personal reflections to the

immediate task, highlighting his adaptability and resolve. The scene underscores the tension between his past and present, as well as his unwavering commitment to justice, even in a system that once branded him a criminal. The chapter sets the stage for a high-stakes confrontation, blending action with introspection.

Chapter 3: Ross City: Eden 2

The chapter introduces the illegal but thrilling drone races in Ross City’s Undercity, where participants use homemade drones pieced together from scrap metal. These high-speed races, which weave through crowded streets, are untaxed and untraced, attracting gamblers and spectators despite the risk of police intervention. The narrator, Eden, recounts being introduced to the races by his friend Pressa, who has been gambling on them for years. He admires the ingenuity of the drones and the adrenaline of the races, which contrast sharply with the regulated, privileged world of the Sky Floors.

Pressa and Eden navigate the Undercity’s grimy streets, passing through a bustling food market before arriving at her father’s apothecary. The apothecary, though illegal, provides essential herbal remedies to those denied proper healthcare due to their low social "Level." Pressa’s father, Mr. Yu, is a kind but ailing man suffering from a muscle-wasting disease. His condition requires expensive, high-Level medical treatment, which Pressa attempts to fund through her gambling on drone races, hiding this from her protective father.

The apothecary is a warm, chaotic space filled with medicinal herbs and a loyal clientele. Mr. Yu greets Eden affectionately, unaware of his daughter’s risky activities. Pressa deflects her father’s questions by claiming Eden is helping her with a robotics project. The chapter highlights the stark inequality in Ross City, where access to healthcare is tied to social status, forcing the poor to rely on makeshift solutions like the apothecary or illegal gambling.

As Pressa and Eden leave the apothecary, their conversation turns to an upcoming drone race semifinal. Pressa reveals the race details, teasing Eden about his potential participation. The chapter underscores the desperation and resilience of Undercity residents, who navigate systemic oppression through ingenuity and risk-taking. Eden,

though privileged, recognizes the harsh realities of life in the Undercity and the moral complexities of Pressa’s choices.

Chapter 4: Ross City: Daniel 2

Daniel, a high-ranking AIS agent, intervenes when his younger brother Eden is threatened by thieves in Ross City's dangerous Undercity. The thieves flee upon recognizing Daniel's authority, but Eden reacts with irritation rather than gratitude. Their tense exchange reveals a strained relationship, with Daniel's protective instincts clashing against Eden's desire for independence. Daniel's internal reflections highlight his deep care for Eden, contrasting with their distant and argumentative dynamic.

The brothers walk through the Undercity in uncomfortable silence, drawing attention due to Daniel's intimidating AIS suit. Daniel presses Eden about his reasons for being in the area, suspecting his involvement with a girl named Pressa, whose family runs an illegal apothecary. Eden deflects, mocking Daniel's personal life and mentioning June—a figure from Daniel's past who still emotionally affects him. Their conversation underscores their inability to communicate openly, with Eden resisting Daniel's attempts to guide or protect him.

As they board an elevator reserved for AIS personnel, Daniel confronts Eden about his lack of trust. Eden challenges Daniel's seemingly indifferent attitude, expressing frustration that Daniel isn't more visibly angry. Daniel admits he's concerned about Eden's well-being but struggles to bridge the gap between them. Eden's resentment grows when he realizes Daniel tracked him using the city's geolocator system, further fueling his defiance.

The chapter ends with their unresolved tension, emphasizing their conflicting perspectives. Daniel's protective nature clashes with Eden's need for autonomy, while hints of deeper emotional wounds—such as Daniel's lingering attachment to June—add complexity. Eden's rebellious actions, like hacking the geolocator, symbolize his rejection of the system Daniel upholds, leaving their relationship at an impasse.

Chapter 5: Ross City: Eden 3

The chapter opens with the narrator, Daniel’s younger sibling, working on a perpetual energy machine in their room while waiting for Daniel to return home late at night. Despite their earlier argument, the narrator monitors Daniel’s movements through a geolocator, relieved when he arrives safely. Daniel’s dangerous job and his spotty memory, a lingering effect from their past in the Republic, weigh on the narrator, who quietly manages small tasks to help him. The tension between them is palpable, with the narrator refusing to acknowledge Daniel’s return, still irritated by his dismissive attitude earlier in the day.

The narrator reflects on their strained relationship, contrasting their childhood closeness with the current distance caused by Daniel’s secretive AIS job. They resent Daniel’s overprotectiveness and inability to understand their connection to the Undercity, a place tied to their shared past. While Daniel appears emotionally detached and functional, the narrator struggles with lingering trauma—nightmares, anxiety, and unresolved memories. This contrast fuels their frustration, making them question whether they’re truly "still a kid" unable to move on, as Daniel implied.

As the narrator prepares to leave for a drone race with their friend Pressa, they notice Daniel perched precariously on the balcony ledge, lost in thought. The scene underscores Daniel’s enigmatic nature—calm yet haunted, his past struggles hidden beneath a composed exterior. The narrator wonders if he, too, grapples with unresolved memories of their Republic days or his feelings for June, a topic they’d earlier used to provoke him. The moment highlights their mutual isolation, with both siblings guarding their inner worlds.

The chapter ends with Pressa’s call confirming the narrator’s participation in the race, prompting a fleeting hesitation. The narrator’s conflicted emotions—resentment, concern, and a longing for understanding—linger as they prepare to sneak out. The

unresolved tension between the siblings and their unspoken burdens set the stage for further exploration of their fractured bond and shared history.

Chapter 6: Ross City: Daniel 3

Daniel stands atop a skyscraper in Ross City, observing the vibrant, futuristic landscape through his augmented-reality chip. The city’s dazzling lights and virtual murals of oceanic scenes contrast sharply with his memories of the Republic’s grim, power-starved streets. Despite the beauty, he senses an underlying instability, as if the city is teetering on the edge of collapse. His thoughts shift to Dominic Hann, an elusive target pursued by the AIS, whose powerful connections and spies have kept him out of reach. Daniel’s frustration grows as his team finds no leads on the next drone race in the Undercity.

Haunted by the recent death of a woman he couldn’t save, Daniel struggles with the weight of guilt and the absence of a tangible enemy like the Republic’s military. He glances toward his brother Eden’s room, resisting the urge to check on him after their earlier conflict. His mind drifts to June, the Elector’s aide, whom he will see the next day for the first time in a month. Their accidental reunion in the Republic had reignited fragmented memories of their shared past, including the paper clip rings they exchanged. The anticipation of meeting her again fills him with both excitement and dread.

Daniel rehearses conversations with an imaginary June, stumbling over words and grappling with his uncharacteristic nervousness. He recalls scattered memories of their time together—June teaching him to fight, her in a scarlet dress, and moments of intimacy—though many details remain blurred. These fragments, insignificant to others, hold profound meaning for him. He hopes June can help piece together the gaps in his recollections, but he fears she may not remember their shared history at all.

As he gazes at the city’s endless lights, Daniel feels insignificant, a shadow amidst the brilliance. Despite his uncertainty, he resolves to tell June that their connection was

special, even if the memories are incomplete. The chapter captures his inner turmoil, blending nostalgia, guilt, and hope as he prepares to confront the past and the unresolved emotions tied to June.

Chapter 7: Ross City: Eden 4

The chapter opens with Eden reflecting on their fascination with drone racing, sparked by their first experience watching the vibrant streaks of drones in the Undercity. The setting is vividly described—a gritty, neon-lit world beneath the polished Sky Floors of Ross City, where the Level system breaks down, and crime thrives. Eden navigates this dangerous area with a hacked identity, masking their true Level 54 status as "Eli Whitman, Level 5," to avoid detection. The tension is palpable as they move through crowds of criminals, feeling out of place and vulnerable, yet determined to reach the drone race.

Eden’s journey through the Undercity highlights the stark inequalities of Ross City’s society. The area is a haven for those who hack the Level system to access basic necessities like transportation or medicine, often at exorbitant costs. Disappearances go unnoticed, and violence is unchecked, painting a bleak picture of life for the desperate. Eden’s unease grows as they pass tents housing people with "flattened Levels," their stares making Eden acutely aware of their outsider status. The chapter underscores the risks Eden takes to participate in the race, driven by a mix of curiosity and defiance.

Upon arriving at the race venue, Eden finds a hidden, chaotic world beneath the city—a neon-drenched plaza packed with spectators and racers. The atmosphere is electric, with crowds betting and preparing for the semifinals. Eden’s false name appears on the virtual roster, but their inexperience becomes apparent when they’re asked for a patron to vouch for their financial responsibility. Confused and unprepared, Eden is nearly turned away until their friend Pressa arrives, hinting at a deeper connection to this underground world. The scene captures the thrill and danger of the drone racing subculture.

The chapter culminates in Eden’s realization of the complexities and unspoken rules of the Undercity’s drone racing scene. Their initial excitement is tempered by the harsh realities of participation, including the need for a patron and the scrutiny of seasoned racers. Pressa’s timely appearance suggests she may hold the key to Eden’s acceptance in this world. The countdown to the race heightens the suspense, leaving Eden—and the reader—eager to see whether they’ll overcome these hurdles and compete. The chapter masterfully blends world-building with personal stakes, setting the stage for further exploration of Eden’s journey.

Chapter 8: Ross City: Daniel 4

The chapter opens with Daniel noticing Eden’s early departure, likely due to his exams, which leaves Daniel momentarily unsettled. His routine is interrupted by the anticipation of June’s arrival in Ross City, as she accompanies the Republic’s Elector for a diplomatic visit. Jessan’s teasing call highlights Daniel’s nervousness, revealing his unresolved feelings for June. Despite his attempts to appear composed, his thoughts linger on their complicated past and the uncertainty of their reunion, fueling his anxiety about how she might react to seeing him again.

As Daniel heads to the AIS headquarters, his focus shifts between June’s impending arrival and his ongoing mission to track Dominic Hann, a dangerous figure in the Undercity. Lara updates him on Hann’s recent sighting at a drone race, providing grainy footage that hints at his influence. The urgency of the mission briefly distracts Daniel, but his mind quickly returns to June, underscoring the tension between his professional duties and personal emotions. The chapter emphasizes his internal struggle as he balances his responsibilities with his longing for closure with June.

The scene shifts to the AIS landing pad, where Daniel and other agents prepare for the Republic’s arrival. The atmosphere is charged with anticipation as reporters and officials gather. President Ikari’s presence adds to the formality, but Daniel’s attention remains fixed on the Republic’s jet. The description of Anden Stavropoulos and his entourage highlights the political significance of the visit, while Daniel’s subtle search for June reveals his emotional vulnerability. The chapter builds suspense as the jet lands, leaving readers eager for their reunion.

The chapter concludes with June’s delayed appearance, heightening Daniel’s anxiety. As the Elector and his fiancée, Faline, step out, the reporters’ chatter about June’s approval of their relationship adds another layer of tension. Daniel’s physical reaction—leaning forward to spot June—captures his desperation to see her. The

unresolved ending leaves their reunion hanging, emphasizing the emotional stakes and setting the stage for the next chapter’s pivotal encounter. The blend of political intrigue and personal drama creates a compelling narrative arc.

Chapter 9: Ross City: Eden 5

The chapter opens with the protagonist, Eden, trapped in a cycle of vivid nightmares, reliving traumatic memories of his mother’s death, his brother John’s execution, and his own struggles during a plague. These haunting visions leave him restless, and he copes by obsessively sketching engine designs until dawn. Exhausted, he heads to the university for final exams, finishing early to avoid interactions. The halls are quiet, bathed in golden simulated light, but Eden’s tension rises as he overhears Emerson and his friends—his longtime bullies—laughing near the exit. He attempts to slip away unnoticed, but Emerson spots him and taunts him, escalating the confrontation.

Emerson and his friends deliberately provoke Eden by mocking his brother John’s execution, a deeply painful subject. Eden freezes, overwhelmed by memories of John’s sacrifice and his family’s tragedies. The bullies revel in his distress, feigning sympathy while pushing him to react. The Level system, which governs their society, fails to penalize their cruelty, highlighting its flaws. Eden’s anger erupts, and he punches Emerson, triggering a fight. The crowd gathers, cheering, as the system deducts points from Eden for instigating the altercation. Emerson, aware of the system’s bias, refrains from retaliating to avoid penalties, leaving Eden to bear the consequences alone.

Pressa, a friend from the Undercity, intervenes, dispersing the crowd and chastising Eden for risking further point deductions. She understands his frustration, sharing his disdain for the rigged system. Their bond is underscored by mutual dreams of escaping their oppressive reality. Pressa advises Eden to skip the drone race finals to cool off, but he rejects the idea, unwilling to suppress his emotions any longer. The chapter captures Eden’s simmering rage and grief, as well as his determination to defy the system that has failed him.

The chapter concludes with Eden’s resolve to attend the drone race, symbolizing his refusal to conform or retreat. His actions reflect a broader defiance against the societal

structures that have marginalized him. The encounter with Emerson and the memories of John’s death crystallize Eden’s disillusionment, setting the stage for his potential rebellion. Pressa’s empathy offers a fleeting solace, but Eden’s path seems increasingly solitary, driven by a desire to reclaim agency in a world that has repeatedly betrayed him.

Chapter 10: Ross City: Daniel 5

Daniel, still reeling from an emotional evening with June, arrives at a gruesome crime scene in Ross City's Undercity. The intersection is blocked by AIS drones, their flashing lights illuminating the grimy streets. His colleagues, Jessan and Lara, greet him with grim expressions as they survey the aftermath of an explosion. The victim, a mutilated body laid out deliberately, bears the signature red handkerchief of Dominic Hann, a notorious criminal. The brutality evokes painful memories for Daniel, reminding him of the Republic's violent past and Hann's escalating savagery.

The victim is identified as a councilman from the President's inner circle, a shocking escalation in Hann's usual targets. Daniel questions Hann's motives, as the attack suggests boldness and high-level connections. Jessan recounts how the councilman was abducted, set on fire, and dumped in the intersection, with witnesses providing limited leads. The precision of the crime hints at Hann's growing influence and coordination. Meanwhile, a theft at East City Laboratories adds another layer of mystery, though its connection to the murder remains unclear.

Daniel voices his concerns to Min Gheren, the AIS director, arguing that Hann's actions are politically charged. He believes Hann is exploiting the Undercity's resentment toward the elite Sky Floor politicians, using violence to rally the disenfranchised. Min dismisses the idea of a coup, skeptical of Hann's ability to challenge the government. Daniel insists the city's fragile social hierarchy, with its oppressive Level system, makes it vulnerable to rebellion. His warnings reflect his firsthand experience with systemic collapse, but Min remains unconvinced, demanding concrete evidence.

The chapter underscores the tension between Daniel's foresight and Min's pragmatism. Hann's calculated brutality and the councilman's murder signal a dangerous shift in his strategy, one that could destabilize Ross City. Daniel's personal turmoil—his unresolved feelings for June and traumatic memories—mirrors the city's

looming crisis. The scene sets the stage for a broader conflict, blending political intrigue with personal stakes as Daniel races to uncover Hann’s endgame.

Chapter 11: Ross City: Eden 6

The chapter opens with a vivid depiction of a bustling plaza in Ross City, where crowds gather to watch an intense drone race. The protagonist, using the alias Eli, arrives with his friend Pressa, who helps navigate the throngs. The atmosphere is electric, with spectators crammed into every available space, including precarious balcony perches. Eli’s unexpected victory in the previous race has sparked curiosity, and the racers now regard him with wariness. The scene sets the stage for the high-stakes competition, while hints of intrigue surround Eli’s mysterious patron, Dominic, whose presence commands respect and curiosity.

Dominic, a charismatic figure with a silver-streaked appearance, arrives and engages Eli in conversation. He offers Eli a lucrative prize for winning the race but also hints at broader opportunities tied to Eli’s innovative drone engine. Dominic’s confidence and cryptic remarks about Eli’s potential leave the protagonist feeling validated, contrasting with the indifference of others in his life, like his brother Daniel. Pressa, however, remains skeptical, sensing deeper motives behind Dominic’s interest. The interaction underscores the tension between ambition and suspicion, as Eli prepares to race with high hopes and lingering doubts.

The race itself is a thrilling sequence, with Eli’s drone outperforming the competition through skillful maneuvering and the superior capabilities of his engine. He navigates tight alleys and outwits rivals, securing a decisive victory. The crowd erupts in cheers, and Pressa’s excitement is palpable, though her earlier unease lingers. Eli’s triumph is marred only by the unsettling presence of Dominic’s guards, hinting at the patron’s hidden influence. The chapter captures the adrenaline of the race while subtly foreshadowing the larger stakes at play beyond the immediate competition.

In the aftermath, Eli basks in the euphoria of his win, savoring the recognition and the promise of greater opportunities. His brief, tender moment with Pressa—a cheek

kiss—adds a personal touch to the high-energy narrative. Yet, the chapter closes on an ambiguous note, with Eli’s success intertwined with unanswered questions about Dominic’s true intentions. The blend of action, emotion, and underlying mystery leaves the reader eager to see how Eli’s journey will unfold beyond the race.

Chapter 12: Ross City: Daniel 6

Daniel, an AIS agent, ventures alone into the Undercity's roughest district, disguised as a gambler to avoid suspicion. The area is lined with tents and desolate shops, evoking memories of his past as a street orphan. His mission is to locate his brother, Eden, whose presence in this dangerous environment baffles him. Despite his discomfort, Daniel blends in, maintaining a wary demeanor as he searches for clues about Eden's whereabouts, ultimately leading him to a suspicious bar requiring a password for entry.

After exiting the bar, Daniel investigates a nearby alley and discovers a hollow wall masking a hidden space. Using his agility, he scales the wall to find a massive crowd gathered for a drone race. To his shock, Eden is among the racers, celebrated as the winner. The scene takes a darker turn when Daniel spots Dominic Hann, a notorious and elusive criminal, engaging with Eden. Hann's presence sends a chill through Daniel, who recalls the man's brutal reputation and the danger he poses.

Daniel's panic escalates as he watches Hann interact with Eden, fearing for his brother's safety. He considers assassinating Hann but realizes the risk to Eden if he fails or is implicated. Instead, he devises a plan to disrupt the event by targeting the overhead lighting system. Climbing the support beams, he prepares to cut the power, hoping to create chaos and extract Eden unnoticed. The tension mounts as Hann's men surveil the crowd, and Daniel's resolve hardens to protect his brother at all costs.

The chapter highlights Daniel's internal conflict between his duty as an agent and his protective instincts as a brother. His frustration with Eden's choices and his inability to understand them mirrors his past helplessness in the Republic. The encounter with Hann underscores the stakes, as Daniel confronts the grim reality of his brother's involvement with a deadly criminal. The chapter ends on a cliffhanger, with Daniel poised to act, leaving readers eager to see how the confrontation unfolds.

Chapter 13: Ross City: Eden 7

The chapter opens with Eden and his brother, Daniel, discussing Dominic Hann, a notorious murderer Daniel has been tracking. Eden reveals he interacted with Hann during a drone race in the Undercity, where Hann posed as a patron. Daniel is furious, emphasizing Hann’s brutality and the danger Eden unknowingly faced. Eden, however, struggles to reconcile Hann’s calm demeanor with his violent reputation, while also fielding frantic messages from his friend Pressa about the night’s events. The tension between the brothers escalates as Daniel lectures Eden, who resents being treated like a child.

Their argument intensifies, revealing deeper familial rifts. Eden accuses Daniel of condescension and pity, while Daniel expresses frustration over Eden’s reckless behavior. Eden’s anger peaks when he suggests they part ways when he leaves for the Republic, a comment that visibly wounds Daniel. Despite Daniel’s attempt to reconcile, both remain stubborn, highlighting their emotional distance. The confrontation ends with Eden retreating to his room, leaving the unresolved tension hanging between them.

The scene shifts to the AIS headquarters, where Eden and Daniel meet Director Min Gheren. Eden is subjected to a memory extraction process to help track Hann, as his unexpected interaction with the criminal is deemed significant. Daniel, though protective, continues to frustrate Eden with his patronizing tone. The director explains the technology, which replays memories to uncover hidden clues, and Eden reluctantly agrees. The chapter ends with the memory playback beginning, immersing everyone in Eden’s recollection of the drone race and his encounter with Hann.

The chapter explores themes of familial conflict, trust, and identity, as Eden chafes under Daniel’s overprotectiveness while grappling with the moral ambiguity of figures like Hann. The advanced memory technology introduces a sci-fi element, hinting at

broader societal surveillance and control. The emotional stakes are high, with Eden’s desire for independence clashing with Daniel’s fear for his safety, setting the stage for further tension and revelations.

Chapter 14: Ross City: Daniel 7

Daniel attends a high-profile gala at Ross City's Hall of Philosophy, though his mind is preoccupied with concerns about his younger brother, Eden, who has drawn the attention of a notorious criminal. The event, hosted in honor of the Republic's Elector, is a dazzling affair set against the backdrop of the city's biodome, with rain replacing the snowstorm outside. Daniel's unease lingers as he interacts with Director Min Gheren and Elector Anden Stavropoulos, who acknowledges Daniel's past heroics in the Republic. The conversation stirs memories of their complicated history, including Daniel's former identity as Day and his strained relationship with Anden.

The Elector's mention of June Iparis, Daniel's former ally and romantic interest, flusters him, revealing lingering emotions. Their exchange is cordial yet charged with unspoken tension, as Daniel deflects praise with humility. After Anden departs, Director Min confronts Daniel about Eden's potential involvement in an investigation targeting the criminal Hann. She insists on Eden's cooperation, framing it as an order rather than a request. Daniel resists, feeling cornered and powerless, his frustration mounting as Min implies consequences for non-compliance. The confrontation leaves him isolated, mirroring the solitude he once felt on the streets of Lake.

As guests move indoors, Daniel remains outside, lost in thought until June unexpectedly joins him. Her presence is striking, and Daniel struggles to hide his admiration. June, perceptive as ever, notices his distress and offers a listening ear. Daniel confides his struggles with the moral ambiguities of his work, drawing parallels to June's past experiences in the Republic. She responds with empathy, suggesting a less dangerous career path, though their banter lightens the mood. Their connection remains palpable, underscored by shared history and unspoken affection.

Recognizing the sensitivity of the situation, Daniel hesitates to divulge details in public. June subtly proposes continuing their conversation privately at her place later,

maintaining a composed demeanor. The chapter ends with Daniel’s internal conflict unresolved, torn between duty, family, and his rekindling bond with June. The gala’s opulence contrasts sharply with his turmoil, highlighting the tension between his public persona and private struggles.

Chapter 15: Ross City: Eden 8

The chapter opens with Eden entering the Komodo Club with Pressa, her mind preoccupied by recent events at the AIS headquarters and her encounter with Dominic Hann. Despite the club's chaotic atmosphere, she struggles to shake off her worries about Hann's potential threat and her brother Daniel's dangerous pursuit of him. Pressa notices Eden's distraction and offers to leave, but Eden insists on staying, immersing herself in the club's virtual performances to escape her thoughts. The vibrant, surreal environment provides a temporary respite, though her unease lingers beneath the surface.

As Eden and Pressa dance, Pressa senses Eden's turmoil and probes her concerns. Eden admits to thinking about the drone race and its mysterious sponsor, Dominic Hann. Pressa advises her to maintain her disguised identity outside the Sky Floors, suggesting Hann might not deem her a significant threat. Her words offer Eden fleeting comfort, but the underlying tension remains. The conversation shifts to Eden's impending departure for the Republic, highlighting the bittersweet nature of their friendship and Pressa's unspoken sadness about being left behind in the Undercity.

Eden's anxiety intensifies when she spots a shadowy figure watching her in the crowd. Twice, she glimpses the mysterious man before he vanishes, leaving her unsettled and questioning whether she's imagining things. Pressa, though concerned, sees nothing and suggests they move to a quieter lounge area. Eden's paranoia grows as she wonders if Hann's men are tracking her, despite her earlier doubts about Hann's intentions. The contrast between Hann's charismatic demeanor and his ruthless reputation leaves her conflicted and fearful.

In the lounge, Eden's distress becomes evident as she scans the room for the shadowy figure. Pressa fetches her water and agrees to leave when Eden admits she needs to go home. The chapter closes with Eden's mind racing, torn between dismissing her

fears as exhaustion and suspecting she’s being hunted. The haunting possibility of Hann’s men lurking in the shadows underscores her vulnerability and the precariousness of her situation, leaving her on edge as she exits the club.

Chapter 16: Ross City: Daniel 8

Daniel returns to his apartment, unsettled by the absence of his brother Eden and the unusual silence of the security system. As he resets the system, he senses something amiss—a foreign scent lingers in the air, and the apartment feels unnervingly occupied. His suspicion is confirmed when he notices an unfamiliar shadow, triggering his alertness. Before he can react, he realizes intruders are present, and his attempt to defend himself is thwarted by their swift, coordinated attack.

A woman in a black suit blocks the doorway, while another assailant grabs Daniel from behind. Overpowered by multiple attackers, he is subdued with chloroform, his struggles rendered futile. As his vision blurs, he recognizes Dominic Hann, a figure from his past, who smugly remarks about causing chaos in the city. Daniel’s panic surges as the chemical triggers traumatic memories of his childhood in the Republic’s labs, where he endured brutal experiments and near-death experiences.

Fighting against unconsciousness, Daniel’s desperation leads him to send a cryptic, static-filled message to June, a former ally. Though their relationship is strained, he trusts her intuition to recognize the distress signal. His last conscious thought is of Eden’s whereabouts and the looming threat posed by Dominic Hann. The chapter ends with Daniel succumbing to the chloroform, leaving his fate uncertain as darkness envelops him.

The excerpt captures Daniel’s vulnerability and resilience in the face of danger, juxtaposing his physical struggle with psychological trauma. Dominic Hann’s reappearance hints at escalating conflict, while Daniel’s fleeting connection with June underscores their lingering bond. The tense, immersive narrative leaves readers questioning Eden’s safety and the implications of Daniel’s capture for the broader story.

Chapter 17: Ross City: Eden 9

Eden, the protagonist, grows increasingly uneasy when her brother Daniel fails to answer her calls, and his account appears inaccessible. Walking through a serene, elevated garden walkway in Ross City, she tries to dismiss her worries, attributing the communication issues to a solar flare or Daniel being occupied with his girlfriend, June. However, lingering memories of ominous encounters in the Undercity and Daniel's recent warnings unsettle her. The tranquil surroundings contrast sharply with her growing anxiety, as she struggles to shake the feeling that something is wrong.

Her unease deepens when she receives repeated automated messages about Daniel's unavailability, a departure from his usual habit of warning her beforehand. Childhood memories of Daniel's illness resurface, intensifying her dread. Despite rationalizing the situation, Eden's instincts scream that something is amiss. As she enters an empty elevator, her tension mounts, hoping to find Daniel safe at home. Instead, the elevator stops unexpectedly, and two strangers in suits step in, addressing her by name.

The strangers reveal they work for Dominic Hann, a name that sends a shock through Eden. They insist she attend a meeting with him, offering vague incentives. When Eden hesitates, they show her a disturbing video feed of Daniel entering their apartment, followed by an unseen intruder. The feed cuts off, and June's panicked call confirms Daniel's disappearance. Eden's fear crystallizes as she realizes her brother is in danger, and her own vulnerability dawns on her.

The chapter climaxes with the strangers coldly informing Eden that Daniel will also be at the meeting with Hann. Her world narrows to a single, terrifying truth: her brother has been taken, and she is being coerced into compliance. The once-serene walkway and elevator now feel like a trap, as Eden grapples with the reality that her worst fears have materialized. The chapter leaves her—and the reader—on edge, anticipating the consequences of this forced encounter with Hann.

Chapter 18: Ross City: Daniel 9

Daniel awakens disoriented on the streets of Lake, his artificial leg cold and the neighborhood desolate, marked by boarded-up homes and eerie silence. A vivid dream blends with reality as he sees his brother, John, trapped behind Republic soldiers, while a Colonies airship looms overhead. The scene dissolves into chaos—dust storms, screams, and blinding light—before Daniel jerks awake, sweating and trembling. The dream's remnants linger, particularly John's outstretched hand, a haunting reminder of his past in the Republic.

Daniel realizes he's bound to a chair in a windowless, sparsely decorated room, gagged and groggy from chloroform. A suited man and other guards watch him, mentioning Dominic Hann, which triggers Daniel's panic about his brother, Eden. He reassures himself that Eden must be alive, as his own captivity suggests he's being used as leverage. Daniel's attempts to assess his surroundings are futile—his system is offline, and the room offers no clues. The guards' casual cruelty and dismissive remarks about his youth and wartime experiences fuel his anger.

One guard taunts Daniel, provoking him until he violently jerks his chair, testing his captors' limits. The suited man warns him but hesitates to act, revealing Hann's orders to keep Daniel unharmed. Seizing the moment, Daniel attempts to link his system to the guard's for a potential escape or communication. When the guard adjusts his gag, Daniel bites his finger, triggering a violent reaction that leaves him sprawled on the floor. The taste of blood and the guard's rage underscore his defiance.

The chapter highlights Daniel's resilience and strategic thinking despite his vulnerability. His focus on Eden's safety drives him, even as he navigates physical pain and psychological torment. The guards' mixed reactions—boredom, irritation, and reluctant restraint—paint a tense dynamic. Daniel's fleeting memories of past struggles and his determination to outmaneuver his captors set the stage for a high-

stakes confrontation, leaving the reader anticipating his next move in this claustrophobic, hostile environment.

Chapter 19: Ross City: Eden 10

The chapter opens with Eden being forcibly taken into a private elevator and blindfolded, triggering traumatic memories of her past in the Republic. The sensory deprivation—darkness, unfamiliar voices, and the elevator's movement—rekindles her childhood horrors of painful experiments, illness, and displacement. These memories, long suppressed, now haunt her dreams, exacerbated by her current captivity. Her fear intensifies as she recalls her brother Daniel's unconscious state, wondering about his fate while enduring the disorienting journey to an unknown destination.

After an unsettling ride, Eden is brought into a windowless, opulent living room where she meets Dominic Hann, a powerful figure who appears as a hologram. Hann's rough voice and calculated demeanor unsettle her, but she confronts him about Daniel's safety. Hann dismisses her concerns, instead probing her motives for venturing into the Undercity as a privileged Sky Floor citizen. Eden's sarcasm and defiance hint at her resilience, while Hann's interest in her drone-building skills suggests a deeper agenda. The tension between them underscores Eden's mistrust and Hann's manipulative charm.

Hann reveals he has researched Eden's academic achievements and unusual Undercity visits, framing her as a rare talent. Despite her demands to see Daniel, Hann shifts focus to her potential, claiming she is the "focus" of their meeting—a notion that resonates uncomfortably with Eden. His flattery and gentle tone contrast with the implied threat to Daniel, leaving Eden torn between suspicion and a latent desire for recognition. As Hann leads her deeper into his facility, the guards' deference hints at his authority and the stakes of her compliance.

The chapter culminates in a vast, high-tech factory where Hann showcases a mysterious, glowing engine—a fusion of machine and organic design. Eden's awe at the scale and complexity of the project momentarily overshadows her fear. Hann

positions himself as a visionary, drawing parallels between their interests, though his true intentions remain unclear. The chapter ends on a cliffhanger as Eden, still grappling with uncertainty about Daniel, is left to ponder Hann’s cryptic motives and the unsettling allure of his world.

Chapter 20: Ross City: Daniel 10

Daniel, disoriented and weakened from captivity in a windowless cell, drifts in and out of delirium, fixating on memories of June. He recalls their first encounter in Los Angeles after a decade apart—a fleeting yet profound moment where their eyes met, sparking a rush of nostalgia. Despite his fragmented memories, June remains a constant in his mind, a symbol of a love he can't fully grasp but can't let go of. Their reunion dinner, awkward yet charged with unspoken emotions, highlights the distance between their present lives and the unresolved past they share.

During their walk after dinner, Daniel and June navigate their reconnection with cautious steps, both physically and emotionally. June reveals she once promised to stay away if it meant his survival, a sacrifice that overwhelms Daniel. Their conversation is tinged with hesitation as they acknowledge their separate paths—Daniel in Ross City, June in the Republic. The tension between their lingering feelings and the reality of their diverging lives leaves them at an impasse, yet neither can fully retreat.

The chapter delves into Daniel's internal struggle as he grapples with June's words: "You have your life in Ross City now." Her acceptance of their separation forces him to confront the fractured nature of their relationship. He questions the intensity of their past love and whether it can be rebuilt. June's suggestion of starting as friends offers a fragile hope, but Daniel must suppress his desire to rekindle their romance, instead choosing to safeguard his emotions for an uncertain future.

As Daniel's captivity wears on, his thoughts oscillate between desperation and clarity. June's wisdom—that the past is an inescapable part of oneself—resonates deeply. He realizes that suppressing his history hasn't erased its hold on him. To survive and protect Eden, he must confront his fragmented memories and emotions. The chapter ends with Daniel clinging to June's memory as a lifeline, determined to reclaim his past

to forge a path forward.

Chapter 21: Ross City: Eden 11

The chapter opens with the protagonist, Eden, confronting Hann in his Undercity estate after assisting with integrating their drone engine into his machine. Despite Hann's apparent admiration for Eden's work, tension lingers as Eden remains wary of Hann's motives, especially regarding their captive brother, Daniel. Hann dismisses the guards and urges Eden to eat, revealing unsettling knowledge about their vegetarian preference. The interaction underscores Hann's calculated demeanor and Eden's distrust, setting the stage for a psychological battle between the two.

Hann proposes a deal: he will release Daniel if Eden completes the engine installation. Eden is skeptical, questioning Hann's sincerity, but Hann insists he'll provide proof via a live feed of Daniel's release. The conversation shifts as Hann reveals personal details, comparing Eden's resilience to his own son's. This unexpected vulnerability hints at a deeper connection between them, though Eden remains guarded. Hann's offer and sudden openness create a pivotal moment, forcing Eden to weigh trust against suspicion.

Hann shares his tragic backstory, recounting his impoverished upbringing in the Undercity, where he and his family struggled to survive. He describes how factory pollution sickened his son and led to his wife's death after she took a desperate loan from criminals. His narrative humanizes him, contrasting his current power with his past suffering. Eden, momentarily distracted by memories of their own harsh upbringing, begins to see Hann in a more complex light, though their skepticism persists.

The chapter concludes with Hann's revelation about his family's fate, delivered with chilling calmness. His story of loss and systemic oppression mirrors Eden's experiences, creating an uneasy parallel between them. Eden's internal conflict intensifies as they grapple with Hann's motives—whether he's manipulating them or

genuinely seeking understanding. The exchange leaves Eden at a crossroads, torn between their desire to free Daniel and the fear of being deceived by a man whose past echoes their own struggles.

Chapter 22: Ross City: Daniel 11

Daniel, the protagonist, finds himself bound and weakened in an unknown location, struggling with thirst and exhaustion. He overhears guards discussing his brother Eden, who seems to be working on a project for their captor, Hann. Daniel focuses on loosening his ropes, enduring pain and bloodied wrists to free himself. Despite his physical state, he remains determined, calculating his escape one step at a time. The guards, dismissive of his condition, underestimate his resolve, giving him the opportunity to work unnoticed.

As Daniel finally frees one hand, he maintains his composure to avoid alerting the guards. A fleeting memory of June teaching him combat skills resurfaces, reinforcing his readiness to fight. When a guard approaches suspiciously, Daniel acts swiftly, using his chair as a weapon to incapacitate him and attempts to seize his gun. Though weakened, he dodges attacks and bolts toward the hallway, stumbling but pushing through his fatigue. The guards give chase, firing shots as Daniel narrowly escapes through a window.

Outside, Daniel discovers the sprawling underground complex, spotting a construction site with a large machine—possibly where Eden is being held. He scales the roof to evade pursuit, his instincts honed from past survival experiences guiding his movements. Spotlights sweep the area, forcing him to hide, but his focus remains on locating Eden. The chapter highlights Daniel’s resilience and adaptability, even as his physical limits are tested.

The chapter ends with Daniel momentarily safe but still in peril, his mind drawing parallels to past escapes. His determination to find Eden drives him forward, despite the overwhelming odds. The setting suggests Hann’s vast resources, raising stakes for Daniel’s mission. The tension builds as Daniel’s survival skills clash with the guards’ relentless pursuit, leaving readers anticipating his next move in this high-stakes

confrontation.

Chapter 23: Ross City: Eden 12

The chapter begins with Dominic Hann fulfilling his promise to release Daniel, as the narrator watches the event unfold via a live feed. Daniel, tied to a chair, manages to break free after a scuffle with guards, showcasing his skill at evading capture. Despite stumbling, he nearly escapes on his own, but the guards ultimately intervene. To the narrator's surprise, they blindfold Daniel and escort him to the Undercity streets, where he is found by AIS agents, possibly including June Iparis. The narrator is left bewildered by Hann's decision to release Daniel.

Daniel's escape sparks a mix of hope and uncertainty in the narrator. They believe Daniel will return to rescue them, driven by his determination. However, the narrator questions whether this will matter if Hann succeeds in his plans. The chapter hints at Hann's dangerous ambitions, which involve a machine powered by the narrator's engine. The narrator describes this invention as both awe-inspiring and horrifying, suggesting it has catastrophic potential.

The narrator's emotional turmoil is palpable as they reflect on the parallels between Daniel's near-capture and the fate of John, a past tragedy. The guards' unexpected decision to spare Daniel adds to the tension, leaving the narrator questioning Hann's motives. The scene underscores the unpredictability of their situation and the looming threat posed by Hann's machine, which could destabilize Ross City.

The chapter ends on a foreboding note, with the narrator acknowledging the impending collapse of Ross City. Hann's machine, now operational, represents a turning point in the story, merging technological terror with personal stakes. The narrator's hope for rescue clashes with the grim reality of Hann's power, leaving their future—and the city's—hanging in the balance. The stage is set for a high-stakes confrontation, with Daniel's freedom serving as a fleeting respite in a larger, unfolding crisis.

Chapter 24: Ross City: Daniel 12

Daniel wakes up in a hospital bed in Ross City, disoriented but physically recovered after being rescued by June and the AIS. He recalls little of his escape but is relieved to find June asleep beside him. Their reunion is tender yet urgent, as Daniel immediately voices his concern for Eden, who remains captive in an underground hideout controlled by Hann. June reassures him that efforts are underway to locate Eden, though the labyrinthine tunnels beneath the city complicate the search. Daniel’s frustration mounts as he realizes the scale of the challenge ahead.

June insists Daniel rest, emphasizing the need for him to regain strength before taking action. She reveals that high-ranking officials, including the Elector, are monitoring the situation. Daniel’s guilt over failing to protect Eden resurfaces, compounded by traumatic memories from their past in the Republic. June’s steadfast presence anchors him, but his fear for Eden’s safety lingers. Their conversation shifts to their shared history, with June admitting she stayed by his side out of fear of losing him—a vulnerability that mirrors Daniel’s own emotions.

The emotional tension between them escalates as Daniel confesses his long-standing love for June, despite his belief that he brings chaos into her life. He acknowledges the pain they’ve endured but emphasizes that living without her was unbearable. June, in turn, reveals her own love for him, a confession she had withheld when they were separated. Their mutual vulnerability dissolves lingering doubts, and they share a heartfelt kiss, symbolizing a renewed commitment to each other despite the uncertainties ahead.

The chapter culminates in a moment of rare emotional clarity for both characters. Daniel and June acknowledge their intertwined destinies, accepting that their lives may always be marked by collision and upheaval. Yet, their love offers a semblance of stability amid the chaos. The chapter ends on a hopeful note, with Daniel and June

embracing the possibility of a shared future, even as the shadow of Eden’s captivity and Hann’s machinations looms large. Their personal reconciliation sets the stage for the challenges to come.

Chapter 25: Ross City: Eden 13

In the chapter *Ross City: Eden 13*, Eden finds himself in a tense confrontation with Hann, the notorious criminal leader of Ross City's Undercity. Hann arrives at Eden's makeshift chamber, dismisses his guards, and engages in a private conversation. He reveals that Eden's brother is safe with the AIS, fulfilling his promise, and then surprises Eden by tossing him a purse filled with gold coins worth millions. Hann explains that the virtual currency of Ross City will soon become useless, making the gold a practical payment. Eden is stunned by the amount but wary of its implications, knowing Hann's ruthless reputation.

Hann shocks Eden further by declaring he is free to leave whenever he wishes, despite Eden's knowledge of Hann's operations and location. Eden tests this claim by moving toward the door, expecting a trap, but Hann remains calm. He asserts that Eden will eventually return, drawn by a shared disdain for Ross City's corrupt Level system and the suffering of the Undercity. Hann appeals to Eden's desire for significance, suggesting he could escape his brother's shadow and enact real change. Eden rejects the idea, but Hann's words plant seeds of doubt.

The conversation takes a darker turn as Hann offers Eden a permanent position working for him, promising freedom, power, and the ability to help those he cares about, like his friend Pressa. He provides a contact number and reiterates that Eden is free to leave, emphasizing that he won't force him to stay. Hann's persuasive rhetoric challenges Eden's morals, suggesting that refusing the offer would mean turning his back on a chance to reshape Ross City. Eden struggles internally, torn between his distrust of Hann and the allure of the opportunity.

Ultimately, Eden chooses to leave, stepping into the hallway where guards await to escort him. As he walks away, Hann's haunting question lingers in his mind: *Who are you helping, exactly, by refusing my offer?* The chapter ends with Eden grappling with

the weight of Hann’s proposition and the uncertain future of Ross City, leaving readers to ponder whether he will resist or succumb to Hann’s vision.

Chapter 26: Ross City: Daniel 13

Daniel and June arrive at AIS headquarters, their interactions marked by unspoken tension from the previous night. Daniel shares an update on Eden's possible location—a neglected underground sector abandoned after a catastrophic fire. Despite June's skepticism about his readiness, Daniel insists on pursuing the lead. As they discuss their next steps, a sudden, citywide system failure occurs, wiping out all Levels, virtual displays, and communication networks. The outage leaves them stranded in an elevator, forcing them to navigate the darkened city on foot.

The blackout triggers immediate chaos, with Daniel and June realizing the severity of the situation. They encounter Jessan and Director Min, who confirm the system's complete collapse, including government data. June warns of impending societal destabilization, drawing parallels to her experiences in the Republic. She predicts rapid unrest in the Undercity, where the Level system's absence removes barriers for the oppressed. Director Min dismisses her concerns, but June's analysis proves prescient as the group witnesses the first signs of upheaval.

As they descend to the streets, the scale of the crisis becomes clear. The Undercity erupts into pandemonium, with people flooding previously restricted areas and clashing with authorities. Daniel notes the eerie absence of virtual overlays, emphasizing the system's total erasure. The collapse of Ross City's class hierarchy creates a power vacuum, and isolated scuffles escalate. June's grim assessment underscores the fragility of societal order without the Level system's control.

Daniel's focus remains on finding Eden amid the chaos. He and June plan to head northeast toward the suspected underground location, though the path ahead is uncertain. The chapter ends with them stepping into the chaotic streets, highlighting the immediate consequences of the system's failure and the looming threat of widespread rebellion. The incident's connection to Hann's actions and Eden's captivity

adds urgency to their mission.

Chapter 27: Ross City: Eden 14

The chapter depicts the sudden collapse of Ross City’s augmented-reality system, stripping away its digital layers and plunging the Undercity into chaos. Without the Levels—a social hierarchy displayed overhead—the city descends into riots, with people reacting in shock, anger, and violence. The protagonist observes the turmoil from the AIS headquarters in the Sky Floors, where the Undercity’s unrest is visible through live footage. Fires, smoke, and military interventions underscore the severity of the breakdown, while the Sky Floors remain eerily quiet in contrast.

The protagonist and their brother, Daniel, discuss their recent captivity by Hann, a criminal who released them after coercing the protagonist into helping him. Daniel suspects Hann is manipulating them, while the protagonist grapples with Hann’s tragic backstory and his unsettling insight into their thoughts. Tensions rise as the protagonist tries unsuccessfully to contact Pressa, a friend in the Undercity, and resolves to venture into the chaos despite Daniel’s objections. The disagreement highlights their conflicting perspectives on protection and responsibility.

Daniel initially refuses to let the protagonist go, citing the dangers of the riots, but relents when June points out the urgency of rescuing loved ones before the situation worsens. The protagonist accuses Daniel of hypocrisy, arguing that he would take risks for June but denies the same agency to them. This confrontation exposes the rift between them, with the protagonist feeling infantilized and frustrated by Daniel’s overprotectiveness. Ultimately, Daniel and June agree to accompany the protagonist, but the emotional divide lingers.

The chapter concludes with the trio navigating the chaotic Undercity streets, where protests, celebrations, and confusion intertwine. The absence of the Level system has unleashed pent-up rage and desperation, with some residents looting and others standing helplessly. The scene underscores the fragility of societal order and the

protagonist’s determination to save Pressa, even as the city teeters on the brink of collapse. The chapter blends action with emotional tension, setting the stage for further conflict and resolution.

Chapter 28: Ross City: Daniel 14

Daniel reflects on his shared grief with Pressa, a girl who has just lost her father, as they leave the hospital. He recognizes her silent anguish, mirroring his own past trauma of losing a parent and fleeing home. The group, including Daniel's brother Eden and their ally June, moves quickly to escape the collapsing city. Daniel observes the chaos around them—police violence, protests, and a system crumbling under its own corruption—drawing parallels to his experiences in the Republic. His priority is protecting Eden, but the scene evokes painful memories of past conflicts.

The urgency to leave intensifies as June reminds Daniel of their tight schedule to board the Elector's plane. The city's descent into violence is evident on screens displaying police brutality against Undercity crowds. Daniel forces himself to focus on the task at hand, pushing aside the haunting visuals. The elevator ride to the top floor, powered only by emergency systems, adds to the tension. The sight of the Elector's jet, with its striking red and black design, feels surreal, underscoring the disparity between the privileged few and the suffering masses below.

As they board the jet, Daniel's thoughts linger on Pressa's loss and Eden's unspoken emotions. Seated across from Anden, he watches the city shrink beneath them. The view reveals a stark contrast: smoke rising from the lower streets while the upper levels still glitter, now stripped of their artificial glamour. The city's vulnerability is laid bare, its white buildings and frantic, tiny figures resembling a war zone. Daniel's perspective shifts from personal grief to a broader critique of societal collapse, questioning the cyclical nature of violence and oppression.

The chapter closes with Daniel's grim contemplation of humanity's relentless cycle of destruction. As the jet ascends through the clouds, he wonders if true peace is possible or if history is doomed to repeat its patterns of chaos. The scene below—a microcosm of conflict—reinforces his disillusionment. Despite his efforts to protect his brother,

Daniel is haunted by the realization that escape is temporary, and the roots of suffering run deep. The chapter leaves readers with a somber reflection on systemic failure and the elusive hope for change.

Chapter 29: os Angeles: Eden 1

The chapter opens with Eden, the protagonist, obsessively sketching schematics of Dominic Hann’s device during a twelve-hour flight to Los Angeles. Haunted by guilt over her role in the destruction of Ross City’s Level system, she struggles to piece together how Hann’s machine worked. Pressa, her grieving companion, interrupts her focus with a cup of tea, thanking Eden for bringing her along. The luxurious Elector’s jet contrasts with their somber moods, as Eden wrestles with self-blame and Pressa mourns her father’s death. Their quiet exchange highlights their shared trauma and unresolved grief.

Eden’s internal conflict deepens as she recalls Hann’s ambiguous motives, including his claim that she reminded him of his son. Despite his role in Pressa’s father’s death, Eden questions whether Hann or Ross City’s oppressive system is truly to blame. The plane’s descent into the Republic shifts her focus, marking a return to her homeland under unexpected circumstances. Daniel, her brother, tenses at the sight of the Republic, his discomfort palpable as past traumas resurface. The group’s arrival signals a new chapter, with the Republic ironically becoming their refuge.

Upon landing, the stark differences between Los Angeles and Ross City are immediately apparent, from the brutalist architecture to the absence of digital overlays. Daniel’s unease grows as Republic soldiers snap to attention, triggering his instincts from a life spent in hiding. Eden observes his silent struggle, feeling guilt for his years in the Undercity. The scene underscores the tension between their past and present, as the group navigates a world that once hunted them but now offers sanctuary.

The chapter culminates in a chaotic media frenzy at the airport, with reporters clamoring for attention. June, calm and authoritative, shields Daniel and the Elector, while Eden protects Pressa from the overwhelming crowd. The arrival of Tess, a

familiar face from their past, brings a moment of warmth amid the chaos. Her confident demeanor and affectionate reunion with Daniel contrast with the group’s earlier tension, hinting at hope and reconnection. The chapter closes with a sense of uneasy homecoming, blending relief with unresolved questions about their future.

Chapter 30: os Angeles: Daniel 1

Daniel returns to Los Angeles with June, navigating a mix of nostalgia and disorientation as he observes the changes in the city. The Republic’s landscape is both familiar and altered—plague patrols and X-marked doors are gone, replaced by scaffolding, green spaces, and ongoing construction projects. June explains that Anden’s leadership is driving these slow but hopeful transformations, though financial challenges persist. Daniel’s memories of his childhood streets resurface, but the presence of June’s hand in his anchors him, easing the awkwardness between them and calming his turbulent thoughts.

The duo visits the newly built Republic History Museum, a stark memorial to the nation’s dark past. Exhibits include Trial uniforms, plague patrol gear, and portraits of past Electors, including Anden’s father. The museum also documents the war that split America, reframing it as "Coranda’s War" rather than a civil war. A separate room confronts the legacy of slavery in pre-Republic America, leaving Daniel to reflect on whether the nation was ever truly united. The weight of history overwhelms them, and they are eventually asked to leave as the museum closes.

Outside, Daniel shares fragmented memories of the area, recalling his first encounters with Kaede and Tess, as well as the Skiz duel gamblers. June grows somber, avoiding the alley where her brother Metias was killed, a reminder of her deepest pain. Daniel recognizes her grief, paralleling it with his own love and loss for his brother John. Despite their resilience, both carry scars from their pasts, and June’s ability to adapt doesn’t erase her fear of those memories.

As the sun sets, Daniel comforts June, acknowledging her strength in moving forward while honoring Metias’s memory. June shifts the focus to Eden, urging Daniel to guide him, as Eden now shoulders responsibilities akin to Daniel’s past role. The chapter closes with Daniel gazing at the water, hinting at the unresolved tension between past

wounds and future obligations. Their shared history binds them, but the path ahead remains uncertain.

Chapter 31: os Angeles: Eden 2

The chapter "Los Angeles: Eden 2" follows the protagonist as they accompany their brother, Daniel, on a nighttime journey through their old neighborhood, the Lake District. Daniel, an experienced urban explorer, leads the way with confidence, revealing his intimate knowledge of the city's hidden pathways. The protagonist struggles to keep up, both physically and emotionally, as Daniel introduces them to his world of rooftop runs and alleyway escapes. The tension between curiosity and apprehension is palpable as the protagonist questions Daniel's motives and the risks involved.

Daniel’s expertise becomes evident as he demonstrates how to navigate the city’s crumbling infrastructure, scaling walls and balancing on cables with ease. He shares glimpses of his past, pointing out spots where he once slept or scavenged for food. The protagonist is shocked to learn about Daniel’s harsh survival tactics, including sleeping in hidden crevices and stealing from market stalls. These revelations paint a stark contrast to Daniel’s current reputation, highlighting the resilience and resourcefulness he developed during his years on the streets.

The emotional weight of the journey deepens as Daniel revisits places tied to painful memories. His body language becomes tense, and his words are sparse, suggesting the difficulty of confronting his past. The protagonist, realizing how little they truly knew about Daniel’s struggles, begins to understand his aversion to their old neighborhood. The chapter underscores the brothers’ contrasting perspectives—Daniel’s hardened realism versus the protagonist’s sheltered ignorance—while hinting at a desire for reconciliation.

The chapter concludes with Daniel pointing out an abandoned skyscraper rising from the lake, a symbol of the city’s decay and his own fractured history. The protagonist’s awe and unease mirror the chapter’s themes of survival, memory, and the unspoken

bonds between siblings. Daniel’s willingness to share his past suggests a tentative step toward trust, leaving the protagonist—and the reader—to ponder what other secrets lie buried in the city’s shadows.

Chapter 32: os Angeles: Daniel 2

The chapter opens with Daniel and his brother, Eden, returning to their Los Angeles apartment after a chaotic night. Eden collapses into sleep while Daniel stays awake, observing the city's JumboTrons broadcasting news of unrest in Antarctica's Ross City, where tanks patrol streets filled with protests and bonfires. The President calls an emergency meeting, but Daniel reflects on how Hann's lawless tactics give him an edge. The scene underscores the tension between order and chaos, with Hann's manipulation of the system sparking violence while authorities struggle to respond.

Eden wakes later, and the brothers share a quiet moment on the balcony, discussing the crisis. Eden reveals his theory that Hann didn't destroy Ross City's Level system but merely suppressed it, likening it to revising a drone's programming rather than rebuilding it from scratch. He believes he can reverse Hann's disruption using his knowledge of the engine powering the system. Daniel, though fearful for Eden's safety, recognizes his brother's determination and expertise. The conversation highlights Eden's growth from a vulnerable boy to a capable young man willing to risk everything.

Eden proposes a risky plan: he'll re-enter Hann's circle under the guise of defecting, while Daniel and June create diversions to buy time. Daniel reluctantly agrees, acknowledging the danger but trusting Eden's abilities. The brothers share a rare moment of camaraderie, laughing at the absurdity of defying authorities. Eden questions whether restoring the Level system is morally right, hinting at a deeper critique of the system's flaws. This moment foreshadows their potential to reshape the system rather than simply revert it.

The chapter closes with Eden sketching a plan to modify the Level system's functionality, suggesting a compromise between restoration and reform. Daniel, though wary, supports his brother's vision. Their dynamic shifts from protector-

protected to partners in rebellion, united by their shared history and resilience. The chapter sets the stage for their covert mission, blending tension with hope as they prepare to challenge both Hann and the authorities.

Chapter 33: os Angeles: Eden 3

The chapter opens with the protagonist arriving in Ross City, Antarctica, where the usual vibrant technological landscape has been replaced by a scene of chaos. Skyscrapers loom ominously, and smoke rises from the Undercity, while virtual markers and lights are conspicuously absent. Military troops patrol the buildings, evoking memories of war-torn scenes from the protagonist's past. The absence of technology exposes the city's vulnerability, heightening the tension as the protagonist prepares to face an uncertain mission.

The protagonist is accompanied by Pressa and Daniel, who provide emotional and logistical support. Daniel equips the protagonist with a discreet communication device—a drone resembling a cockroach—that will self-destruct if tampered with. This device carries a critical patch to alter the city's Level system, symbolizing a deeper revolution. The protagonist's fear is palpable, but Pressa's presence offers reassurance, grounding them in the face of overwhelming odds. The group's dynamic underscores themes of trust and solidarity in adversity.

Upon landing, they are met by AIS agents and soldiers, who claim the Undercity rebellion is under control, though their defensive tone suggests otherwise. Daniel challenges their assertions, highlighting the systemic abuse fueling the unrest. The protagonist and Pressa prepare to descend into the Undercity alone, exchanging tense farewells with June and Daniel. The emotional weight of the separation is evident, particularly in Daniel's reluctance to linger, revealing his unspoken concern for the protagonist's safety.

As the elevator descends, the protagonist and Pressa confront the stark reality of the Undercity—barricades, shouting crowds, and a heavy police presence. The chaos mirrors the protagonist's traumatic past, triggering a sense of dread. Pressa's steady presence becomes a lifeline, and they navigate the streets together, seeking a quieter

path to their destination. The chapter closes with a sense of foreboding as they step into the heart of the rebellion, their resolve tested by the surrounding turmoil.

Chapter 34: os Angeles: Daniel 3

Daniel reflects on the stark contrast between his military experiences in the Republic and the current conflict in Ross City, where the enemy is elusive and the battle lines blurred. He and June prepare to lure Hann, their adversary, into the open by broadcasting tailored messages across different frequencies. The plan hinges on identifying Hann’s location based on his response, a tactic June once used to track Daniel himself. As they set up the recordings, Daniel grapples with the uncertainty of their strategy and the looming threat Hann poses to the city’s stability.

The chapter delves into the tension between Daniel and June as they coordinate their efforts to outmaneuver Hann. June’s leadership shines as she directs the team, evoking a memory of their first encounter in Daniel’s mind. Their shared history adds a layer of intimacy to their professional collaboration, underscored by a brief, tender moment before they part ways to lead separate teams. Despite the gravity of their mission, their personal connection provides a fleeting respite from the chaos around them.

Daniel’s concern for his brother, Eden, who is infiltrating Hann’s circle, weighs heavily on him. The team’s plan is a calculated risk, banking on Eden’s ability to gain Hann’s trust while they create a diversion. Jessan’s report of missing weapons from a factory hints at Hann’s readiness for open conflict, heightening the stakes. Daniel suppresses his fear, focusing on the mission, but the underlying dread for Eden’s safety lingers.

The chapter concludes with Daniel and June splitting up to oversee different sectors of the city, their teams poised to intercept Hann if he takes the bait. The soldiers’ wariness of Daniel hints at his formidable reputation, adding tension to the scene. As they move into position, the chapter leaves readers with a sense of impending confrontation, the success of their plan uncertain, and the fate of Ross City hanging in the balance.

Chapter 35: os Angeles: Eden 4

The chapter opens with Eden and Pressa being blindfolded and led through an unfamiliar location by guards. Eden attempts to memorize their path, noting the shift from metal to wooden floors, while Pressa remains silent but visibly anxious. When the blindfold is removed, they find themselves on a balcony overlooking walled compounds near the border of Ross City, with the frozen Antarctic tundra stretching beyond. Hann, the enigmatic antagonist, greets them with his characteristic calm yet intimidating demeanor, appearing physically weakened but mentally sharp. His presence immediately heightens the tension, and Eden’s internal monologue reveals their determination to stay focused on their mission.

Hann questions Eden’s return, probing for motives and suspecting deception. Eden claims to have come without their brother Daniel’s knowledge, offering assistance in Hann’s plans to restructure Ross City’s system. Hann remains skeptical, scrutinizing Eden’s every word and gesture. Pressa, meanwhile, is subjected to a rough search by guards, which Eden protests. Hann’s amusement at their dynamic suggests he sees potential in their alliance but remains wary. Eden’s lie about Daniel siding with the AIS to sacrifice the Undercity residents adds layers to their deception, as they attempt to gain Hann’s trust by warning him of a trap.

Pressa plays a pivotal role by presenting Hann with vials of serum meant to alleviate his lung infection, a gesture that catches him off guard. She explains her personal connection to the medication, having cared for her ailing father, and frames the offer as solidarity with Hann’s cause despite disagreeing with his methods. Her composure and sincerity momentarily disarm Hann, revealing a flicker of vulnerability. Eden observes this interaction with a mix of admiration and anger, recognizing Hann’s manipulative nature but also his ability to evoke sympathy. The serum becomes a bargaining chip, symbolizing both Pressa’s empathy and their strategic maneuvering.

The chapter culminates in Hann’s conflicted reaction to their overtures. While Pressa’s boldness and the promise of relief from his illness seem to resonate with him, he questions their motives, accusing them of exploiting his vulnerability. Eden’s fear intensifies as they realize the precariousness of their position, unsure whether their ploy has succeeded or pushed Hann too far. The unresolved tension leaves the reader anticipating Hann’s next move and the potential consequences of Eden and Pressa’s risky gamble.

Chapter 36: os Angeles: Daniel 4

The chapter opens with Daniel in a state of panic after witnessing an explosion where he believed June was stationed. Overwhelmed by fear for her safety, he rushes through the chaotic scene, calling out to her with no response. His desperation drives him to leap down a stairwell and sprint through the debris-filled streets, convinced June is trapped or dead. The tension peaks as a hand suddenly grabs him—June emerges from the dust, unharmed but covered in ash, revealing she had orchestrated a decoy to deceive their enemy, Hann.

June explains her strategy: she intentionally kept Daniel in the dark to ensure his genuine reaction would convince Hann of her demise. Her plan hinges on making Hann believe he had successfully attacked her team, thereby strengthening Eden’s credibility as a double agent. Daniel, though relieved, chastises her for the risky maneuver, but his anger is overshadowed by his relief at her survival. The duo returns to the command center, where they analyze transmissions and pinpoint Hann’s likely hideout near the city’s eastern border.

The chapter shifts focus to Eden, Daniel’s brother, who is under Hann’s control. June confirms that the explosion aligns with Eden’s earlier warning, suggesting he has made contact with Hann. Despite the progress, Daniel struggles with anxiety over Eden’s safety, masking his fear as they await further updates. The scene underscores the high stakes of their mission, with June and Daniel balancing deception, trust, and personal stakes in their fight against Hann.

As Daniel gazes at the chaotic city, he reflects on the broader implications of their actions. The chapter closes with a somber realization: their revolution involves hidden agendas and forced change, mirroring June’s covert tactics. The line “A revolution within a revolution” encapsulates the theme of layered conflicts, leaving Daniel to question whether true normalcy can ever be restored amid such upheaval.

Chapter 37: os Angeles: Eden 5

The chapter "Los Angeles: Eden 5" follows the tense encounter between Pressa, the narrator, and Dominic Hann, a ruthless leader in Ross City. Inside his office, Pressa administers a medicinal concoction to Hann, who watches her with suspicion while his armed guards stand ready outside. The narrator observes Pressa's calm demeanor as she explains the treatment, aware that any misstep could lead to violence. Hann probes Pressa about her family's history in the Undercity, testing her loyalty, but allows her to proceed, hinting at his desperate hope for a cure.

Hann reveals his plan to hijack the city's Leveling system, aiming to centralize control under his authority. The narrator feigns shock at the technical complexity, urging Hann to let them inspect the system immediately. Hann, however, remains distrustful and asserts his dominance by abruptly grabbing Pressa's wrist, a silent threat underscoring his lethal reputation. Pressa drinks from the same concoction to prove its safety, though the narrator worries about unintended effects. Hann, momentarily appeased, agrees to show them the system that night but demands results by morning.

After leaving Hann's office, Pressa and the narrator retreat to a guarded room where she takes an antidote, revealing she had anticipated Hann's demand. The narrator admires her foresight and composure, though her mention of her late father's apothecary hints at unresolved grief. They strategize to exploit Hann's expected illness, buying time to sabotage his plans. A fleeting moment of intimacy arises when Pressa nearly kisses the narrator, but she quickly deflects with a lighthearted memory of their past.

The chapter culminates in a mix of tension and cautious optimism. Pressa's resourcefulness and the narrator's technical skills position them to outmaneuver Hann, but the stakes remain perilously high. Their shared history and unspoken feelings add emotional depth to their mission, underscoring the personal risks they face. The

narrative balances urgency with quiet camaraderie, leaving the reader anticipating their next move in this high-stakes confrontation.

Chapter 38: os Angeles: Daniel 5

The chapter opens with Daniel experiencing a fragmented and unsettling dream, blending surreal imagery with painful memories from his past. He recalls a childhood moment when, injured and starving, he returned to his mother's house after a year on the streets. Bleeding from a knife wound, he hesitates to reveal himself to his family, fearing the Republic's retaliation. When his brother John finally discovers him, the emotional reunion is cut short by Daniel's realization that this memory is distorted—John is dead, and the dream shifts to a vision of his younger brother Eden dying from a chest wound.

Daniel's dream reflects his deep-seated guilt and trauma, particularly his fear of failing to protect Eden. The vivid imagery of Eden's lifeless body haunts him, symbolizing his unresolved anxiety about his brother's safety. The dream's abrupt end jolts him awake, where June comforts him. Her presence grounds him, but his panic lingers, exacerbated by the absence of communication from Eden, who is on a dangerous mission infiltrating Hann's circle.

The tension escalates as June informs Daniel that Eden's location signal has disappeared, leaving them with ominous possibilities. The lack of contact suggests Eden may have removed the tracker for safety, the drone may have failed, or—most alarmingly—Hann may have discovered and neutralized it. Daniel's fear for Eden's life intensifies, mirroring the nightmare he just endured, as the stakes of their mission become starkly clear.

The chapter masterfully intertwines Daniel's psychological turmoil with the unfolding crisis, highlighting his vulnerability and unwavering concern for Eden. The dream sequence serves as a metaphor for his relentless dread of loss, while the real-time threat to Eden's life amplifies the urgency of their situation. The unresolved ending leaves readers anticipating the next developments, underscoring the precariousness of

their mission and Daniel’s emotional fragility.

Chapter 39: os Angeles: Eden 6

The chapter "Los Angeles: Eden 6" follows Eden and Pressa as they navigate a high-stakes escape through a guarded facility. After being led to a room by a guard, they quickly overpower him, showcasing Eden’s combat skills learned from his brother, an AIS agent. With no time to spare, they lock the guard inside and stealthily make their way to the upper levels of the building, where Hann’s construction site is located. The tension mounts as they move through shadowy corridors, avoiding detection while heading toward their goal—the control platform.

Upon reaching the construction site, Eden and Pressa crouch in the shadows, observing two guards patrolling the area. To bypass them, Eden devises a risky plan to slide down the railing using their jackets as makeshift ropes. Despite Pressa’s initial hesitation, they both execute the maneuver quietly, though a slight noise alerts one of the guards. The pair narrowly escape by darting through the maze of halls, their hearts pounding as the guard briefly investigates before retreating. The close call heightens the urgency of their mission.

Eden and Pressa finally reach the control platform, where Eden activates the system using a chip hidden in his ankle. As he prepares to upload critical data, Pressa warns him of Hann’s sudden appearance. Hann, seemingly unaffected by the fever Eden expected, stands behind them with a faint smile, revealing he anticipated their arrival. The chapter ends on a cliffhanger, leaving Eden and Pressa facing an unexpected confrontation with their formidable adversary.

The chapter masterfully blends action and suspense, highlighting Eden’s resourcefulness and the duo’s desperation to outmaneuver Hann. The detailed descriptions of their stealthy movements and close calls create a palpable sense of danger. Hann’s unexpected appearance underscores the unpredictability of their mission, setting the stage for a tense showdown in the next chapter.

Chapter 40: os Angeles: Daniel 6

Daniel, known as "Day," rushes out of a building into the cold night of Los Angeles, determined to investigate why his brother Eden failed to send a scheduled message. June, his companion, catches up and urges caution, arguing that Eden might simply be delayed or that rushing in could jeopardize their plan. Daniel, however, fears Eden is in danger and insists on acting immediately, convinced that their enemy, Dominic Hann, will exploit any delay. Despite June’s protests, he persuades her to let him go alone, promising to return safely, and they share a brief, tender moment before he departs.

Alone in the city’s outskirts, Daniel relies on his instincts and a tracker June provided to navigate the unfamiliar terrain. With the city’s systems offline, he memorizes Eden’s last known location and moves stealthily, avoiding potential guards. He spots movement in a building and uses a smoke bomb to distract Hann’s men, creating an opportunity to infiltrate a large, fortified factory where Eden might be held. The tension builds as Daniel scales the building, narrowly avoiding detection by guards returning to their posts.

Inside the factory, Daniel discovers a high-tech control room filled with blinking computers and a central platform emitting holographic nodes. His suspicions are confirmed when he spots Eden and Pressa standing with Hann, surrounded by guards. The scene suggests they’ve been captured, validating Daniel’s fears. The chapter ends on a cliffhanger as Daniel, hidden in the shadows, realizes the dire situation and prepares to intervene, though the odds are heavily stacked against him.

The chapter highlights Daniel’s relentless loyalty to his brother and his willingness to risk everything, even as June advocates for caution. Their emotional exchange underscores the stakes—not just for Eden’s safety, but for the future Daniel and June might share. The tension between urgency and strategy drives the narrative, culminating in a high-stakes confrontation with Hann. The vivid descriptions of the

city’s atmosphere and Daniel’s tactical maneuvers immerse the reader in the suspenseful, action-packed scene.

Chapter 41: os Angeles: Eden 7

The chapter opens with a tense confrontation as Pressa is shot in the shoulder by Hann, who remains unmoved by her pain. The protagonist steps in to protect her, attempting to distract Hann by claiming responsibility for the conflict. Hann, however, continues to threaten Pressa, shifting his aim to her leg and later her head. The protagonist pleads for her life, even offering himself as ransom, but Hann dismisses the appeal, revealing his intent to exploit the protagonist regardless. A desperate mention of Hann’s deceased family sparks his anger, redirecting his focus—and gun—toward the protagonist.

As adrenaline surges, the protagonist spots Daniel, his brother, hidden in the shadows near the building’s windows. Seizing the moment, he lunges at Hann, disarming him and holding him at gunpoint. The protagonist orders Hann’s guards to back away, but Hann retaliates with a swift strike, reclaiming control. In the chaos, the protagonist uploads data that corrupts Hann’s system, resetting the city’s original network. This momentary advantage allows him to grab Pressa and flee, with Hann’s enraged shouts echoing behind them.

The pair navigate through the building as guards pursue them, bullets whizzing past. Suddenly, fire retardant misters activate, filling the space with thick fog—likely Daniel’s doing. Amid the confusion, Pressa spots an emergency exit, and they dash toward it, guided by touch. The protagonist fights panic, haunted by memories of a past attack. Just as the guards close in, Daniel emerges from the mist, confirming reinforcements are on the way. He helps Pressa up, but gunfire forces them to take cover again.

Daniel devises a plan to lead the guards away, directing the protagonist and Pressa toward a metal walkway. Recalling a past climb, the protagonist follows Daniel’s lead, scaling computer shelves to reach higher ground. Pressa prepares to sprint for the exit

as Daniel and the protagonist draw the guards’ attention. The chapter ends mid-action, with the protagonist gripping a stair railing, poised to escape as the confrontation escalates. The siblings’ teamwork and quick thinking highlight their resilience against overwhelming odds.

Chapter 42: os Angeles: Daniel 7

The chapter opens with Daniel reflecting on Dominic Hann's failed attempt to destroy Ross City, noting that while Hann survived his injuries, his reign of terror is over. Daniel and his brother Eden are recovering in the hospital, observing the city’s Level system being restored—yet with subtle changes Eden secretly implemented. Daniel grapples with guilt over his past detachment from the Undercity’s struggles, realizing Eden had been right all along. His scars serve as reminders of a life he tried to leave behind, but he now understands that ignoring his past is not the solution.

June visits Daniel before her return to the Republic, and their conversation reveals a newfound ease and affection between them. They discuss Eden’s alterations to the Level system, which will allow Undercity residents to protest and share resources without punishment. Though uncertain whether the government will accept these changes, Daniel prepares to face the AIS and defend their actions. June offers her support, and their emotional exchange underscores their deepening bond, with Daniel admitting his true home is wherever June is.

The scene shifts to Daniel and Eden standing before the AIS and President Ikari, who interrogates them about their unauthorized modifications to the Level system. Eden takes responsibility, but Daniel boldly asserts that their changes were necessary to force the government to listen to its people. The tense atmosphere mirrors the political struggles June once faced in the Republic, highlighting the difficulty of challenging oppressive systems. Director Min’s silent support hints at potential allies within the government, but the outcome remains uncertain.

The chapter concludes with Daniel’s unfinished defense, emphasizing the dangers of a society where dissent is punished. His words echo Eden’s earlier arguments, reinforcing the theme of systemic injustice and the need for change. The brothers’ calm defiance contrasts with the officials’ discomfort, suggesting a turning point in

Ross City’s rigid hierarchy. The unresolved tension leaves readers anticipating the consequences of their rebellion and the future of their fight for equality.

Chapter 43: os Angeles: Eden 8

The chapter begins with the resolution of the protagonists' legal troubles in Antarctica. Eden and Daniel face consequences for insubordination, resulting in their Levels being halved, but they avoid prison time thanks to a presidential pardon. They are allowed to return to the Republic, where Eden is set to begin an internship at Batalla Hall. The chapter hints at the end of their Antarctic journey, with Eden reflecting on the closure of this chapter of their lives.

A month later, Eden visits the Undercity in Ross City to meet Pressa, who has recovered from a shoulder injury. The Undercity shows signs of change, with task forces addressing civilian grievances and protesters no longer penalized for speaking out. Pressa’s father’s shop is being repaired, symbolizing hope amid loss. Eden gifts Pressa a framed arrangement of dried flowers, a heartfelt gesture that underscores their deepening connection. The scene captures a mix of melancholy and optimism as Pressa grapples with her father’s death but finds purpose in preserving his legacy.

The conversation shifts to Pressa’s future, revealing her uncertainty about staying in the Undercity. Though she has opportunities like university scholarships, she feels restless and out of place. Eden, sensing her turmoil, impulsively invites her to join him in Los Angeles. His offer ignites a spark in Pressa, who sees it as the adventure she’s longed for. Their emotional exchange culminates in a spontaneous kiss, marking a turning point in their relationship.

The chapter closes with a sense of new beginnings. Pressa’s acceptance of Eden’s proposal symbolizes her readiness to leave the Undercity and embrace a future filled with possibilities. Their laughter and embrace convey warmth and mutual affection, contrasting with the earlier tension of parting. The scene leaves readers with a hopeful note, suggesting that their journey together is far from over.

Chapter 44: os Angeles: Daniel 8

Daniel reflects on his transformed life in Los Angeles, no longer a fugitive but a free man, as he walks through the rain-slicked streets toward June’s apartment. He notes the gradual societal changes in the Republic and Antarctica, inspired by his brother Eden’s reforms, which have brought more fairness to the Undercity. Despite progress, Daniel feels a mix of nostalgia and nervousness, carrying a small box in his pocket—a symbol of his unresolved emotions. His thoughts drift to his rekindled relationship with June, their quiet dates, and shared conversations about rebuilding the Republic and Eden’s adaptation to life back home.

As Daniel arrives at June’s door, his anxiety peaks, fearing he might be rushing their relationship. June greets him warmly, her casual elegance leaving him awestruck. Their playful banter eases his tension as they head out into the night, with Daniel leading her toward a surprise. June’s curiosity grows as he evades her questions about their destination, a café near the train station where they first reunited months earlier. The station holds deep significance for Daniel, evoking memories of their accidental reunion and the emotional weight of their shared past.

Daniel orchestrates a breathtaking surprise, illuminating the train station with thousands of twinkling lights, guiding June toward a secluded park adorned with candles, glass orbs, and roses. The setting mirrors a fairy tale, and June is visibly moved, her eyes reflecting wonder and affection. Daniel’s nervousness lingers as he prepares to reveal his feelings, recalling the moment they first reconnected. The ambiance underscores the depth of his emotions, blending nostalgia with the hope of a shared future.

In the park’s center, Daniel confesses his love, describing how their reunion at the train station remains one of his most cherished memories. June’s reaction is a mix of anticipation and vulnerability, her whispered acknowledgment deepening the moment.

Daniel’s shy smile and trembling voice reveal his sincerity, leaving the chapter on a poignant note of unresolved tension and heartfelt emotion. The scene captures the fragility and beauty of their relationship, poised on the brink of a significant revelation.