**Prologue**

(Needs to be shrunk)

“Many years ago, when humans relied on their own flesh for protection, the gods of our world casted powerful beasts upon our lands; magical creatures known only as the *Bloodless*, that could take the onslaught of entire armies of men without ever seeming to bleed. The beasts began attacking our human settlements, and despite humanity banding together, our race could barely survive the onslaught of these horrors. It seemed like our judgment was upon us, until one human chose to act.

“She was a rogue from our society, who thrived upon stealing from the wealthy and sharing her spoils with the misfortunate, to whom she connected with. The only name she was ever called was “Thorn”. Despite her criminal beginnings, however, this unlikely answer to prayer would soon change the fate of all of humanity for years to come. After witnessing the damage that the Bloodless had done to her town, it was said that she and her most trusted allies went up to the heavens, the home of the gods, and stole blood from the very gods themselves. Upon taking and consuming such godly mana, the bodies of Thorn and her allies were morphed and changed, turning their small frames into powerful fighters that could control the very elements of nature themselves!

“They returned to their village and challenged the monsters that threatened their lands, and humanity’s new heroes began to win. One by one, their village and other villages were cleared of the bloodless, and Thorn was hailed as a protector of their lands. The age of these blood users had begun.”

*BOOM*

\*Scene cuts to pixelated Girl on a rooftop, reading a book in the light of the sunset.\*

“ !!...... Oh. The gates are closing. It’s almost time.”

\*Girl gets up, sighs, and looks out into the city\* “Strange. A mere thief really became such a great figure in her world?“

“Maybe I’ll be a great and respected thief, too!”

\*She leaps off of the rooftop, and our tale begins.\*

\*\*later scene\*\*

\*A guard is patrolling a hallway, until a figure drops right in front of him. He jumps and whips out his bow, until he sees that it’s a small girl.\*

Guard: “Oh.. Kid, you gave me a heart attack! Are you alright? Where are your parents? What’s your name…?

\*Then he sees the blade in the girl’s hand, as the girl gives him a smirk.\*

Girl: “... You may call me ‘Thorn.’”

\*Guard’s vision goes black\*

Thorn lands on a nearby rooftop, traveling to the storehouse.

“Travis said that the Wielders were recieving a valuable shipment of cargo from the capital city tonight. I wonder just how valuable it really is!”

(Sees the Anti-user propaganda “Anti-User combat training: J is for Jab”)

“... Pathetic Wielder Filth.”

* Dialogue between guards, where Thorn reveals how her power works.

(Guard sees her)

Guard: “It’s a User!”

Thorn: “Curses!”

Guard: “Monster! Stand and Fight!”

Thorn: “Monster..? Hehe.”

\*Thorn beats them up.\*

Thorn: “Next time, think twice before challenging a ‘Monster’.”

Thorn goes into the Train Car, but nothing is here but piles of covered junk.

Thorn: “What? Where’s the loot! There’s nothing in here…”

Something glows in the back, and as it rises into the air, Thorn sees a massive shadow loom over her.

Thorn: “W-What the [rats/Bloodless] is that?!”

Fight ensues. Thorn fights what appears to be a massive automaton, larger than any small Wielder automaton she’s seen. It towers over Thorn with massive hands that could grab Thorn in one grip. What's more, strange, blue veins snaked all over the robot like vines, glowing with a strange, blue energy. All of the veins hooked up to a strange orb in the monster's chest that glowed even stronger with power. That must've been its weak-spot, if the thing even had one.

Thorn gripped her blades with a hard smile. Terrifying and lumpy or not, she wasn't going to let this thing hurt her!

After the fight.

Thorn (kneeling): \*Huff\* \*Huff\*”.. The Mighty Thorn.. \*huff\* always prevails!”

\*Huff\* \*Huff\* "But.. what even is this.. thing? Is it.. really the cargo that this train was sending over? What is the capital doing with things like this?!”

Thorn gets up, and sees the glowing orb that was lodged in the sentinel’s chest laying on the floor.

Thorn: “And what’s this?” \*Picks it up\*

The orb glows like a gemstone in Thorn’s hand. It seemed to have some kind of blue liquid inside of it. The orb had a strange feeling of… strength, like it made Thorn feel powerful holding it in her hand.

Thorn: “Hm. I wonder what your little story is, too.”

Guard (outside): "You there! Open up the car doors!”

Thorn: “Rats! Time to go!.”

Outside the base, Rain is starting to drizzle. Thorn jumps into an alleyway, and smirks at the guards who’ve already lost her.

"Hah! Another successful plunder! Well, sort of.. It would be better if the rumor wasn't a dry lead!"

She walks toward the alley exit, when she sees a kid huddling underneath the roof of an apartment window, shivering and hiding from the rain. The kid was dirty, and wore scrap clothing that could only come from a cheap orphanage; the kind Thorn knew all too well about.

Thorn was about to walk away, when after a pause, she let out a sigh, and walked back toward the kid.

Thorn: “Hey.” drops a bag of coins by the kid’s feet.

Kid: \*Looks up, nervous at the stranger.\*

Thorn: “Go ahead and keep it. Scavengers like us need to stick together, right?” Thorn said with a smirk.

Kid: \*Inched away, face filling with fear.\*

Thorn: “Relax. I'm not as dangerous as I look.”

\*The kid doesn't move, more fear fills his eyes.\*

Thorn \*Starts to frown\*: “.. What’s wrong, kid? I’m not going to hurt you. Just take the-!”

Thorn’s sentence was interrupted when a flash of lightning revealed the silhouette of a figure waiting to stab her from behind.

Thorn’s image phased away from the attack of the looming figure to reappear on the other side of them, knife in hand. She wasn’t afraid, but how did this fellow almost get the jump on her? Her attacker stood up straight, seeming unsurprised by Thorn’s teleport technique. He was a tall man, with brown hair sticking up like a crown on his head, and a long blue coat with silver linings that Thorn didn’t recognize. The man could pass as a nobleman if not for the short blade reaching out from under his coat sleeve, or the military-looking insignia on his shoulder.

???: “Hm. A teleporting ability; One I haven’t seen before.” turns to face Thorn, kid crawling away behind him. “But either way, you won’t be a threat much longer.”

Thorn looks at the competition with a haughty face. She was still on edge, but she wasn’t about to reveal it. Whoever this joker was, he’ll be minced meat compared to that massive Automaton. “Oh, and you're going to try and fight me?" Thorn mocked. "Ha! let’s see you-”

Before Thorn finished, the figure was right in her face, blade ready to impale her. She barely dodged, but coins flew everywhere as her looting bag was slashed clean open. Before she could react, though, her attacker was already on top of her again, continually slashing and pushing her away from her hard-earned goods.

“You Bloodrat!” Thorn shouted as she seemingly teleported away to a building window before hopping from wall to wall to get to the top. Her pursuer, however, Wasn’t going to lose her that easily.

Thorn cursed to herself as she ran along the buildings. That gold took a week of planning to acquire, that little-

A flash of blue appeared on her left, and she had barely tucked and rolled out of range before her attacker slashed at her again. Battle continues on the rooftops.

Eventually, Thorn gets a lucky hit in, and kicks her assailant off of a high building toward his demise.

Thorn: \*Woof!\* ..Who was that guy? He was strong!

Thorn looks back at how far the two traveled during their brawl. Maybe she could still go back and collect the coins she had dropped back at that alley, if no one had stolen–

Her thoughts were interrupted by an arm grabbing the front of her shirt and yanking her down the buildingside. She tried resisting, but found herself falling down below her attacker again before hitting something hard that knocked the breath out of her. She then slammed into the ground, the street water splashing all around her as she landed.

Her foe dropped down to the street to meet her. “Did you really think I would die after a small fall like that?” He said as he started walking toward Thorn. “Despite the power that you bloodrats can hold, you’re nothing compared to the strength of us Wielders.”

Thorn gritted her teeth. What should she do? She could barely get onto her knees, let alone run, but if she didn’t, she was finished. What should she do? What can she do?!

the player gets a prompt on what button to press, and Thorn feels the liquid seeping from the now cracked orb.

Thorn feels a power flow to her from the orb she was holding. She felt her breathing relax, and her muscles stopped aching. (Show health increase?

Thorn: “Wow. What? What power is this? I can feel my muscles relaxing..”

[STOPPED HERE]

//Thorn uses the orb’s power to escape. Figure is ticked.

Thorn leaves the area.

Thorn: “W-what is this liquid? Could it be.. No way! Could it be the blood of the gods itself!

//Thorn returns home, to Cutlas tending to a fire and having some grub going. He asks Thorn where she’s been, and she tries to brush things off as if she was just reading all day. Cutlas points at her slashed bag, and Thorn just

//Thorn shows Cutlas the vial, but Cutlas tells her to throw it away. “Where did you get that?!” “That stuff is evil. Get it away from you!”

//Cutlas wants nothing to do with it and won’t talk about it, but Thorn is now curious about what this strange liquid is, and why it gave her such power. She would definitely put more of it into good use. She also considers harvesting more to be able to protect herself.

**CH 1: The Storehouse (CHECK)**

**Storybook:** After banishing the beasts from their lands, Thorn and her allies were praised as heroes. They became protectors, rulers, and pillars of hope for their people. They were idolized and praised for their courageous feats, and the people clung to them for protection from the outside threats. With their newfound powers, no man or creature dared to threaten Thorn or her comrades’ towns, and their towns lived in peace

"But with their power over others, were they now any different from the very monsters they helped to destroy?”

**Training**: The morning of, Cutlas insists that the two train to make sure Thorn has understood everything. (This will also be an opportunity for the player to make sure they know everything about the player controls).

“Oh, c’mon! Training is stupid! I know everything there is to know already! Let’s just go!” Thorn complained.

“Oh, is that right?” Cutlas responded calmly with a hint of sarcasm. “Well, tell you what: If you can get past me and get to the door, we’ll skip training today.”

“..Wait, really?” Thorn was shocked at the proposal. Cutlas was usually so strict about training, but would he really skip it if she could just get around him?

Cutlas couldn’t help a grin crawling along his face.

After a good half-hour of fighting, Thorn was once again pinned to the ground.

“Ow! Get off me, you big bear!”

“ \*yawn\* Oh, this big bear feels like he could take a nap,” Cutlas mocked, as he dropped himself onto Thorn’s back.

“Gggrrrh!” The wind was knocked out of Thorn, but she wasn’t about to cry out and give Cutlas the satisfaction he wanted.

“You still think we don’t need training?” Cutlas asked her with a smirk.

Thorn only gritted her teeth, avoiding Cutlas’s gaze.

“There will always be someone who is stronger than us, Thorn. We train so that we can beat them. Or do you want your loot bag to be slashed in a fight again?”

Thorn bit her lip at the remark, thinking about last night with the blue figure. She didn’t even tell Cutlas about him, but he could tell by the bag that she had been in a tough fight. What hurt more what that Cutlas’s words rang true. She needed to become stronger!

Her thoughts were interrupted as the behemoth got off of her back and extended a hand toward her. “So, are you ready to train, or are you going to stay on the ground eating dirt?”

Thorn gritted her teeth at the remard. She grabbed Cutlas’s arm and histed herself back on her feet. She was *never* going to stay on the ground.

“That’s more like it,” Cutlas muttered.

After going through some loops, Cutlas called the training to an abrupt stop.

“Alright, that’s enough for today. About time to get moving.”

“Wait, you’re stopping it now? Don’t we usually go for a lot longer than this?” Thorn asked, confused.

“Oh, wait, do we? I can’t seem to remember..” Cutlas asked in fake ignorance, to which Thorn picked up on quickly.

“... Wait, no. I must be wrong. You said we would end early,” Thorn quickly rebutted.

“OOOkay, that’s what I thought,” Cutlas smirked. “Now, let’s go!”

Thorn and Cutlas raid a city warehouse for supplies. (Run into the sentinel.) This is more of a slice-of-life for them, showing how their lives normally go.

Cutlas: Remember, Thorn: Destroy anything that looks important, take the supplies that we need, don’t sound any alarms, and DON’T pick-pocket the guards!

Thorn: Ah, what?! But Cutlas, they’re thugs! Who cares if their pocket-bag goes missing?”

Cutlas: “We’re not like that, Thorn. We’re better than that. Understand?”

Thorn and Cutlas work together to raid a warehouse for needed supplies, such as food and weaponry. (Thorn even asks Cutlas why he allows this but not pick-pocketing. Why are they destroying things that look important? Cutlas only responds with “Because this city has changed. I can’t trust the leaders in charge anymore.” Thorn raises an eyebrow, but Cutlas doesn’t say another word.

Near the end of their plunder, the two split up (thorn tries to get away from him so that she can pick-pocket her foes, and does so by taking an underwater route in order to “save time” even though Cutlas can’t swim. So, he takes a different way. Eventually, Thorn finds herself in a large room, looking for a light switch, and upon switching it on, finds herself immersed among dozens of Weaponized Automatons. Thorn jumps at first, then realizes that they’re all deactivated. She takes a closer look, discovering that the Automatons are a class called “sentinel”, and upon touching the core on one’s chest, it activates! Thorn jumps back, as the automaton begins to attack. At one point, Cutlas comes to the room and joins the fight.

The two fight the sentinel (which can swim underwater and uses harpoons), and upon defeating it, Cutlas realizes that the commotion will soon start an alarm, and that they have to go. Thorn looks at a dislodged harpoon on the ground, gets excited, and stows it away before following Cutlas.

On their way home, Cutlas and Thorn run to an old building before catching their breath. Cutlas glances at the building for a moment.. “Say, Thorn. Look at this. It’s an old orphanage.” Thorn remains silent. “Do you remember the ol’ times we had there?” Cutlas asks. “No,” Thorn coldly replies. “..We need to keep moving.”

Thorn starts to run ahead, but Cutlas looks at the building one last time. “.. Hard to believe that it was 8 years ago..” After a moment, he follows Thorn again.

**CH 2: The Mysterious User (CHECK)**

Thorn: “At long last!”

Thorn uses the harpoon hook she stole from the sentinel to make a makeshift grappling hook, and goes to a part of town with large skyscrapers to test it, but then sees a figure flying with an extraordinary power. Could it be…?

* Thorn tells Cutlas that she’s going to get some air, and goes off to some high towers to experiment with her grappling hook. She climbs some high buildings to the tallest place she can reach, and enjoys the sunset view for a moment.
* Then, before she can start plundering the buildings around her, out of nowhere, she sees.. What appears to be a cloud gliding from one building top to another. The cloud disperses, and reveals a person using magic. Thorn wonders if it’s some trick, but why would someone just be using their magic randomly like this, and in secret?! Thorn goes to check it out.
* When Thorn gets close enough to the figure, the figure sees them, and runs away before Thorn can talk to them. Thorn shouts for them to wait up, and she pursues them.
* Eventually, the user girl is cornered and Thorn catches up with her. Thorn tries to assure her that she’s just like her, and that she can use magic as well. Upon realizing this, the user goes from defensive to uncomfortably confident. Immediately, she pulls out an amulet of some kind, activates it, and two sentinels appear and pull up a barrier around the two users. Thorn realizes that it’s a trap, and the user girl announces that she’s was looking for a User roaming around, and that she was lucky that her prey had so willingly followed her here. Thorn realizes her folly, and gets ticked toward the so-called user-Hunter, and pulls out her blades to fight her way out.
* Boss fight: The user hunter uses their power over the wind to fly around (comparable to the Autumn Dance ability Ocran has, that creates a tornado around her with leaves, allowing her to levitate, jump higher, and carry heavy objects in her wind current), and Thorn uses her grappling hook to reach higher places and attack the girl.
* Fight Conclusion: Thorn and the user-mimic fight, and at one point, Thorn breaks the amulet she was wearing on her chest, and her powers over the wind drain away. The sentinels start to malfunction as their control amulet is destroyed, and they deactivate.

Thorn turns toward the fake user. “You pretend to be a User.. to capture real ones?! Who do you think you are?!”

The girl smiles. “There’s no crime in hunting a monster. After all, your kind can lift a finger and bend everyone around you under your control. I’m just protecting my own from bloodrats like you.”

Thorn raises her blade, when she hears some commotion. It looks like the city guards are coming to see what the ruckus is. Thorn cursed under her breath, and turned back to the fake user. “If we meet again, I’ll show you what a true monster can do!”

Back at home base, Thorn walks by Cutlas, who’s tending to the fire. “Well, hello Miss Adventurer. How was your night…?”

Thorn stayed silent, which gave Cutlas all the information he needed. “Ah. ..Not the best night, I see.”

“Cutlas..” Thorn spoke quietly, but never broke her gaze from the ground. “.. What are the odds of finding another User like me in town?”

“Hm..” Cutlas thought for a moment. “.. Well, to put it into comparison, you’re the only User I’ve ever met in 6 years in this city.” Cutlas looked up, but saw that this wasn’t the answer Thorn needed to hear. “.. However, they’ll be more likely to show themselves to you rather than to a Wielder like me.”

Thorn nodded, and kept walking upstairs.

“Do you want to talk about it?” Cutlas shouted after her, but the silence that followed gave him his answer. He sighed as he turned back to the fire and started turning over the embers again. “.. I can’t understand what it’s like to be your shoes, Thorn. I’m sorry that you’re going through this.”

Meanwhile, up in her room, Thorn curled up onto her bed, under the covers, and refused to move. As she tried to shut her eyes, the thoughts echoing in her head poured out down her cheeks. *Why. Why.. Why am I so alone!*

**CH 3: The Dealer and the Diva (CHECK)**

Thorn takes on a task from a dealer in exchange for weapons, but it seems like she’s not the only one on the scene.

Thorn goes on her own to a weapon dealer’s facility. Upon there, she sneaks in and tries to attack an unsuspecting slender figure, but she accidentally bumps something, and the figure shoots at her hiding place. She fights back, but the figure fights with unique bows and strange glyphs that briefly prevent her from using her illusion. After the fight comes to a standstill, the figure starts to laugh. “Well, you’re just as lively as ever, Thorn!

The two put away their weapons with smirks on their faces, and Travis makes a remark that eventually he’ll figure out how her teleportation works as Cutlas comes into the scene. Thorn comments about the bows he has, and Travis hides them away. “You won’t be stealing them, that’s for sure! They’re my latest invention, though I’ll only be keeping them for myself. Besides, I have better things to show you.”

“Before we get to that,” Cutlas grabs Travis’s collar from behind to stop him in his tracks. “I need to ask, what were you thinking; feeding Thorn leads about ‘valuable treasures coming in from the capital’?”

Travis grew quiet while Thorn sorted through his wares, secretly eavesdropping. “W-well,” Travis stuttered. “I did tell you about the shipment, and I thought you two were on the same page.”

“She nearly **died** the night of that shipment, and something tells me you didn’t think to tell Thorn about how there was a giant user-killing machine waiting for her.”

“How was I supposed to know about it?” Travis responded nonchalantly, which seemed to suggest he had some idea about the contents of that shipment anyway. “What was coming in was something valuable that was not going to end up in the right hands. Cutlas, we both have quarrels with the Wielder society we live in,” Travis placed his hand on Cutlas’s shoulder, trying to ease the frustration fuming out of every breath his friend took. “The people here are single-minded about their feelings for users. If wealth or machinery keeps feeding the mentality our town–no, our nation holds, then Users won’t be safe anywhere, especially Thorn.”

After a moment, Thorn’s bratty attitude broke the silence. “Travis! Is this really all you have?!”

Travis smiled at the remark from the young amateur, and after a moment, he broke away from Cutlas’s cold glare and moved toward Thorn to explain the new weapons, the boomerangs. “They may seem simple, but they’re good for stunning an enemy, or hitting them from behind. They’re also useful for hitting things that you just can’t reach; the perfect weapon for one who wants to turn their enemies’ strength into their weakness.” He turned back to Cutlas. “As for you, Cutlas, I fixed up your shield as you requested, and here’s some extra ammunition.” Travis said as he handed him a quiver and his shield, good as new.

“Oh, c’mon Travis! Where’s your extra loot! You know we can handle it!” Thorn said, a little annoyed at Cutlas for being a coward about fighting this society. She was strong, and he knew it. She wasn’t the pathetic girl she once was 8 years ago?

“Well, I *do* have some nicer items here..” Travis said, as he toyed around with his pocket watch, until Cutlas placed his hand on his shoulders with a look that even gave Thorn cold feet. “..uh, but.. I’ll save those for the clients I have who are more fit to fight with them.” Travis looks back at Cutlas, who mouths to him a message.

*Thank you.*

“Thorn, let’s go!” Cutlas shouts to Thorn.

Thorn is irritated, and starts walking past Travis, when he waves to her. “See you soon, Teleporter.” He says with a wink, while pointing to his stopwatch. Thorn’s eyes widen, and she rushes after Cutlas.

Version 2

Travis offers Thorn and Cutlas some nicer weapons, but when Cutlas asks what the catch is, Travis lets on that business has been dropping since the new toys from the capital have been showing up. The competition is too much for his small business, and he wants them to prove how inferior the product of his competition is. He’ll offer the tools to them if they’ll bring him 5 sentinel cores as proof of them destroying the “new toys” that are shipped into the richer parts of town. Feeling that the city is getting too dangerous for Thorn to be safe anymore, she’s all for the idea, but Cutlas straight-up refuses. “We’re not like that, Travis. We’re not thugs who will just stir up trouble for something shiny.” Travis tries to have him reconsider, but Cutlas hands him back the nice weaponry that Travis offered him, and he and Thorn leave, for which Thorn is ticked.

* Later, Thorn returns to take Travis up on his offer in exchange for the weapons, and she goes to the rich neighborhood to stir up trouble.
* Thorn is making great progress on the mission, but then finds signs that she’s not the only person on the job. Signs of someone short-circuiting security systems are everywhere, which makes Thorn worried.

Thorn is about to enter the weapons storage that Travis had talked about, where the Sentinels are being held.

“That’s as far as you go!”

A young girl in a guard’s outfit walks out from the building and stands in Thorn’s way.

Thorn:.. “And you are?”

???: I’m the one who’s going to stop you! You go about using your power to steal and destroy whatever you can, and you’ve done enough!

Thorn: Look kid, you clearly don’t have the experience or skill to fight against someone like me. Just step aside, and you won’t get hurt.

???: Skill? Oh don’t worry. **I’ll** show you skill, and you’re not hurting anyone else with your power! ... (and I’m not that much younger than you..).

Thorn:.. Heh. Fine. Let's see you try and stop me!

Thorn leaves her afterimage behind and goes to knock out the girl, until the girl swung at Thorn when she got close.

Thorn: W-What?

???: Your tricks won’t fool me!

* Thorn jumps back and realizes the girl sees her. She also notices the amulets on the girl’s hip, and assumes that she’s another fake user. The fake user points her baton at Thorn, and tells her that she’s done enough to torment this city, and that she’ll put a stop to her.
* At the end of the fight, the girl’s amulets break. Thorn mocks the fake user, and attempts another attack, only to be blocked again by the girl’s magic. Thorn waits a moment, and realizes that the girl is using her own magic.

After the fight.

Thorn: Give up. You’ve lost. \*ries to walk past\*

???, crouching on the ground: … No! \*Uses her EM shield.\*

Thorn jumps back. “What?! But your amulets! Your magic is gone… you

…

Thorn: .. No way.. Are you..

???: I’m doing everything I can to prove that users aren’t monsters; that Users are good people capable of heroic things, and you’ve been going around destroying everything that I’ve worked for!

Thorn: Wait, I, I thought that you were just another wielder thug. I-

???: Get out. You’ve done enough harm tonight.

Thorn: I.. I didn’t-

???: LEAVE!

After a small pause, Thorn turns and goes the other way.

* The girl points her batons toward Thorn. “I can’t stand for the actions you have taken any longer. You go around, hurting people and stealing their wares. I have been working to prove that users are not the monsters here, but your actions have proven otherwise. Now, if you have any dignity left, leave! Leave and don’t hurt these people anymore.”
* Thorn tries to approach the girl some more, but the girl just shouts at her to leave again, so eventually Thorn walks away.

Thorn makes it home, thinking about the encounter, to find that Cutlas is in a panic. He abruptly asks Thorn where she’s been, and Thorn tells him that She’s been by herself for a bit. Cutlas asks about any guards who might have seen her, but she tells him that nothing happened. Cutlas takes a moment to process, then tells Thorn that he heard that the Capital city is sending in some kind of reinforcements to strengthen the town, and he fears that it might have something to do with him and Thorn’s plunder runs. He tells Thorn that they need to investigate what kind of force is coming into town, or they might be in grave danger.

**CH 4: The Ambassador**

Cutlas is on edge when a new face arrives in town, and asks Thorn to investigate.

Do I need a new reason for Cutlas and Thorn to investigate the place. Perhaps they just need to know what the higher-ups are up to. Perhaps Cutlas hears of activity of increased security and the mobilization of armed forces, and he has Thorn go with him to investigate.

The two go to the capital building to investigate the new activity with the mobilization of more Sentinels, and to find out what the town leaders are up to. Upon arriving at the building, The two find that guards are everywhere, and that fighting their way in isn’t an option. Cutlas helps Thorn gain entryway into a ventilation system, where she continues on her own.

Thorn eventually finds the governor working in his office, who’s talking with an unknown figure; an older goon who’s wearing a coat similar to the assailant in blue from earlier, but in black. The governor of the town is frustrated with him and demands that he stop with his shenanigans, and the figure asks him to walk with him for a bit, and he’ll explain everything. The governor presses the ambassador on why he has brought such big machines into his town, and the Ambassador assures him that Users from outside the borders are becoming restless. We don’t know what their next attack will be, and we need to be prepared. The monsters are too unpredictable, and the sentinels will make a profound and necessary protection against whatever threats may come to the city.

The two walk over to a room with a large sentinel inside, but this one looks slightly different from the others; bigger, and with more mechanical parts sticking out of it’s hull.

“My agent Abaddon has been observing the streets of this tiny city for weeks, and has found several skirmishes where a User was present.”

The govenor’s face is struck with shock and embarrassment at the officer’s observation, to which he only smiles. “It’s starting to be clear that you are unable to protect this city, but our new machines will be more than sufficient at doing your job.”

The governor tilts his head in a smile, and it seems like his eye is staring directly at Thorn.

“Would you like an example?” The ambassador asks, and he snaps his fingers. The next thing Thorn knew, the Sentinel was pointing it’s arm right at her, and just as she jumped out of the way, the ground below her exploded, causing her to fall into the large room.

The Ambassador laughed. “See? You have a rat in this very building who has been spying on us. Allow me to make quick work of it for you.” The sentinel attacks some more, and Thorn fights it off for a little while longer, before retreating. Thorn moves past some guards, and almost makes it to the exit of the city, before Kayl reappears and tries to stop her. The two duel, and before Thorn is beaten, Cutlas comes onto the fray and fights off Kayl, giving the two of them an opening to escape. Kayl yells in frustration as the two escape.

Back home, Cutlas is furious about the Hunter, and that Thorn didn’t tell him what was going on.

Cutlas: “Why didn’t you tell me that you ran into a hunter?!”

Thorn: “..A Hunter?”

Cutlas: “Those men in blue coats are trained fighters with a mission to hunt and kill Users! Why didn’t you tell me that you ran into one?!”

Thorn \*Trying to walk away\*: “I didn’t know that those blue coats were so important!”

Cutlas: “Oh, and you didn’t bother to tell me that someone like that ambushed you and almost took your life?! What’s up with that?!”

Thorn: “I can.. I can take care of myself!”

Cutlas: “No, you don’t get it! You can’t beat those guys, especially not by yourself!”

Thorn: “I don’t nee.. Ur help..”

Cutlas: “.. Thorn?”

Thorn \*Turns to face him\*: “Why don’t… You think.. I.. can protect….my..self..” \*Passes out in Cutlas’s arms\*

Cutlas: “Thorn? Thorn! Can you hear me?!...”

Thorn is passed out for days, and her fever continues to worsen. Cutlas doesn’t know how her sickness started, but he has to find a way to get her help.

**CH 5: The Sickness**

When Thorn comes under a bad sickness, Cutlas must travel through a beast-infested forest in search for help.

Cutlas: “The fever’s been going on for days. Thorn, what happened to you?”

Cutlas: “I need to get help, but no one in the city will help a User. If I wanted help, I would have to go..

Cutlas: “...To Terranora.”

Cutlas: “If it still exists, that user village might kill us on sight, thinking we’re wielders. The doctors there might help Thorn, but when they capture me, they might..”

Cutlas: …

Cutlas: “I failed to protect someone once. I won’t break that promise again.”

Cutlas: “Hope you’re ready, Thorn. We have a long journey ahead of us.”

Cutlas carries Thorn on his back as they travel through a wilderness in search of a User town, that's rumored to be past the mountains.. if it even still existed.

Cutlas's mechanics: he moves slower than Thorn, but deals a lot more damage in his attacks.

Asthma: Instead of a magic meter, Cutlas has a Stamina meter, which drains whenever he runs, jumps, or attacks. The Stamina will recharge when he’s not moving. Like Thorn, he’ll have to fight smart, and know when to run or when to hide for a moment to rest.

Cutlas remember where the old User Town was where he found that woman, and returns to the location only to find it in decimation. He crumbles at the thought that everyone in the town being killed off!

He and Thorn rest up for a bit here, and Cutlas's fears act up when seeing the horror messages and scenes around him that were left behind in the town. He could even see an altered insignia of the Hunters (perhaps with a sword of truth, where the new insignia has gauntlet blades, or no sword at all, to give Cutlas's sword in Thorn's hands a symbol of Him and Her upholding the standards that the Hunters lost!)

He could even see a message on the wall, where someone says something like "Don’t worry. We’ll take good care of her" or "watch out for the girl” or “She’ll be in a better place," (the quote will be what the Hunters told Cutlas when he turned the user woman over to them) which causes Cutlas to panic and rush after Thorn. He could see her just fine, or see that a figure was about to take her (even almost an imaginary one; a shadowy figure that resembles the Ambassador! (His sprites can be darkened and used for the silhouette, showing that Cutlas has a connection with the Ambassador!) This silhouette could be the final boss of the level!)

(There's a little bit of explanation of Cutlas's past at the new User town, but during this travel of his, Cutlas can live through the guilt he feels from back then, and his own fear of not being able to protect a loved one of his. This fear can be portrayed by the level itself!)

At the end of the level, Cutlas will fight the final boss (the beast, or the Ambassador Silhouette (which can have the same attack set as Kayl), and will succeed, and then lose consciousness as he thinks he sees other figures coming toward him.

**CH 6: The Sins of the Past**

The Town of Seidon holds a sorrowful history, as one traveler learns through searching for a traitor.

(the year of when the disaster happened will be referenced again in the next chapter, where Users talk about Cutlas’s heroisms in saving the village (and thinking he saved the user lily, who would end up destroying Seidon.)

This level could be Kayl reliving old memories while travelling through Seidon looking for Travis, OR we could have it be a flashback level of Kayl hunting down his family’s killer. The latter wouldn’t make as much sense, but it’s a cool idea! Maybe we can throw in some flashbacks from the town.

This level could also be about the Ambassador instead, worrying about Kayl (However, we would need a reference to Kayl taking Travis’s weapons away.

**CH 7: The Town**

In exchange for Thorn’s treatment, a strange town asks for the help of the two travellers in recovering their lost citizens.

*Thorn.. Thorn..*

Thorn?

Thorn’s eyes slowly opened to a bright, white room. There were curtains all around, and sitting by her, was a Cutlas staring at her face with worry, which slowly faded into relief as Thorn focused on him.

“Oh, thank the gods you’re awake!”

Thorn sat up and observed the room around her. Being in the unfamiliar environment made her instinctively reach for her knife, which wasn’t at her side as it normally was, which made her more uneasy.

“Now, are you ready to explain yourself?”

“What? Cutlas, what are you..” Thorn’s words were stopped when she saw Cutlas’s angered and worried face.

“The doctor said that you must have been sick for months! She said that apparently you had a small flu that you never took care of, and it grew more and more severe until the time you passed out!”

Cutlas clenched his fists as the rage grew. “Thorn, why didn’t you tell me you were sick?! You collapsed right in front of me, and didn't wake up for weeks! Why did you just say you weren’t feeling well?! What if you collapsed in the middle of a fight like that?!”

Thorn was taken back by the statement. She didn’t think she had to tell him, and.. She didn’t think that it was that big of a deal. However, through the heavy breaths in Cutlas’s rage, she could see that he was… scared. For her. Of what would have happened if the flu got worse. Thorn couldn’t look him in the eye.

“... I didn’t .. didn’t want to be weak… and I didn’t want you thinking I needed help.” She said quietly.

“That’s why?! That’s why you let this flu keep on?! Why, this could have killed you if you didn’t get help! What if you passed on because of this?!”

Thorn kept staring at the corner of the bed, avoiding Cutlas’s gaze.

“Now, I need you to promise me, Thorn, that if you feel sick or wounded or hurt like this again, you tell me. Got it?”

Thorn held her peace, still registering the words she was told about her once-small cough that seemed like nothing at all.

“I said, GOT IT?!”

“Yes! Fine, I’ll tell you!” Thorn retaliated, but couldn’t face Cutlas’s gaze.

“... Good.” Cutlas fumed, his worry starting to die down.

Thorn didn’t think that it made any difference for him if she was sick or not, but even with avoiding his gaze, she could feel the weight of his worry in his words.

Before the rescue, after the banquet, the mayor tells Cutlas that he has someone he would like him to meet. After a while, Thorn quietly sneaks behind. She finds Cutlas and the mayor standing by a grave, and Cutlas falls to his knees.

Cutlas: “So, she was able to return home in the end.”

Mayor: “That’s right. She lived four happy years here after her escape.”

Cutlas: “Four. That’s all…!”

Mayor: “.. Aaron, If it weren’t for you, she wouldn’t have lived past that.. Massacre. I wanted to show you that the woman that you thought you failed to protect was able to return here and live the rest of her life in peace. It was your chivalry that enabled her to continue living her life.”

Cutlas \*gets a little teary-eyed before getting back up\*: “... I’m glad she made it home.”

Mayor: “.. Aaron, my faith in those so-called ‘wielders’ has been shaken in the past, but you are living proof that there are still good people among them who will stand up for what is right, and defend it even with their lives. I want to show that to these people. You saved Lily’s life back then, as well as mine, and many other people in this town despite going against the orders of your superiors–and for that, I will always remember you as our hero. If we can show our people that goodness inside a Wielder like you, then it will lead to great progress in establishing peace between our two factions once again.”

Cutlas: “...”

Mayor: “I don’t want to start a war, Aaron. The Wielders have taken many things from us, but I will not let revenge take away what little we still have. (Whatever gods may be, they will have our revenge.)”

Mayor: “... Don’t stay out too long. We’ll need you at full strength in the morning. When you and your daughter are ready, my servant will escort you to your rooms.

Cutlas: “ My dau– Thorn? Oh no, she’s..”

Mayor: “..hmm?”

Cutlas: “... Nevermind.”

**CH 7.5: Return to Chiron**

Thorn and Cutlas return to Chiron, to find that it’s in lockdown mode. Cutlas and Thorn decide to separate for a bit as they go through town to figure out what’s going on.

Part way through, Thorn runs into the User girl again, who’s on high alert and traversing the town from the building tops to avoid being spotted. Andra hesitantly tells thorn about the increase in security, as they work together to get the Andra back outside the city gates to safety. (This is where the player gets a taste of working with Andra in a level instead of Cutlas.)

Kayl may not be in this level, since he may still be in Seidon, but at the same time, Thorn and Cutlas are coming from an outside town as well, so it would seem reasonable for Kayl to be in town as well.

**CH 8: The Infiltration**

Thorn works with a young User to rescue others of their kind, who are being held prisoner in the city.

On the way around, Thorn runs into the User girl she had met before! She was badly beaten, and so they took her to their base to treat her.

The user wakes up, and reluctantly introduces herself as Andra and tells the two of what’s been happening in the city. Security in the town has increased, Sentinels are almost everywhere, and the town has been capturing Users and containing them in some kind of facility. Andra tells them that she tried infiltrating the place already, but that she was discovered, and barely escaped the sentinels. She says she needs to go back and save them, and Thorn, after seeing Cutlas’s example in the User town, is moved with compassion. Cutlas, however, is opposed. He talks about how, if what Andra said is true, then there’s no hope in getting into the city. Thorn is dumbfounded at Cutlas’s refusal to help, but Cutlas is genuinely afraid. Thorn gets frustrated, and when Cutlas still refuses to yield, Thorn threatens that she’ll go alone with Andra, if she must. Cutlas forbids it, and tells Thorn to go to her room for a bit. Thorn waits, then eventually sneaks out to go help Andra.

At some point in the rescue, Andra even asks Thorn if what they’re doing is right, to which Thorn is adamant about it being right.

It was a Trap! It looks like the fake claim that they had captured Users was a plot to trick other Users in the city to come out of the shadows so that they could be captured once and for all. Kayl appears and fights Thorn and Andra, and just as the two gain an upper hand on the hunter, Kayl busts out Travis’s pistols and begins using them for his own. Thorn is shocked, and only imagines the worst for the old weapon dealer she trusted. The Median Girl gets defeated and knocked out, and before Thorn follows suit, Cutlas rushes in and fights the hunter alongside her. However, the hunter was too strong for them, so Cutlas forced Thorn out a door that slammed shut, and she saw a blade go through Cutlas’s chest before she had to flee.

**CH 9: The Lament (First Half Done)**

The Median Girl is gone, Cutlas is MIA, and Thorn is alone. As she goes into shock, her fears start to haunt her.

Cut to a black screen, with Thorn’s voice echoing in the darkness.

“Cutlas!... Cutlas!...” (echoes)

“Thorn!” Cutlas runs up to her in the middle of a forest. Thorn’s stuck in a tree. “What are you doing?!”

Thorn sighs, then lets Cutlas help her down. A little bit of talk happens between them about how Thorn caused some trouble, but the Caretaker is deathly worried about where she is. Thorn eventually complies and gets ready to head back to the orphanage.

(Might pick a different intro to the lament.)

“Thank you. Thorn, I swear, One day you’re going to be the death of me.”

Thorn raises an eyebrow. “What? what do you mean by..?”

Thorn looks up, but Cutlas is gone.

“Cutlas?.. Cutlas?!”

Thorn begins running through the forest, looking for Cutlas. Cue low music that has a hint of anxiety to it. She eventually comes to the orphanage building that is now on fire. The front door breaks down to reveal Cutlas burst out, with a worried look on his face. “Thorn! Thorn where are you!?” He then runs off the screen.

“Cutlas! Cutlas, I’m here!” Thorn tries to shout back, but to no avail. She starts to run after him.

Thorn eventually makes it to a city, but the buildings and roads are unstable and in ruins, as if they can break at anytime. She sees a shadow chasing her in the background, and realizes that it’s the shadow of the blue figure that killed Cutlas. As she continues to run, the shadow tries to attack her, and catch up with her. At one point, giant swords shaped like Kayl’s gauntlets will shoot out from the ground after Thorn.

[Gamewise: This part will have three parallel levels to them, each with different terrain, potential enemy locations, and traps such as falling debris. Whenever Thorn dies in the first level, since she’s playing as an illusion, her body will dissipate like the illusion, and then she will respawn in the beginning of the second level, and if she dies in the second, she will respawn in the third, and then after that, if she dies, she’ll respawn back to the same place where she had died in the first level. Each level will track how far Thorn made it in each level, and spawn her into that said place, until she makes it through the level.]

Eventually, Thorn is trapped in an enclosed area, and the shadow catches up to her, but doesn’t come out of the light just yet. Thorn gets ticked, and yells at the figure “It’s you! It’s your fault that Cutlas is dead.” At this remark, the darkness shadowing the figure disappears, and Thorn sees herself (The figure is the real Thorn). Thorn, still being played as the illusion, starts to panic in confusion, and the fight continues one-sidedly. Thorn barely scrapes for life, and just before the second Thorn is about to deal the finishing blow, she merges with the first Thorn as the first does a sort of “hit” animation, before freezing, and then slowly collapsing onto the ground. This is where she has to face that Cutlas’s death was her fault.

(After the Final Realization. May shrink to actually fit into the Videogame)

Words from her favorite storybook race through her head. “A mighty thief.. The Great Thief Thorn was strong!.. She was powerful!..”

“... I thought it would make me strong.”

“I read those stories since I was a little girl, dreaming that I could live in a world as great as the one I saw on the other side of the pages. I wanted to be like that Thief, who seemed so happy and secure. I lived my life full of stealing and plundering as I pleased, because that’s what she did. I thought that having piles of loot and great power over others would make me strong, just like her. I thought that it would give me everything I had always wanted…

“.. but now...”

“What do I even have?”

“I have gold and silver, but without you…

“I have nothing left.”

\*sniff\* “..Why.. Why can’t I have you instead?”

“I’d give up all of this gold just to have you back again?! Why did..”

“Why did I trade you for nothing! Why was I so stupid. Why didn’t I listen to you?! Why didn’t I listen to your words more? Why didn’t I let you protect me, as you were always doing, and just kept my mouth shut? Why did I throw you away like that, and then I got you killed because of my own selfishness..” \*Sobs\*

After the Level:

**CH10: The Search**

To show Cutlas that his hopes in her becoming a great hero were not in vain, Thorn decides to go find out where Andra is and go save her.

Thorn guesses that Andra is being held at the APD (Hunter) Facility again, and starts looking through the air vents. This time, she’ll stay away from the Ambassador. While she’s traversing through the vents..

“Thorn.”

Thorn holds her breath.

“So that’s her name.”

Thorn looks through a vent, and sees a room with the Ambassador walking around, but what was on the bed, where the voice was coming from, made Thorn’s blood freeze and boil at the same time.

The murderer was there. Alive.

He was on the bed, covered in bandages. His head had a large bandage from the rock that fell on him, and one of his arms was attached to a brace. To make matters worse, that filthy murderer’s hands were holding the dark-leather book that Cutlas used as a journal.

Kayl and the Ambassador have a talk for a bit. The Ambassador points out that Kayl has had an unhealthy compulsive desire to hunt down this user Thorn. Kayl is defiant, stating that he is fine, and the Ambassador points out that Kayl has been constantly looking for her, and hungry to catch her, and because of that he has been abandoning his missions and his posts. The Ambassador continues by asking Kayl how many doses of Ichor he has consumed this week. When Kayl stays silent, the Ambassador points out that Hunters like themselves are to only have two vials of dosage a day to avoid having their bodies get dependent on the ichor and cease producing their body’s own natural energy, but Kayl has been taking four a day. He proclaims that Kayl is becoming too dependent on Ichor, and that if he doesn’t stop there will be consequences that he cannot live with. Kayl states that he does not care, and that any cost is worth destroying those Users! That’s when the Ambassador has realized that Kayl has fallen off of the deep end. He tells Kayl that he’s been released from the Hunter program. The Ambassador had seen Kayl as his own son, who had the potential to become a great hunter, but for his own good, Kayl was done. He was going to bring Kayl back to the capital on the next train back, which will be transporting the User there as well. That will be Kayl’s final mission, and then he’ll be released from the Hunter’s corp. Kayl is furious, but holds his tongue, looking at his coat that has the Barrier Bows in them. *We’ll see about that*, he thinks to himself.

(Make it a bonus: The player can choose to try and grab the notebook. If they choose not to, great! If they do, a small dialogue happens where Thorn hugs the notebook. “I’m sorry, Cutlas. I’ve got you now.”)

**CH11: The Rescue**

Thorn goes to save Andra, who’s being transported on a train toward the capital.

**EPILOGUE?: (Check!)**

Thorn returns home, to find the place in Shambles, but not like how she had left the place. This leaves her uneasy, and she runs toward the main room. And freezes.

Sitting on the throne in the middle of the room, was Abaddon.

(Abaddon at this point is going through withdrawals for Ichor, and is obsessed with killing Thorn and avenging his family. He may even be a little crazy at this point.)

"Who are you, girl? Could you really be her? That monster from 8 years ago?"

Thorn was confused. She stood her ground, but could feel herself shaking.

"I chased that monster for years, but I was never able to avenge my family's death. Users.. blood-rats like you.. you take what you want and destroy any family that gets in your way!"

Thorn's eyes furrowed. Her grip on her sword tightened.

"I'm glad that I gave you a taste of that pain. Now that you know how it feels, I, Kayl Abaddon, can send you to your death once and for all!"

Alternative Quote from Kayl (I actually like this one a lot better!):

“Finally. I have you. No more places to run, and no one left to get in the way.”

“Looking back, I’m actually glad that a User like you killed my family. I can now fight you (vermin) with nothing left to lose, and with the power to make sure no one else feels my same pain ever again!”

Kayl strikes.

The fight goes on in three stages. The first, Thorn and Kayl fight as normal, but Kayl is seemingly stronger. He also fights with the barrier guns and causes destruction among the castle ruins (He can shoot the bullet upward, the blast causing the ceiling to crack, but the shield holds it up for a few seconds, before dissipating and the ceiling cracks and falls apart.)

After the fight, parts of the ceiling and walls start to collapse, and Thorn attempts to flee down a hallway that hasn't been destroyed yet, all the whole Kayl barks taunts and challenges her to face him. She ends up in a new room, and Kayl fights her once adebrisin this fight, Kayl actually breaks one of Thorn's swords.

The fighting pattern continues, until more debris falls to the ground, leaving Thorn trapped in a cavern of debris, the only path our leading to Kayl. Thorn is petrified, thinking of Cutlas's killer, and how to escape, until she sees Cutlas's sword lying not too far from her. She thinks of him, and how he charged in bravely to save her and many others. She thinks of some words Cutlas said at the User town about how greatness isn't built on how much power you have in you, but what you protect and uphold with that power. She climbs out of the tunnel, facing Kayl on the bridge, holding Cutlas's sword.

"So, you'll finally face me?" The blood-hungry beast in front of her challenged.

Thorn stood her ground. "Cutlas was a great man, who protected even filth like me. He didn't care about Users or Wielders, but about doing what's right. You only care about blood." Thoughts of Andra's words about trying to prove the good in Users came to mind. "I want to be like Cutlas, so I won't be afraid to uphold what he taught me any longer. I won't be afraid to face you!"

Final fight ensues. Kayl is in his over limit mode, with occasional times where he needs to rest (after Thorn lands a good hit on him), where Thorn can get a few good hits in.

At the end of the fight, Thorn defeats Kayl, and the bridge they're fighting on starts to collapse. Thorn makes it off the bridge, and Kayl tries to follow, but his over limit is starting to glitch away, and before he reaches the cliff, his overlimit dies. His eyes stop glowing, and his hair dawn's a streak of white. "Mom.. D..ad.." he mutters, before falling to his death(?)

Afterward, Thorn looks down at the cliff. A crack in the castle wall reveals a rainy sky, with sunlight breaching the clouds.

**True epilogue:**

Thorn talks a little about how sometimes she's still scared, but (does something to cope with it, like think of Cutlas or a saying of his, maybe?)

**Other Notes:**

Keep in mind Kayl and Cutlas’s Roles. Kayl represents Thorn’s fears of being weak, and will appear each time she feels weak. Cutlas represents security, and who Thorn can be if she chooses to walk the path to becoming a hero. Have these show in the story.

Consider having Kayl’s breaking into Thorn’s home being in the middle of the story, and roughly around when Cutlas dies. Then, we can have Kayl still be the final boss at the end of the level, when Thorn saves Andra. AND, with the two still on the train toward the capital, and having nowhere else to run to (and being too far from Chiron, and Cities are the safest places right now, and perhaps Andra is too badly hurt to survive through the wilderness), they decide to head to the capital.

Consider That there is an in-game training before every level (or every other level) so that the player gets used to it, and then when Cutlas is gone and there’s no one to initiate the trainings, Thorn AND the player both feel the impact of Cutlas being gone.