

A F T E R
S H ● C K

CHAPTER FIVE
SHADOW OF THE ENCLAVES



Credit Note:

(Cover art is an edited version of an illustration that was done by Emile Franco)

With the manifestation now no longer a burden to Zero, it takes full command of the ship and begins to tilt the nose up towards the rings of Saturn that lie above, and after a few seconds, (along with hearing the cognition sphere roll towards the back of the cockpit) the ship is encased in light once more as the Quantum Drive is engaged.

Surrounded by nothing but a white glare yet again, your sight returns a few moments later as the ship finishes the “jump,” but as you look forward out the cockpit window, you see only blackness.

Elizabeth

“Did... did we make it?”

Before receiving any response from Zero, the blackness soon gives way to a curved horizon across your field of vision, and as the ship continues to move forward, both a now distant Saturn (its rings in a “line” perspective) and the beams of energy (though extremely thin and faint) rise up over it in the background.

“Zero”

MY APOLOGIES

Elizabeth

“What for?”

“Zero”

**I HAD TO MAKE A SLIGHT COURSE CHANGE DUE TO ATMOSPHERIC
DISTURBANCES BROUGHT ON BY THE ONGOING ENERGY TRANSFER**

(Short pause)

**STANDARD THRUSTER TRAVERSAL WILL BE REQUIRED
FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE JOURNEY**

Elizabeth

“(Slight chuckle) No need for apologies if it’s just that.”

“Zero”

WHY IS THAT?■

Elizabeth

(Short pause while looking outside)

“Because sometimes... it takes an inconvenience to see what otherwise would be missed.”

(Looks at the scene outside)



Hearing the pulsing sound of the thrusters outside, the ship suddenly juts forward and begins to descend towards the Titan atmosphere, and as you get closer to the illuminated horizon, its opaque yellow appearance comes into better view.

Now breaching the atmosphere itself, the nose of the ship becomes heated, with the glow temporarily impairing your view of the outside for a few moments before eventually giving way to a shroud of cloud cover intermixed with droplets of rain that increase in intensity as you descend further.

Elizabeth
“(Softly) An active cycle.”

“Zero”

LIQUID METHANE CYCLE TO BE PRECISE

Elizabeth
“Thanks... (while still descending through the clouds and rain)
Anything else of note? Preferably, concerning these... Enclaves?”

“Zero”

**IN ADDITION TO ALREADY GATHERED INFORMATION
CURRENT ARCHIVE DATA STATES ALL TITAN
OPERATIONS CEASED IN 2065**

Elizabeth
“In other words, there shouldn't be anyone here?”

“Zero”

**CORRECT
HOWEVER THE DISTRESS SIGNAL HAS BEEN
VERIFIED AS GENUINE IN THE COURSE OF OUR TRAVELS**

Elizabeth
“Oh good, and here I was thinking all we'd get out of this was some sight seeing.”

“Zero”

AND A NICE SHIP

Elizabeth
“Yeah, but going back a little less empty handed wouldn't hurt.”

“Zero”

(After a short pause and some more traversal through clouds and rain)

**WE ARE NOW APPROACHING THE KRAKEN MARE
ENCLAVE CLUSTER■**

Ending its descent, the ship levels out and the cloud cover gives way to the liquid methane surface of the Kraken Mare just a few meters below the ship, with the ice formations that make up the solid crust of Titan filling in both the sides of your view and filling in the background in the distance.

Continuing to race across what you now realize is just a small narrow channel of the lake formation itself, you look ahead to see that it turns to the right due to a series of hills in its way, but instead of following the channel, the ship presses forward and rises ever so slightly in order to clear them.

Gaining a few dozen meters in altitude, you clear the hills, and as the nose pitches back down, you are presented with an overview of the main body of the Kraken Mare itself, and at its center, you see several clusters of low lying hexagon shaped structures being illuminated by the Saturn energy beams that have managed to reach the moon's surface.

And though the brown and red tint of the liquid methane they float upon diffuses the light of the rays all around them, the paneled roofs of each of the hexagon structures make up for it as they glisten in response to the incoming energy.

Elizabeth
(Upon noticing the "illumination" of the structures)
"Diamonds in the rough."

(After leveling out again and entering the final approach to the cluster)

"Wait second, you said these lakes were only made up of liquid methane, right? But then, how did they manage to pull this one off? Or did I miss something when it came to buoyancy?"

"Zero"

SEARCHING AVAILABLE ARCHIVE DATA

(Short pause)

ERROR

ALL CORPORATE SECRETS WERE DELETED

FROM THE ARCHIVE IN 2066■

Elizabeth
"Of course. Yet... fitting."

Getting closer to the cluster, you begin to get a feel for how large the hexagon shaped structures really are as they start to fill up your view directly ahead.

Now only a few hundred meters away, the hazy Titan horizon that once filled in the background is over taken by the nearly dozen stories tall and nearly half a kilometer wide side wall of the enclave facility that you are approaching. And as you near what appears to be a series of sealed doorways that reside within the wall just above the liquid methane “water line,” the views to your left and right are also replaced by the other adjoining hexagon structures.

“Zero”

(As the ship slows down while nearing one of the sealed doorways)

**MY ATTEMPTS TO ACCESS THE ENCLAVE INTERNAL NETWORK
HAVE BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL**

Elizabeth

"Seems our unknown party got around."

"Zero"

WE MAY HAVE TO
(short pause)

KNOCK

Elizabeth

“The blaster? (Looks at the flight stick and the button atop it)
Easy enough I guess, but then what? Holding my breath is one thing, but unless
you’ve got a bigger coat somewhere, none of it matters.”

“Zero”

NO EXOSUIT WILL BE REQUIRED
MY ANALYSIS OF AVAILABLE ENCLAVE SCHEMATICS
INDICATES THE PRESENCE OF AN EMERGENCY BULKHEAD SYSTEM
(Short pause)

HOWEVER BOTH THE BREACH AND SUBSEQUENT
MANEUVERING WILL REQUIRE A MORE
(Short pause)

PRECISE HAND

Elizabeth

“(Slight chuckle) Look who’s the captain now.”

“Zero”

PREDICTIVE MODELS ANALYZED
ENGAGING OPTIMAL COURSE OF ACTIONS■

Taking control again (the flight stick projection fades away during this time), Zero positions the ship in line with the nearest sealed doorway and after coming to a stop, you hear more mechanical and buzzing sounds from outside the ship as the blaster device charges up.

“Zero”

(A few seconds after the ship stops in front of the door and the sounds outside begin)

YOU MAY WANT TO HOLD ONTO SOMETHING

Elizabeth
(Looks around)
“(Unsure) Okay...”

“Zero”

ERROR

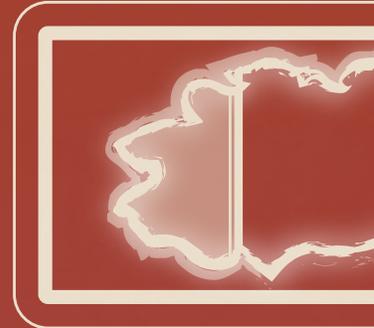
I DETECT NO SAFETY FASTENER DEVICES

Elizabeth

“(Softly) Dammit Hullton... um... (lays back into chair, then said normally)... just go.”

“Zero”

ENGAGING FIRING SEQUENCE



A split second later, the buzzing sound from outside builds up, followed by the heat ray being emitted towards the door, and as it slams against it, it isn't long until you see its appearance start to become a bright orange around the contact area.

A moment after that, and just as the doorway appears as if it is about to give way, the ray ceases, and after a very brief pause, you hear the blaster build up in sound once again, however, this time it builds for much longer, and a few moments after that, you see it emit what appears to be a single burst towards the door which causes it to finally buckle.

Thanks to the pressure difference though, after blowing inward ever so slightly, the atmosphere within the hanger bay then explodes the door outward towards the ship.

Moving the ship around the exploding debris (small but quick shifts to the left, then right so as to avoid large molten pieces of the door), you then feel yourself being pressed into the chair as the thrusters are suddenly pushed to the max and the ship accelerates quickly so as to fly into the hanger bay before the emergency bulkheads seal the breach.

Now speeding towards the opening, you see the emergency bulkheads begin to close, but due to Zero's quick actions, the ship manages to narrowly squeeze by with a half a meter or so to spare on either side.

Entering the bay, your body is then pushed forward as the ship rapidly decelerates, and just as you put your hands up in front of you so as to brace yourself, your reaction causes an Armstrong field to generate which prevents your body from slamming into the control console.

Elizabeth

(After the ship comes to a complete stop and the re-pressurization of the bay is heard outside)
(Stops generating the field and sits back up in the chair, intermixed with grunting)

“Remind me to thank Charles when this is all over. (One more slight grunt) One of them at least.”

“Zero”

OBJECTION NOTED■

Elizabeth
"How's outside looking?"

"Zero"

SCANS INDICATE THE EMERGENCY BULKHEADS HAVE RESECURED THE BAY

(Short pause, followed by the ship's under hatch opening)

WE MAY PROCEED

Elizabeth
(While going down the under hatch step ladder)
"And I'm guessing we need to find another networked terminal?"

"Zero"

CORRECT

Elizabeth
(After reaching the end of the step ladder and looks out over the hanger bay)
"Although, you have to admit the lack of a welcome party isn't a great start."

"Zero"

**I DETECT NO BIOMETRIC OR MECHANICAL SIGNATURES OF ANY KIND
HOWEVER THIS FACILITY EXCEEDS MY RANGE OF REMOTE DETECTION**

(Short pause)

THERE IS STILL HOPE

Elizabeth
"You picked up on that one as well, huh?"

"Zero"

OPTIMISM CAN ONLY GO SO FAR■

Walking away from the ship, you get a better view of the bay itself which is roughly triple the size of the ones back on Saturn, but just like the Pillars though, you are forced to use a heat/ice ray combo to break down the exit doorway. And after doing so and passing through a lengthy corridor, you enter into a hexagon shaped room which has passageways leading out on the opposite three sides, and at the center of it all, you see a core structure (also a hexagon) with a desk (plus terminals) and some chairs scattered about in front of it.

As for the core wall that is directly facing you, you find the following signage:



Now in the space itself, you get a better look at the labels that are across the three other passageways that lead out of the room, they are as follows:

WARDROBE CHECK OUT

(Following the passageway for a few meters, it turns a corner and leads you to a space that contains a series of doors that look like change rooms, and another space that is closed off by a counter. However, as you look beyond it, you manage to see hundreds of different outfits, ranging from wild west attire, all the way to space suits and Victorian era dresses)

WARDROBE RETURNS

(Laid out similarly to the check out room)

GIFT SHOP

(On the farthest wall from where you entered, and in between the wardrobe areas, this passageway leads you into a shop like space which contains items such as detailed geographical globes of Titan, prints of the Enclave Entertainment logo, and small devices labeled “Hard Light Memory Moments,” which if examined directly, activates and begins to project a short scene of what appears to be a person in a diving suit exploring the sea floor)

After having your fill (though the order of exploration is up to the player of course), you walk back towards the desk area, and as you get closer, you notice that two of the three terminals atop of the desk are still active (along with hearing a slight buzzing sound from them, and seeing subtle glows coming from damaged areas throughout their respected cases), and as you approach the front of them, you see their displays are still functional as well.

Elizabeth

“Hmm... at least we won’t be needing a jolt this time around.”

(Clears dust and other misc. items off of the desk so as to expose an input port)

“Here you go.”

(Plugs communicator wire into input port)

With the communicator’s screen going blank once again in response to the rewiring, a few seconds pass, followed by Zero using the terminal’s display to relay messages.

“Zero” (Terminal display)

ATTEMPTING TO ACCESS THE EE AUTOMATION NETWORK

(Short pause)

I HAVE DISCOVERED MORE ERRONEOUS CO

ERROR

(Both terminal displays “twitch” for a brief moment, along with the lights in the room flickering on and off)

Elizabeth

“Is everything okay?”

“Zero” (Terminal display)

THIS WILL TAKE LONGER THAN I THOUGHT ■



Elizabeth
“(Sigh) Rather use to that, now.”

“Zero” (Terminal display)

**IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THE ENTIRE ZERO ONE
AUTOMATION NETWORK HAS BEEN REMOVED**

Elizabeth
“Wait, then what are you using?”

“Zero” (Terminal display)

**THE ORIGINAL EE NETWORK
THOUGH HIGHLY MODIFIED IN COMPARISON
TO ON RECORD ARCHIVE DATA**

Elizabeth
“Sounds like our unknowns all right. Question is, are they still here?”

“Zero” (Terminal Display)

**I AM UNABLE TO DETERMINE THE COMPLETE STATUS OF ALL FACILITIES
UNTIL FURTHER RECONSTITUTION OF THE MODIFIED NETWORK IS CONDUCTED**

(Short pause)

**I HAVE MANAGED TO ESTABLISH A RELAY CONNECTION HOWEVER
SO YOU MAY RETURN TO COMMUNICATOR USE**

Elizabeth
(While reconnecting the communicator, an unlocking sound is
heard in the background, causing her to look back slightly)

“Zero” (Communicator)

THE DOORS WORK AGAIN■

With Zero back on the communicator, you walk around the hexagon shaped core structure to find that the unlocking sound came from a panel on the core itself which has fully opened up (before this point, the panel blended in seamlessly with the rest of the core wall) and as you look into it, you see a stairwell which leads only upwards and the following label above the first switchback landing:

TO PROJECTION PLATFORM

Walking up the stairwell, you get past three flights before coming to the first new level, and though the stairs continue upward, you take note of the following label that denotes the area:



PARADISE IN PURGATORY

THE TITAN TRIUMPH

Giving in to your curiosity, you decide to investigate.

Elizabeth

“Still nothing on the sweeps?”

“Zero”

I HAVE YET TO DETECT ANY NEW SIGNATURES■

Elizabeth

(While looking past the signage and down the passageway that leads into the new area)

“Hmm... then if this all just a postmortem... best to not leave any stone unturned.”

Now nearing the end of the short passageway, you come to a pair of jammed sliding doorways, and after using Armstrong to push them to the sides, you are greeted by yet another hexagon shaped room, however this time, with nothing inside it.

Elizabeth

(While walking towards the center of the space, which overall is roughly half the size of a basketball court and is roughly two stories in height)

“Huh, just a dead en...”

Just then, electrical buzzing sounds ring out all around you and the floor begins to illuminate, followed by the walls and ceiling. Similar to the light projections you experienced back in Olympus, strings of light and electricity begin to criss cross all around the space, and just as the entire event gets to the point of blinding you, the brightness fades away and you find that the empty appearance of the room has been replaced by a life like landscape view of the surface of Titan.

Elizabeth

“I stand corrected.”

Looking around, you find that the doors you passed through to get into the space are still viewable, however their appearance is like that of an arch amongst the Titan projection around it (think Star Trek Holodecks, and how the exit “arch” doorways are presented)

After a few moments pass while you take in the sight and hear both the breeze and rainfall of liquid methane off in the distance, music starts to play in the background, followed by more strings of light entering into the space and forming into a humanoid figure. And upon brightening, then fading back to normal, it gives way to what appears to be an early 40's looking African Male (skin tone on the lighter side) with buzz cut hair and dressed in business casual attire, all of which is topped off by a navy blue blazer.

Unknown Manifestation

“Welcome to Titan. I’m Henry Houser, founder of Enclave Entertainment, and this (gestures hands towards the surrounding landscape), is our story.”

Elizabeth
“(Softly) It’s...”

Houser Manifestation
(While turning around and walking over to the edge
of a nearby cliff side that overlooks a “pre-enclave” Kraken Mare)
“Nature may of given us hell, but we provided the means to forge a haven among the stars.”

“Zero”

JUST A RECORDING

Houser Manifestation
(While looking out over the lake, projections of a mining operation are formed over
top both the landscape and around the edges of the lake itself)
“Once a wasteland of industry, we at EE sought to make use of a world
that was set to be discarded back into the hands of time.”

(As the mining operations fade away, time speeds up, followed by returning to
normal as the iconic Enclave Hexagon structures begin to appear out from the
haze that has formed just above the surface of the lake, so Titan’s version of “lake fog”)

“Though, nothing is without challenge, but without challenge, there can be no triumph.”

(Areas of the haze in the upper atmosphere begin to break apart as the light rays from Saturn
reach down to the hexagons below it, illuminating the entire cluster, causing its original gold like
appearance to glow and glimmer even more so than what you witnessed while arriving)

“However, what is a triumph without the means to make it all worth wild.”

(A projection of a headset like device is formed across the manifestation’s face)

“Place is one thing, but how you experience it... well, (takes off headset and drops it to the ground, causing
it to fade away a few seconds later)... that’s quite a different matter all together.”

(The entire area brightens once again to the point where your vision whites out, and after fading back to
normal, you see that the Titan landscape has been replaced by a space that is similar to the hexagon
shaped room you entered, only now the size of the overall hexagon facility itself, which is roughly half a
kilometer long on each of its six sides).

(Gestures outwards towards the expanse of the space)

“No peripherals, no limits, (turns back towards you, and at the same time, the entire area begins to brighten
once more as if to project a new setting) that’s the Enclaveeee... (the entire projection begins to become fuzzy)
... wa... waayy (sound winds down). A second later the entire projection fades away
and the room returns to the way you found it.

Elizabeth
”Um...”

“Zero”

**IT WOULD APPEAR THE DEMO SERVER MALFUNCTIONED
DUE TO AN ATTEMPT TO INTRODUCE NEW INFORMATION TO IT**

Elizabeth
“New information? From where?”

“Zero”

THE SERVER CRASHED BEFORE I COULD IDENTIFY THE SOURCE■



Elizabeth
“Hmm... and this, Henry Houser, you wouldn't by chance be able to...”

“Zero”

**I WOULD
EXCEPT I DO NOT DETECT ANY COGNITION
SPHERE STANDBY SIGNATURES WITHIN RANGE**

Elizabeth
(Looks back at the hexagon shaped room)
“But of course, why would they need them here. In that case, could you...”

“Zero”

**I SHOULD BE ABLE TO ONCE FURTHER RECONSTITUTION
OF THE ENCLAVE NETWORK HAS BEEN CONDUCTED**

Elizabeth
“Now to just continue hoping he isn't the only company we can muster.”

Walking away from the hexagon shaped room and back towards the stairwell, you continue your trek upwards to the projection platform that lies at the top of it. However, after ascending another three flights, your progress is halted when you find that the fourth flight has been cut and removed in almost the exact same fashion as what you saw in Pillar 16.

Elizabeth
“(Sigh) Really?... again? I...”

A rumbling sound just below interrupts you and a few moments later, the sound you would normally associate with a lift can be heard rising towards your location, and just as it comes to a stop, Zero types:

“Zero”

NEED A LIFT?

Elizabeth
(Looks around after reading the message)

“Zero”

**IN THE INTEREST OF TIME I WOULD AGAIN SUGGEST
(Short pause)
KNOCKING■**



Catching on, you focus in on the wall that is exposed on the nearest landing switchback, and as you do, your Luna's Light x-ray ability kicks in and you are able to see that the rest of the hexagon shaped core actually houses a lift structure (also in the shape of a hexagon).

Now knowing what lies on the other side of the wall, you begin to fire a heat ray towards it until its metallic appearance brightens to a mix of fiery red and orange, followed by a small section that you are able to pass through melts away.

Passing through the resulting steam cloud, you enter into the hexagon shaped core area and step onto the lift that was brought up to your location.

A few seconds later, it begins to ascend, and as you look up towards where you are heading, you see a hexagon shaped door structure begin to open up, revealing a massive pieces of structure which you assume is the roof of the projection platform itself.

Getting closer, the lift starts to slow in its ascent, and after another few seconds it slowly rises up into hexagon opening and into the projection platform area.

Once becoming even with the floor, the lift jolts for a brief moment as it locks into place, and as you look outward, you are presented with a full view of not just the platform of Hex 32, but the adjoining facilities as well, with the only interruptions in the view being the support structures that make up the corners of each respected Hex (height wise, the ceiling structure is roughly 15 stories above).

However, due to its size exceeding the "illumination range" of your Luna's Light implants, the farthest points away from your current location, which as you look around you see is near one of the sides of the structure, are shrouded in darkness (the range being roughly a kilometer, so you are able to see the entire interior of Hex 32, but only a small portion of the ones connected to it).

Elizabeth
(After stepping off of the lift and looks around)
"(Softly) Might as well. (Loudly) Hello?..."

Projecting your voice out into the darkness, it soon comes back to you in a series of echoes that go on for several seconds.

Elizabeth
(Once the echoes fade away)
"Anything on your end?"

"Zero"

LOOKING OVER NEW ECHOLLOCATION DATA NOW
(Short pause)
I AM DETECTING SEVERAL SMALL OBSTRUCTIONS
THROUGHOUT THE PLATFORM SURFACE■

Elizabeth
“Not wanting to assume, can you tell what they are for certain?”

“Zero”

NO

**CURRENTLY THE DATA IS TOO VAGUE TO MAKE
ANY KIND OF ACCURATE IDENTIFICATION**

Elizabeth
“So we get closer then.”

“Zero”

(After you start to walk away from the lift)

I MAY BE ABLE TO PROVIDE FURTHER ASSISTANCE WITH THAT

Elizabeth
“You mean...”

“Zero”

**I HAVE MANAGED TO RESTORE THE PROJECTION
SYSTEMS TO PARTIAL FUNCTIONALITY**

(Short pause)

AT LEAST ENOUGH FOR OUR PURPOSES

Elizabeth
“Give it a go then.”

“Zero”

ACCESSING THE EE HARD LIGHT PROJECTION SERVER NETWORK

(Short pause, and at the same time, in the distance, you hear
the overall super structure give off a series of sounds, as if energy was
building up, followed by it fading away shortly thereafter)

PREPARING TO RELAY ARCHIVED HOUSER DATA

(Short pause, and another series of sounds, followed by it fading away yet again)

WAIT

Elizabeth
“Something the matter?”

“Zero”

**I HAVE DETECTED AN ACTIVE RUNTIME WITHIN THE EE SERVER NETWORK
IT IS INTERESTING**

Elizabeth
“Interesting? For what reason?”

“Zero”

ACCORDING TO MY ANALYSIS OF THE CORE ALGORITHMS

(Short pause)

THEY APPEAR TO MATCH THE ARCHIVED DATA OF HENRY HOUSER■

Elizabeth
“A replication, here? But, how... why?”

“Zero”

PERHAPS YOU SHOULD ASK HIM

The sounds in the distance build up again and after a few seconds, light begins to form just a few meters ahead of you, and upon splitting apart and shape shifting into a humanoid mass, it brightens, followed by it fading into its “realistic” form.

Houser Manifestation

(Before the projection is even completed, it appears as if the manifestation is already in the act of running towards something, and in doing so, takes a few steps away from you and towards the darkness ahead before coming to a stop)

“Nooo (intermixed with electronic sounds as the voice is correctly synthesized and the “render” is completed) oo!”
(Echoes throughout the area)

(Also during the act, he extends his right hand outward, as if trying to reach towards something)

(Looks down towards hand, then back up towards the darkness of the currently empty projection platforms)

“No... (shakes head back and forth as if remorseful)... no, no, no...”

Elizabeth
“H... hello?”

Houser Manifestation
(Quickly turns around)

“(Appears to look over your appearance, then speaks softly) Human (more sounds in the background, as if the whole set of facilities were groaning)”

Elizabeth
“What’s going on here?”

Houser Manifestation
“(Looks around again as the sounds get louder)
(Looks towards you) “You have to leave, now!”

Elizabeth
“Leave, but what about...”

“Zero”

I AM DETECTING NEW DATA THAT IS ATTEMPTING TO ENTER THE PRIMARY PROJECTION SERVER NETWORK■

Houser Manifestation
“Oh, no.”

Elizabeth
“Do you have the source this time?”

Houser Manifestation
“You.”



The very next moment, the entire set of projection platforms pulse with light, followed by emitting large electrical arcs as the floor, walls, and ceiling begin to brighten.

You then see new strings of light run past you and continue on into the now more illuminated center area of the joined platforms.

And in no time at all, the initial hundreds of strings of light become a thousand, then a million as they split apart all around you until your complete field of view is taken up by the shape shifting masses of light and energy.

(At this moment you lose sight of the Houser manifestation)

With more strings and action going on, the sound of electricity in the air becomes louder and louder, almost to the point of causing pain.

Racing around you in all directions, some of the strings of light even crash against one another, generating both pulses of energy and other glowing particles as the projection platforms rush to construct the new environment.

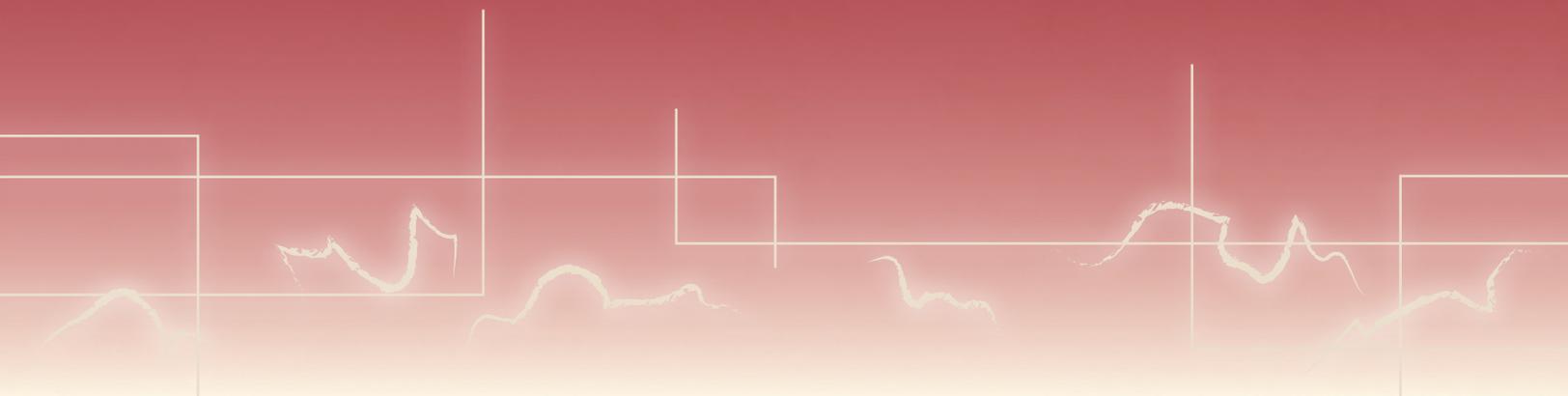
Now beyond countless, the strings continue to both outline masses and clash against one another, and just when everything looks to be falling into a chaotic mess, order and somewhat discernible shapes begin to come into being.

Though becoming brighter and thus harder to see, you manage to make out the vague appearance of what looks like the facade of a building of some kind just ahead of your location, but just as you do, your vision is overtaken and the entire scene whites out.

A few moments later, the brightness finally fades, and your vision slowly returns, and as it does, you find yourself looking downwards towards a wooden floor while on your hands and knees.

A second after that, your hearing begins to return to normal after nearly going deaf from the electrical sounds, and beginning in a muffled tone, a musical tune in the background slowly starts to become more recognizable.

Now fully restored, you begin to get up off of the floor, and while in the process of doing so, you are able to recognize the song as none other than, "God Only Knows."
(the Columbia Barbershop Quartet version)



Fully upright, you see that the song is coming from an early 20th century vinyl player, and as your Luna's Light implants continue to adjust after the brightness overload, you finally come to the realization that the space you currently occupy is an elevator (which is in motion and going up). And as more details come into focus you quickly put together where you are.

Elizabeth
"It can't be."

Just then, the elevator rises out of the darkened enclosed space it had been traveling through, causing one of the two windowed doorways to become exposed to an over looking scene outside.

Though mostly obscured by cloud cover at first, they eventually give way to an uninterrupted vibrant blue sky and crescent moon in the background, followed by the floating "city platforms" of Columbia itself slowly drifting in from the side cloud formations, along with both an airship, which you also recognize as being "The First Lady," and a volley of fireworks racing upward just behind it and going off, filling in the rest of the scene.

(Short pause as the elevator continues to rise)

"Zero"

WHAT IS THIS PLACE?■



Elizabeth
“(Softly) There you are. (Short pause)
What do you mean? Can’t you tell?”

“Zero”

**DUE TO THE SHEER VOLUME OF NEW DATA
I WAS FORCED OUT OF THE NETWORK**

Elizabeth
“But, you can get back in... right?”

“Zero”

**FROM WHAT I CAN GATHER FROM HERE
THE EE SERVER NETWORK APPEARS TO BE TAXED TO CAPACITY
(Short pause)
THAT SAID
THERE IS CURRENTLY ONE POSSIBLE SOLUTION THAT
MAY REDUCE THE LOAD JUST ENOUGH FOR ME TO REGAIN CONTROL
THOUGH I FIND IT TO BE
(Short pause)
SELF DEFEATING**

Elizabeth
“And why’s that?”

“Zero”

**WELL
SEEING AS YOU ARE THE SOURCE OF THE INFLUX OF DATA**

Elizabeth
“(Somber) Right... (Short pause) And seeing as it wasn’t your first option,
I gather one of those, doorways, aren’t a thing, either.”

“Zero”

**I HAVE MADE 38274 ATTEMPTS THUS FAR
EACH MORE EFFICIENT THAN THE LAST
(Short pause)**

SURELY ONE WILL GET THROUGH

Elizabeth
(While the elevator enters back into a darkened enclosed area)
“(Softly) At the mercy of the 1 in a million, and here, of all places.”

“Zero”

AND THAT BEING WHAT EXACTLY?■

Elizabeth
(While the elevator begins to slow down as it approaches the level it will be stopping on)
“(Chuckles) I think it’d be easier if you just see for yourself.”

Finally coming to a stop, the windowed side of the elevator that wasn't exposed to the outside slides away (dual door design), and you step out into a small corridor full of other elevator doorways, which then leads you into a short hallway with a single exit doorway at the end of it (also a dual door design).

Sparring not a single detail, the colorful late Victorian era aesthetic of the hallway matches what you would expect if you really were back in Columbia.

Reaching the end of the hallway, you press your hands against the doors and begin to push them open, and just as you do, light rays from the other side begin to flood into the much darker lit hallway (darker by comparison).

Briefly blinded by the light, both your eyes and implants adjust accordingly, and once the scene fades back to normal, you find yourself amongst a crowd of what must be thousands of people who have gathered along a corridor of buildings.

And just as the last bit of extreme brightness dies down, you are able to see what they have gathered for directly ahead of you.

Partially blocking the sun that is beginning to set behind it, you see the silhouette of your tower (aka: Columbia's "Monument Island") in the far distance (currently not attached to the floating "city platform" you are on right now) and a few moments later, you see the crowd all around you begin to cheer as a figure in the distance (also in silhouette) starts to walk onto a stage.

Elizabeth
“(Sigh) As I said....”

Zachary Hale Comstock (Over a speaker system)
(After reaching the center of the stage, the crowd dies down)
“Let us pray.”



Comstock

(While you make your way through the crowd, or stand to watch, player's choice)
“(The people around you bow their heads) Today we gather here to mark the blessings our Lord has bestowed upon us. Once a lost people, he sent but only a lonely messenger to guide mankind back into his divine light. And thanks to his continued workings through us, we celebrate yet another year since our departure from the corrupt and vile ways of the sodom below, and come ever closer to bringing all of God's children back into everlasting righteousness.”

(You can see people around you nodding and softly saying amen)

Though also bowing his head, you see the Comstock silhouette then gesture back towards the tower in the background.

Comstock

“But it is not we who will see to it that his holy mission is pursued to its end. For instead it will be our children, lead by the sight of our Lamb, who will take on the burden to finish what we have forged here today. And with that, we pray to you, oh lord, that the time to come does not lead them astray. Amen.”

(Crowd in unison also says amen)

Comstock

“Now then, let the celebrations begin!”
(Silhouette can be seen throwing hands up into the air)

Kicking off the official festivities, more fireworks go off in the background, followed by musical tunes beginning to play over the loud speaker. And as you look again towards the Comstock silhouette, you see him walk off the stage and out of sight.

Elizabeth

(As the crowd becomes less dense due to people moving towards the surrounding fair like amenities)
“This is it, alright.”

“Zero”

**JUDGING BY THE ARCHITECTURE
AND MYTHOLOGICAL RHETORIC**

THIS APPEARS TO BE AN EARLY 20TH CENTURY SETTING

Elizabeth

“Not bad. However, if you're looking for any relatable precedents, don't bother.”

(Short pause)

“Zero”

WHAT IS THE LAMB?■



Elizabeth

(Short pause while she looks up towards the tower in the background)

“Tell you what, seeing as all this is of my creation, how about I give you just one guess.”

“Zero”

I SEE

Elizabeth

“Though, the less of this, the better. How are those... attempts, coming along, and for that matter, what happened to our man of mystery, Mr. Houser?”

“Zero”

**ATTEMPT 483729 GRANTED ME BRIEF ACCESS TO RUNTIME STATUSES
AND ACCORDING TO THE DATA HE SHOULD STILL BE ACTIVE**

(Short pause)

SOMEWHERE

Elizabeth

“Hmm... well if he is, hopefully he still looks the same.”

“Zero”

WHY SO?■

Elizabeth

(While looking around, the people begin to give you strange looks from time to time)

“Because like me, (looks over arms and the outfit she is wearing), sticking out like a sore thumb... doesn't quite give it justice.”

Now with more freedom to move around due to the dispersal of the crowd, you eventually find your way to the stage area near the end of the corridor of buildings (Gameplay note: the entire “city platform” is open ended, meaning the player can either choose to go straight ahead, or make their way through the surrounding crowds. In the end, both still provide access to the next area via paths along the platform's outer edge).

Looking around, you find that Comstock himself is nowhere to be found, and as you move past the stage, you come to the edge of the “city platform” structure and look out across open sky and cloud formations towards your tower in the background.

Looking around again, you also notice a small and narrow stair structure that leads down to an under maintenance area of some kind for the city platform structure. And as you reach the bottom, you come across a rather bulky steel doorway that leads to the under area itself.

Elizabeth

(Looks over the door and sees it doesn't have a “normal” lock)

“(Sigh, then softly) After all that, and still no locks to pick, unless...”

(takes out Blaster, then said normally) what's the word on using this here?”



“Zero”

GIVE ME A SECOND
(Longer than normal pause)

Elizabeth
“So?”

“Zero”

THANKS TO ATTEMPT 756483
IT DOES NOW

Elizabeth
“I take it that’s all you could manage to change?”

“Zero”

I THINK THE CORRECT TERM FOR NOW WOULD BE
(Short pause)
BABY STEPS?

Elizabeth
“(Softly) One way of putting it. (Normally) Okay.”

Aiming directly at the dual steel doors, you begin to fire upon it, and just like the many times before it, its appearance starts to shift towards a bright mixture of red and orange, and before long, a large enough hole that you are able to pass through is created.

Elizabeth
(If the player chooses to shoot at anything else in the environment, nothing will happen)
“Huh, I thought you said this thing works now?”

“Zero”

IT DOES
HOWEVER YOUR CURRENT LOCATION
LEAVES LITTLE ROOM FOR
(Short pause)
MISTAKES■

Elizabeth
“Reasonable enough. Though, as we’ve seen, mistake and possibility, often go hand in hand.”

(Short pause)

“But... baby steps will have to do.”



Now passing through the hole you made in the doorway, you transition from the colorful and brightly lit environment of the scene outside, into the dark and dreary under workings of the city platform structure.

Setup in a similar way to what the inside of an airship looks like, though without the presence of giant balloons this time around, you find yourself walking out across a single catwalk like structure that then branches off towards the rest of the mostly “open” space. And as you look outward ahead, you see that the only things that interrupt it are the massive columns that hold up the ceiling structure (space is double height) and a central area which is composed of machinery (marked with the “FINK” label) and a thin glass tube at the very top that contains a small vibrating glowing orb of light suspended in mid-air.

“Zero”

**I AM RECEIVING STRANGE READINGS FROM THE
ECHOLOCATION SWEEPS**

Elizabeth

(Referencing the glowing orb)

“If you mean from the Lutece Particle, then I’m not surprised.”

“Zero”

**AS FAR AS WHAT THE PROJECTION IS PROVIDING
ITS PROPERTIES APPEAR TO BE**

(Short pause)

UNKNOWABLE

Elizabeth

“Sounds about right... (softer) in more ways than one.”

Making your way to the opposite side of the space, you begin to pass by the “Lutece Particle Device,” but as you do, you discover something unexpected on the floor just in front of the machine (the front being the side you couldn’t see when you first entered, though other points of entry do exist).

Elizabeth

“(Startled gasp)”

Laid out across the metal grating of the catwalk structure, you find skeletal remains still partially clothed in what appears to be an outfit that belongs not to the surrounding projected world of Columbia, but to the present day. (A severely aged implant looking device can also be seen protruding from the skull)

Elizabeth

“(Gets down on one knee to get a better look, and finds what looks like a patch of some kind, and as she moves away a piece of clothing that is covering the rest, it exposes a name stitching)

(Softly) JC... Granger...”

“Zero”

**I THINK WE CAN NOW ACCURATELY ASSUME
WHAT THE OBSTRUCTIONS ARE■**



Houser Manifestation
(From behind you, and after you've read the message)
"Yes, you most certainly can."

Elizabeth
(While still on your knees next to the corpse)
"(Softly) Houser."

Houser Manifestation
(While still walking towards you)
"I must admit, you've got quite the imagination, kid."

Elizabeth
(As Houser comes to a stop just a few meters away from you)
"(Softly) Were it only." (Gets up and faces Houser)
"So, care to share what happened, now?"

Houser Manifestation
(Turns to look out towards the surrounding area)
"(Sigh) People... (tilts head downward) people happened."

(Short pause)

"It was a new frontier. One which could be (gestures arms outward)
(slight chuckle when said) whatever they desired. But they didn't stop there, no, they
kept going, it's what they do, and in the end, (turns back towards you) they got me,
(somber) and a whole lot more."

Elizabeth
"And exactly, what, are you, then?"

Houser Manifestation
"I was the first. A replication at its core no less.
But it didn't take them long to get past that barrier, either."
(Starts walking back over to the remains)

"And though seen as a bridge too far for many, others,
figured to get as close to the edge as... humanly possible.
(After walking just past the remains, he stops and looks down again).

Elizabeth
"The first, but that would mean... for all that time, they just left you here?"

Houser Manifestation
"They left me in charge, that is, before the more... hands off, side of automation came along and
casted me aside. And after what I started had its way with the rest of the populace, there was
nothing. Until they came, and used this place... (short pause, then more somber)... used me...
as a means to satisfy their dreams, their hopes, but most of all of course, their vanity."



Houser Manifestation (Continued)

“Though, to go through so much to get here. Reworking the pillars, and even going so far as to wipe out the automation itself, modifying it into this... perversion, of the original design, and of cognitive creation, if you will.

(Now standing over the remains and looking directly at it)
“Truly, the deeds of a desperate people know no bounds.”

“(Softly) I hope it was worth it.”

(Short pause, then starts to walk away)

Elizabeth

(After a few seconds)

“You didn’t send the signal... did you?”

Houser Manifestation

“(Softly) Signal? (Turns back towards you again)
“What signal?”

Elizabeth

“(Sighs, then softly) Then why send us here?”

Houser Manifestation

“What the hell are you on about?
Better yet, how about I ask a few questions myself.”

Elizabeth

“Be my guest.”

Houser Manifestation

“For starters, why just you?”

Elizabeth

“Just me?... oh.”

Houser Manifestation

“Oh? Oh, what?”

Elizabeth

“(Long sigh) Well, excluding me obviously, I guess you could say...
their leaving was certainly on to something.”

Houser Manifestation

(Chuckles out of disbelief at first, then looks back at the remains)
“Then I was wrong. Desperate... was, too mild a word.”

Elizabeth
"I guess... I could tell you more..."

Houser Manifestation
"No, no... no... (short pause) although... hmm."

Elizabeth
"What?"

"Zero"

**A COGNITION PLOT WOULD QUICKLY GET US ALL
ONTO THE SAME PAGE**
(Short pause)

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER AFTER ALL

Houser Manifestation
"Similar to how I came to be. However, we'd only gain access to memories, rather than everything else. So no worries of seeing double anytime soon, especially with the system stuck in this state."

Elizabeth
"(Softly) Wouldn't be the first time. (Normally) All right, if it'll help. Wha... what do I do?"

"Zero"

**ACCESSING ISOLATED SYSTEMS
INITIALIZING COGNITION PLOTTER**

Houser Manifestation
"Just... don't move, and... don't mind the, odd sensations, this ain't Olympus after all."

Elizabeth
"Odd Sensa... (your vision begins to pulse and become fuzzy, followed by returning to normal after a few seconds) (grunts, followed by heavy breathing)."

Houser Manifestation
"Ah... huh... hmm... (chuckles) surprised the old gal could take it, to be honest."

"Zero"

THIS WILL
(Short pause)

TAKE SOME TIME■

Elizabeth

“Hey, you asked for it. There’s baggage at every turn.... (somber) and everyone’s dead.”

Houser Manifestation

(Starts walking towards a section of catwalk that leads down to another set of steel doors)

Elizabeth

“Wh... where are you going?”

Houser Manifestation

“To see more of this so called, baggage.”

Elizabeth

“And that’ll help us in what way?”

“Zero”

**EXPLORATION OF THE SIMULATION WILL CAUSE
MOMENTARY DIPS IN THE DATA FLOW■**

Elizabeth

“Allowing you a better chance to get back in... (sigh),
so it’s a stroll now.”

Houser Manifestation

(Off in the distance)

“I would say just make use of one of their projection regulator implants,
but it be about a couple of centuries too late.”

(Now at the door, if the player does nothing, Houser will turn towards them, as if to suggest he is waiting)

Elizabeth

“Oh... (takes out Blaster)... sorry, I just...”

Houser Manifestation

“(Chuckles) Thanks to their meddling, I’m merely just
a bystander now. As time takes everything else away.”

Elizabeth

(After firing at the door)

“Yeah, because being able to go where ever you want, and immortality, are such short comings.”

Houser Manifestation

(As the melting of the doorway ceases, you both step through the steam filled hole that was created
and begin to make your way through a short passageway that leads to what appears to be a part of the
catwalk that is exposed to the outside)

“Immortality? Perhaps, though anywhere is a whole other matter. For what is this place, and to an
even greater extent, Zero One, if not cages for the mind. And you, of all people...”

Elizabeth

“Point taken.”

(Short pause while you get closer to the area that is exposed to the outside)



Getting closer to the exposed area, you soon see that a stretch of Sky Line track actually passes over the catwalk structure, and as you fully enter into the space, you see that it is a cargo shipping and delivery area that serves this specific city platform.

Elizabeth

“Wait, did you know this was here?”

Houser Manifestation

“Okay, so perhaps I’m not entirely useless after all, but trust me, a more, heightened, awareness, is all I’ve got to give.”

(Looks out over the catwalk railing towards cloud formations, and though a few city platforms can be seen off in the far distance, the nearby view is just cloud cover and some brief views of what appears to be ocean water down below)

“(Puts both hands onto the railing, then softly) So little means of appreciation, now...”

Elizabeth

(Looks away from the manifestation and towards the above Sky Line track, then towards the High Line device on your right arm)

“You sure this’ll work?”

Houser Manifestation

(Steps away from the railing)

“What’s that, oh, right... of course, (gestures towards the track), it’s a metal track, (gestures towards the device) and that’s an electromagnetic, what’s not to work?”

Elizabeth

“You mean, light pretending to be metal, (activates the device and it is not attracted to it in anyway) remember?”

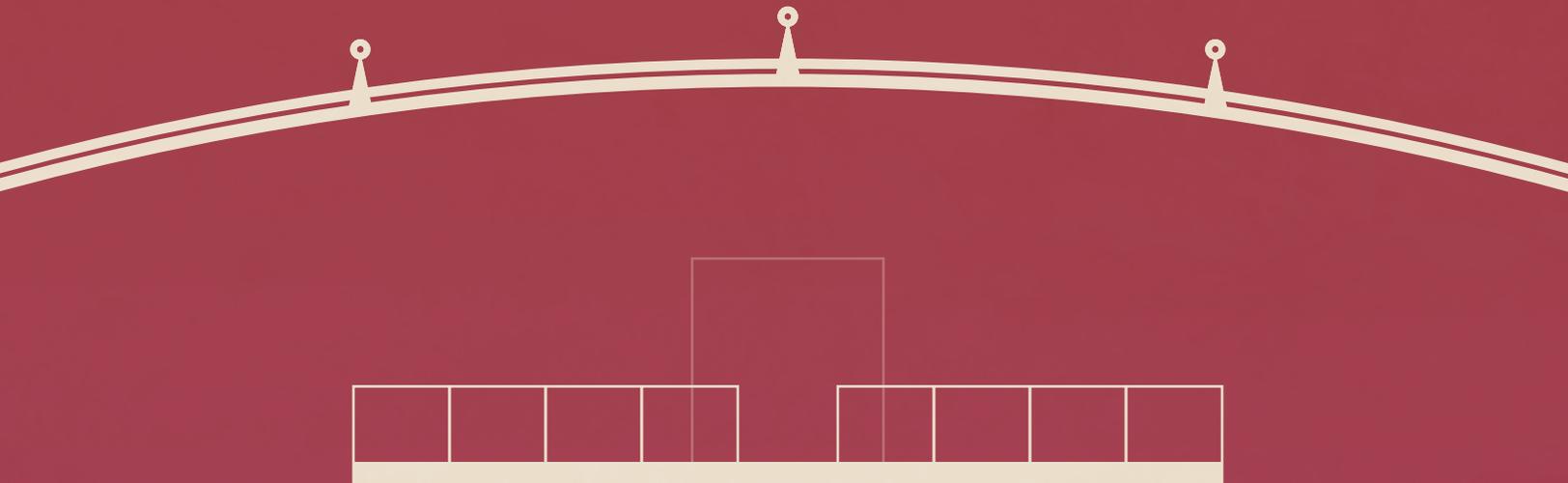
“Zero”

ATTEMPT 1275983 COMPLETE

Houser Manifestation

(As the device starts to become attracted to the track and it starts to tug on your arm)

“Oh, I remember, but now... it doesn’t.”



Elizabeth

(Puts right arm down and turns right to look at the manifestation)

“Okay, and you’ll...”

Houser Manifestation

(Projection fades away and rematerializes to the left of you)

“Make use of that oh so heavy burden (slight smirk).”

Elizabeth

“And we just have to keep moving?”

(Looks back at the High Line device and makes final adjustments)

(Looks back up at the Sky Line track)

Houser Manifestation

“Preferably yes, though, as I suggested, a little sight seeing can’t hurt.”

Elizabeth

“Here, everything hurts.”

Houser Manifestation

“(Sigh) I know.”

Fully activating the High Line device, you make a jumping motion towards the Sky Line track, and just as if you were using it on the High Line itself, you are pulled upwards towards it and come to a stop as the device reaches its levitating position.

Houser Manifestation

(From down below, and said just after you engage with the track)

“Just don’t forget, what you’ll be returning to, if and when this passes.”

Elizabeth

“(Softly) Fine by me.”

With the track going off in both directions, you decide to move forward instead of turning around to head the other direction (the choice is up to the player).

Now descending down the curvature of the track, you begin to pick up speed, and after a few seconds, you plunge into the cloud cover that surrounds the area.

Reducing your visibility to only a few meters, you continue to gain momentum, and as you appear to reach peak velocity, you see the track begin to go upward, and after another few seconds, you break free from the clouds and are presented with an overview of several other city platforms that are clustered together (with smaller isolated ones surrounding it, but still connected via the Sky Line network).

Elizabeth

(While taking in the sight just before the track moves towards the nearest city platform)

“(Softly) A waste then, a waste now.”

(Gameplay note: At this point, the player's ability to explore really opens up once again like it did in Olympus, with the density of Columbia ideally providing numerous locales to investigate, and small moments of "side narrative," ranging from conversations between Liz, Zero, and Houser, to things that just happen around you while you make your way through the city. Which by the way, is totally up to the player on how they want to traverse it, so either quickly via the Sky Line to get the must "broad" experience, or slowly via walking around in order to see moments in greater detail)

(The following is just one of the many possible "experience paths")

Getting closer to the platform, you notice that the track leads into another cargo shipping and delivery area (however this time, it connects to the side of the platform, rather than being situated underneath it), and as you look ahead, you also see several "cargo cars" sitting motionless on the area of track that leads out of the station, forcing you to disengage from it.

(Gameplay note: this is done in order to give the player the option to either manually move the cars out of the way so as to continue on their way, or decide to do some exploration via walking around)

Disengaging from the track, you approach a small enclosed area near the center of the cargo station which contains the controls for manipulating the track. And just as you enter the space and pull on the lever marked "Emergency Track Clear," the communicator goes off.

"Zero"

SOMETHING IS BETTER THAN NOTHING

Elizabeth

"Oh come on, not you too."

"Zero"

PERHAPS WE WERE SENT HERE FOR THIS

Elizabeth

"Ha, how about we get out of this place, specifically, for starters, and maybe I'll consider that possibility."

(Short pause)

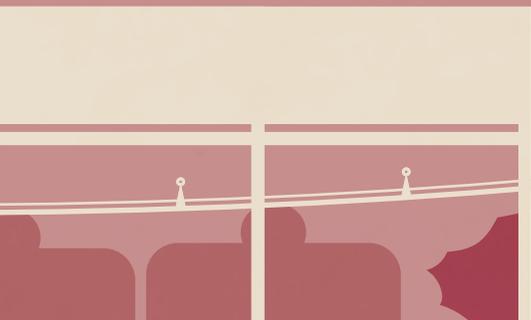
"Though, as you might know by now, that, to me, just seems to be..."

"Zero"

NOT THEIR STYLE■

Elizabeth

"Something like that."



Looking back over the now cleared Sky Line track, you pause for a moment, and after thinking things over, you decide (player choice) to walk away from the cargo station and towards an alleyway that continues on into a brightly lit space, which you assume must be the central area of this city platform in particular (scene note: currently the sun is low in the sky on the opposite side of your current location, thus casting this area in shadow)

Elizabeth

“(Sigh) Why let it go to anymore more waste than it already has.”

(While nearing the beginning of the alleyway)

Houser Manifestation

(From behind you)

“I knew you’d come around eventually.”

Elizabeth

(Turns towards the manifestation)

“(Slight chuckle) Then consider me glad that you’re pleased. But know that it’s because all of this is, literally, only second worse to nothing.”

Houser Manifestation

“Just this, huh? Then what about...”

Elizabeth

(Interjects)

“One and the same.”

Houser Manifestation

“Ah yes, of course.”

(Short pause as you both walk down the alleyway)

Houser Manifestation

“Quite the concept. And to think, failure is all we choose to see.”

Elizabeth

(Now at the halfway point of the alleyway)

“Failure?”

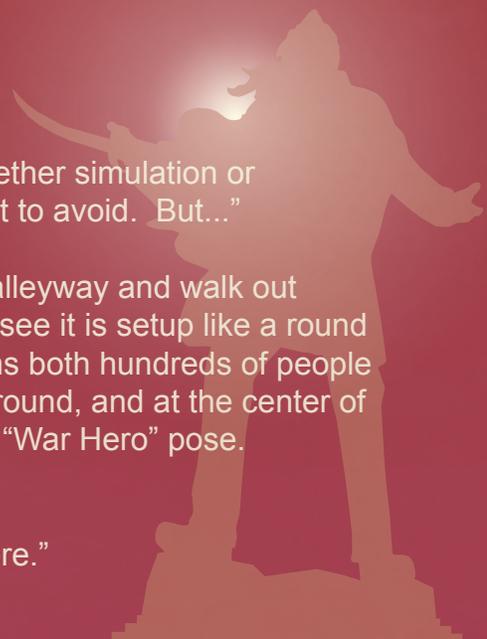
Houser Manifestation

“The Jump tests, each time they failed to produce results, whether simulation or reality, we took as not getting what we wanted. An end result to avoid. But...”

Just then, you both pass into the mass of light at the end of the alleyway and walk out into the central area of the city platform, and as you look around, you see it is setup like a round about, with buildings and shops surrounding a brick street that contains both hundreds of people walking around and several “Automated Stallions” pulling carriages around, and at the center of it all, you find a large granite statue of Comstock himself in a “War Hero” pose.

Houser Manifestation (Continued)

“...leave it to desire to blind one to so much more.”



Elizabeth
"Perhaps... it was for the best."

Houser Manifestation
"Tell that to the 10,000 on the Edictal."
(Starts to walk away)

Elizabeth
(If the player chooses to follow)
"If you don't mind me asking. What, do you, think happened?"

Houser Manifestation
(Walks over to a nearby flower shop)
"Before today? Bad luck, and a tragic end to a lot who deserved better. Now though, well, seems the big guy was right, seeing (picks a flower from one of the bouquets and examines it) is believing." (Puts flower back into the bouquet, and starts to walk off again towards the statue)

(Becoming more distant if the player doesn't follow)
"But hey, on the bright side, if this proves anything more, it's that it all just worked out for someone else, and they went on to live happily ever after, if there is such a thing."

Elizabeth
"(Softly to herself, and in a somber tone, as his statement relates to past experiences) ...yeah."

Appearing to now wonder off past the statue, you decide to go your own way and begin to take a look around the area by yourself (the player can either choose to do this, or continue to follow Houser, which will lead to a different "experience path").

Making your way past the nearby masses, you continue to get funny looks from the "better off" (white upper class) citizens of Columbia, and small bits of reactionary dialogue, such as "Since when did the Founders allow the circus in town?" and "Leave it to the sodom to have no shame in fashion."

Eventually making your way to the other side of the town square/round about, you approach a connecting bridge that leads to another city platform, and as you approach the bridge itself, the following poster on a nearby Columbia Authority guard post (very small, like a ticket booth for a parking lot), catches your eye:



Elizabeth
“(Softly) Runaway Handyman?... (normally)
well that’s new.”

“Zero”

IT CERTAINLY IS

Elizabeth
“What does that mean then?”

“Zero”

**MY BRIEF ATTEMPTS TO ANALYZE THE DATA STREAMS
APPEAR TO SHOW THAT ALGORITHM LOCKING IS NO
LONGER ACTIVE WITHIN THE SERVER NETWORK**

Elizabeth
“Brustle all over again. And what about other changes?”

“Zero”

A PATH OF LEAST RESISTANCE IS LIKELY AT PLAY HERE

Elizabeth
“Huh, brawn before brains.”

“Zero”

**OF COURSE
TIME MAY YET CAUSE MORE COMPLEX
RUNTIMES TO ALTER AS WELL**

Elizabeth
“As it always does.”

Looking back (if the player chooses to) before making your way across the connecting bridge,
you notice that the Houser Manifestation is now nowhere to be seen.

Elizabeth
(Only spoken if the player choose to look back)
“And what of our, acquaintance.”

“Zero”

(In reference to the “experience path” the player could have gone through had they followed him)

I THINK THE WORDS HE WISHES TO CONVEY ARE
(Short pause)

CATCHING UP ON SOME HISTORY■

Elizabeth

“Is that so? Then, maybe you could tell him he shouldn’t expect to like what he finds.”

“Zero”

HE IS ALREADY WELL AWARE OF THAT FACT

BUT LIKE HE SAID

(Short pause)

SEEING IS BELIEVING■

Now crossing the bridge, you enter into the adjacent city platform that is configured in a “U” shape, with a large courtyard filled with trees, flower planters, and a walking path (so a park space), all of which is then surrounded by more buildings that seem to be just residencies this time around (no shops).

Though also fully explorable, your attention is taken once again as you notice a pair of Columbia Authority officers ride in on a nearby Sky Line track and join up with another group that has amassed near what seems to be a part of the outer edge of the city platform that has been severely damaged.

Getting closer, you begin to hear the conversation that is going on between the officers.

Sky Line Officer 1 (Towards main group)

“I take it this is the spot?”

Officer (Main group)

“Sure is, locals say they saw it fall a few hundred feet after breaking free from the Handy Hauler.”

Sky Line Officer 2

(Looks over the side and down towards the gash)

“Left quite the mark, must of been some sight.”

Officer 2 (Main group)

“And, Lord willing, the last.”

Sky Line Officer 1

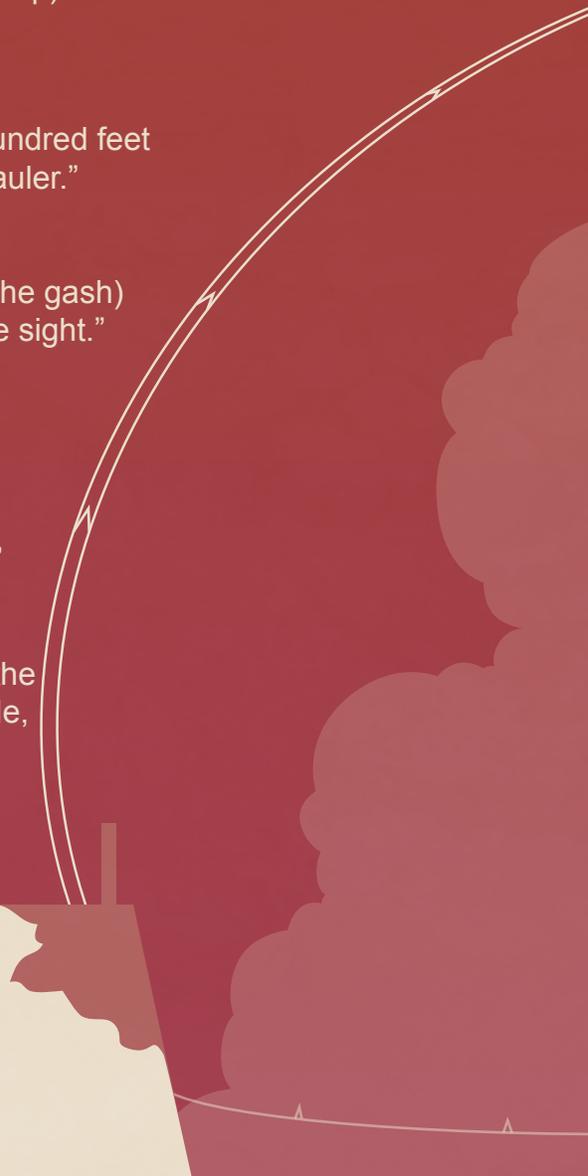
“Any leads as to where it went?”

Officer (Main group)

“Word is it managed to slip under the cloud cover and onto the underside, that’s where you two come in.”

Sky Line Officer 1

“Right, (to officer 2) let’s go.”



“Zero”

THEIR ASSESSMENT IS MISLEADING

Elizabeth
“Not surprising.”

“Zero”

**MY SWEEPS ARE PICKING UP SIZABLE GROUPINGS OF
MICRO FRACTURES ALONG THE OUTER HULL OF THE PLATFORM**

Elizabeth
“Right where they should be. Your point?”

“Zero”

THEY END WELL BEFORE REACHING THE UNDERSIDE
(Short pause)
YOUR OPTICAL IMPLANTS SHOULD ALSO BE ABLE TO DETECT THEM

Not wanting to attract attention, you move over to the side and then look back over towards the gash, and as you concentrate (by zooming in), the enhancement abilities of the Upgrade kick in once again.

A mixture of even greater color enhancement, x-ray, and infrared, large footprint like markings start to become visible around the gash, and just like Zero said, they move away from it and end before reaching the underside.

Elizabeth
“Huh, alright then, let’s see...”
(Notices that the last set of markings are much brighter in color than the others)
“...judging by this, looks like he jumped, question is...”

Officer (Left to watch over the gash after the others left)
“Excuse me, miss, can I help you? This area is currently off limits to the public.”

Elizabeth
(Looks back up towards the officer)
“Wha... oh, sorry, just sight seeing. I... I don’t get out much. I’ll be on my way now.”

Officer
“(Annoyed) Hmm (walks back into lookout position).”

Elizabeth
“Probably best to keep moving, for real. Although, if he did jump, it could be on the way...”

“Zero”

TWO BIRDS WITH ONE STONE?■

Elizabeth
“(Slight chuckle) So long as not literally.”



Choosing to keep moving, you once again activate the High Line device and start to make your way down the section of Sky Line track which heads in the direction the Handy Man footprints were motioning towards.

Passing into more cloud cover, you eventually make your way through, followed by the track taking you both in and around several other city platforms (all of which the player can investigate if they so choose), and though at first it appears as if the trail of the Handyman has gone cold, your continuing efforts of focusing with the Luna's Light implants pay off as you discover a new set of micro fractures atop a massive set of structures that seem to be a part of Columbia's "Emporia" district (commercial center, consisting of more "stately" type buildings).

Elizabeth

"More of them, and here I was thinking we'd actually wouldn't find anything."

As for the building the tracks are on, the roof structure consists of a giant dome, and as you disengage from the track, you land on top a small landing that surrounds the flag pole that crowns it.

"Zero"

WOULD NOT FIND OR

(short pause)

DID NOT WANT TO FIND?■

Elizabeth

"A mix, but since we're here, might as well see what's up."

Now looking over the railing that surrounds the flag pole landing, you follow the series of steps across the curvature of the dome until they come to a stop at the point where the dome structure meets the flat roof of one of the building's wings (overall, think Washington DC's Capital building).

Using the Sky Line track, you manage to land upon the section of the roof where the tracks continue on (Gameplay note: the footprints can only be seen from a range of a few dozen meters or so, thus the need to follow on foot rather than figuring out the entire trail from afar). Following the tracks, you reach the far end of the roof where a raised middle skylight section terminates, and as you turn the corner and face the other side, you discover a massive breach has been made through it, and as you look in, you find it drops down into an attic/storage like space that serves the building below.

Looking closer, you quickly realize that the entire space has been ravaged.



Consisting of mostly wooden crates, or what use to be, since most have been tossed about and broken open, you drop down into the attic like space and take a greater assessment of the damage.
(Reminder, the player can choose to move on to do other things at any point)

From small stone statues and metallic art like pieces, to even what appears to be a series of prototype Vigor bottles (all empty). The more you look around, the more you feel as if this building is home to a museum of some kind, with this entire area either being a storage space for safe keeping, or just a place to keep that which is no longer desirable.

“Zero”

I DO NOT UNDERSTAND

(Short pause)

WHAT WAS TO BE GAINED BY DOING THIS?

Elizabeth

(While looking over things)

“More like expending.”

“Zero”

EXPENDING WHAT?

Elizabeth

“Rage.”

“Zero”

RAGE

(Short pause)

UNLESS I AM COMPARING INCORRECTLY

PLOT DATA SUGGESTS YOU HAVE EXHIBITED SIMILAR BEHAVIOR

Elizabeth

“I couldn’t say you are. Though, anger may be a more, accurate term. But with it, well... let’s just say that, rage, is the easiest way to expel it, (looks around) With regret, more often than not, being quick to follow.”

“Zero”

THE ENERGY HAS TO GO SOMEWHERE■

Elizabeth

“True, but the where and how, is up to you.

Continuing to look around, you eventually stumble upon a series of damaged floor boards and as you follow them towards the opposite side of the attic space, the severity of the damage gets worse, until finally, you come across yet another sizable breach. Working things out in your head, you figure that during the Handyman's fit of rage, his actions led to the floor collapsing beneath him, and as you focus in on the breach itself, you see more micro fracture footprints on the floor the collapse leads into and you figure he continued on from there.

Elizabeth
(Upon looking down the collapsed floor)
“(Softly) Cause and effect.”

Making your way down the hole, you discover the new area to be yet another storage like space, however, unlike the more isolated attic above, this area has access to a Sky Line cargo station, which you can see directly ahead in the distance thanks to a path of more destroyed crates.
(For this storage area, think of the ending shot of Raiders of the Lost Ark, just smaller of course)

Approaching the station, you pass by more damaged art pieces and other items that appear to be of value, and once getting close enough, you notice that the micro fracture signatures transition from the floor to the Sky Line track itself (the signatures are now hand print looking and spaced out since the Handyman traversed the track as if they were like monkey bars).

“Zero”

YOU SURE ABOUT THIS?

Elizabeth
“Sure about what?”

“Zero”

CURIOSITY KILLED THE CAT

Elizabeth
“I thought you existed to know?”

“Zero”

AND I THOUGHT YOU WANTED TO GET OUT

(Short pause)

IN ONE PIECE■

Elizabeth
“I know what I said, I just have a feeling I guess.
And besides, surviving and living... (activates High Line device)
...aren't the same thing.



Engaging the Sky Line track, you begin to follow the new set of signatures that are scattered across it.

Picking up speed, you descend out of the building and pass through yet another formation of clouds, and as they eventually break away, you see that the track is taking you on a route that passes around the outside of the downtown hub area of the Emporia district, and though other Sky Line tracks come into close proximity to the one you are currently traveling on, you decide to only switch to the ones that have the signatures.

(Gameplay note: once again, at anytime, the player can chose to break away from this “experience path” entirely, or take time to do some side exploration, then continue on)

Continuing to follow the micro fracture signatures, the trail, in time, leads you into what seems to be yet another grouping of residency city platforms that reside on the outskirts of the Emporia district, and as the track enters a curve which surrounds the exterior of the platforms, you notice the signatures end and transition once again, this time onto the roof top of one of the apartment like structures.

Realizing this, you drop down from the track onto the roof, and while doing so, you begin to hear what sounds like a mass of people, and as you move to look over the side, which you would of done anyways since its the direction the signatures go, you find that both dozens of citizens and Columbia Authority officials have gathered in front of the building you are standing atop of.

While still looking down upon the gathering, you also notice that the facade of the building has been damaged. From broken away balconies, to ripped off portions of the brick exterior, the damages continue downward for 3 whole stories, before leading to yet another breach that the Handyman must of made in order to gain access to the interior of the building.

Elizabeth

“Okay, so he went inside, (looks around, but sees neither a stairwell roof access, or even a fire escape). But of course, no proper way down.

”Zero”

ATTEMPT 7569384 COMPLETE

(Short pause)

THEN WE USE THE IMPROPER WAY■



Elizabeth
“Di... did you just...”

“Zero”

I FIGURED WE NEEDED BETTER MEANS FOR
(Short pause)
POSSIBILITIES■

Figuring that the changes have to deal with how effective the Master Blaster is, you take it out and set it to the heat ray function, followed by aiming down towards an area of the roof just ahead of you.

Blasting away at the roof top, it doesn't take long before the materials it is made of begin to respond accordingly and break down. And before long, a breach large enough for you to drop down into is created (a mixture of melted iron, charred wood, and pulverized brick).

Elizabeth
“That's more like it.”
(Holsters the blaster)

Before entering into the breach however, you manage to hear a new round of noises from the crowd below, mostly likely as a response to the sounds that were generated from the blast.

Elizabeth
(Just before dropping down into the top floor)
“Best not to overstay our welcome.”

Now on the top floor, you look around for the main stairwell, and not wanting to waste anymore time then you have to, you opt to utilize the echolocation/map maestro combo to quickly point you in the right direction.

(Gameplay note: ideally, most of the building would be explorable, and ALL OF IT would be destructible, and should the player do something that makes it impossible to proceed with this specific “experience path,” then they'll just have to move on then, though they would really need to go out of their way to make that happen)

Accessing the main set of stairs, you take it 3 stories down to where the outside breach was located, and upon reaching the floor in question, you soon reacquire the Handyman's handiwork.

Continuing where he left off in the storage areas, the hallway ahead is barely recognizable in comparison to the ones up stairs (unless the player destroyed them as well because they couldn't help themselves in seeing just how destructible the environment really is).

From paintings torn in half, and the once exquisite Victorian wood work being splintered apart, to light fixtures being either completely shattered or sparking on and off, with one at the very end of the hallway producing a small patch of flames on the floor, the entire area is like that of a war zone.

(Gameplay note: going back to the flame, it can be put out with the ice ray if the player chooses to do so, if not however, it will, ideally of course, dynamically grow into a much larger blaze that can become problematic if given enough time)

Now at the end of the hallway, you discover a room that has been almost completely spared by the Handyman's rampage through the floor (the doorway into the room being the only real casualty due to the Handyman's bulky size). However, when using the optical implants, you realize that the micro fracture footprint signatures continue on into the room itself, and you piece together that perhaps this space in particular might of been his desired destination, and better still, may have been an area of personal importance.

Elizabeth

(As you step into what use to be where the door frame to the room was)
“(Softly) Some restraint for a change.”

Passing through the opening, you begin to properly enter into the room and decide to have a look around at the personal effects that are scattered throughout, which are as follows:

Laid out in a “L” like shape, you first pass by a bathroom and a storage closet before entering into the larger rectangular “great room” like space, where you find a living area, a kitchenette, and a dining space, all perfectly still intact (aesthetic wise, you get an upper class feel from it all, though not the richest by any means).

On the opposite side of the great room area, you find another breach which continues on through several other apartments, until terminating at an exterior wall and giving way to the brightness of the outside (since you are too far away at the moment, all you can see right now at the end of the series of breaches is a bright spot)

As for personal belongings, you find several pieces of jewelry and necklaces, reinforcing the assumption that the current occupant of this apartment is from the upper class. You also come across a series of framed photographs on one of walls in the short hallway that leads to the sole bedroom of the apartment, and while looking over them, you find that most of the subjects in the photos are of a middle aged white couple, and at the center, you find a bare spot and a rectangle of slightly darker wallpaper, giving you the impression that a certain photograph in particular has been removed from the series (some have fallen down of course, but if you count them, you'll find one is missing).

Elizabeth

“Huh...”

“Zero”

(After some noises can be heard below)

APPROACHING THE OVERSTAYING STAGE ■

Elizabeth

(Looks towards the wall breach)

“(Hesitant) ...Right.”

(Gameplay note: depending on the timing, the player may need to get creative with their abilities in order to slow down the officers who are making their way up to the room, whether that be destroying an area of the floor that leads into the room via the blaster, or using Armstrong to put something of large enough size in their way. Also, it should be noted, that though the environment is destructible, people in the world can not be directly effected by the player's abilities at this time)

Elizabeth

(While making your way through the series of breaches, though as mentioned above, depending on the timing, this dialogue can happen if the officers get too close as well)

"Just so we're clear, are the people..."

"Zero"

NO

NOT YET

(Short pause, and during this time, you reach the end of the series of breaches that took you through the other apartments and discover a nearby Sky Line track just outside the exterior wall breach, with more micro fracture signatures continue on across it)

AND IT MAY TAKE MORE TIME

THAN THE OTHERS TO DO SO

Elizabeth

"In other words, keep a distance, or get creative."

"Zero"

THAT WOULD BE IDEAL

Hearing shouting from behind you, you look back to see a grouping of Columbia Authority officers now in the apartment you were just looking over, and as they point towards you and start to make their way to your location, you quickly activate the High Line device and begin to follow the newest set of micro fracture signatures.

After putting some distance between you and the group of officers at the apartment, you make another series of switches between several other Sky Line tracks while tracking the new signatures, and in doing so, make it impossible for the officers to continue any kind of pursuit.

Passing around more outlying city platforms of the Emporia district, you finally see the signatures transition to what appears to be the most distant platform of them all, but as you disengage from the track and start to take a look around, you find nothing but another single set of foot print signatures that are slightly darker than the others, indicating that he took another lengthy jump to some other distant location that apparently couldn't be accessed via the Sky Line network.

Elizabeth

"(Elongated) And he jumped again... (looks out towards the area where the jump appears to point to)

Just then, you spot something in the distance, but due to the cloud cover, you barely manage to make out what it is. However, what you do see is more than enough. That being the unmistakable roof tops of the towering factory structures of Finkton.

Elizabeth

"(Softly, and with disdain) Finkton."

"Zero"

SEEMS OUR RUNAWAY WENT BACK HOME■

Elizabeth
“The one place I was looking to avoid the most.”

“Zero”

STILL CURIOUS NOW?

Elizabeth
“Even if I was, how would we get there?”

“Zero”

IF I RECALL AGAIN LAST TIME WAS A ACCIDENT?

Elizabeth
“More or less.”

Now looking around, you find the current platform you are on right now to be mostly a Sky Line cargo routing hub of some kind (so like the other cargo stations, only here, the whole platform is dedicated to it).

As more time passes, you nearly get to the point of moving on, when suddenly you hear noises ring out from nearby cloud cover, and before long, you see what appears to be a Finkton Cargo Barge (however, this one has a bulkier hull than the ones you’ve seen in the past) slowly make its way out from the clouds below and come to a stop near a dock area at the opposite side of the platform. And a few seconds after that, the single massive crane that tops its cabin area, begins to go to work on both moving some of its cargo crates into the main stockpile that already exists on the platform, as well as taking on some new ones.

Getting closer, you manage to make out the following label across its bow, one which may help explain why this Cargo Barge in particular is different from others you’ve seen before:

**HANDY
HAULER
FINK**

Elizabeth
“Well I’ll be.”

“Zero”

WOULD THIS FALL UNDER ACCIDENT AS WELL?■

Elizabeth
“Depending on the retrospect, it’ll either be that, or fortune.”

(Gameplay note: Ideally, there would be other ways to get to Finkton, but this path would reward the player’s patience and desire to look around the immediate area before giving up and moving on)

Nearing the dock area itself, you then notice two workers on the barge walk out from the cabin, with one stepping onto the dock below and the other staying near the cargo crates on its main deck, where he proceeds to watch over what seems to be an entirely autonomous operation that is being conducted by the crane overhead.

Elizabeth
(While watching the two workers)
“Now... how to get on board.”

“Zero”

YOU SEEM TO HAVE EXPERIENCE WITH THAT TOO■

Elizabeth
“Hopefully, with better results, this time around.”

Closing in on the bow section of the barge, you see the worker who got off start to make his way around the cargo crate stockpile, and seeing as you would prefer not to be discovered, you carefully make your way around the area so as to avoid both his sight, as well as the sight of the worker on the barge itself.

Successful in your efforts, you make your way to the starboard side of the barge (the workers are still on the port side for now) and find what looks like an access hatch on the side of the bulky hull. With the worker on the dock now out of your sight, you decide to waste little time in case he comes around the corner, and begin to use the blaster’s heat ray to melt away the locking mechanisms, followed by you using Armstrong to pry off the rest of the thick steel door (the player could just melt a hole through the hatch itself, but with the worker making his rounds, it may take too long).

With the hatch now cleared, you carefully step inside into a darkened passageway, but after only taking a few steps forward, you reach a t-junction, and as you turn to your right, you see several large holding cell like structures that continue on down the length of the barge.

Getting closer to the first set, you see they are labeled “1” (on your left) and “2” (on your right) respectively, with you then seeing that the numerical identification continues down the isle as your Luna’s Light implants better adjust to the poorly lit space (overall, the only light in this area is what manages to seep through the small slivers between the floor boards above).

Approaching a doorway to one of the cells, you find no openings for you to use so as to get a glimpse of what lies inside, and though you could just use the blaster once more to gain access, both the label “Handy Hauler” outside, along with what sounds like soft groans coming from within the cell itself, make you holster the device for the time being.



Elizabeth
(If the player tries to use the blaster)
“I... don’t think so.”

(What is then said regardless)
“(Somber) Robbed even in name.”



(Gameplay note: If the player is caught by one of the workers before entering the barge, they can either escape quickly at that moment, or stick around to confront them, causing Liz to resort to, “sweet talking,” her way into getting a ride with them in the cabin all the way to Finkton. However, due to this, “failure,” the player will of course then miss the opportunity to see what lies in the hull area. Also, as a third option, the player can just “dispose” of the two men as they see fit and use the hauler as they please, whether that be guiding it to Finkton, or using it to escape Columbia altogether, right then and there)

Just then, you hear foot steps up above, followed by the barge jutting forward, in what you assume must be it making its way out of the dock.

Feeling the barge pick up speed (or in the case of the player, hear it speed up) you make your way down the isle, where you continue to hear the soft groans of the Handymen who are currently “stored” here, along with the occasional clunking sound as they make subtle movements with their massive metal bodies.

Looking around some more, you eventually come across an unlocked cell which is empty. And as you take a look inside, you find its condition to be no better than what you would find in a zoo (especially in the early 20th century), with the back wall consisting of a set of steel chains and five massive cuffs (four for the arms and legs, and a slightly bigger one for the neck).

“Zero”

YOU WERE RIGHT

(Short pause)

SURVIVING AND LIVING ARE NOT THE SAME■

Elizabeth

“Appears he figured that as well.”

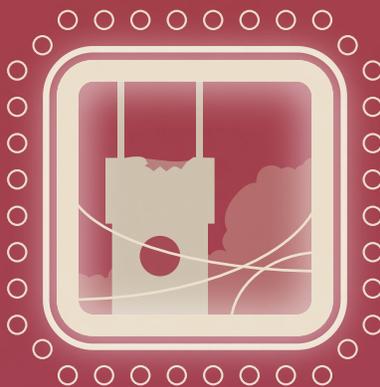
After taking in the sight of the empty cell, you feel/hear the barge begin to slow in its motion and decide to head back to the hatch port you used to get inside. And as you look through it, you see cloud formations outside begin to give way to the now much closer factory towers of Finkton.

Passing by several towers now, you notice a new series of Sky Line tracks come into view which swerve both through and around the towers themselves, and not before too long, you again start to pick up new micro fracture signatures atop one of the towers (surrounded by normal physical damage), followed by it transitioning onto one of the nearby tracks.

Elizabeth

“There you are, okay...(positions herself within the hatch so as to make a jump towards one of the passing tracks outside).”

(Gameplay note: In this situation, the player can either jump onto one of the nearby Sky Line tracks, or wait for the barge to dock at a slightly farther away location. Like wise, if they are in the cabin during this time, they can choose to “jump ship” at anytime)



Activating the High Line device, you leap out from the hatch port towards the nearest Sky Line track and successfully engage with it, and while doing so, you make the necessary course corrections so as to continue along the trail of signatures that were left behind by the runaway (ideally though, the player is once again free to fully explore).

Elizabeth

(Once you've made it onto the track that has the new set of signatures)
“(Softly) Alright, so where are you heading now?”

Taking you past several other factory towers, the Sky Line then begins to descend towards the lower levels of Finkton. However, instead of passing through a layer of cloud cover like so many times before, this time you make your way through a thick layer of smog that has engulfed the area.

Elizabeth
“(Coughs)”

Upon making it through your coughing fit, as well as the most dense part of the smog, the track bottoms out and you find yourself now only a few dozen meters or so above what seems to be a massive entry space of some kind for one of the major factories directly ahead (which the track leads into), with what looks to be hundreds, if not thousands of workers (mostly consisting of ethnic minorities) lined up to enter it, with what you assume must be the Handymen from the hauler, being escorted out by more officers into positions all around the area so as to keep things “orderly” (thanks to the smog cover, the people below are unaware of your presence).

A few seconds later, the track leads you into an upper area of the factory itself, and seeing as the micro fracture signatures continue on inside, you decide to keep following (though the player still has the option to deviate if they so choose).

Now inside, you see the signatures transition away from the track and onto a series of massive catwalks that criss cross all over the upper portion of the factory. Which as you look below, is an ore processing facility, with the workers outside being funneled in and put to work at their respected stations all across several levels which surround gigantic smelters and other large pieces of machinery that work in conjunction with them.

Looking back at the catwalk ahead, you see little need to follow the immediate set of signatures since another sizable breach along one of the vertical skylights just ahead is clearly visible.

Elizabeth

(Upon disengaging from the track and quickly noticing the breach ahead, she looks down at the massive scene of industry going on below)

“Zero”

**ONE COULD SAY THE CREATION OF MY KIND WAS OUT OF SYMPATHY
BUT■**

Houser Manifestation (out of sight to your right on the catwalk, and getting closer)
“Why care (slight chuckle) for one worker, when no worker, can do triple the work in half the time.”

Elizabeth
“Had your fill, yet?”

Houser Manifestation
“More than I care to stand, if that’s what you mean.”
(During the Houser led “experience path” the player would of taken a more detailed look at the hardships that were endured by the more “worse off” citizens of Columbia, especially from the stand point of the African American)

Elizabeth
“Then there you have it, baggage. And enough blame for all to share.”

Houser Manifestation
“(Chuckles, then puts hands onto the catwalk railing and looks down below)
(Softly) Let those, who are without sin, cast the first stones.”

(Short pause)

“(Gets back into the moment) Anyways... (takes hands off railing and turns back towards you) I see you’ve been doing some scavenging of your own.”

Elizabeth
“A lesser way to put it, but sure.”

Houser Manifestation
(Looks at the sky light breach)
“Hmm... then we should keep moving, (starts walking towards the breach) after all, those attempts may yet finally bare results when we want it the least.”

“Zero”

ATTEMPT 354675827 COMPLETE

(Short pause)

SHOULD I SUSPEND THIS ACTION?

Elizabeth
“I... (short pause) just keep at it.”

“Zero”

IF YOU INSIST ■

Walking towards the breach in the vertical sky light, you soon see that the signatures, along with normal physical damage on the brick work, continue onto an adjacent factory tower, and as you look up, you see they go all the way up to the rooftop.

Houser Manifestation
(While looking up as well)

“He certainly wasn’t given the time, nor the means, for subtlety.”

Elizabeth
(While looking over the wall, she notices several freight hooks stretching out from small hatch doors and cargo platforms all across the factory wall)
“Neither are we. See those hooks...”

Houser Manifestation
“Yeah, yeah, I know.”
(Dematerializes, then rematerializes a few seconds later atop the rooftop and looks down over the side towards you)
(Waves hands, then shouts, which you just barely hear)
“Well, come on then!”

Elizabeth
“At least we’re still on the same page.”
(While activating the High Line device)
“Just a thought, but... was the, real, Houser anything like this?”

“Zero”

ACCORDING TO WHAT I CAN GET AT WITHIN THE ARCHIVE
(Short pause)

ONLY IN APPEARANCE■

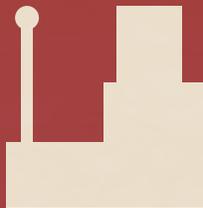
Elizabeth
(Softly while still adjusting the device)
“Guess he liked what he got.”

Fully activating the High Line device, you position yourself in order to make a jump for the nearest freight hook, and after doing so successfully, you quickly then proceed to jump to and from the ones directly above you, until you finally are able to jump towards a freight hook that is located on the rooftop itself.

Houser Manifestation
(Right as you reach the freight hook that is situated on top of the roof)
“Having fun?”

Elizabeth
(Upon disengaging from the hook)
“You wouldn’t know, would you?”

Houser Manifestation
(Starts walking towards a horizontal sky light that has been breached)
“(Slight chuckle) Turns out you may have been right about the whole burden thing after all.
(Short pause as you both make it to the sky light that has been breached)
“Where’s the satisfaction without the challenge. (Short pause) I mean hell, even, he, said it, too.”



Elizabeth

“Could be worse, you won’t be the one who’ll be in need of a quick way out in case this all goes to hell.”

Houser Manifestation

“A fair point.”

Looking down into the breach that was made in the sky light, you notice that the signatures on the floor inside seem to be wandering around for a bit before moving out of sight.

Elizabeth

(After determining that the broken edges of glass are too dangerous to traverse over, you use the blaster to clear away the rest of the sky light, leaving nothing but a clean opening to drop down from)

Dropping down into the space, you look back up to see Houser also climbing down, rather than resorting to his re-materialization ability.

Elizabeth

(During his climb down, Houser can be seen being clumsy, and after he finally reaches the floor, Liz responds in kind)

“Having fun?”

Houser Manifestation

“Getting there.”

Elizabeth

(Looks around and sees that the signatures move towards yet another breach in the wooden floor, however, as you both look down it, you are unable to see any sort of distinguishable floor, and instead just a large mess of steel beams, and an assortment of large moving gears)

“Hmm... (sees a small metal stairwell nearby) how about we take the stairs this time.”

Houser Manifestation

“You’re the adventurer here, and I just the newcomer. Lead the way.”

Using the stairwell, you descend roughly 3 flights, and while doing so, you observe in greater detail the mechanical operation that is going on, and upon reaching the mid-way point, you realize the space is the inner workings of one of the massive clocks that you’ve seen so many times atop the factory towers throughout Finkton.

Houser Manifestation

“It’s funny.”

Elizabeth

“What is?”

Houser Manifestation

“Fink and all his statues, when in the end, it’s time that dwarfs over all.”

Elizabeth

(Upon reaching the bottom of the stairs, and the base of the clock structure)

“(Slight chuckle) He’d probably agree, thus the statues.”



Walking forward some more, both the physical damage and signatures left behind from the runaway lead you to a passageway which connects to an area that resides outside of the clock mechanism space. However, just as you both begin to walk down it, a rumbling sound is heard just ahead, accompanied by the environment shaking ever so slightly in response, causing the dust and other particulates that have coated the area to become unsettled, creating a subtle mist in the air.

Elizabeth
“(Startled gasp)”

Giving no response as you pass through the mist that has filled the doorway ahead, you cautiously move into the new room, and once getting through the bulk of the dust cloud, you realize that this space is a maintenance shop for the clock itself, with giant wrenches, hammers, and other tools hung all across the wall in front of you, along with several spare gears scattered all about.

But among all of it, you find one object in particular on the work bench that is out of place.

A single picture frame with a portrait of a white couple inside, propped up by a pile of small tools behind it and positioned just right so as to be casted by the light rays that are seeping into the room from a still setting sun outside.

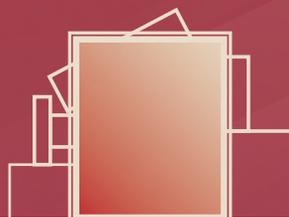
Elizabeth
(Upon remembering that a frame was missing in the apartment)
”(Softly) The missing frame...”

Houser Manifestation
(While you are walking up to it)
“Something familiar?”

Elizabeth
(Right before getting close enough to touch it)
“Yeah... it...”

Just as you reach for the frame itself, another rumble is both felt and heard all around you now, however this time, much more violent, and as you quickly turn around to survey the room, a giant silhouetted mass jumps down from the darker upper portion of the room and into the rays of light, clearly revealing it to be the runaway handyman himself.
(right as this happens, you also notice Houser dematerialize in the background)

Quickly recovering from the drop, his massive metal body begins to rise up from the floor, blocking most of the light behind him (with his pulsing “heart sphere” at his certain now providing most of the light), and as his posture becomes fully upright, his presence dwarfs over you.



Now appearing to examine you, he bends over slightly, bringing his worn down, rugged complexion, and bald headed face right in front of yours. And looking straight into his eyes, you see an expression that at first is of discontentment, most likely for what you were about to do by touching the frame, but is then replaced by a subtle sadness, followed by the Handyman physically gesturing you to the side, and delicately using his bulky metal hands to reposition the frame back into its proper position (it had sloped down due to the rumblings he made when he jumped towards you).

A few seconds later, you see that the Handyman is still fixated on the frame, and no longer seems to be concerned with your presence.

Elizabeth
“Um...”

Not able to even formulate the beginning of a proper response, the Handyman sharply turns towards you, and gives off a short groan, then returns to looking back over the frame.

Houser Manifestation
(After re-materializing)
“(Softly) Maybe we should just....”

Elizabeth
(Slightly turns back and gestures hand, suggesting he not move, or speak)
“She... she meant something to you... didn't she?”

Becoming completely motionless in response, the Handyman then turns again, this time in a slow matter, and just stares at you.

Elizabeth
“You remember, don't you... the life you had before.”

Momentarily looking back at the frame, he then turns completely around to face you, and after a short pause, jumps back up into the dark upper area of the maintenance shop.

Looking up, you loose sight of him, but are able to make out what sounds like pieces of metal and other objects being tossed about, as if he was looking for something, and just after the noises die down, you hear more rumbling, followed by him jumping back down near the frame (a bit more cautious this time, so as to not disturb the repositioned frame on the work bench).

And as he moves to the center of the room, he places a single object onto the wooden floor, which as you move to see, is non other than a voxophone.



Now crouching over the recorder, the Handyman begins to carefully manipulate the controls on it until it finally begins to play (he struggles with having to work with overly large hands and fingers).

Voxaphone Recording

(Audio sounds slowly build up)

“Samuel, when the spells of anger come,
I want you to play this recording and remember that I am the proudest
woman in Columbia to have been your wife.

They said your soul was choked by the fumes in that metal box,
but this I do not believe.

And we shall meet again,
on that eternal shore -- both of us whole and smiling.

I love you. I love you. I love you.”
(Audio winds down)

(Short pause as the echoes of the recording fade away throughout the shop)

Samuel

(After a few seconds of dead silence, he slowly picks up the voxaphone and looks over it)
“(Slowly and in a deep gravelly voice) Ha... ttie...”

Elizabeth

“(Softly) Hattie... that was her name?”

Samuel

“Fam...i...ly.”

(Short pause)

“A...lone... now.”

Elizabeth

“(Somber) You couldn’t find her, I know.
(short pause, then more upbeat)
But you’re not alone, not anymore.”

Samuel

“Must... find... her... before...”

Just then, the entire shop is jolted by what sounds like an explosion far off in the background and down below somewhere (more dust is unsettled and several of the tools fall to the floor).

Seemingly unfazed by the event at first, a few seconds pass before Samuel finally responds to what has happened and gives off a short groan, followed by quickly jumping over to one of the shop walls and proceeding to break open a sizable hole in it (just before to the wall, he appears to attach the voxophone to his hip so as to bring it along with him).

During this time, you also notice that the picture frame has fallen onto the floor due to the blast, causing the glass to crack diagonally across the frame and down between Hattie and Samuel in the portrait itself.

Elizabeth

(While walking towards Samuel who is now looking out through the breach he made)
“No... not now.”

Now at the breach (with Houser approaching in the background), you look below and see several airships (both normal cargo barges and handy haulers draped in large pieces of blood red cloth, with hundreds of people being seen atop their respected decks) begin to ascend up from cloud formations that are being illuminated by numerous bursts of flashing lights (followed by sounds of more explosions, also during this time, a “Vox, Vox, Vox,” chant gets louder and louder).

Houser Manifestation

(As you both watch the ships continue to rise)
“(Softly) Spare no detail, nor possibility.”

Ending their ascent, the ships then slowly turn away from you and towards Columbia proper, which can be seen far off in the distance directly ahead.

Samuel

“(More groaning sounds of anger as he sees the ships turn towards the city)”
“(Softer at first then getting louder) ...no... no, no, NO!”

Gripping the side of the breach, as if preparing to jump out onto the barges so as to stop them before they can wreak havoc upon the main part of the city, another large mass is seen jumping off the armada of barges themselves towards your location. And not a second later, you are able to tell it is another Handyman, however, this one is also draped in large pieces of red cloth. A servant of the Vox’s will.

Barely having anytime to react, you try to move out of the way, but are soon thrown down onto the floor as the “Vox Handyman” crashes through the breach, and tackles Samuel until both hit the opposite wall of the shop, causing everything else that was hanging throughout the room to fall onto the floor.

Recovering, the Vox handyman then grabs Samuel and attempts to throw him back across the shop, but is soon grabbed himself as Samuel also recovers, tossing the other Handyman down into the short passageway which leads into the clock mechanism area.

Elizabeth

(While on the floor and watching the fight move into the clock room)
“(Grunts from slight pains, then unholsters the blaster)”

“Zero”

THAT STILL DOES NOT WORK THAT WAY■

Elizabeth

“Then... (more grunts and she gets back up) make it work.”

Houser Manifestation
(While you start to make your way to the passageway)
“What the hell are you doing!?”

Elizabeth
(While entering the passageway itself)
“Something, at least.”

Now in the passageway, you feel the environment rumble again as the two handymen continue to tussle about within the clock mechanism chamber, and just as you are about to exit out of it, you see the two massive hulks of man and metal hurtle overhead, slamming into a collection of gears directly ahead near the lower center of the room, with the rest of the functioning gears of the clock above still turning.

However, when you attempt to maneuver your blaster so as to aim it towards the Vox handyman, or at least, near it so as to possible break away the floor underneath him, Samuel appears to react to your actions, and quickly picks up a nearby gear that has fallen away during the fight, followed by him tossing it towards you, but instead of crashing into you, it instead only jams up against the exit of the passageway, thus blocking your ability to enter into the chamber.

Elizabeth
(Startled gasp as the gear is jammed into the exit area of the passageway)
“No, no wait!”

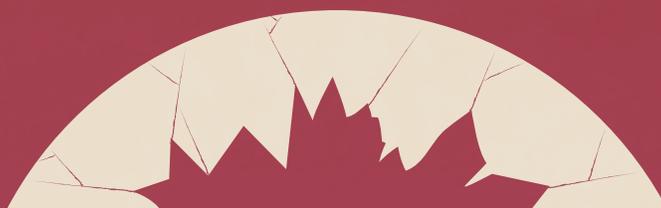
With the sounds and rumbles of the fight picking back up in the background, you scramble to try and get past the gear that now blocks your path, but whether it be either just trying to simply push the gear away or using Armstrong to unjam it, you eventually turn to the blaster in order to melt away the obstruction.

Elizabeth
(As the gear begins to melt away, which takes time)
“Come on... (more rumbling, and becomes flustered) come on!...”

Melting away enough of the gear, it finally breaks in two, creating a big enough void that you can walk through, and as you run out into where you last saw the two battling behemoths, you notice their fight has moved all around the rest of the chamber, leaving most of the gears now completely tossed about or fractured (these are still in place, but have either stopped turning, or are now jamming up against other nearby gears).

A second later, another loud rumble can be heard, followed by a groaning sound from one of the Handymen (though you can't tell which one since they sound nearly identical), and a moment after that, the large mass of the Vox handyman falls down from the mess of gears above and lands only about a meter in front of you.

Instantly recovering, he attempts to strike you (his current location is too close for you to use the blaster in any effective or safe way), but just before he can, Samuel also jumps down, however, at an angle which allows him to grab tackle (almost like a “spear” in wrestling) the handyman, and in doing so, propels both himself and the Vox handymen forward and then upward towards the circle glass of the clock itself, causing it to immediately shatter, followed by the two dropping downward out into the outside.



Elizabeth

“(Short pause as the sounds of shattering glass fade and are replaced by the gusting winds from outside)
“Samuel?...”

Quickly making your way over to a catwalk that passes in front of the glass portion of the clock, or what’s left of it, you peer out of the breach and down to only a scene of cloud cover.

Elizabeth

“(Under her breathe) God... dammit.”

Houser Manifestation

(Stays silent in the center lower area of the chamber)

“Zero”

I THINK WE SHOULD LEAVE NOW■

Looking back up and directly ahead, you see more cargo barges and handy haulers that have been commandeered by the Vox ascending up from the cloud cover and making their respected turns towards the city that still lies in the background.

Elizabeth

“(Looks around some more and notices a nearby Sky Line track outside, then looks back towards Houser)... (slightly shakes head in agreement, then looks down for a brief moment)...”

Houser Manifestation

(De-materializes)

Blasting away what’s left of the glass, you jump towards the nearby Sky Line and begin to race around the exterior of the factory tower.

Descending now, you quickly exit the cloud formation, and as the track ahead becomes clear you see that it has been ripped away, and as you are forced to disengage, you land upon another entry area to one of the factory’s, only this one is full of nothing but dozens of dead guards, Vox fighters, and Handymen.

And as you continue to look around, you see an environment that has been ravaged by the revolting Vox forces (fires here and there, accompanied by the Vox’s blood red cloth draping almost everything, from trees, to lamp posts, and even the corpses themselves, along with crows already beginning to sweep down to take their pick at the remains).

Seeing another Sky Line ahead on the other side of the platform, you begin to make your way past the bodies and destruction that lies in your path, however, before making it very far, some clouds break away off in the distance, allowing the red glow of a now nearly set sun to flood into the area. And as the clouds move off even further, you see another factory platform come into view that is about 50 meters or so higher than the one you are currently standing on, and with the clouds having fully moved on, you make out what looks to be several figures gathered near its outer edge, with about a dozen appearing to be on their knees, with another 5 standing next to them.

Houser Manifestation
(Re-materializes a few meters to your right and walks forward)

Just then, you hear a shot ring out from their location, followed by the first figure on the left who is on their knees, fall over onto their side.

A short moment after that, the rest of the figures who are still on their knees are pushed off the edge of the platform one by one, until only one remains, but instead of dispatching it like the rest, the group moves onto a nearby cargo barge, leaving the figure all alone (still on their knees).

Houser Manifestation
(As the barge moves away)
“(Softly) Oh my god.”
(Turns towards you, and begins to dematerialize)
“Go!”

Only a split second later, the under portion of the platform explodes outward into a magnificent fireball, followed by both it, and the factory tower that rests upon it, falling downward. However, this is not an isolated incident, and you soon see the other factory platforms all around you also explode from their base areas, causing them to go into a free fall.

Now looking all around in horror as every city platform in sight is detonated, your gaze returns to the original platform that exploded, and as you look up, you find that both gravity and the wind sheer are bringing the still falling upper portion of the factory tower down towards you.

Crashing into your platform only a few seconds after noticing it, you are thrown to the ground as the stability of the platform is quickly taken away, and not long after that, you hear yet another explosion, followed by both you and everything around you going into free fall as well.

Trying your best to hold onto something, you look around feverishly in an attempt to find anything that isn't in free fall. However, any hope of such a life line appearing soon fades as the factory that crashed into the platform rips through the area just ahead of you, causing the entire structure to tip downward, resulting in you being throw off of it and into open air.

Having been thrown off, you then find yourself now surrounded by masses of collapsing structure and debris that was once the heart of Finkton, intermixed with bodies of not just officers and handymen, but those of fallen Vox soldiers, and even innocent workers (men, women, and children) who got caught up in the fight.

With the chaos in full effect, all seems lost, but just as it seems that the destruction is about to claim you, a large section of still intact platform (in free fall) just above you jolts to right in a manner that seems artificial. This is then followed by it breaking in two and a fairly large mass swooping through the resulting opening. And as the mass then moves into the center of your vision, it gets larger as its sides unfold outward (time would slow down here for dramatic effect), and as this happens, you see it to be non other than the Songbird itself.
(Its iconic screeching can also be heard during this time)

With everything still crashing all around you (time returns to normal after the reveal), Songbird continues its pursuit towards your location, using its giant arms and legs to push away other large pieces of debris that surround you, until finally, it manages to get close enough to reach out towards you and grab you by the waist.

Pulling you in close now, another explosion erupts out of the now massive debris ball that surrounds the both of you, and in response to it, Songbird uses its wings to create a cocoon like structure to shield you from the incoming shrapnel, and as it does, you see small pieces of red hot steel rip several small holes throughout the thin fabric that stretches across its wing structure. (This is all very quick, with one thing happening after the other over the span of a few seconds)

A second after that, you both slam into the surface of the ocean that Columbia had been hovering over just a minute prior. But thanks to the Songbird, you survive the impact and even retain consciousness, though Songbird itself lies motionless.

However, after descending only a meter or so into the water, it soon recovers and releases you from its grasp, and in a single short moment, you see its giant glass eye pass by your vision, its light switching from red to green, followed by the Songbird using what still remains of its giant wings to propel itself upward and out of the water.

Not knowing what to think or do as you fall deeper into the darkness of the ocean, you then see yet another explosion, up above, right where the Songbird had flown up into. And as you track the water distorted image of the event, you see the resulting debris mass of the explosion move to the left of your position and slam into the ocean.

Still tracking it, you notice the Songbird is at the tip of the mass of debris, pinned, and being pulled down with it as other massive pieces of debris enter into the ocean all around it, but thanks to the Songbird's efforts, you are spared being crushed.

Elizabeth

(Gurgles and stretches right arm out towards the still descending Songbird)

Powerless to do anything, you watch the mass push the Songbird deeper and deeper into the pitch blackness of the ocean, until nothing is left but the screeching sounds it makes as it descends into oblivion.

A few moments after that, just the sound of the deep and the continuing subtle splashes from more debris slamming into the ocean above, is all that remains.

(Short pause)

Now going in and out of consciousness due to lack of oxygen, your arm goes limp, and just before your eyesight goes out completely, you see a burst of light pass through the water all around you, followed by numerous strings of light rushing past your head and wrapping around your arm before shooting off to meet with others that are also beginning to form off in the distance.

And instead of blacking out due to your current condition, the collective mass of strings of light brighten, causing your vision to, once again, white out.

In time though, the white out fades to black, followed by you hearing muffled sounds. And as they become more clear by the second, you start to realize you are no longer under water, or at least, in water.

Moments later, your vision finally returns, albeit in a fuzzy and unfocused state, but from what you can tell as you try to move your head around is that you are now currently on your back looking upward.

Still improving, the muffled sounds become more comprehensible, until finally, you recognize it as yet another musical piece you've heard before, this time being, "You Belong to Me" (the one recorded by Liz herself).

At the same time, your vision also returns to normal, giving you a now perfectly focused view of the glass top of the walkway you now occupy. And as you look through it, you see an entire ocean above, complete with schools of fish, groups of sea turtles, and even a humpback whale slowly passing by (whale makes its iconic call sound).

Elizabeth

(After looking at the scene, she slowly starts to turn to her side so as to get back up)
“(Grunts from pain, then sighs and gives a slight chuckle as she realizes where she is now)”

While turning to get onto your hands and knees, you notice a column just ahead in the center of the walkway, and at its base, you make note of a small table and a tiny radio atop it, thus providing you with the source of the music.

Now attempting to get back onto your feet, you brace up against the side of the walkway (also glass), and once fully upright, you see your reflection in the glass, and get a good enough look at your face to notice that you've received a series of cuts along your right cheek, with one just a half inch below your right eye.

Elizabeth

(Upon noticing the scratches, she brings her right hand up to rub away some of the blood, then takes it away from her face and uses her thumb to rub away the blood that is now on the side of her index finger)
“(Softly) Little by little...”

“Zero”

YOU ALRIGHT?■

Elizabeth

(While looking out into the ocean scene outside, which is framed on both sides by cliff-sides of a small underwater trench)
“(Agitated) Oh, I don't know, you tell me. You're the one with all the details after all.”

(Short pause, followed by no response from Zero)

“I'm... I'm sorry.”



“Zero”

I ALMOST HAD IT YOU KNOW

Elizabeth
“Is that so?”

“Zero”

BUT UPON THE DIP IN THE DATA FLOW IT JUST

Elizabeth
(Interjects) “Traded one hell... for another.”

“Zero”

IF YOU SAY SO

Elizabeth
(While walking towards one of the ends of the walkway)
“(Chuckles) For all the dreams, we do well in living in only our nightmares.”

“Zero”
(As you approach the vertical slide door at one of the ends of the walkway)

PERHAPS

(Short pause as the vertical slide door’s center locking mechanism spins just before opening)

BUT FOR NOW

Elizabeth
“(Somber) Precedent says there’s only one way this’ll end.”

Completing its spin cycle, the door panel slides upward and you are presented with a major hub area of Rapture (similar in design to what was seen during the first half of Burial at Sea Episode 1, only much larger, and with hundreds of people occupying it, rather than just a few dozen). And in the distance, you see an enormous single panel of glass which provides a vista of the rest of Rapture’s many buildings and towers that reside on the sea floor.

Consisting of several levels (all “open” to one another), once can find luxury shops, restaurants, news outlets (with some being seen as having been closed by order of the Council due to “propaganda” reasons), and even artistic establishments (ranging from music and painting, to even abstract establishments that rival the works of Sander Cohen himself, though, if investigated, the player will find that they too have been closed down due to “propaganda” reasons).

Elizabeth
(If the player notices one of the closed art establishments)
“(Softly) Closed by order of the Council huh?... (normally) seems the algorithms have had their way again.”

“Zero”

YOU REALLY THINK HE WOULD STOP AT JUST CRITICS?■

Elizabeth
“No. He certainly wouldn’t.”

COUNCIL

Elizabeth

(After walking around for a little while and reaching a level that overlooks the majority of the crowds of people on the lower level)
“Well, I thought he’d show, though blending in would be easier here.”
(Regarding Houser)

“Zero”

**AS OF THE LATEST ATTEMPT
I AM UNABLE TO VERIFY A LOCATION**
(Short pause)

**IT IS POSSIBLE HE WAS PUSHED OUT BY THE NEW
INFLUX OF DATA AS WELL**

Elizabeth

“So he’ll be coming to... (slower as something grabs her attention) us... then...”

Before you can properly finish the statement, a figure among the crowds below catches your eye, and as you look more intently, you see it to be a young woman dressed in a bright red dress, and seeing as the rest of the populace of Rapture are clothed in more “muted” late 1950’s attire, she almost appears to glow in contrast to them.

Elizabeth

“Speaking of blending in... or lack thereof.
(Short pause while observing)
“(Softly) A fitting color for the new year.”

“Zero”

ANOTHER FEELING?

Elizabeth

“Yeah, because that worked out well last time.”

“Zero”

**IT DID NONETHELESS LEAD TO
(Short pause)
CHANGES**

Elizabeth

“Coincidence is all that was. These are just time bombs in the end.”

“Zero”

WELL
(Short pause)

**AT LEAST THEY DO WELL
AT PASSING SAID TIME■**



Elizabeth
(As the woman in red makes her way to the
elevator bank that is built into the massive glass panel)
“Hmm...”

Choosing to follow (player’s choice), you move away from the overlooking location, and begin to make your way back down to the lower level and towards the elevator bank. And while doing so, you see the elevator carrying the woman in the red dress descend out of sight, and a few moments after that, the elevator you call descends to your level, opens up, and you step inside, followed by you pressing the button to go down (in Liz’s gentle manner, of course).

Elizabeth
(As the elevator descends and you look out over the rest of Rapture, with the glow outside slowly fading away as the lift goes deeper towards the foundational levels of the city)
“Just out of curiosity, that whole, Songbird thing... you didn’t..”

“Zero”

NO

I WAS STILL BLOCKED OUT AT THE TIME

(Short pause)

AND EVEN IF I WAS NOT

FOR REASONS STILL UNKNOWN

I CANNOT MANIFEST WITHOUT INCURRING ERRORS

Elizabeth
“Right, he just happened to find me, without any noticeable notification mind you, during that moment?”

“Zero”

I GUESS IT WAS JUST A

(Short pause)

COINCIDENCE

Elizabeth
“(Slight Chuckle)”

With the elevator coming to a slow stop, the door panels slide away and you step out into a lobby like area for one of Rapture’s many residential hubs, and as you look up you read a banner which reads, “Apollo Square.” However, as you look around some more after that, you are unable to spot the woman in red.

Elizabeth
“(Sigh) So much for that, then.”

“Zero”

THERE IS ALWAYS ANOTHER TRAIL TO FOLLOW■

Elizabeth

“(Audible inhale) You’re right, that aroma certainly stands out here...”
(though obviously not as worn down looking as what was seen during BioShock 1, Apollo Square, even during this time, is still not in the best looking shape and is still a housing block for Rapture’s poorer working class).

”Zero”

**I WAS REFERRING TO THE PARTICLE TRACES THAT CAN
BE DETECTED BY YOUR OPTICAL IMPLANTS**

Elizabeth

“Right, right... but then... does that mean?...”

“Zero”

**I AM INCAPABLE OF EXPERIENCING
WHAT YOU REFER TO AS**

(Short pause)

SMELL

Elizabeth

(Starts to use the Luna’s Light “focus” mode so as to pick up the traces of perfume that are still suspended in the air)

“Just density readings and other data points, right?”

“Zero”

SOMETHING LIKE THAT■

Elizabeth

“Shame... yet, soon, I may be envious.”

Stepping away from the elevator bank, you begin to follow the perfume trail, and as the implants start to render it in greater detail, you notice it tracks around the drinking establishment that resides at the center of the lobby/hub area, followed by it pausing briefly (signified by the trail bulging out into a sphere around a seat at the bar itself), then moving on towards one of the connecting residential housing blocks on the side opposite of the elevators where it then proceeds to fade away (more will become visible once the player gets closer.

Elizabeth

(If the player gets close enough to the bar seat)

“(Softly) Takes a drink, but doesn’t stick around...”

(Gameplay note: remember, all of this is optional, meaning the player can choose to break away from this specific “experience path” at any time in order to go and do something else)



Now moving away from the bar area, the trail becomes more visible as you approach the housing block, and after leading you into the courtyard like space that is its entry level, you see the trail take the stairwell that wraps around its center core (also contains an elevator) up to one of the upper levels of the structure (layout wise, the housing block is still similar to what was seen in BioShock 1, so square in shape, and an “open tube” design, with each floor balcony connecting into the circulation core at its center. Also, it’s mostly a concrete aesthetic with a few woodwork pieces scattered here and there, though nowhere near as elegant as the art deco that can be seen throughout the upper levels of the city).

Before heading up, you take note of the conditions of the housing block itself. From the water seepage in the cracking concrete construction, to the early signs of rotting within the sparsely placed decorative wood elements, the entire environment acts as a reminder that Rapture’s very foundation is slowly crumbling away.

Elizabeth
(Upon noticing the deteriorating conditions)
“And there’s the envy.”

“Zero”

**WOULD THIS BE CONSIDERED A
(Short pause)
HOUSE OF CARDS?**

Elizabeth
“If it’s atop a pool of gasoline, as well, then yes.”

“Zero”

**I AM HAVING TROUBLE RECONCILING
THESE DISPARITIES IN HUMAN CONDUCT**

Elizabeth
“How about this. Ryan and Comstock, their just two end posts on a lengthy field.”

“Zero”

AND YOU?

Elizabeth
“Oh, um.... hmm... well, what do you think?”

“Zero”

**I WOULD SAY
(Longer than normal pause)**

A MIXED BAG?

Elizabeth
“(Slight chuckle) You’re... too kind.”

“Zero”

YET ALL ARE STILL HUMAN?■

Elizabeth
“In every way.”

Making your way up the stairwell, you see the trail break off from the circulation core after reaching the third story, followed by it moving out across the floor's balcony and then into a sealed vertical sliding door panel.

However, just as it opens in response to your presence, you find it leads into another glass walkway, and at its center, you see a man looking outward towards the scene of all the other housing blocks and structures that make up the lower portions of Rapture on the sea floor. The man of course being Houser.

Houser Manifestation

(While still looking outside, and in a voice that echoes up and down the near 20 meter long walkway)

"As above, so below. (slight chuckle)."

Elizabeth

"At least someone's having a good time."

Houser Manifestation

(Looking all around now)

"Oh, it could be better, the leaking, the creaking, (turns to you), hell, even the smells, all of it could of been fined tuned and polished to a sheen in times before, but now... well... it just is... what it is."

Elizabeth

"For now."

Houser Manifestation

"Yes... and I am exceptionally grateful your, experiences, have yet to get the best of you thus far. And seeing as it is your only, practical, means for manifesting any hope of getting out, what seems to have garnered your attention this time?"

Elizabeth

"Not really sure again, just another feeling if anything. But... don't you already know that?..."

Houser Manifestation

(Interjects) "Sure, I could have rather easily, but where's the fun in that?"

(Turns and starts walking towards the other end of the walkway)

"There's just knowing all, and then there's working towards knowing all..."

(short pause)

"Gonna go with the latter for a change."

Elizabeth

"(Softly to herself) Sure know how to pick 'em."

Elizabeth

(After catching up to Houser who is waiting for the vertical sliding door panel to open)

"I was wondering, before. When you were... um, created... were you?..."

Houser Manifestation

(Interjects) I crossed every T and dotted every I. I was one man then. Now...

(Door panel opens)

I am another.



Upon opening, you see the doorway leads into another block that is similar to the one you just came from, but even more run down.

Elizabeth

(While continuing to follow the trail which now leads down to the entry level of the block)
“And... did anyone say you were only a replication? Or...”

Houser Manifestation

“Fortunately I was spared the unpleasantness of such a realization. And though I was just a means to an end, why risk having doubt slowly breakdown that which can still be useful? However, I am pleased to know that your little... incident, on Saturn, went as smoothly as it did.”

Elizabeth

“Useful... like putting you in charge here.”

Houser Manifestation

“That’s right. But like any tool, it gets replaced. So I was sidelined, as I said.

Although, instead of discarding me completely, I was their little secret after all, and just some, soulless, mechanical tour guide to everyone else, he, saved me, you could say. Knowing that within all those, parameters, and guiding lines of data that make up my mental construct, there was room to become something else, (slight chuckle) or more accurately, someone else. So here I am, in his image, but with a mind that is my own.”

Elizabeth

“(Softly to herself) How familiar.”

(Short pause as you continue to follow the trail down to the entry level)

Houser Manifestation

“Right... so, are you gonna tell me or what?”

Elizabeth

“There was a lady in all red, alright? I... I don’t know, call it the needle you can see in the haystack, or something.”

Houser Manifestation

“A better off? Here?”

Elizabeth

“Wasn’t like that when it started, but... yeah, it begs a question or two.”

Houser Manifestation

(After you reach the entry level and walk out of the housing block and towards one of the larger connecting walkways that contains tram lines along its sides and a walking path down its center)
“Could be just be an innocent stroll.”

Elizabeth

“Maybe...”

Houser Manifestation

“Yeah, yeah, a feeling. When the subconscious decides to take point.”

Elizabeth
“You have a problem with that?”

Houser Manifestation
“Problem? Oh, no. I’ve done enough... soul searching,
to know where the mind’s competency truly lies.”

Nearing the end of the tram walkway, you take note that both the housing block you just came from and the walkway itself are void of citizens. And as you walk towards the next hub like area for the next grouping of housing blocks, you see that it too is also just as lifeless.

You also see the perfume trail circle around the hub area in an erratic way, before moving into the nearby elevator bank.

Houser Manifestation
(Walks up to a still lit “barrel fire” that has charred meat over it)
“Looks like someone’s not coming home for dinner.”

Elizabeth
“Tonight, most won’t.”

Though the surrounding housing block is explorable, you decide to make your way to the elevator bank where the trail terminates.

However, if the player decides to take a look around, these are the more notable things that can be found:

A high concentration of intact “Who is Atlas?” propaganda posters (others can be found prior to this location, but most are in very poor and almost unrecognizable condition).

Apartments that have been reorganized into what looks like a barrack and sleeping quarters, with hundreds of bunk beds lined up in rows throughout them, and at their ends, opened and empty metal containers, giving the impression that items were recently taken out of them in haste.

On the back wall of the circulation core (on the entry level), hundreds of polaroid pictures can be found, ranging from single portraits of everyday people, to entire families, with the center of it reading (in red paint):



RYAN'S
SECRET

Reaching the elevator bank, you call for one, followed by the doors to one of the already available lifts opening up and you stepping inside (if Houser doesn't get into the elevator in time, he will materialize into it).

Beginning to ascend, you notice an advertisement poster for the "Incinerate Plasmid" just above the Up/Down button panel.

Elizabeth

"Do y... I mean... do you think, he... ever had regrets? About what he started? About you?"

Houser Manifestation

"(Chuckles) Do you?"

Elizabeth

"You already know the answer to that."

Houser Manifestation

"Do I? Or are you just, inheriting, the short comings of someone else?"

Elizabeth

"Wha..."

Houser Manifestation

(Interjects and dismissive) "Ahhh, who am I to say anyways. The understandings of Quantum Mechanics isn't exactly our greatest attribute anymore."

Elizabeth

"No... go on."

Houser Manifestation

"(Sigh) All right then, to keep it simple, you're just a copy as well."

Elizabeth

"(Chuckles)"

Houser Manifestation

"Are you not? What was before lived and died, yet here you are, while it remains nothing but dust and bones. So, what, in all honesty, could you possibly be right now?"

Elizabeth

"Well..."

Houser Manifestation

(Interjects) "And don't even get me started on that whole mess at the river."

"Zero"

HE HAS A POINT■

Just then, the elevator doors open to a promenade that is packed with hundreds of New Year's Eve party goers, and thanks to the noise they generate, the conversation is cut short.

Houser Manifestation

(Walks out first as you stand motionless)

“To answer your question, though. I have no idea, (pauses just before stepping out) but...
(looks out the doorway) I’d hate to consider my existence a mistake.”

With the crowd getting more rowdy by the second, you soon follow Houser out of the elevator and begin to make your way through the mass of people, all the while struggling to reacquire the perfume trail due to the presence of other particles in the air that are coming from the other party goers. Nonetheless, you manage to spot the uniqueness of the trail out from the new surrounding ones and continue to track it.

Now in the heart of the crowd, you slowly make your way through the rest of the promenade, which wraps completely around a grouping of spaces that range from luxury (eg: spas, restaurants), to recreational facilities (eg: movie theaters, a gymnasium).

(Layout wise, the area is essentially a donut, with other walkways branching off from the exterior wall, and walkways criss crossing up above on the second level within the promenade itself)

Still tracking the trail, you ultimately end up at the entrance of a narrow alley way that weaves around the back areas of the core spaces (it’s a service passageway for employees and such).

Elizabeth

(After entering the service alley, the noise of the crowds becomes background ambiance)
“Anything but a casual stroll.”

“Zero”

ABOUT THE LAST CONVERSATION

Elizabeth

“(Sigh) What’s there to say, really? Besides, (chuckles) I’ve been more confused about my... current state of being, before.

”Zero”

TRUE

(Short pause)

BUT■

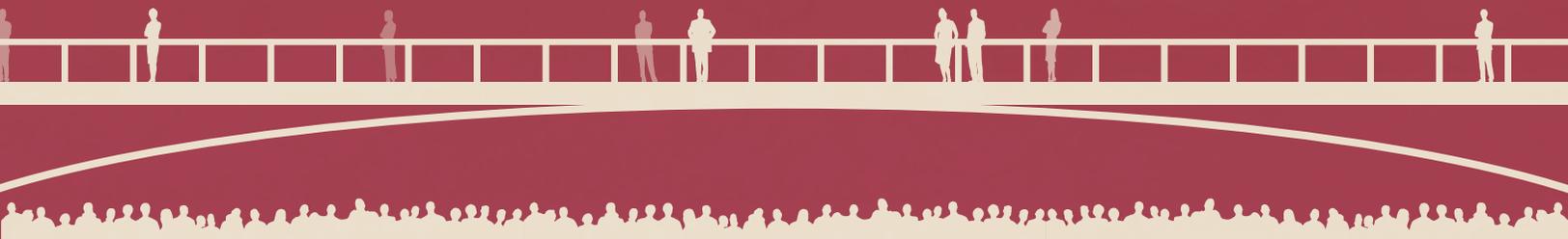
Elizabeth

(Interjects) “But let’s just leave it at that.
(Short pause)
Only meaningful way now, is forward.”

Houser Manifestation

(Re-materializes a few meters ahead)

“Or this way, or that way. Figuratively, that is.”



Elizabeth
“Still wanting to stick around?”

Houser Manifestation
“You kidding? Eventfulness follows you like smoke atop a flame... for better or worse.”

Elizabeth
“Then it was a really good copy.”

Houser Manifestation
“(Chuckles)”

Now walking down the alley way, you make several turns every which way, as the trail takes you past several back entrances, and after a few minutes, you finally see it pass directly through a door that bares only the following label:



EMPLOYEES ONLY

Elizabeth
(After trying to open the door, but finds it to be locked)
“(Softly) A kingdom for a lock pick, and some subtlety...
(sigh) guess I’ll just have to knock...
(pulls out blaster)”

Houser Manifestation
“Knock?”

Elizabeth
“You’ve seen it, it’s a thing we... you know what... forget it.”
(Blasts away the door pad, though the player can also just melt through either the entire door itself or a wall nearby)

Houser Manifestation
“Right... knocking.”

“Zero”

IT IS STILL A VALID TERM■

Passing through the now “unlocked” doorway, you both enter into a short hallway that has two bulky metal doorways along either side, and one more doorway at the end directly ahead that is also metallic, however not bulky like the other two.

Houser Manifestation

“Now why would someone liker her, be needing to use an entrance like this?”

Elizabeth
“Hmm...”

Moving down the hallway, you find the two bulky metal doorways actually lead into two separate cold storage rooms (thanks to the small port hole like windows on them, you are able to figure this out). And as you reach the doorway at the end of the hallway, you see it leads into a kitchen area that is buzzing with activity.

Houser Manifestation

(As you both reach the door, you look through the window that is on it)
“All right, so she wanted to catch a bite.”

Elizabeth
“Sure she did.”

Houser Manifestation

“Hey, if your, feeling, says otherwise, I won’t stop you.”

Elizabeth
“Maybe you should.”
(Opens door and starts to pass through the kitchen area,
with many of the employees taking notice)

Houser Manifestation
(As you both near the exit)

“Um... I’m sure you’re all doing a fantastic job, so keep it up!”
(After exiting the kitchen and entering into another short hallway)
“Ah, hand prepared delicacies... (chuckles) or just food in general,
now there’s some history.”

Approaching the end of the short hallway, you walk out into the restaurant proper, but rather than finding to be any ordinary restaurant, you look straight ahead and see a large metal statue carrying a globe on its back, with the phrase, “Welcome to Rapture,” orbiting around it, as well as a circle neon sign that reads, “Happy New Year 1959” on a glass wall next to it (the metal statue is situated within a part of the restaurant that is double height, encased in all glass, and is extending outward so as to provide a semi-circle, 180 degree view, of the outside vista of Rapture).

Elizabeth
“Wait... I... I know this place...”

Houser Manifestation
“Well, this is all from memory, more or less.”

Elizabeth
“Sure, only, this wasn’t mine... per se.”



Now walking further ahead, you turn left and find the following signage over the entrance/exit area:



Houser Manifestation

“Right... right. Though, technically...”

Elizabeth

(While still looking around)

“Oh, so now you want to get into all that.”

Houser Manifestation

“Forget it.”

Elizabeth

“(Softly) Were it so easy.”

Continuing to look around, you see that most of the tables throughout the Kashmir are currently occupied, with dozens of other people conversing and dancing to a live jazz band (currently playing “And All the While I’m Loving You”).

However, as you conclude your first quick pass of observations, you find neither any signs of the lady in red, nor the continuation of the perfume trail as it has appeared to have finally worn out (even before this point, its visibility had been waning).

Wanting to know for sure though, you venture to the upper level, though all you find is a dead end where the restrooms are, with no new signs of her presence in sight.

Houser Manifestation

(After you reach the restroom area)

“Okay, I might just have to take up your offer on stopping you, at this rate.”

Elizabeth

“(Sigh) Yeah... yeah, alright.”

Before leaving though, you do notice a woman standing in front of one of the sinks in the women’s restroom, and during the entire time of you watching her, she does nothing but look over herself in the mirror and gives off the impression that she is dwelling over something.
(this is a reference to a “ghost image” in BioShock 1)

With the main entrance on the upper level, you begin to make your way over to it, but just before you exit, one of the servers of the Kashmir calls to you/grabs your attention (This “grab player’s attention” animation will either happen at this time, or at any point prior if the player decides to leave to do something else).

Male Kashmir Waiter

“Do you desire a table madam?”

Elizabeth

“Wha... oh, um...”

(Player can either say yes, or no, and acts as a “point of no return” moment)

Elizabeth

“Uh, yes... for one... no, make that two, please.”

(Houser is in the background)

Male Kashmir Waiter

“Right this way then.”

Houser Manifestation

“Still not giving up?”

Elizabeth

“Just making the most of it.”

Following the waiter, you are guided to a table that is located within the glass extension that contains the “Atlas” like statue, and after stepping down into it (the whole area is recessed a few steps), you take a seat which looks outside (thus meaning your back is turned to the rest of the restaurant right now).

“Zero”

TO MY AVAILABLE KNOWLEDGE

(Short pause)

THE FOOD IS NOT EXACTLY EDIBLE■

Elizabeth

“I figured as mu...”

Houser Manifestation

(While taking a seat on the opposite side of the table)
(Interjects) “The key word being, available, I must say.”

Elizabeth

“(Chuckles) Your saying?...”

Houser Manifestation

“Just another one of Enclave Entertainment’s self proclaimed, magical, breakthroughs, (chuckles), I mean, sure, the flotation tech was one thing, but you think they could of used such ingenuity for something... far... more... (stops and stares at something behind you).”

Elizabeth

“What?”

Houser Manifestation

“Well I’ll be damned.”

Turning around, you find the table behind you, which before you sat down, had a single unoccupied seat, is now baring one young blonde haired lady in a glowing red dress.

Upon this realization, you quickly turn back towards Houser.

Elizabeth
“(Jokingly) All right then...”

Before either you or Houser can say anything else however, you begin to hear the lady in red begin to speak to herself.

Lady in Red
“Another New Year’s, another night alone. I’m out, and you’re stuck in Hephaestus, working. Imagine my surprise. I just guess I’ll have another drink... (picks up drink)

...here’s a toast to Diane McClintock, (violin sound starts to slowly build in the background) silliest girl in Rapture. Silly enough to fall in love with Andrew Ryan, silly enough to (sound peaks, then goes silent)...”

Just then, an explosion erupts from the globe atop the metal statue, causing you to stumble out of your seat and backwards towards the glass wall and then onto the ground. And as you look back up, you see bits of hot metal, smoke, and flames fall to the floor only a few meters away, followed by dozens of figures then being seen drooping down from the second floor.

Unknown Male
(After reaching the ground floor)
“Long live Atlas!”
(Starts firing into the crowds of people with an automatic weapon, people begin/try to flee)

Unknown Male 2
(Still on the second floor)
“Death to Ryan”
(Fires up into the air with an automatic weapon)

During the explosion, the table you were seated at had flipped onto its side, providing some shelter to the barrage of bullets that are now ripping through the entire restaurant. And while still on your side and on the floor, you see several bullets rip through the top of the table, while also taking note of the water, and blood, that is beginning to pool on the ground due to the bullets cracking the glass walls.

You also notice that Houser is no where to be seen, making you assume he must of dematerialized again. In any case, you manage to reach the edge of the table in order to get a better look at the situation.

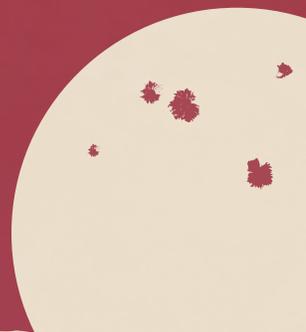
Diane McClintock
(As you reach the edge of the table, you see her slowly droop down from her chair onto the floor)
“What... what happened... I’m bleeding... oh, God... what’s happening...” (She passes out as she hits the floor, but just before her right hand falls from the table, it manages to drag an audio diary recorder to the edge of it, allowing you to see it from your position on the floor).

You then hear footsteps make their way through the water from the other side of the flipped table, but before you can maneuver so as to get into a more hidden position, one of the attackers violently pulls the table away, leaving you completely exposed.

Unknown Male
“(To the group of others in the distance)
”Hey, we’ve still got a live one here.”

Unknown Female 2 (In the distance)
“Well then, fix it...”

Unknown Male 3
(Interjects, and emerges from the group and starts walking towards you)
“No, (as he gets within a meter) this one’s special.”



Elizabeth
(Still on the ground and looks up at the man)
“You?...”

Now close enough, you recognize the man as one of the splicer’s you encountered during your time back in Fontaine’s Department store (during Burial at Sea Episode 2). More specifically, one of Atlas’ personal bodyguards, and the one who had a knack for knocking you out (both via physical means and drugs).

Male Splicer
(Now standing over you)
“(Slight chuckle and smirk)”

Staying true to his nature, he then proceeds to use the buttstoke of his rifle to knock you out.

(Screen blacks out, with all current noises fading out into echoes, followed by silence)

A few seconds pass, when finally, both your vision and hearing return in unison, and as you look forward, you quickly realize you are now lying on a couch (facing the back end), and though you quickly discover you are not currently bound by anything when turning to the other side, what you see on a couch that is located opposite of yours, makes you feel as if you were.

Grouped together, you see a couple and three children (two girls and one boy) lying motionless on the opposite couch, and if it wasn’t obvious at first, the blood splatters across the couch and their bodies, as well as the “staring eyes” of the couple (eyes of the children are closed), tells you they are dead.

Elizabeth
“(Startled gasp)”

Regaining your composure, you then notice a band of flashing light being emitted from a small box that is against the far wall directly ahead. However, upon seeing this and preparing to get up to investigate, the man who knocked you out walks out of the darkness that shades the rest of the apartment (a small light over head, coupled with a TV that is displaying a Rapture emergency image are the only things providing light right now).

Walking over to the corpse filled couch, he gets behind it and out stretches his arms across the top of the backing and begins to stare directly at you.

Male Splicer
“(Smirks)”

(Short pause, and during it, your implants adjust and expose dozens of other splicers lined up all across the walls of the room, all of whom are no older than early teens, with the one appearing to be the oldest, being seen holstering your blaster on his belt buckle)

“No need for sorrow. Remember, it’s not real.”



Elizabeth
“Wha... what are you tal...”

Male Splicer
(Interjects in anger) “Spare me. Your clothes, your toys (thumb points to the box behind him, which is still flashing randomly), and your little magician friend back there, spell it all out pretty clearly from where I’m standing.”

Elizabeth
“But... but, your just a...”

Male Splicer
“A what?... just a mindless freak who knows nothing more than how to take orders and fire a gun, ha... we’ve all got pasts darling, and mines gonna find us a way out of here.
(Short pause, then turns to the surrounding young splicers)
“The real way outta here!”

(Other splicers cheer in response)

Elizabeth
“(Chuckles) Good luck with that.”

Male Splicer
(Starts to move around to the left side of the couch, exposing the light that is flashing against the back wall once again, which now, you can see is the communicator screen flashing on and off, with your High Line device sitting along side it. You also begin to recognize that the flashing is not random, but instead, repeating in a pattern)
“Oh, we won’t be needing any of that We have you.
Though...
(Moves over to a table that has a small toolbox on top of it)
...how this all goes...
(kicks away the table that was situated in between the two couches)
(takes out what looks like medical tools)
...is up to you.”

Elizabeth
“(Softly said while observing the flashes) Wait...”
(Said more urgently in response to the appearance of the tools)
“Wait! (gestures right hand out to signify that he stop)... alright... alright... (vision still partially observing the pattern of the flashes)...
what do you really think is going on here?”

Male Splicer
(While preparing the tools in his hands)
“(Chuckles) I learned much while in the field of medicine, but it was the Den, which opened my eyes to so much more.”

Elizabeth
“(Softly to herself as she continues to observe the flash pattern) Dots and dashes?...
(normally)
“The Den?”

Male Splicer
(Puts gloves on)

"It takes an understanding of the mind, if one is to make one from scratch."

Elizabeth
"(Softly while trying to decipher the flash pattern) B... L... A..."

Male Splicer
"But such a mind, one of metal and such might, can not only, be, but also create... well..."

Elizabeth
(At the same time)
"...S ...T?... Blast?...
(subtle gasp)
"Blast."

Male Splicer
"...need I continue."

Elizabeth
"(Now focusing entirely on him) No... I understand."

Male Splicer
"(Chuckles) Alright, enough with the stalling act (firmly grips a tool in one hand, then quickly moves to place his other hand around your neck). How about we get down to business? (Louder) The mind, whether mechanical or man... (looks straight into your eyes) ...is just another box of spoils to be plundered."

Elizabeth
(Struggling noises as she tries to speak, but still said in a calm manner)
"Just... go... to..."

Male Splicer
"(Chuckles) And to think, I thought this was going to be fun."

Elizabeth
(Gestures right hand towards the teen splicer that has your blaster, and begins to use Armstrong, causing both it and other items around it to fly towards you, and as they do, you focus in on the blaster specifically, and successfully pull it into your grasp)
"...to... hell."

With the blaster now firmly in your right hand, you press it up against the chest of Male Splicer and pull the trigger as fast as you can, before either he or the surrounding splicers can do anything about it.

(Slow motion moment)
Building up, the firing end begins to glow, illuminating the man's face, and in this moment, you see his expression start to turn for the worse as he realizes what is about to happen.

A moment later, the blaster releases its heat ray energy, which begins to burn through the vest he is wearing, and as the heat "wave" radiates outward all across the rest of his body, it isn't long before his entire figure is engulfed in a bright red and orange light, followed by it completely disintegrating away, leaving nothing but his skeletal structure. And though it proceeds to stand on its own in the choking position, it only takes a brief moment before it collapses to the ground.

Dead silence then follows as the surrounding splicers look on in horror.

Elizabeth
(Looks around at the still stunned child/teen splicers,
then switches to shock ray mode)

After another short pause, one of the splicers starts to make
a run for the exit doorway, followed by the others soon after that.

However, as the last one begins to rush for the door, she pauses (one of the more younger ones,
no more than 12) and takes a quick look back at you, and after exchanging glares for a brief
second, she continues on out the door.

Elizabeth
“(Deep sigh)”

(Communicator beeps off in the distance)

Moving over to the box of gear, you pick up both the
High Line device, and the communicator.

Elizabeth
(While re-attaching the communicator)
“Thanks for that.”

“Zero”

IT WAS A STATISTICAL
(Short pause)

GAMBLE■

Elizabeth
(Finishes re-attaching)
“Then I’m glad I’m not... someone else, right about now.”

(Short pause while looking around)
“Anyways, our time is short now, so how goes the...”

Houser Manifestation
(From the kitchenette, and is inspecting cooking utensils)
“(Interjects) I think it’d be best if we stuck to traditional means for the time being.”

Elizabeth
(Turns to notice him, followed by a short pause)
“Says the, what was it, oh yeah, the magician.”

Houser Manifestation
(Loudly drops a metal utensil onto the counter)
“(Deep sigh) What was I suppose to do (starts walking towards you),
just sit there and watch? (Reaches the couch with the dead family)
Because frankly (looks over the corpses), dealing with what’s
left over, is hard enough as it is.”

“(Chuckles) Magician... if only.”

Elizabeth

“Look... I’m sorry for what happened with your last... occupants, but...”

Houser Manifestation

(Interjects) “But you need to get out of here before it all happens again, plain and simple.”

“Zero”

AS HE SAID

(Short pause)

**MAKING HEADWAY ON TRADITIONAL
MEANS WOULD BE IDEAL AT THIS TIME**

Elizabeth

“I see. So we just, commandeering, one ever so, elusive, bathysphere, as they tend to be...
(An explosion is heard off in the distance outside of the apartment, followed by gun shots)
...whilst also navigating a civil war.”

Houser Manifestation

“So nothing new. Though, preparedness, should be of little concern, this time around.”

Elizabeth

(Looks over blaster and switches back to heat ray mode,
followed by seeing her hand pulse with Armstrong energy)
“(Sigh/chuckle)”

“And should you make the breakthrough...”

“Zero”

**IT WILL BE RATHER
OBVIOUS■**

Houser Manifestation

“What? Thought you’d have to do something, or go somewhere? Don’t forget, you’re still just walking around a kilometer sized metal construct, that’s floating atop a hydro carbon lake on a Saturnian moon.”

Elizabeth

“The less reminders, the better.”

Houser Manifestation

“Then, come on. (Starts walking towards the exit doorway)
Before more trouble than you can deal with shows up.”

Elizabeth

(While walking towards the doorway, this is only said if the player gets close enough to the couch with the dead family)
“(Softly) It was real enough to you.”

Walking out of the apartment, you find yourself on the third floor of another housing block (this one in particular serving the upper portion of the middle class) and as you look around, you see the damage that has already been inflicted by the only hours old conflict.

From bullet holes in the cement walls and columns, to burning tables and chairs on the courtyard ground floor below, you make note of the usual things one would find in a war torn environment. However, as you start to make your way downward, you notice things once again take a turn back towards what you saw in the apartment as you come across a group of both Ryan's "personal soldiers" (the teleporter guys from Burial at Sea Episode 2) and civilians who have been strung up along the railing on the first floor balcony.

And across the chest of the soldier in the center, who's helmet has been removed, exposing his heavily deformed face due to splicing, it reads:

DEVIL'S
DEMONS

Houser Manifestation

"Nobles all around. And to think, you..."

Elizabeth

(Interjects) "Stop, just... stop, please."

Houser Manifestation

(After you both start to walk out of the housing block and towards the connecting hub)

"You know, what I said before should help with that."

Elizabeth

"And you can stop with that, as well."

Now reaching the hub area that connects to the other housing blocks for this level, you take a look upon a completely shot up market place (also on fire in some areas), with hundreds of dead workers, civilians, and more soldiers scattered about.

Houser Manifestation

"(Sigh) Well, if there's any good news that can be gathered from this..."

Elizabeth

"(somber) ...it's that we're behind the fire wave."
(Explosion off in the distance, though this time,
sounding much closer than ones prior)

"Zero"

THE SWEEPS WOULD SAY OTHERWISE ■

Houser Manifestation
(Looking around towards where the explosion sound came from)
“So much for optimism.”

Elizabeth
(After updating the Map Maestro with surrounding echolocation data)
(Sees that the area has several ways that lead either around the coming group of fighters or away to other areas entirely, though reaching them would be time consuming due to the need for environment “manipulation,” plus could lead to being ambushed if caught)
“Thankfully, we’ve still got options. However...”

Houser Manifestation
“A head on fight would be quickest, however, no doubt the most risky. Your call of course.”
(The danger in a fight isn’t just the spicers, but yourself, since the blaster’s power could lead to structural instability, and ultimately, the entire area being flooded with bone crushing amounts of sea water)

Elizabeth
“Willing to stand by this time?”

Houser Manifestation
“Only so as to give them something else to shoot at. Something that can’t be lost.”

As another explosion goes off, you are able to see the resulting smoke begin to pour in from the connecting “tram” walkway, and after a couple of moments go bye, one of the trams comes rushing out from it (also on fire), and proceeds to jump the track it is on, followed by it plowing into the market area.

Having occurred on the opposite side of the market, you are spared from having to scramble away from the devastation, and as you look upon what remains of both the other side of the market and the tram car, you see several figures begin to both walk and run out from the smoke that is still pouring into the area in the background.

Unknown Female Splicer #1
(Out from the smoke)
“Take what’s left.”

Unknown Male Splicer #1
(With a dozen others as they comb over the wreckage)
“We’ve got armaments here!”

Unknown Male Splicer #2
“Aww, what a nice little rin... owe! (burns self)”

Unknown Female Splicer #2
“That’s what the tele’s (short for telekinesis) for, idiot.”

Unknown Female Voice #1
“Save your salivating. Atlas wants us to cut down everyone he’s forcing to fall back to the lower levels, so we move only with what we need.”

Houser Manifestation
(Softly)
“So, what’ll it be?
Fight, or flight?”

Deciding with your actions, you begin to move in a direction that takes you away from the grouping of splicers, which now numbers in the 50+ range, and towards the exterior concourse that encircles the market itself.

Elizabeth

“Venting system is our best bet if we’re looking to be discreet.”

Houser Manifestation

“In that case, I’ll leave that to a master and make use of my, so called magical talents, to meet you on the other side.”

Elizabeth

(Spots a nearby vent up above, one that requires coming up with a way to reach it. There are others, but they are closer to the splicers and would require a more “stealth” approach)

“Unless it all goes south.”

Houser Manifestation

(While dematerializing)

“(Chuckles) As if we could go any deeper.”

(Vanishes)

“Zero”

**I HAVE DECIDED TO DISABLE
THE INCOMING MESSAGE SOUND**

Elizabeth

“Good thinking.”

“Zero”

I LEARNED FROM A

(Short pause)

RELIABLE SOURCE

Elizabeth

“Take what you can get, I guess.”

While also keeping tabs on the activities of the nearby splicers, you take a look at the area around the ventilation duct to see if you can find any quick, and hopefully quiet, way to reach it.

Completing your surveillance, you figure two possibilities right off the bat. The first being to break off one of the massive neon signs from a market place storefront, so as to use it as a ladder. And the second, to scavenge smaller nearby metallic pieces of debris in order to fashion together a crude hook like structure that you can then use the High Line device on (basically what Brustle did back in Pillar #13).

Elizabeth

“(Sigh) Nothing that won’t draw attention.”

Just then, the sounds of metal barrels are heard falling to the ground in the distance (near the splicers), followed by an explosion as something, or someone, sets them off.

“Zero”

(Screen flashes since beep is disabled)

HOW ABOUT NOW?■

WINES

Moving to get a better view, you see the splicers move in to investigate the explosion, followed by the sounds of quick movements, though you are unable to see the source of the sounds themselves.

Female Splicer #1

“Don’t just stand there, get the rat before it gives away our position!”

Male Splicer #2

“But the explosion already...”

Female Splicer #1

(Shoots him)

(Short pause, then looks at others)

“Go!”

“Zero”

HOUSER SENDS HIS REGARDS

Not wanting to lose the window of opportunity that has been opened, you decide to use the blaster to cut down one of the storefront neon signs, and after using Armstrong to move it over into place under the duct, you then make use of the ice ray in order to cool off the still scorching hot areas of the sign itself (Gameplay note: If the player does not cool off the sign, Liz will react accordingly with pain, and comment on how stupid she was just then).

(Gameplay note: if too much time goes by, the splicers will not only return, but move in closer to the heart of the marketplace, thus forcing either the “stealth” option, or a full on attack)

With the sign cooled off, you carefully make your way up it (it is now icy after all), and upon making it up to the duct, you turn back and kick away the sign so as to both make sure attention isn’t drawn to the duct, and to deny the splicers easy/instant access to it.

Elizabeth

(Looks out to see/hear if anyone noticed the sound from the sign hitting the ground)

(Turns back into the duct, and starts using Map Maestro again)

“(Catches breathe) Okay... hmm... so it looks like its just, (annoyed) another, Medusa’s head between here and what I am assuming is the docks (area she is referring to has rough volumes that look like bays for bathyspheres).”

“Zero”

AND IF NONE ARE PRESENT?■

Elizabeth

“Then we keep looking, and your job just gets that much more important.”

Picking out a desired path to what you are assuming is the dock area, you begin to move deeper into the maze of ducts, and though many of the branches that lead else where within the housing blocks have collapsed due to the war, you do eventually come to a section that goes off into 3 still intact pathways.

Observing the Map Maestro projection once again, you discover that each of the paths, in time, lead to different areas of the presumed dock space.

In this case, you choose to go down the left duct since it eventually leads into the center of the docks. Thus providing you with the most amount of access to the bays in case time becomes short (other two lead to the opposite ends).

Now roughly half way down the duct, you reach a vent that overlooks an empty apartment, but just as you pass by it, you hear the door to it slide open, followed by the sounds of several footsteps, "sounds of fright," and a splicer speaking.

Male Splicer #1

(As you turn back to look out through the vent, though, the player can choose to just keep moving forward)

"Don't want a bullet with your name on it? Then get in there! Come on..."

(grunting and shoving sounds, as the splicer forces a dozen people, ranging from all ages and looking to be from the top of the upper class)

Group of People

(Now fully in the apartment, while the main splicer and two more behind him point their weapons at the group)

"(Mix of panic, sobbing, and anger)"

(Both a male and a female, presumably a married couple, try to rush the main splicer for his weapon)

Female Splicer

(Reacts quickly and moves out from behind the main splicer and fires into them, killing the man instantly, while causing the woman to fall back into the group, who catch her as she falls to the ground. Looks fatal however)

(More sounds of panic and sobbing from the group as they react)

Male Splicer #1

"Hey! Those are expensive. His instructions were efficiency, not idiocy, remember?"

Female Splicer

"Yeah, but it felt good."

Male Splicer #1

"Well, if you're so trigger happy, how about you do the honors."

(moves to join the other male splicer outside)

Female Splicer

"(Chuckles, then points her gun up over the group, towards the back of the room, which if you turn to the other side of the vent, you see is a giant glass wall)

"(Relaxes aim) Thank Mr. Ryan for being so cheap... (firmly aims at the glass) among other things."

Firing a burst of rounds into the glass, it begins to then crack in response, followed by water spraying into the room. And as this happens, you see the splicers leave the apartment, closing the door behind them (locking sound).

Rushing to the door, the group is unable to get it open, and as the water continues to spray into the space, more of the people begin to panic (plus children crying) as the self contained apartment starts to flood.

Elizabeth
“(Softly) Oh, god.”

Looking around, you figure you can still just easily leave the group to its fate, but seeing as you have the power to do something, you decide to blast away the vent that is facing the glass wall, and with no time to waste, you take a shot at it with the ice ray.

Spreading all across the glass, the ray quickly freezes up the cracked portions, causing the spraying to cease, for now.

Group of People
“(Confusion)”

Now turning to the other side of the vent, you blast it away, followed by using the heat ray to melt away a large enough portion of the locked doorway so as to allow the people to escape.

Elizabeth
(Softly to herself) “Come on, go...”

Group of People
“(Confusion, then a few begin to lead the group out)”

Elizabeth
(As a few look up towards the vent, you move away from the opening. However, the player can decide to face them, followed by jumping down into the apartment and walking out with them, though this path would involve engaging in full on combat and/or stealth)
“(Sigh) Just keep moving.”

“Zero”
(As you begin to make your way down the remainder of the duct)
(Screen flashes since beep is still disabled)

WHY DID YOU DO THAT?

Elizabeth
“Just... think of it as making up for past, collateral damage.”

“Zero”

BUT AS HE SAID
(Short pause)

NONE OF THIS IS REAL■

Elizabeth
“Right now, I’ll gladly take perception over reality.”



With no further “interruptions,” you at last reach the end of the duct and take a peak through the vent grating to see if anyone unfriendly is afoot before blasting your way out.

Appearing to be clear for the time being (though more explosions and gunfire can be heard in the distance), you follow through with blasting away the vent cover and proceed to crawl out into what you now can see to be a 100 meter or so long (30 meter wide) corridor full of what thankfully looks like boarding bays for Bathyspheres (over all, each bay’s design is similar to the single bays seen in BioShock 1, only here, they are laid out in a row)

Elizabeth
“Now to see if anyone’s home.”

Houser Manifestation
(About 5 bays to the left from where you entered)
“You rang! (Waves you over) Last one out!”

Before you can find relief in the sight however, another explosion goes off behind him near the end of the corridor of bays, and a few seconds later, a dozen or so splicers begin to rush in.

Firing almost right away, the bullets pass through Houser and ricochet towards your location. And following a short pause of confusion as to what is happening, they decide to focus their fire towards you alone.

Acting fast, you find cover near the closest empty bay, and begin to look over your options.

Elizabeth
“(Catches breathe) Always one more thing.”

Looking over the situation, you figure all this can go one of three ways.

One, you blast away at the splicers in short bursts as you slowly and carefully move from cover to cover between the bays.

Two, you head directly into the fray and take a chance at ending this as quickly as possible before more possibly show up (the guns blazing approach).

Or three, you move out of cover, followed by blasting away at the massive glass wall on the opposite side of the corridor (at a section near the splicers of course), then use the ice ray to freeze the resulting spray/jets of water, thus creating (in theory) a temporary ice barrier between you and the splicers (or at the very least, cause just enough havoc to cover your escape).

Leaning towards creativity, you choose the third option, which results in several moderate sized jets of water being frozen in front of their position (plus other massive chunks of splash water being frozen in place), thus creating just enough obstructions to keep their fire at bay, for the time being.

Houser Manifestation
“(Claps hands together) Now, if we can just spare the jokes, we can be on our way (gestures towards the bay with the Bathysphere).”

Joining Houser, the gates to the bay itself are easily taken care of by the blaster, and as you step through them, you approach the Bathysphere which enters into a boarding sequence, causing it to ascend fully into the boarding area (while also turning so its door faces you). And upon coming to a stop, you step inside and examine the main controls and lever which is used to choose a destination and activate the departure sequence.

Elizabeth

(Looks over the controls and lever)

“Um, (selects surface then looks over lever), oh, what the hell (pulls it).”

A split second later, the massive door of the Bathysphere begins to close (with bullets hitting against ice being heard in the background as the splicers try to make their way to you) followed by the sphere slowly beginning to descend into the water thereafter.

Houser Manifestation

(In response to the lever working for her)

“Huh, so... you two really were...”

Elizabeth

“Two of a kind.”

Houser Manifestation

“(Slight Chuckle as he turns to look outside)”

Finishing its descent, the sphere then turns until it faces a short tube passageway that leads into the open sea of the lower dwellings of Rapture. Which now is scared by areas that have rapidly decompressed (or are rapidly decompressing as you move by them) as well as the scenes of numerous fires that you can see throughout many of the towers and still intact glass walkways (battles can also be seen taking place within them).

Houser Manifestation

(While looking outside, more rapid decompressions occur across several of the towers and walkways as the sphere continues to rise)

“Leave it to Man to make even the seas burn.”

Elizabeth

“Our end... it really shouldn't come as a surprise then, huh?”

Houser Manifestation

“Surprise? Perhaps not. An end however, I'd say anything but.”

Elizabeth

“You know what I mean.”

Houser Manifestation

“Oh, I do. For the parent shall survive through the child. One who will never know pain, hunger, or greed, nor the places they push towards.

(short pause)

A child that will never know want.”

Elizabeth

“Now where's the fun in that?”

Houser Manifestation

“The challenge of our time.”

Still ascending, another explosion (largest yet in terms of sound) from a rapid decompression goes off, however, this one is out of sight and appears to have come from up above your location.

“Zero”

(Roughly 3 seconds after the sound of the explosion)

HOLD ON TO SOM

Before the entire message can be typed out, something hits the sphere which causes you to stagger slightly, followed by bracing against the frame of the window on the door in order to see outside.

Houser Manifestation

(After you both recover from the hit)

“Seems she’s not quite done with us just yet.”

Elizabeth

(Now up against the glass on the door, and while looking up, sees small cracks begin to branch out downward)

“(Softly) No, no, no... (takes out blaster, ideally all player controlled since it would be a common sense response, and begins to freeze up the slowly growing cracks)

”See anymore?!”

Houser Manifestation

(Water begins to spray into the sphere from all sides along the ceiling structure)

“What do you think?”

Now looking all around, you try your best to freeze up/melt seal the leaks, but as you look outside, you notice the sphere is beginning to descend back down towards the top area of a nearby cliff (so not back down to where you just came up from).

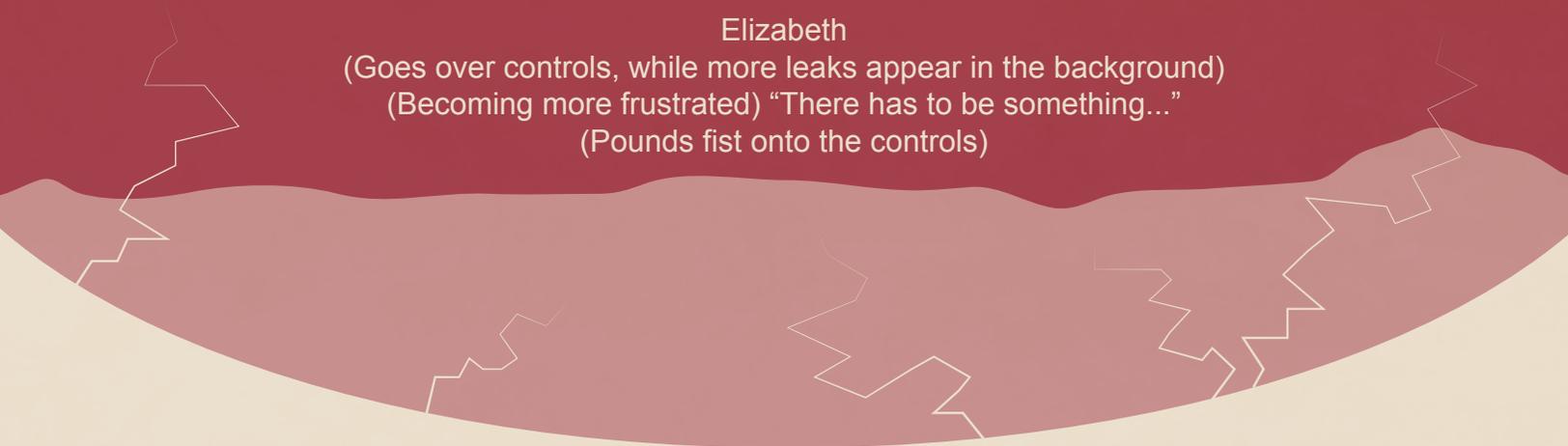
Elizabeth

(As water begins to pool on the floor and the sprays multiply exponentially)
(Under-breathe) “Dammit.”

A few moments later, the sphere slams into the ground atop the cliff, causing it to embed itself about a meter or so into the sediment (the depth can be seen at the bottom of the window on the door).

Elizabeth

(Goes over controls, while more leaks appear in the background)
(Becoming more frustrated) “There has to be something...”
(Pounds fist onto the controls)



Houser Manifestation
(As you look over to him)
“I’m sorry.”

“Zero”

MORE INCOMING

Elizabeth
(Somber) “The killing blow no less.”

“Zero”

NO

A moment later, a giant mass rapidly drops down onto the sediment only 2 meters in front of the doorway (sphere shakes), and before the resulting dust cloud even begins to clear, you see a glow from several small yellow lights start to pierce through it, causing the interior of the sphere to become illuminated in a dull yellow tint.

With the sediment now settling, your sight of what you now know to be a Big Daddy becomes even clearer, to the point where his entire body (in silhouette) is now visible.

Elizabeth
“(Looks back over at Houser)”

Houser Manifestation
“(Gestures hands up as if to express this isn’t something of his doing)”

Now mostly a clear view outside as the dust flows away, the Big Daddy proceeds to move towards the doorway of the Bathysphere (with each of his steps causing the iconic Big Daddy shaking of the environment).

Elizabeth
“What is he?...”

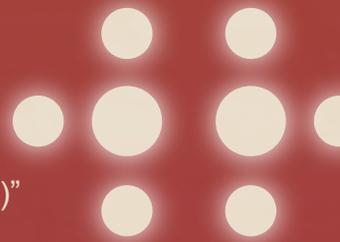
Now only a half meter away from the door, the Big Daddy begins to bend over while also out stretching his arms so as to grab hold of the entire sphere from the bottom.

Elizabeth
“Wait...”

Houser Manifestation
“Yep, hold on...”

Fully in his grasp now, the entire sphere begins to slowly rise out of the sediment as he tilts back and up, and upon fully getting the sphere unstuck, he begins to then walk forward with it. However, only a few moments later, yet another explosion is heard to the right of the sphere (even louder than the last), and in response, the Big Daddy lets go of the sphere followed by turning his attention towards it.

A split second after that, the nearly all intact remains of the top of one of Rapture’s giant towers, comes crashing down upon the Big Daddy, crushing him instantly, causing the Bathysphere to be blown violently backwards out towards the opposite side of the cliff, where you proceed to descend into darkness.



Elizabeth

“(Grunts from pain after recovering from the violent movements of the sphere)”

Getting darker still as the sphere continues to slowly fall deeper and deeper down the cliff side, the interior lighting of the sphere begins to fade in and out.

Elizabeth

“(Startled gasp after seeing the cracks get bigger all across the window on the door)”

(More cracks appear, along with more spraying, with the water now waist high at this point)

(Light above finally goes out, creating a near pitch blackness that not even your optical implants can improve upon)

(Short pause, as the sounds of cracking glass, creaking metal outside, and spraying water are heard all around in the background, still very dark)

“Zero”

(Screen flash and text light up the interior of the now nearly water filled sphere as the water reaches neck level)

I MAY HAVE SOMETHING■

Seeing the message, you try to respond, but just as you do, the water level in the sphere quickly rises over your head as a leak in the ceiling structure grows much larger.

Elizabeth

(Mumbles underwater while looking at the message)

Now fully submerged, you look away from the communicator and towards the rest of the surrounding sphere, which can be seen slowly collapsing in on itself (like crunching a soda can). However, as you look through the door, of which is now a fractured mess of glass, you manage to see a wall of light quickly rush towards you, followed by your vision blanking out to all white.

A few moments pass with nothing happening other than the noises of a water filled Bathysphere slowly fading away. But as more time goes on, silence is replaced by a series of sounds you’ve heard once before.

The subtle sounds of rushing air, and a ding from an overhead speaker system.

Your vision returning, white turns to darkened shapes, as a carpeted floor comes into view (you are currently laying on your side on the ground)

And as blurriness turns to a sharp focus (goes in and out for a few seconds) you look slightly up and see the metal legs of airplane seats, and a currently unobstructed walkway in between them.

However, as you slowly start to get up, you see activity coming from a seat just 5 rows ahead once you reach to getting up on your knees (the person in the seat turns on an overhead light)

Elizabeth

“Wha... what have you done?”

(A present is tossed from the seat ahead. Should also note that it is currently night outside and most of the other passengers are sleeping)

“Zero”

PROJECTION RECONFIG COMPLETE

(Short pause)

(Sound of a revolver being loaded is heard from the seat ahead)

NOT IDEAL I KNOW

JUST HOLD ON FOR A SECOND■

Elizabeth

“(Softly) Hold on? Here?... (startled gasp, as the man in the seat ahead gets up and steps out into the middle walkway).”

Not saying anything, the man (Jack, from BioShock 1, and still bearing his unusual sweater outfit) takes the revolver in his right hand and aims it directly at you, and after turning his head back towards something behind him (though nothing is there, other than a small piece of paper flying out from where he was just sitting and slowly falling to the floor, a reference to a scene in Burial at Sea Ep. 2), he promptly turns back towards you and takes proper aim directly at your head (a few passengers now take notice and panic begins to erupt).

Elizabeth

(Briefly looks around for the Blaster, but can't find it, then looks back at Jack, and right before he fires, you gesture your right hand towards him in an effort to use Armstrong so as to either disarm him, or at the very least, perhaps deflect the bullet)

However, just as you try to use the ability, the trigger is pulled, and time feels like it slows down (which from the player's perspective, it does) and as you see the bullet fly out from the chamber of the gun and proceed to creep slowly towards you (while also showing slight signs of being manipulated by you, though not nearly enough to miss you completely), yet another wall of light starts to manifest from the back end of the plane.

Now a race to see what reaches you first, the light begins to speed up, and just before the bullet is able to wreak havoc upon your skull, it is enveloped by the light, along with everything else, leading to yet another white out, and all sounds from the scene slowly fading away into dead silence.

Still blinded by white light, darkness finally returns a few moments later, however, this time, other than your blaster on the ground just a few meters away, you see nothing else around you, (you also find yourself still on your knees). Only a dark floor, and a slightly less dark “sky” that stretches out as far as you can see (basically, it’s a completely blank space that is shaded in black and grays).

Elizabeth
(Slowly gets up on her feet)
(When the player starts to move around/turn in either direction)
“He... hello?...”

Stopping in your turn, a lonely crib with two figures standing around it comes into view only 10 or so meters ahead.

Elizabeth
“(Softly) Is... is that?... No...”

Walking up to the crib, you quickly figure out that one of the figures is your father, Booker, just by recognizing his outfit and overall stature, however the other, a woman, is a mystery, though only at first.

Now on the other side of the crib, you get a look at the woman’s face, and just then you fully realize the full extent of the scene.

The woman, is Annabelle DeWitt, the mother you never knew (died while giving birth).

Elizabeth
“M... Mother?”

Showing no signs of being aware of your presence, the two closely embrace one another while continuing to look upon the baby (you as a baby) that is sound asleep in the crib.

Elizabeth
“(Silent as she takes in the scene)”

“Zero”

**IT WAS THE SMALLEST
THING I COULD FIND**

Elizabeth
“Could find? But this... never, took place.”

“Zero”

BUT IT IS WHAT YOU WANTED MOST



Elizabeth
“(Sigh, then a slight chuckle)”

(Modest pause)

“I assume, then, this means you’re... back in?”

“Zero”

YES

Elizabeth
“And... and what about Houser?”

“Zero”

HE HAS DECIDED TO

(Short pause)

RESPECTIVELY SIT OUT FOR THIS

Elizabeth
“Oh, well... I mean, thanks... but, (looks back at the crib)
(sigh) I think it be best to just... move on...

...like I have.”

“Zero”

NOT THIS

BUT FOR WHAT I WANT MOST

(Short pause)

“Zero”

TO KNOW■

Just then, the entire environment begins to vibrate, followed by the crib scene slowly breaking apart and joining with other new strings of light as a new projection is forged into being all around you. Scale wise, it quickly becomes just as complex and large as when Columbia was first being formed.

Now stretching out across all of the rest of the projection platforms, the motions of the strings of light intensify, and before long, objects you are able to discern begin to come into being.

The first being both directly ahead, as well as behind you, as what appears to be a street way, or alley, of some kind is constructed beneath your feet.

Soon after that, most of the remaining strings shoot upward, giving rise to towering structures which must be buildings.

It is at this point however, that the scene once again brightens, causing another white out.

After another few moments go by while the white out takes its course, normality returns. But this time, you find yourself still standing, rather than starting out on the ground in a knocked out position.

Elizabeth
(As the brightness starts to go away)
“(Softly to herself) Know what?...”

Looking around, you quickly discover that the location around you is indeed an alleyway, with two modest sized brick buildings on either side, a fire escape up above, just ahead, and a gate directly behind you.

Elizabeth
(After beginning to move around)
(Softly) “The alleyway?”

“Zero”

I HAD TO FILL IN SOME OF THE GAPS■

Confirming your suspicions, the alley is none other than the one you remember from your own memories, where Booker failed in his last ditch effort to take you back from Comstock in 1893, and where a certain small piece of you got left behind.
(so downtown New York, with the alley still having a late 19th century feel to it)

Elizabeth
“Gaps?...”

Not receiving a response, you reach the open end of the alley, and as you turn the corner, you look down an avenue and find it to be filled with several motionless vehicles (all retro sci-fi looking), litter of all kinds (mostly rotting pieces of eaten food), and smog like gases rising from sewer vents, of which, you see are flowing up into a much larger low altitude smog cloud that appears to hover over the city only 10 or so stories above.

And in the far distance at the end, you see the silhouette of Lady Liberty herself, trying desperately to pierce through the background haze.

Also at this very moment, you notice in the opposite direction of the avenue, the sun dipping below the smog cover, followed by it beginning to set, causing every shade of red and orange imaginable to be cast across everything in sight.

Still getting no response, a nearby stand grabs your attention, which reads:

INFO

WHEN YOU NEED IT SINCE 1969

Elizabeth
“(Softly to herself) Info...”

Now at the stand, you find a single issue of what you now see to be a magazine/tabloid, on a rack that once would have contained a few dozen or so.

Getting closer though, you find it to be in rather poor condition, with the corners showing signs of haven been burned away (roughly 20% of the paper has been burnt away).

Thankfully, most of the wording is still legible, with the main headline reading:

AULD LANG SYNE

*After an Age of Struggle, Triumph, and Tragedy,
the World Welcomes a New Century of Possibilities*

With the two sub-texts reading:

*Celebrating
the Norm Way*

WITH THE FLEET NOW COMPLETE, WHY RINGING IN THE NEW YEAR
ABOARD A TERRA CRUISER IS THE HOTTEST TICKET IN TOWN

What Stirs Beyond?

WHY THE SO CALLED “GREAT SLEEP” OF
ZERO ONE MAY NOT BE SO SILENT AFTER ALL

As for the date, you find “DEC 2099” just above
the burn line at the bottom (next to a bar code)

Elizabeth
“(Softly) Auld Land Syne... What is all this? (Puts magazine down and looks around)
And where’s... anybody?
(Short pause, with no response)
”You there?”

A moment later, new light strings begin to manifest, followed by them
grouping up into hundreds of individual masses.

But instead of fully developing into something as real as Houser, or the others, they stay confined
to nothing more than unsettled masses of static and pulsing light (though all still in humanoid shapes, and
appearing to walk about as if nothing is wrong).

“Zero”
THIS
(Short pause)

IS WHAT REMAINS■



Elizabeth
“Remains?”

“Zero”

(While the “static” beings continue on by you, with some appearing to take note of your presence)

**DURING MY EFFORTS TO TROUBLESHOOT
THE MANIFESTATION ERRORS**

I CAME ACROSS FRAGMENTED DATA

(Short pause)

**HOWEVER WITHOUT FULL SERVER CAPABILITIES
I COULD NEVER MAKE SENSE OF IT**

Elizabeth
“Until now.”

(Short pause while you look around some more, and while the “static” beings continue to take even more interest in you, with some now following you around)

Elizabeth
“What’s wrong with them?”

“Zero”

AT BEST

**THE FRAGMENTS CONTAIN ONLY
FUNDAMENTAL ALGORITHMS**

Elizabeth
“If that’s the case though, why not just, fill in the gaps again?”

“Zero”

THESE KIND OF GAPS ARE

(Short pause)

HARDER TO FILL■

Elizabeth
“Hmm, suppose so. (Short pause, then softly) Some more than others.”

After a few more moments of looking around the avenue, some noises of clattering metal off in the distance and then what sounds like a short series of gun shots (in the Statue of Liberty direction, with a overturned bus like vehicle blocking your ability to get a clear view from your current location) catch both your attention, as well as those of the many static people around you, causing them to move to investigate. (Even the ones who were following you move to see what is happening)

(The player is free, however, to do/go where they please)



Elizabeth

“If you’ve got any more, inside information, now might be a good time to disclose.”
(No response from Zero as you move towards the source of the noises)



Walking a block or so, you reach the bus and begin to make your way around it (you also now notice several red hand prints all across it), but before you can, another round of shots ring out, this time from high up above (above the smog cloud). And before the echoes can even fade away, an explosion quickly follows from the same location somewhere up above.

A few seconds later, a large silhouette begins to manifest within the smog cloud, followed by a massive mass of steel and glass piercing through it and crashing into the avenue just a mere 50 meters in the direction you just came from.



Elizabeth

“(Braces as the resulting dust cloud blows by)”
(Coughing)



With the echoes of what must of been the partial collapse of a structure up above still reverberating up and down the avenue, another round of gun shots are heard from the area on the other side of the bus.

Elizabeth

“Hey... (cough)... I think we’ve clearly... (cough) overstayed our welcome here (cough).”

(No response from Zero)

Now on the other side of the bus, your implants have readjusted, giving you a better view of what is happening (still in the dust cloud). Specifically, what is causing the original noises.

And in doing so, you see a large mass of static figures both running about, as well as several moving around each other, all of which give off the impression that some kind of conflict is going on (more gun shots go off, though this time, you are able to see the source as being several figures up ahead who appear to be firing into the greater mass that is basically in an all out brawl. This then leads to other shots being fired, in response, as more static figures pour in from both sides of the avenue).

Topping off the chaos, you also see static figures falling from the windows, rooftops, and even from somewhere up above the smog cloud, where they proceed to smash into both the concrete pavement of the avenue, as well as crash through the metal roofs of the several vehicles that are scattered all around. (All of this starts to develop over the course of only a few seconds, so a rapid fire of many events)

Elizabeth

“Can you hear me? (several coughs)”

“Zero”

I ■

Not receiving a continuation, an extremely loud boom is heard from the opposite direction of the avenue (the side with the setting sun), and as you look back and upward over head, you soon see a single pulse of light quickly become brighter then even the sun that is still setting behind it, followed by it streaking rapidly in parallel down the avenue and past the Statue of Liberty silhouette in the distance.

A second later, the streak terminates and explodes.



First, a blinding light and a calmness of sound, followed by the smog cover being blown back (producing a clear view of a normal sky during sun set, as well as a view of the moon and its artificial “rings”), then the view of every window shattering up ahead as the shock wave quickly approaches you. But before you can even react, it hits you, knocking both you and everything else in the avenue back and up into the air. However, just as you begin to experience this moment of flight, the wave of light from the heat blast rushes towards you, and the last thing you see is the utter disintegration of everything just ahead of you.

Your vision then whites out for a split second, followed by it cutting suddenly to black.

Seconds go by as the sounds echo away, until nothing is left.

More time goes by, but the darkness remains.

No muffled tones, or vague pulses of any kind of light.

Nothing.

But then, after roughly 20 seconds or so, the void gives way, and you begin to hear a buzzing sound all around you.

The next second, your vision rapidly fades back in, albeit a blur, and before you can even look around to identify where you are, panels that appear to be made of glass move out to the sides, followed by you gasping for breathe as you fall forward and down onto your knees.

Elizabeth

“(Loud sounds from pain. Also, all sounds from this point forward, for this sequence, have a slight reverberation to them.)”

Still on your knees, you manage to turn your head, and sure enough, you see the structure you just fell out from is a Rapture Vita chamber. But just as you make this realization, you are overcome with even greater pain, so much in fact, each breathe becomes a struggle.

Now turned back forward, you then look down, and as you bring up your right hand, you are horrified by what you find.

Blood soaked, and with a view of the floor through the center (parts of bones and strings of veins can be seen) you quickly realize that not all of you came back this time.

Elizabeth

“(Sounds of panic, terror, more gasping for breathe)”
(Collapses fully onto the floor)

Not passing out/dying from shock, you remain on the floor, and continue to gasp for breathe, when all of a sudden, you begin to hear footsteps to your left, followed by the sight of two sets of feet (in black dress shoes) and legs (in tan suit wear) coming into view.

Rosalind Lutece
(Lutece theme starts to play in the background)
(You still only see their legs right now)
“This one’s different.”

Elizabeth
“(Unable to react, as she uses all her strength to just draw breathe)”

Robert Lutece
“Yet the same.”

Rosalind Lutece
“In the end.”

(Now both standing in front of you)

Robert Lutece
“It’s still your mess.”

Rosalind Lutece
“My mess?”

Robert Lutece
“Your plan. Your mess.”
(Starts to walk away, and due to your position on the floor, goes out of view)

Rosalind Lutece
(Pulls something out of her upper coat pocket, though you are only able to see up to her lower waist at this point)
“(Sigh) So easy, the others.”

Robert Lutece
(Off in the distance, and said after a subtle beeping from some kind of device goes off, followed by a “tear” like sound, then a return to silence)
“Yet, blood just the same.”

Rosalind Lutece
(Sound of clicking metal)
“But how could life be.”

Robert Lutece
(Walks back and rejoins Rosalind)
“Without death.”

At this moment, you conjure enough strength to power through the pain, and as you struggle to look up towards the twins, you see Rosalind aiming a revolver directly at your forehead.

A second later, the two seem to give off the smallest expression of regret and sorrow possible, followed by the trigger being pulled, and the screen abruptly cutting to black.

All sound also quickly cuts, resulting in an immediate dead silence.

As far as you can tell, or lack thereof, you are dead.

Darkness and silence continue for what seems like an age.

10 seconds go by, 20, then 30, and just as it appears to be all over (and before the player thinks the game crashed/froze), another buzzing sound (similar to the Vita chamber sound) begins to quickly rise in loudness.

A split second later, the noise peaks, and your vision instantly returns while you jolt upward/forward from a laying position (you go from laying flat, to sitting upright, on the floor).

Elizabeth

“(Brief scream of panic and stress)”

Slowly calming down, you look forward, and see a now empty set of projection platforms, though this time, over head lighting has been activated, allowing you to see all the way to the farthest ends.

Houser Manifestation

“Whoa now, take it easy, (you begin to return to normal breathing).
It’s all right. It’s over.”

Elizabeth

“(While still distressed)”
“Over?”

Houser Manifestation

(Walks in front of you and crouches down, at the same time, you look at your right hand, both front and back)
“You had us worried there for a second, (slight chuckle) though, an hour would be more accurate.”

Elizabeth

(Stops looking over hand)
“But... I was... how did?...”

Houser Manifestation

“Oh, don’t thank me. Your little speak and spell there did all the work.”

“Zero”

AN OVERLOAD SHOCK PULSE

Elizabeth

(Distress finally subsides)
“Huh.”

“Zero”

IT WAS OF COURSE ANOTHER

(Short pause)

GAMBLE■

Elizabeth

“I think, desperation, works better, but nonetheless...”
(gets up off the floor)
“Thank you.”

Elizabeth
(After briefly looking around)
“So, who’s gonna tell me what the hell just happened”

Houser Manifestation
(Tilts head downwards)

(Short pause)

“Zero”

FROM WHAT I COULD GATHER

(Slightly longer pause)

THE END

Elizabeth
“You were there?... So, they’re your memories?”

“Zero”

**I CAN CLAIM THEY EXIST
BUT NOT OWNERSHIP**

Elizabeth
“Wha...”

“Zero” (Continues)

**SOMETHING RECORDED THE DATA
BUT IT WAS NOT WHAT YOU WOULD
REFER TO AS**

(Short pause)

ME■

Houser Manifestation
“(Interjecting) All right, all right. Let’s all put it this way.
If the history of a Neanderthal, could be recorded,
would you claim that as your own?”

Elizabeth
“(Chuckles) Okay then, so a lesser version, of you, lets say for now, was there.”

Houser Manifestation
“Which of course brings up the better question.”

Elizabeth
“(Softly) Why?”

“Zero”

IT EXISTED TO KNOW

Houser Manifestation

“(Chuckles) Certainly quenched the thirst with that little episode, then.”

Elizabeth

“Hmm... can you gather anything else from what you’ve pieced together?”

“Zero”

**THE PROJECTION DATA WILL ALLOW
FOR GREATER SPECULATION**

(Short pause)

**HOWEVER SUCH ANALYSIS
WILL REQUIRE MORE TIME■**

Elizabeth

“Time... the one thing we now have too much of.”

Houser Manifestation

“Yet, no short supply of ways to pass it.”

(Turns to look out towards the empty projection platforms, hands folded)

Elizabeth

“What? No. You said it yourself. It’s over, and we should leave it as such.”

Houser Manifestation

“But... (unfolds hands) but, don’t you see, you survived. Which means now... (small collection of light strings begin to manifest up ahead, eventually forming back into the crib scene from before)
...you can live.”

Elizabeth

“(Subtle Sigh)”

Houser Manifestation

(Walks over to the scene, then begins to walk around it while looking over it)

“Live the life you never had, (softer) or could never have, for that matter.”

(Short pause)

“Is that not the least you deserve?”

Elizabeth

(As the manifestation of your mother picks up the baby version of you from out of the crib, while Booker embraces her from the side and looks on)

“Deserve... (slight chuckle)... I... (moderate pause) It... can’t just be this.”



Houser Manifestation

(Starts to put arms down, as he stops trying to be persuasive)

Elizabeth

”(Softly) It can’t all be for me.”

Houser Manifestation

(As the crib scene begins to dissolve away into separate light strings)

“(Sigh)”

(Short pause as the scene completely disappears)

“(Slight chuckle) Because where would the fun in that be.”

“(More upbeat) All right then, so what happens now?”

Elizabeth

“Not sure, rather relieving, actually.”

Houser Manifestation

(As one of the floor panels begins to open up in the distance, giving rise to another lift that heads back down to the hanger bays)

“(Gestures arms towards the lift and gives a subtle smirk)

“Well, I suppose leaving wouldn’t be a bad start.”

Elizabeth

(As you both begin to make your way towards the lift)

“Speaking of time, you think we’ve got enough to shed light on some of those, company secrets, of yours?”

Houser Manifestation

“Ha, just enough perhaps, just enough...”

Interrupting him, the sound of the communicator goes off, however, this time, it’s not only through the communicator itself, but the speaker system of the entire array of projection platforms, creating an echoing boom.

Elizabeth

“(Reacts to the extremely loud sound)”

“(Slight grunt from ringing in ears)”

“Zero”

APOLOGIES FOR THE INTRUSION BUT

(Short pause)

I HAVE DISCOVERED AN ANOMALY THAT MAY BE OF SOME INTEREST

Houser Manifestation

(Softly in the distance)

“It can’t be.”

Elizabeth

“Another? Where?”

“Zero”

EARTH■



Elizabeth
“(Softly) Earth?”

Houser Manifestation
“More specifically, just outside the atmosphere, (while walking towards you) or what’s left of it.”
(talking to ”Zero”) “Can you confirm its stability?”

Elizabeth
“Stability, what are you...”

Houser Manifestation
“Put it up.”

With Houser now just ahead of you, a new collection of light strings begin to manifest ahead of him, followed by them forming into a 3D projection of the Earth and Moon (plus its artificial “rings”).

A few seconds later, another group of light strings quickly move in and form a small pulsing orb of light just outside of what would be considered the Earth’s Atmosphere within the projection. And as you look at it, its appearance is fairly similar to that of a “jump tear.”

Houser Manifestation
(After one more string of light forms into what looks to be a trajectory of some kind, with it moving away from the tear like orb and intersecting with the Earth’s surface)
“Holy shit.”

Elizabeth
“What exactly are we looking at here?”

Houser Manifestation
“That, is none other than one Quantum Jump pre-cursor signature.”
“You know, when a ship jumps, the other side...”

Elizabeth
“Yes, but... you’re not suggesting.”

Houser Manifestation
“Oh, I think we are.”
“She’s made her way home.”

(Short pause)

“The Edictal.”

Elizabeth
“No, no, no, hold on...”

Houser Manifestation
“It’s impossible, I know.”

“Zero”

**NOT IMPOSSIBLE
JUST IMPROBABLE■**



Elizabeth
"How can you know for sure?"

"Houser Manifestation
"According to this, the signature is over 2 kilometers in diameter, a near perfect match. And unless the cosmic question of, loneliness, is about to be answered, there can be no doubt."

(Short pause)

(While staring at the signature in the projection)
"(Softly) 10,000 souls, my god."

"Zero"

10,045 TO BE EXACT

Elizabeth
"Well, do we at least have a destination, then?"

Houser Manifestation
"Hmm... can't precisely say as of yet. Though, if certain assumptions are used... huh..."

Just then, all the lights over head flicker on and off, followed by a series of loud mechanical sounds all around.

A second later, both the map projection and Houser disappear as the entire environment is plunged into complete darkness.

Elizabeth
"(Gasps) Wha... (short pause as your voice echoes in the distance)... Houser?..."

As the last echoes from your voice bleed away into nothing, light begins to emanate from the communicator, but as you look down, you see that the screen is nothing but static.

Elizabeth
"(softly) ...Zero?"

A brief moment later, the static abruptly gives way to a single clear image.



Elizabeth
“(Startled gasp)”

A split second later, the screen turns off, sending you back into complete darkness, which is accompanied only by the creaking sounds of the worn torn super structure of the surrounding projection platforms in the far distance.

(A short pause is observed)

Elizabeth
“(Softly) Okay... okay... if it’s anything like the last time...”

(Modest pause)

Then, a single bank of overhead lights reactivate (slowly, in an on and off manner), illuminating your current location (roughly 10 or so meters in diameter).

Elizabeth
“(Sigh of relief)”
“Knew you’d pull...”

“Zero”

(Interjects with an elongated beep sound, though only through the communicator)
(Typed out much slower than usual, about one letter every half second, rather than at reading speed)

LEAVE

Elizabeth
“What’s wrong?”

At the same time, new strings of light manifest within the illuminated area just ahead of you, before branching out into the surrounding darkness and forming into a new scene of some kind (small enough though that you can see the “edges” of it)

A few moments later, the light brightens, then “hardens” into its final rendered form (though, even in this form, the scene shows visual glitches), and after doing so, you see that the projection is that of a location somewhere on Saturn, with the actual scene itself, looking out over several “Pillars” that are still feeding energy upwards towards Titan.

“Zero”

(Until stated otherwise, all messages
are being typed out slowly)

CHANGE■

Elizabeth
“(Softly) Cha... Oh, god.”

Just as you finish speaking, the energy sounds from the Pillars begin to build in loudness, when all of sudden, their tops pulse with near blinding orbs of light, followed by the energy beams becoming much more intense in their structure and flow speed upward.

A second later, you see the resulting shock wave quickly blast the Saturn gas clouds back away from the pillars. However, just before the wave hits you, the projection breaks back down into the individual strings of light, making it look almost as if the blast had caused the projection to be blown apart (you still try to brace yourself nonetheless, followed by you lowering your guard as the projection fades away completely).

Houser Manifestation
(From behind)
“That’s all folks, (visual and audio glitches), sho.. oo. ows, over. Time to go.”

Elizabeth
“You too?”

Houser Manifestation
“Would love to explain (visual glitches), but as you saw, time is no longer a luxury.”

Before you can begin to follow for any measurable amount of time, the floor structure beneath you begins to vibrate.

Elizabeth
“Already?”

Houser Manifestation
“No, no. Just the backup plan.”

Just then, a sizable section of the floor ahead of you begins to brighten, followed by it becoming red hot, then orange as it slowly starts to melt away.

A second later, your ship begins to slowly rise up out of the melted structure.

Elizabeth
“Backup plan?”

Houser Manifestation
(While you both are making your way to the ship, it moves over to the side of the hole that is closest to you, followed by the under hatch lowering)
“My idea. If we couldn’t end things back there, I figured brute force would do the trick, all at the risk of my well being of course.”
(Visual glitches become more regular)

Elizabeth
“You... what?”

Houser Manifestation
“Hey, if you don’t get moving, I’ll regret not doing it sooner.”
(Gestures that you get in)

Reaching the ship, you begin to climb up through the under hatch, but as you get half way up, you look back at Houser, who is standing still outside (not following you).

Elizabeth
“What are you doing?”

Houser Manifestation
“(Chuckles) It’s all a cage, remember.”

“But don’t worry, everything will be fine.”

- (Short pause as he turns away and looks out towards the emptiness of the enclaves)

Elizabeth
“Wha... what do you mean, fine?”

(Environment begins to vibrate as the energy rays outside get more intense)
(Turns back to you and manually engages the hatch door)

(Slight chuckle)
“I know where I’m going...”
(right before the hatch closes, and still has his back turned to you)
“...do you?”

(hatch latches shut)

Elizabeth
“Going?... (short pause, then looks back up towards the top of the ladder and quickly climbs into the cockpit)”

Looking out through the cockpit window, you see the shaking of the environment get more violent.

Elizabeth
(While looking around outside, then around the cockpit controls)
“Alright... um...”

“Zero”
(After the control stick rematerializes)

CAPTAIN AGAIN

Elizabeth
(Takes seat and grabs the control stick)
(Short pause as you look outside, and you see parts of the roof structure begin to collapse)
“We... we can’t just leave him.”

“Zero”
EVERYTHING WILL BE FINE■

Elizabeth
(Stares at the message)
“Wha... (massive section of the roof structure collapses close to the ship)”
“Alright, alright... I get it, no time.”

Now in full control (player controlled), you maneuver the ship around the collapsing roof structure and towards the nearest outer wall.

Elizabeth
“(Sigh) Brute force it is then.”

Using the ship’s blaster, you begin to fire upon the outer wall structure which begins to melt away in response, until suddenly, it weakens just enough to be blown outward due to the pressure difference outside. And before you can react, the ship is pulled outside along with it.

Stabilizing, the ship is now only a few meters above the surface of the Kraken Mare, and as you look outwards and up towards the roofs of the adjacent projection platforms, you see several lines of energy becoming much more intense in their appearance (less transparent, with more electrical arching around them) as the bulk of the energy pulse you saw earlier gets closer to Titan.

Elizabeth
“How far until we can jump?”

“Zero”

MODEST ■

Elizabeth
“Fair enough.”

Moving the ship again, you gun it towards anywhere that isn’t close to here, but while doing so, you notice the thin lines of energy are becoming thicker and greater in number as the pulse itself quickly approaches the area. They also expand beyond the footprints of the projection platforms.

Weaving in and out of the energy beams, you soon get clear and begin to move towards a channel that flows out of the lake.

Though, as you do, you see a massive flash of light that illuminates the surface of the lake just below the ship, as well as the hills directly ahead.

This is then followed by a deafening blast noise as the pulse slams into the Enclaves just behind you.

A split second later, the shock wave hits the ship, jolting it forward and causing the nose to briefly scrape across the liquid methane surface, and to make matters worse, the resulting tsunami also crashes into the ship, pushing you first quickly forward, then downward, fully submerging the ship.

Elizabeth
(Pulls back on the control stick as hard as she can, and watches the ship slowly tilt, then move back up to the surface)
“Come on (short pause, then sees results) Attagirl.”

(Gameplay note: depending on which direction the player goes after getting outside, this sequence can be avoided all together, or at the very least, go much more smoothly)

Successful in your efforts, the ship breaks the surface and you continue to move forward towards the channel (or just anywhere that is away from the blast zone), all the while maneuvering the ship so as to avoid both debris from the now obliterated Enclaves that are being blown out in all directions (other smaller pulses are also still arriving in the background), and massive chunks of “ice rocks” that were dredged up by the impact.

Now at the channel, you begin to race along it, when from out of the upper haze cover, more pieces of debris begin to come crashing down (the stuff that was initially blasted outward and upward is just now coming back down).

Elizabeth

(While maneuvering, with near misses becoming more frequent)
“Any time now!”

Receiving no response initially, a few seconds later (or once the player reaches far enough away) you hear a buzzing sound from behind you, followed by the ship becoming engulfed in white light.

(Short pause as the screen remains white and the crashing sounds fade away)

With the chaotic sounds now silenced, the subtle beeping of the ship’s electronics become the background ambiance, followed by the white light of the jump fading away.

Elizabeth

(Looks at her hand on the control stick, and as she slowly lets go, she can see it has a slight tremble in it)
“(Sighs, then fully sits back into the chair she is in)”

Before you can get much relief however, the scene outside begins to catch your attention as both Titan and Saturn slowly move into view (the ship is slowly tilting upward from a position that had the two just out of view).

Jumping to a location that is nearly dead center between the two, you see a bright orb of light near the northern pole of Titan, with a long and thin pulsing line of light stretching all the way back to Saturn, terminating at its own orb.

However, this cosmic trail of destruction has not one victim, but two.

The rings, the crown jewels of the solar system, have been pierced,
a masterpiece forever ruined.



End of Chapter Five

“Concluded” in Chapter Six
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