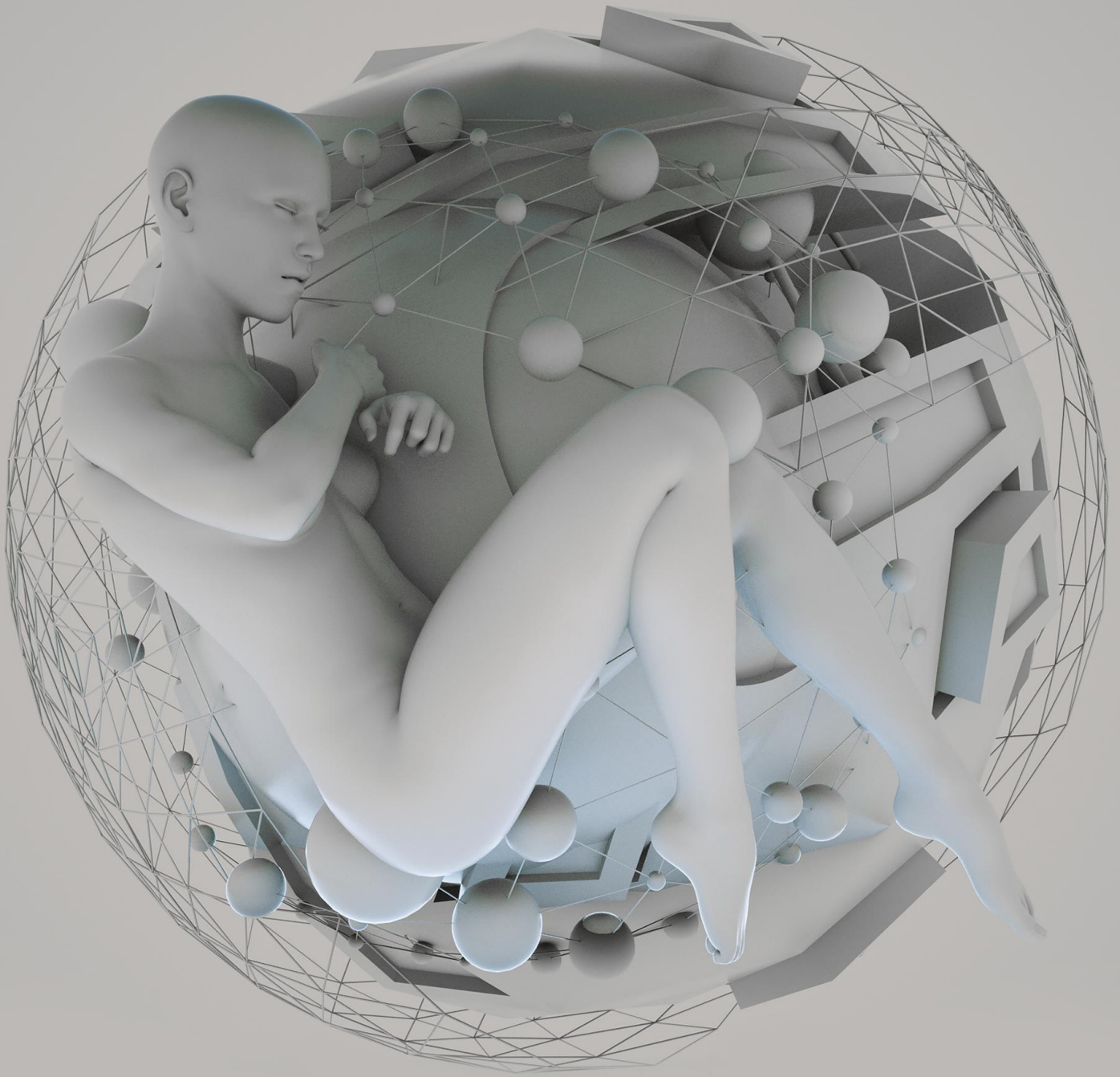


# RE:AWAKEN

QUINN MCGRAW  
LELAND BJERG  
JOSH THOMPSON



A NOVELLA BY SPLICE COMICS  
BASED ON THE EPONYMOUS RECORD BY  
EVERY HOUR KILLS

# RE:AWAKEN

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BASED ON THE 'RE:AWAKEN' EP BY  
EVERY HOUR KILLS

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# SYNOPSIS

Idra Lune is dying, but in the 22nd century, it's nothing special: everybody is dying. Her friends, her family, her girlfriend Brae'enne, and all the rest of planet Earth are infected with a consumptive plague. For decades, hope had been in short supply, until the arrival of a highly advanced alien species: the Illusorians.

The aliens were also a dying race. They offered humanity a simple trade: medical supplies to treat and cure the plague in exchange for human children to replenish their lost ranks. Those given willingly would be transformed into Illusorians, ensuring the survival of both species.

Some humans embraced the exchange, believing their children were being given better lives. A religion, known as the Vessel of Light, grew around the powerful beings and 'Ascension': the process of transforming a human into an Illusorian. Others rejected the Illusorians and the new faith, and remained in the lower castes of Earth society, condemned to slow death by the plague.

Idra and Brae'enne live in the lower castes, working as black market mercenaries. When a renegade Vessel scientist offers them the cure to the plague in exchange for infiltrating an Illusorian base, the two of them must decide if they are willing to risk the years they have left on a chance at a lifetime together.

# CAST



## IDRA LUNE

OCCUPATION: MERCENARY

FACTION: NONE

Fierce and impatient, Idra is a deadly combatant. She has no love for the Illusorians, and holds them responsible for the death of her father, who was killed in the only human military action against the advanced aliens shortly after their arrival on Earth.

## BRAE'ENNE BENET

OCCUPATION: ENGINEER

FACTION: NONE

Brae'enne is deeply intuitive with machinery, and has successfully reverse-engineered Illusorian wormhole technology. She loves Idra desperately, and will do whatever it takes to protect their relationship.



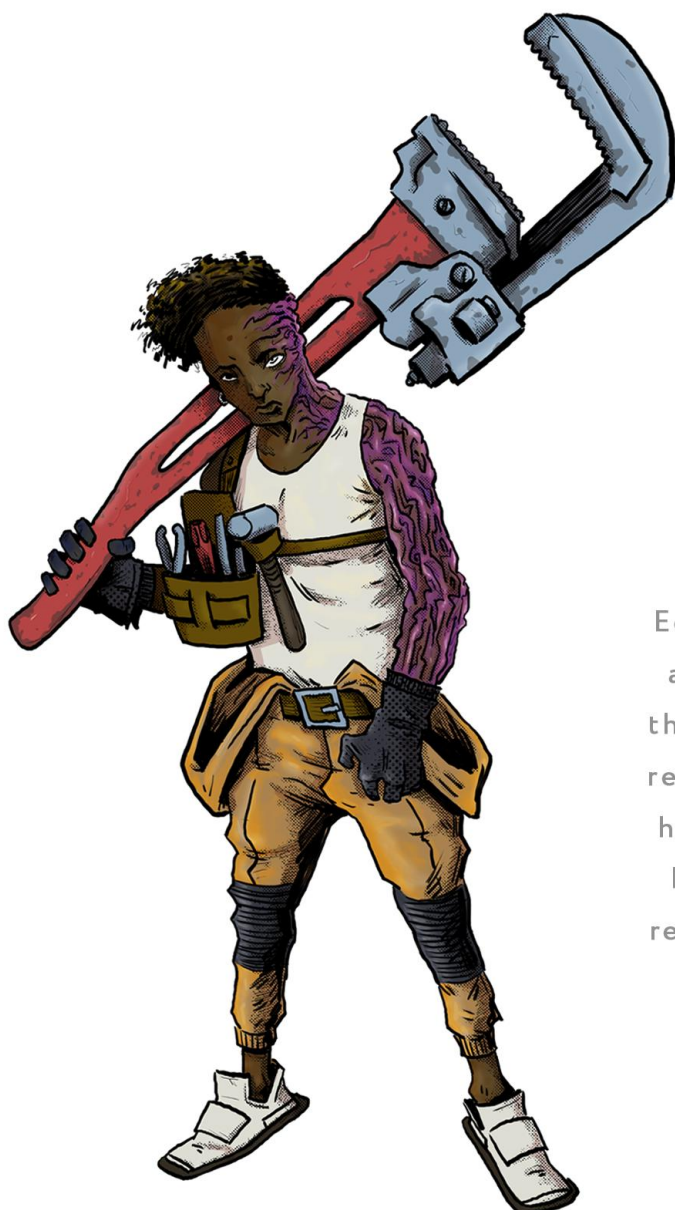
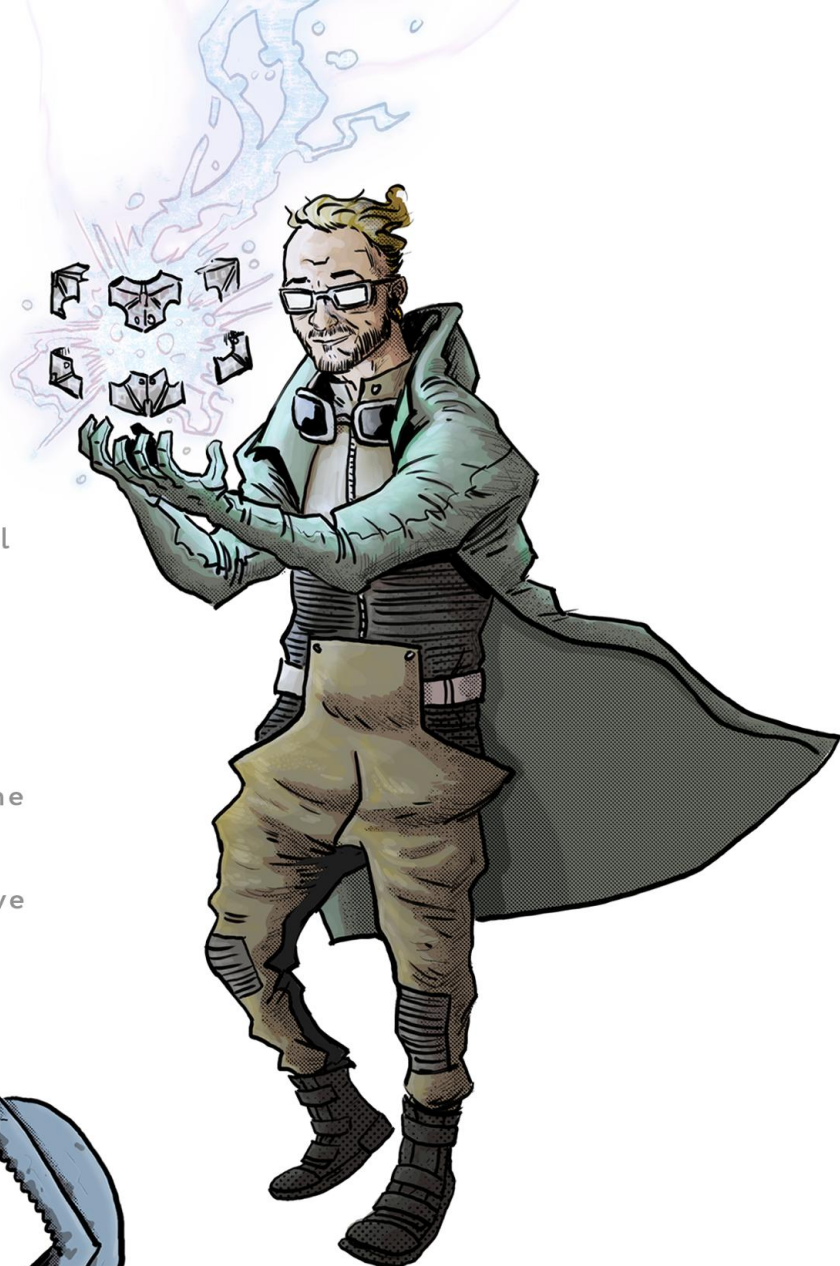


## ORION MOORE

OCCUPATION: SCIENTIST  
FACTION: EXILED

Once a devout member of the Vessel of Light, Orion is now an apostate.

When the Vessel refused his entreaties to see his Ascended daughter, Orion stole Illusorian technology and fled. Now in hiding, he works with his adoptive son Eos to create a device that will help him save his daughter: the NumLock.



## EOS CIRESI

OCCUPATION: APPRENTICE  
FACTION: SECULARIST

Eos lost his birth parents to the plague at an early age and ended up living in the lower castes of Earth society. Orion recognized the boy's potential and took him on as an apprentice. A dutiful son, Eos seeks to help his adoptive father rescue his distant sister and reunite his new family.

## VADEN EDAX

OCCUPATION: HIGH COUNT

FACTION: VESSEL OF LIGHT

Vaden is responsible for overseeing and spreading the faith of the Vessel of Light on Earth. A deeply devout man, he believes every child he delivers to the Illusorians is a soul saved. He is silver-tongued, passionate, and dead-set on capturing the apostate, Orion Moore, in order to please the Illusorian Overlord: the Archdiocese.







## THE ARCHDIOCESE

FACTION: ILLUSORIAN EMPIRE

An ancient being, whose ascension is lost even to Illusorian history, the Archdiocese is the overlord of the Illusorian Star Harbour. Nearly immortal and extremely patient, the Archdiocese wants to ensure the human race keeps supplying his species with children in order to restore the Illusorian Empire to its former glory.

# CHAPTER 1 - PREVIEW

1.0 Idra Lune floated in darkness. The salt in the warm water tingled against her skin. Half-dreamed visions drifted before her eyes as her mind opened in the suffusive black of the isolation tank. Her hands drifted, outspread, on the surface of the stillness around her. The little knots and kinks in the muscles of her face began to let go and relax, like wrongly placed stitches being undone. She drew a deep breath. Her chest swelled and settled, like a sheet unfurled in the air to softly drift down and enfold a mattress.

Her legs, she felt as an absence. She imagined a pair of long hollows in the water, extending from her stumps, as though the saline could conduct her memory and part for it in empathy. She reached down with a graceful, sinewed arm, and pressed her fingertips against the base of a stump. Her mind drew back from the subconscious boundary with which it had been flirting and grounded itself in her lower thigh. She felt the cap of flesh the surgeons had folded over and stitched to cushion the bone. Fresh ridges of newly formed plague scars had begun running back up her thighs shortly after both legs had been amputated.

These days, the plague found its way into everyone, latching on to an extremity and chewing its way inward. A plagued limb became a slow burning fuse; a countdown to when the disease would reach vital organs and end the infected's life. Amputation was not a cure, only a stopgap. It would put the disease into remission, but the plague always returned, sometimes at the same limb, sometimes another, and the fuse would be relit. Idra was running out of flesh.

She sighed. It resonated metallically in the isolation tank. The intercom crackled, and her partner, Brae'enne, spoke.

"Idra, please hold still. I can't calibrate your prosthetics if you don't relax."

"Sorry Brae. Just needed a moment. Missing my girls."

"Take all the time you need. Sometimes I miss your legs too, but the part of you that matters most to me..." Brae'enne's smirk became audible over the intercom, "...is your heart."

"You're such a tease." Idra said, but she grinned in the dark all the same.

"I can hear you smiling,"

"Yeah, guilty." Idra laid back and set her arms purposefully at her



sides. "Whenever you're done being cute, I'm ready."

"Alright. I'll run the software again. See if we can't establish a stronger neural link."

Idra waited, resisting the urge to fidget. She felt a buzzing in her jaw: some kind of field was scanning her neurology. After a few moments, she heard footsteps on the steel plating overhead.

The hatch on the isolation tank opened, and harsh light broke the calm dark. Idra squinted. Brae'enne wore a pair of coveralls and an overstuffed tool pouch over her voluptuous figure. Her face was broad and pleasant, and spattered with freckles and specks of grease. Like her partner, she too had lost a limb to the plague. Her left hand had been replaced with cybernetics. She offered it to her lover. Idra reached, blinking, for Brae'enne. She found Brae's wrist and felt cool steel fingers encircle her own in turn.

"Should be all set, hon." Brae'enne grunted as she hauled Idra from the tank. Idra's dripping hair, black as the gaps between the stars, emerged behind her leanly muscled arm. Then came her eyes, dark gold and fiery as the stars themselves. She was long, and powerful, and would have been six feet tall if she were still whole.

The air of Brae'enne's shop was cool on her wet skin. The squat warehouse sat in a bad neighborhood with bars on its windows and an elaborate password guarding its reinforced entryway. Along the walls were shelves stacked with spare parts, weaponry, and experimental technologies. A half-assembled, or perhaps half-disassembled, copter was parked before a pair of corrugated steel garage doors and surrounded by componentry.

She put an arm around Brae'enne's neck and felt the coarse fabric of the coveralls drawing the beaded moisture from her bare skin. Her lover did not shrink from her wetness. Brae'enne's good hand and forearm moved to gently cradle her and pulled her close. Idra laid her cheek against Brae'enne's shoulder and breathed her scent; sweat, synthetic grease, and a hint of lilac. She felt it settle somewhere deep in her chest, strong and steady and comforting.

Brae'enne carried her down a ladder bolted to the side of the isolation tank. Mounted alongside the ladder was the calibration rig, holding her prosthetic legs.

Idra's legs were military issue, steel and titanium: no synthetic skin. Bare pistons and servos bolted to a strong, lightweight chassis. As Idra moved, her mechanical legs, now linked to her neurology but still suspended from the calibration rig, gently flexed against the air.

"You're so light." Brae'enne said absently as they reached the floor.

"Yeah well...legs are heavy." Idra replied.

"Aw, shit. Idra, I'm sorry."

"I know you didn't mean anything by it."

"But still! I should be more—"

"Hey. It's fine. I don't have legs anymore." She lifted her head from Brae'enne's shoulder and looked into her eyes. "I don't have legs, and I love you," she said sardonically.

"You are too muh—" Brae'enne was interrupted as Idra kissed her. It was more than a kiss. It was a command. Maintaining the kiss, Brae'enne gently lowered Idra to the floor, and various buckles and buttons were undone. The clinks and snaps drifted up to the dusty steel joists of the old warehouse's ceiling, and were soon replaced with breaths and sighs, and oaths whispered with primitive ferocity.

Suspended in the calibration rig above them, the mechanical legs, so cold and utilitarian in appearance, moved and turned and arched sinuously, telegraphing the passions of their owner in a graceful disembodied dance.