

EXT. DESERT-DAY

IVAN (V.O.)

So where was I? Oh yeah! I spent the next few days with the cowboys, learning how to ride, and about the surrounding area. But eventually, it was time for me to move on.

The cowboys sit on their mounts, gathered around Ivan. Ivan is no longer wearing his ninja garb, but keeps his mask and wrist and ankle guards. He is wearing a black bandana made out of his ninja shirt. He smiles at the cowboys.

COWBOY

Do you really hafta go, Ivan? You could stay here with us!

IVAN

I told you guys. I have to find the Desert Outpost. And before that, a town to stay in.

Jarom signals to one of his friends, who approaches holding the reigns of a sandrider.

JAROM

A promise is a promise, Ivan. this is one of my best sandriders. They may not look like much, but they're wicked fast on the sand, and hardier than anything. His name's Rudy.

Rudy sniffs curiously at Ivan. Ivan laughs nervously and pats his head. He climbs onto Rudy's back.

JAROM

And take this!

Jarom tosses a water canteen at Ivan. He catches it.

JAROM

I hope you find what you're looking for out here, Ivan!

Ivan waves at the cowboys as they begin to leave. He tugs on Rudy's reigns unsuredly. Rudy shuffles to the left with a grunt. Ivan notices that Jarom rides back to him.

JAROM

You gotta tell him where you wanna go. They understand. Also, take this.

Jarom takes his cowboy hat off his head and puts it on Ivan's head. Jarom nods to him.

JAROM

Here's hoping we can meet again someday.

Ivan and Jarom shake hands. Then Jarom follows his posse. Ivan looks down at Rudy.

IVAN

Alright, Rudy. It's just you and me now.

Ivan points in front of him.

IVAN

That way!

Rudy Takes off into a run, moving surprisingly fast. Ivan hangs on.

EXT. DESERT-DAY

Ivan has become used to riding on his sandrider. He squints against the sunlight and blowing sand to see a small town ahead of him. He pulls on the reins to slow Rudy down to a trot.

BLACK (V.O.)

There's the town, but it seems... too quiet.

EXT. SAGE HILL-DAY

Ivan trots into the town. There is nobody in sight. Suddenly, Ivan pulls out his sword just in time to deflect a bullet. Rudy gets scared, and lets out a loud grunt. Ivan calms him down.

IVAN

Wait for me at the edge of town,
Rudy!

Rudy hops away as Ivan jumps off of him, landing on the road with both of his swords in his hands. A voice emits from a nearby building.

DONOMOL

Run for cover, you idiot! Do you
want to get shot?!

IVAN

I wanna know what's going on here!
Who shot at me?!

A bandit walks out from behind a building, holding a pistol in his hand.

LASLO

Put down those swords, Mister!
We're just here for the money, then
we'll be on our way!

DONOMOL

Don't let him take it, Mister!
Laslo and his boys are thieves!

IVAN

Really? I hadn't noticed! Back off,
Laslo! Where I come from, we don't
tolerate stealing!

LASLO

Who are you to order me around?!

Laslo starts shooting at Ivan. Ivan dodges the bullets and deflects them with his swords. He runs at Laslo and holds his swords against his neck.

IVAN

It doesn't matter who I am! Leave,
or I'll make you!

Laslo looks frightened. He pushes his gun into Ivan's chest and pulls the trigger. There is only a soft click. He waves at one of his buddies. A bandit jumps out from a nearby

building and shoots Ivan in the head. Ivan lurches away for a second, but then turns his head back to Laslo, looking angry. The wound immediately heals. Laslo's eyes widen.

LASLO

Are you some kind of monster?!

IVAN

I will be, if you and your men
don't get out of my sight right
now!

Laslo immediately turns and runs away, his buddies following suit. One of his buddies carries two children in his arms who are struggling to get free.

LASLO

We'll leave, but we're taking these
kids with us as ransom! We ain't
gonna go empty-handed!

Ivan reaches for a shuriken, but realizes he doesn't have any. A woman runs out to him, looking terrified.

SARAH

No! He has my children! Please,
Sir! You have to go after them! He
might hurt my children!

Ivan turns to her, putting a comforting hand on her shoulder.

IVAN

Calm down. I'll get them back for
you.

Ivan whistles for Rudy, who comes in an instant. Ivan jumps onto his back.

IVAN

Tell everyone that it's safe, but
to stay low, just in case.

EXT. DESERT-DAY

Ivan rides after the bandits. He catches up to them and Pulls one rider off of his mount. Then he pulls out a sword and severs the reigns of another rider's mount. The

sandrider veers off course and screeches to a halt. Ivan comes up on the rider who has the two children. The bandit sees him coming and calls out to Laslo.

BANDIT

Boss! Help me!

Laslo sees what's happening and commands his sandrider to run another way, abandoning the bandit. The bandit looks at Ivan in fear. Ivan grabs the reigns from the bandit and yanks on them, stopping both sandriders. The bandit pulls out a gun, pointing it at Ivan.

BANDIT

D-don't come any closer!

IVAN

Give me the children and I won't!

The bandit looks at the two children, who have been tied and gagged, strapped to the sandrider saddle. They whimper in fear of him.

BANDIT

Whatever. I didn't even want to come to this stupid part of the desert anyways.

He pulls off the straps on the saddle. Ivan picks up the children and sits them down on his saddle. The bandit runs away on his sandrider. Ivan puts his sword away and smiles at the children. He unties them, talking to them gently.

IVAN

You kids got a little excitement today, huh? Well, you're safe now. What are your names?

The older sister speaks for both of them.

ABBEY

Abbey. And this is my brother Drew.

IVAN

I'm Ivan. You kids ready to go back home?

The kids nod. Ivan pats Rudy's head.

IVAN

You heard 'em, Rudy.

Rudy starts walking back towards the town. The little girl speaks up.

ABBEY

Are you hiding from someone?

IVAN

Hiding? Nope. Why do you ask?

ABBEY

You're wearing a mask.

Ivan chuckles.

IVAN

Oh, this? Where I come from, I'm a superhero!

ABBEY

Really?! What are your powers?

IVAN

I'm a ninja! I also heal really fast.

There is a short silence.

DREW

What a ninja?

IVAN

They are warriors of justice. They fight to protect people, but they usually do it in secret. I'm still working on the whole stealth thing.

The children giggle. Suddenly, Abbey wraps her arms around Ivan's waist.

ABBEY

Thank you for saving us.

Ivan looks surprised. Then he smiles.

IVAN

You know, after being a superhero for almost two years, you're the first person who has ever thanked me.

EXT. SAGE HILL-DAY

Ivan and the children ride the sandrider back into town. More of the townspeople are cautiously out on the roads. The woman from earlier gasps at the sight of Ivan And the children. She runs towards them.

SARAH

Abbey! Drew!

CHILDREN

Momma!

Ivan helps the children off the saddle and they hug their mother. Ivan slides off the sandrider and mutters to Rudy to wait for him at the edge of town. The woman approaches Ivan, holding Drew in one arm, and Abbey's hand with her other hand.

SARAH

Thank you so much, Sir! I can't tell you how grateful I am!

IVAN

It was nothing, Ma'am. I'm just glad they're safe.

Ivan smiles down at Abbey, who grins back at him. She reaches out and tugs on his hand.

ABBEY

You could stay with us if you need a place to live!

IVAN

Oh, I- I couldn't. I'll be fine.

SARAH

Please! We owe you our lives! It's the least we could do!

Ivan hesitates, but then looks at the children. They smile hopefully at him. He smiles. He bows to them like a ninja.

IVAN

It would be an honor, Ma'am.

SARAH

My name is Sarah. Sarah McDodds.

IVAN

Ivan Daynes, at your service.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE-DAY

Sarah, Ivan, and the children walk through the small house.

SARAH

It must not look like much to someone from the big city, but it's actually pretty big for houses out here.

IVAN

I think its wonderful! All I had in the city was a bedroom I almost never slept in.

SARAH

Oh! But aren't you a superhero? I just assumed that you would be living pretty high for someone who saves the city.

Ivan shrugs.

IVAN

The Tower, where I lived, takes in people with special talents and trains them to use their powers to keep the city safe. We work in exchange for room and board, basically.

SARAH

That seems a little unfair.

IVAN

How do you mean?

SARAH

Well, the city owes you so much!
You save them from evil on a
regular basis! You deserve more. At
least, that's my opinion.

Ivan lets out a small laugh.

IVAN

Heh. In reality, it's kind of the
opposite, actually. I'm hated in
the city. People think I'm a freak.
They banished me.

SARAH

What? That's awful! How could they
do that?

IVAN

Eh, it's a long story. I'm just out
here to investigate something to
clear my name, so that I can go
home, and hopefully not be hated
anymore.

ABBEY

Can I help?

Ivan smiles and pats Abbey on the head.

IVAN

Thanks, Abbey, but I can handle
this.

Sarah leads Ivan into the kitchen.

SARAH

Well, we don't have a bedroom for
you, but you can sleep here in the
kitchen, if you like!

IVAN

Oh, that won't be necessary. Part
of my superpowers is that I am
physically incapable of sleeping. I
just need a place to gather
information to.

SARAH

Um, how about the barn? You can keep your sandrider there too!

Ivan smiles.

IVAN

That would be perfect! Thanks again.

Ivan leaves to go to the barn. Abbey smiles.

ABBEY

I like him!

EXT. SAGE HILL-DAY

Ivan walks along the road. People give him curious stares, but nobody speaks to him.

BLACK (V.O.)

Great. This town thinks we're a freak too.

Ivan just rolls his eyes and looks around. He sees a group of boys a ways off. They are gathered around in a huddle and shouting. As Ivan gets closer, he can see that in the middle of the group, there are two boys fighting. The bigger boy obviously has the advantage over the skinnier boy. Ivan approaches them.

IVAN

Hey! What's going on here?

BOY 1

Stu's getting whapped by Gavin! Stu was stupid enough to make him mad.

Ivan grabs Gavin by his collar and pulls him off of Stuart.

IVAN

All right! Break it up! Just what the heck are you idiots doing?

GAVIN

Shove off, old man! Gotta teach this kid some manners!

IVAN

Old man?! Listen, you. How about a deal? If you can touch me, you can continue teaching your "manners". If you can't touch me in a minute, you leave him alone.

GAVIN

All I gotta do is touch ya?

IVAN

Yep.

GAVIN

Deal!

Gavin dives at Ivan. Ivan easily dodges him. Gavin tries again, and Ivan does a flip over him. Gavin gets frustrated, and swings a fist at Ivan, but no matter how hard he tries, he can't touch Ivan. The other kids begin to count down from ten, while Stuart watches in amazement. When the kids count to one, Ivan catches Gavin's fist in his hand, smiling darkly.

IVAN

Time's up. Now git!

Gavin looks bewildered. He suddenly takes off running. The kids scatter, all except Stuart, who is stunned. Ivan holds out his hand to him.

IVAN

Stu, right? Maybe next time, you ought to work on dodging, rather than fighting. Big kids like Gavin are slower than us skinnier guys.

Ivan helps Stuart to his feet.

STUART

My- my name is Stuart.

IVAN

I'm Ivan. So, you good? Or Did that Gavin give you one too many hits to the head?

STUART

What? No, I'm fine. I'm kind of...
used to it.

Ivan looks concerned. Stuart turns to leave.

STUART

Well, thanks for the help. I gotta
get going.

IVAN

Hey.

Stuart turns back around. Ivan demonstrates a block move.

IVAN

Next time that Gavin winds up for a
punch, do this.

STUART

Yeah. Thanks.

Stuart leaves. As he does so, Donomol approaches Ivan.

IVAN

Hey, you're that guy from earlier.

DONOMOL

Yes, yes! I'm so glad I found you.
My name is Leroy Donomol, mayor of
Sage Hill. I can't thank you enough
for the service you gave to our
community! You saved our town!

IVAN

Oh, it was nothing. I just don't
like bullies, is all.

DONOMOL

Nothing, you say? You demonstrated
skill I've never seen before! And
that shot you sustained to the
head! It disappeared in a matter of
seconds! I've heard of your kind.
The big city really has it covered
when it comes to unique talents!

Ivan bows.

IVAN

Thank you.

DONOMOL

Tell me, how long do you intend to remain in our town? If you continue to protect us from those who wish to harm us, I can assure you that your efforts will be rewarded!

IVAN

Listen, Donomol. I appreciate what you're trying to do for your town. But I have some things I need to take care of out here, and then I need to head back home. I'll do what I can for your city, but I can't make any promises, and I can't take any rewards.

DONOMOL

Are you quite sure? Why ever not?

IVAN

Let's just say it goes against my nature, alright?

DONOMOL

Well, this is indeed remarkable! You truly are a hero, aren't you? We would be most grateful of any services you can provide during your stay, Mr...?

IVAN

Daynes. Ivan Daynes. And thank you.

Donomol leaves. Ivan wanders the town some more and sees a general store. He enters.

INT. GENERAL STORE-DAY

Ivan walks in. There are a few people in the store, looking at baskets of fruit and random household objects on shelves. The store clerk sees Ivan and waves. Ivan approaches him.

CLERK

It's you! Saw what you did for our town today! That was downright awesome!

IVAN

Oh. Yeah, it was nothing, really.

CLERK

Don't be so modest! Anyone who helps out Sarah and her kids is all right in my book! Heaven knows she can use all the help she can get!

IVAN

What do you mean?

CLERK

Well, ever since she lost her husband, her little farm has fallen into disrepair. She has no time to fix it, what with raising and educating her children and all. I'd go help her out myself, but I have a farm and family of my own.

IVAN

How do you have a farm out here in the desert?

CLERK

All the water is underground. We have wells set up all around town. We wouldn't survive out here otherwise.

IVAN

It seems like the kids just run amok out here. Don't they have school?

CLERK

We used to have a schoolhouse, a long time ago. Taught by Sarah's husband, no less. But then the disappearances started, and the

(MORE)

CLERK (CONT'D)

schoolhouse turned into more of a town hall.

Ivan looks surprised.

IVAN

Did you just say disappearances?

CLERK

Yeah. Started about two and a half years ago. Spooky tale.

IVAN

Go on.

CLERK

First, it was old man Dunstin. He came bumbling in to town one night, after drinking with his cowboy buddies, saying that someone tried to kidnap him. Nobody believed him, of course. But then he vanished altogether. And not just him, either. Kids, grown ups, teens, pets, a whole group of them just suddenly didn't show up in town anymore. Lots of people got spooked and moved away. Others were determined to find out what was going on. But everyone who went out looking for answers, never came back. Eventually, people just stopped looking altogether, and the disappearances slowly came to a stop.

IVAN

When did they stop?

CLERK

The whole ordeal only lasted about five or six months. But boy, howdy! What a crazy half a year that was, I'll tell you what!

An old woman approaches the clerk.

OLD WOMAN

You tryin' to scare away our visitor with those ghost tales, eh?

IVAN

It's all very interesting! I'd actually like to investigate this a little myself!

CLERK

I would advise against it, but after seeing you earlier today, I don't doubt that you can take care of yourself.

IVAN

Do you have a map of the area I could buy?

The store clerk reaches under the counter he is leaning on and pulls out a large map.

CLERK

This is the only one I've got. It was hand drawn by an explorer who came through here a while back, so I'm not sure how accurate it is.

IVAN

I'll take it! How much?

CLERK

For you? Free. After saving our hides this morning, it's the least I can do for you. You need anything else for this little expedition?

IVAN

If I do, I'll let you know!

The clerk hands Ivan the map with a smile, and Ivan leaves.

EXT. DESERT-AFTERNOON

Ivan rides on the back of his sandrider, trotting through the desert expanse. The wind blows, stirring up some sand. Ivan has his bandana pulled up around his mouth and nose,

and uses his hat to shield his eyes from the wind and sun. He looks at his map and frowns.

BLACK (V.O.)

What are we doing out here? We don't see anything for miles.

IVAN

Yeah, the sun is starting to get low. I'd better get back. Let's go, Rudy!

Rudy grunts as Ivan tugs on his reigns. Rudy turns and heads back to the town.

EXT. SAGE HILL-AFTERNOON

As Ivan approaches the town, he sees a group of sandriders huddled together at the edge of town. He hears a commotion. Ivan rides into town to see that Laslo and his crew are back. They are pointing their guns at Donomol, who has his hands in the air. They are backing him up into the small bank. Ivan slides off his mount and picks up a rock. He flings it at Laslo, hitting the gun out of his hand. Laslo shouts in pain. All the bandits turn towards him.

BANDIT

It's that freak again!

The townspeople cheer. Ivan looks pleasantly surprised with this reception. He approaches the bandits with a menacing look on his face.

IVAN

Didn't I say you'd see the monster if you didn't leave this town?!

LASLO

W-we saw you leave town! We thought it would be safe to come back!

IVAN

You thought wrong! I'm sticking around here indefinitely, see! You won't get anything but pain in this town!

The bandits start to back up. Laslo looks at them.

LASLO
S-stand your ground, you idiots!

BANDIT
What, you mean like you did when
this guy was chasing us before?!

Ivan pulls out both of his swords and turns them on.

BANDIT
I'm not sticking around!

The bandits take off running. Laslo glares at Ivan, and then follows them. Ivan puts his swords away, and everyone cheers. Ivan looks around, looking somewhat pleased with himself. Donomol comes to shake Ivan's hand.

DONOMOL
Thank goodness you came when you
did! You're a hero!

IVAN
Oh, I dunno. I've just become kinda
fond of this town, is all.

ABBEY (O.S.)
Ivan!

Abbey and Drew run up to Ivan and hug his knees. Ivan bends down to them and smiles. He places Drew on his knee and gives Abbey a one-arm hug.

IVAN
Hey, guys! Where's your mom?

Sarah approaches Ivan with a smile. Ivan stands and hands Drew to her.

SARAH
I'm sorry. It seems the children
have become quite fond of you.

Ivan chuckles and rubs the back of his head.

IVAN

Well, I'm just glad they aren't
scared of me!

DONOMOL

How can we repay you for saving our
town twice in one day?

IVAN

Please. I've told you. I don't need
any reward. I'm just doing what I
know.

Ivan turns to Abbey.

IVAN

Well, what do you say? Should we go
home and eat dinner?

ABBEY

Yeah! Dinner time! Yay!

She grabs Ivan's hand and marches towards home. Ivan smiles
sheepishly back at Sarah. Sarah laughs and follows them.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE-NIGHT

Sarah pulls a blanket over her sleeping children, smiling
fondly at them. They lay in a small bed in a room separate
from the main room. Sarah enters the main room and sees
Ivan washing the dishes.

SARAH

Thank you for helping our town
today. People are feeling more
hope, now that you're here.

Ivan turns to her, drying his hands.

IVAN

If things aren't too well for you
here, why don't you leave?

SARAH

Well, believe it or not, this place
used to be surrounded by forest
life. It's really taken a turn for
the worst in the past few years.

(MORE)

SARAH (CONT'D)

Lots of townspeople here have already left. But I just can't bring myself to leave.

Sarah leans up against a wall.

SARAH

Ronald, my husband, he built this house. There's so many memories here.

IVAN

He must have been pretty amazing. I heard he taught in a school here too.

SARAH

Yes. He loved teaching. I teach too sometimes, but I'm nowhere near as good as he was.

IVAN

I'm sure he appreciates what you can do. You've got those two little munchkins to care for.

Sarah laughs a little.

SARAH

Yes. They can be a handful. But I wouldn't trade them for anything. They keep me focused on what's important in life.

Ivan smiles. Then he straightens.

IVAN

Well, I should go. I have some things to take care of.

SARAH

Of course. Thanks again.

IVAN

It's my pleasure.

Ivan leaves.

INT. SARAH'S BARN-NIGHT

Rudy is curled up into a ball in a pile of old hay. He is snoring. Ivan sits cross-legged on an old crate, studying his map intently. He mutters to himself.

IVAN

It looks like this map is surprisingly accurate. If I divide the map into a grid, I can mark off where I've already looked.

BLACK (V.O.)

We don't even know what we're looking for. What if we miss it completely?

IVAN

I can sense people's presences. Hopefully that'll be enough.

Ivan sighs and lifts his head. He looks up at the sky through a hole in the roof. His eyes grow wide.

IVAN

Wow! I've never seen the stars so clearly before!

BLACK (V.O.)

I guess that's because we've lived in the city for as long as we can remember.

Ivan admires the sky, a small smile on his face.

IVAN

I don't know why, but I feel like the sky knows who I really am. I've been living under it for my whole life, after all.

BLACK (V.O.)

We can be so sentimental sometimes.

EXT. SAGE HILL-DAY

The usual hustle and bustle goes about the small town. Ivan is talking to a man, pointing at the map. The man points

off into the distance. Ivan smiles and thanks the man. The man replies with a nod. Ivan looks up, and happens to see a few boys running excitedly into an alley. Ivan looks curious and follows them.

EXT. ALLEYWAY-DAY

A bunch of boys stand around in a group, watching Gavin beat up on Stuart. Stuart sees Ivan in the back of the crowd, and seems to remember something. As Gavin winds up for a punch, Stuart takes on the defence pose that Ivan taught him. Gavin punches him, but he blocks it.

GAVIN

Impressive! How about this?!

Gavin punches Stuart in the side of the head. Ivan barks over the crowd.

IVAN

HEY!

The children scatter, except for Gavin and Stuart.

IVAN

Didn't I tell you to leave this kid alone?!

GAVIN

That was yesterday, this is today.
If you wanna-

Ivan takes a menacing step towards him.

IVAN

Get outta here!

Gavin looks afraid and takes off. Stuart gets up off the ground and wipes some blood off his lip.

STUART

Thanks, but I need to start finishing my own fights successfully if I ever want this to stop.

Ivan looks at Stuart pityingly.

IVAN

Stu, we gotta work on your social skills.

Stu lets out a laugh.

STUART

I guess that's true.

EXT. SAGE HILL-DAY

Ivan and Stu sit together on a bench beside the main road of the town.

STUART

After my parents died, I did a lot of wandering around, and eventually ended up here. It was alright at first. There was a school. I learned how to read and write. But then the school closed down. Ever since then, the kids have had more time to pick on me.

IVAN

You know, you and I are a lot alike.

Stu snorts.

STUART

Yeah, except you're awesome, and I'm not.

IVAN

No, really! We both have no families, and get regularly trampled by the general public.

STUART

You? How could someone like you have bad relations with anyone?

IVAN

Well, believe it or not, I'm probably the most hated man in my

(MORE)

IVAN (CONT'D)

hometown right now. Possibly even more than the villains I work to keep behind bars.

STUART

What, you used to be a bad guy too, or something?

IVAN

I've been framed for murder, and I'm generally seen as a freak.

STUART

Well, of course you're a freak! But that's not a bad thing. Especially since you're using your freakiness for good!

Ivan looks thoughtful. Then he stands up with a smile.

IVAN

I've got an idea! Why don't I teach you the ways of the ninja?

STUART

Is that what you call your fighting moves?

IVAN

Yeah, pretty much. Would you like to learn?

STUART

Are you kidding?! That sounds awesome!

IVAN

But you gotta promise me something, first.

STUART

Sure!

IVAN

Only use it for good. That means no payback for Gavin. Got it?

STUART

Serious?!

IVAN

The way of the ninja is about justice and honor. It's about using your strength to protect the weak, and bringing hope to those who don't have any.

STUART

Huh. That pretty much sums you up, doesn't it?

IVAN

I try. Deal?

STUART

Deal.

Ivan and Stu shake hands.

EXT. SAGE HILL-DAY

A montage takes place. Ivan stands before Stu, each of them holding a long, straight stick. Ivan shows him how to use the stick to defend, and also to attack. They make slow motions, practicing the moves.

EXT. SAGE HILL-AFTERNOON

Ivan walks down the road to Sarah's house, and sees that Sarah is in the back yard, gathering vegetables from what's left of her garden. Ivan stops, looking back at the general store briefly.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE-AFTERNOON

Ivan enters the house, holding bags of groceries. The children jump for joy, while Sarah stands mystified. They have a hearty dinner.

EXT. DESERT-DAY

Ivan rides on his sandrider, surveying the desert. He crosses a square off on his map.

EXT. SAGE HILL-MORNING

Ivan and Stu practice some martial arts moves, Stu mirroring Ivan. Ivan tosses a piece of wood in the air, and punches it in half. Stu tries to do the same, and throws a piece of wood in the air. Stu punches it, and it flies and hits Ivan in the face. Stu holds his hurting hand, while Ivan holds his hurting face.

EXT. SAGE HILL-DAY

Sarah is in town, walking with a basket on her arm. She stops as she sees Ivan a ways away, carrying an armful of building supplies. As she walks home, she sees Ivan repairing the farm, the barn, and her house. She looks dumbfounded. The children run out to her, looking excited. Sarah allows a small smile, which grows into a grin.

EXT. SAGE HILL-MORNING

Ivan walks to the edge of town, holding the reigns of his sandrider in one hand, and his map in the other. He looks back suddenly, and sees that Stu is dedicatedly practicing the things that Ivan has taught him. Ivan looks down at his map, and then exchanges glances with Rudy. Then Ivan puts his map in a pocket of Rudy's saddle and sends him home, walking over to Stu to help him learn.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE-NIGHT

Ivan sits with Abbey and Drew on the floor in front of the fireplace. He is animatedly telling them a story of one of his escapades as a superhero in ArbeiVille. The children look excited and sometimes laugh. Sarah watches them with a smile as she prepares dinner.

EXT. SARAH'S HOUSE-DAY

Ivan finishes repairing a wall of the barn, wiping the sweat off his brow with his arm. He then immediately begins work on the garden, which is now beginning to grow various types of food. He picks some carrots and holds them in one arm. Sarah is picking them from the other side and placing them in her basket. They meet in the middle and are about to pick the same one. Their hands touch. Their eyes meet for a moment, then they both quickly look away. Sarah turns and Ivan continues working in the garden.

EXT. SAGE HILL-DAY

Ivan and Stu stand before each other holding their long sticks again. They bow to each other. Then they commence fighting. Stu shows immense improvement, and they even look like they're having fun.

INT. SARAH'S BARN-MORNING

Ivan is hanging upside down from a rafter, doing crunches. The sunlight peaks in from a window. He sees this and jumps down to the ground. He stretches and smiles, walking towards the door of the barn. We can see that the area map is folded up in a corner, slightly covered by old hay.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE-MORNING

Ivan walks into the house with a smile. The children and Sarah are eating breakfast. The children cheer when they see him.

CHILDREN

Ivan!

IVAN

Hey, kids! What's for breakfast?

DREW

Pancakes!

IVAN

Mmm! Smells great!

Ivan sits down with the others and eats breakfast with them.

IVAN

As always, Sarah, your cooking is amazing!

SARAH

Haha! You're too kind.

The four of them finish breakfast, and Ivan cleans Drew's messy face while the girls clean up the table. Ivan picks Drew up and carries him to his mother, who takes him.

IVAN

I'll be back this afternoon.

SARAH

Where are you going?

IVAN

I need to speak with Donomol about something, and Stu is ready for the next level of his training.

SARAH

Good for him! See you later, then!

Ivan smiles and leaves the house.

EXT. SAGE HILL-MORNING

Ivan walks towards the town, when he hears the front door slam. He turns around to see Abbey running towards him. He kneels down and she gives him a hug around the neck.

ABBEY

Come home safe!

IVAN

I will.

Ivan stands, and waves at Sarah and Drew, who are standing on the front porch. Ivan turns and starts walking away. Suddenly, Drew yells.

DREW

Bye, Daddy!

Ivan stops short. He blinks in surprise. Behind him, Sarah looks worried. She tightens her embrace on her son. Ivan looks at the ground, and continues his walk to town, without looking back.

EXT. SAGE HILL-DAY

Ivan walks among the hustle and bustle of the town. He looks lost in his thoughts.

BLACK (V.O.)

Well, why not? ArbeiVille hates us. If we go back, they might not accept us. We were a hindrance to The Unstoppables at any rate. Here,

(MORE)

BLACK (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 we have a town that loves us, a
 home, Sarah and the kids-

Ivan mutters under his breath.

IVAN
 Sarah and the children are not mine
 to have.

BLACK (V.O.)
 Those kids love us! We could just
 stay here, and not go back!

IVAN
 I have a responsibility in
 ArbeiVille. My friends... Vlad,
 Jayde, Ted... Hero..

BLACK (V.O.)
 Go on. Just try to tell us that we
 don't love it here. That we would
 rather go back to fighting Hodolph
 and Zampano. That Hero misses us
 and wants us back!

Ivan flinches.

IVAN
 It's not any of those things...
 It's because...

Memories flash in Ivan's mind. They are of Anya. Ivan
 kissing her on the lips, Anya burying her face into his
 chest and crying. Anya smiling at him. Ivan lifts his head,
 turning around. He has a look of determination on his face.

IVAN
 I've been stalling long enough.

EXT. DESERT-DAY

Ivan rides on his sandrider, looking grim. He refers to his
 map.

IVAN
 Turn here, Rudy! Left!

Rudy veers to the left.

BLACK (V.O.)

What are we looking for out here?!
There's nothing but sand!

Ivan squints out into the distance. Suddenly, he gasps and calks for Rudy to halt. Rudy screeches to a stop.

BLACK (V.O.)

We... We stand corrected.

Ivan stares at an area that was obscured by a circle of sand dunes. In the middle, a large, black warehouse stands. Ivan circles the square on his map.

IVAN (V.O.)

In retrospect, I guess that this is
the moment my life changed forever.
Once I found out what was happening
inside that warehouse, my life
would never be the same again.

END.