

Running for Green

BY JACOB LARCH AND ALAN J MOCKLER

FROM A STORY BY JACOB LARCH

**INT: UNDERGROUND TRAIN.**

The doors open and the class of children enter. Combat or cargo pants, t shirts or vests, carrying data pads. Chatting, laughing, bitching, a class in motion. They sit with bare feet dangling, curled beneath or resting on facing seats and the banter of life continues. They're all seventeen.

ON: JULES.

Innocent, carefree, damaged by the war. JULES puts down her pad and stretches arms up, closing eyes in familiar satisfaction, legs and toes stretching out in gentle warmth

ON: KARSTEN.

KARSTEN is shy, fighting a nerd-crush on Jules.

KARSTEN

You're doing that yoga thing.

JULES

I like that "yoga thing."

Jules opens her eyes and they share a smile. Jules sits cross legged on the seat, relaxed, ready for the day. The train starts to move and wall lights pass slowly outside.

Perfect student GAGE sits on the next seat across as his sister, troublesome tomboy MALLORY swaggers past.

MALLORY

Who did ya hair?

She ruffles it to his annoyance.

GAGE

Will you pack that in?

MALLORY

That's no fun!

GAGE

Mallory!

KARSTEN

She'd only find someone else to annoy!

ALEXANDRA, their youthful teacher sways with the carriage, hopeful that today she can get their attention.

ALEXANDRA

Mallory, sit down! Kells! Leave Tyler alone!

Two girls, hyper TYLER and wayward KELLS plunge into seats alongside Jules and Karsten respectively.

TYLER

What if we don't get picked?

KELLS

Everyone gets picked!

TYLER

What if I don't?

JULES

You will. You're popular. You're bound to.

KARSTEN

She's popular?

KELLS

She's a popular target!

TYLER

I am not! Jules? Tell them!

JULES

Tyler's cool.

KARSTEN

You say everyone's cool!

JULES

That's because they are.

KELLS

You can't like everyone!

JULES

Who says I can't?

KELLS

Even Lambert? And Brandy?

The class bitches, gorgeous Lambert and the vacantly sinister Brandy lean over the seats from behind Jules.

LAMBERT

What about me, Fishwife?

Kells reacts as if stung.

KELLS

Don't call me that!

Lambert's venom overflows her endless wellspring of bile.

LAMBERT

Why not? Everyone knows you'll  
end up in the fisheries!

BRANDY

No skin, no hands, no looks...

LAMBERT

Like she had any to begin with!

ALEXANDRA

Lambert, Brandy, sit down please!

Suddenly, butter wouldn't melt in Lambert's mouth.

LAMBERT

Oh, Miss! Jules invited us!

ALEXANDRA

You know that's not true!

Brandy grabs Jules collar and hisses in her ear.

BRANDY

You tell her we were invited!

JULES

But you weren't.

BRANDY

Still think you'll make runner?

Serious consideration: this is certainty.

JULES

I'll make runner.

BRANDY

Why you so eager to get up there  
anyway! Want to get your head  
shot off? I hear the youngest are  
the first to die!

ALEXANDRA

Brandy!

KELLS

Yeah, sit down and give your face  
a rest!

Brandy shoots venom at Kells, who pulls a tongue. Jules  
giggles, Tyler joins in, Karsten smothers a smile.

LAMBERT

I'll see you four later!

JULES

Thought you wanted Gold Legion?

Lambert's pulled up short: is she tricking me?

LAMBERT

So?

JULES

People have to be invited to Gold  
Legion on merit.

LAMBERT

...So?

JULES

I don't think picking on people,  
or threatening them is worthy of  
merit. Maybe it's just me...

ALEXANDRA

Lambert! Jules!

Lambert sits down in a sulk and Jules looks out the window  
as BIG REVEAL; BACKGROUND OF THE LOADING DOCK APPEARS  
through the window. A cavernous room of work pits, high  
gantries linked by arc light galleries, welding sparks,  
search lights and a thousand people preparing for war.

The children ignore the background: this is regular.

TYLER

Seriously, Jules: she's right.  
Why you in such a hurry to sign  
up? They don't care about  
runners.

JULES

You can't fight till your  
eighteen but you can run if  
you're younger.

KARSTEN

City needs runners too...

JULES  
I can run in the city, but I need  
to run on the surface.

Embarrassed pause: Kells, Karsten and Tyler share a dread.  
Kells finds the words for them all, quieter now.

KELLS  
How do you know she's up there?

Jules looks out of the window at the loading dock.

JULES  
She's up there. I'll find her.

Jules is lost in private memories from her reflection.

JULES MOTHER  
(v.o)  
Hold my hand! Don't let go!

JULES  
(v.o)  
I won't, mummy!

JULES MOTHER  
(v.o)  
See that door? We're going below  
ground. We'll be safe there!

FX: ROAR OF AN EXPLOSION, SCREAMING FROM MANY VOICES.

JULES  
Mum? MUM!!! Where are you????

The background is replaced by a tunnel wall again. Jules is  
back, and turns to the others, the memory fades.

TYLER  
What if Green Legion don't want  
you to run for them?

JULES  
I'll have to show them they're  
wrong.

Jules settles back, happy her fate is mapped out. The  
others don't look so sure...

END