

REPUBLIC OF INFIDELS

CHAPTER 1: "The Remains"

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FADE IN:

EXT. HIMALAYAN MOUNTAINS - EARLY EVENING

AERIAL: A drifting view of the Himalayan Peaks. The familiar silhouette of Mount Everest.

Then, as the perspective moves south, the steep base of the mountain slopes disappear into lapping waves.

This is Himalaya Territory.

What once was land is now covered by ocean. It hugs the base of the Himalayas, creating jagged little inlets, choking off the lower elevations.

SUPER: Himalaya Territory - 2043

A colossal dam - **The Crown Dam** - is visible in the upper reaches of the mountains, curving between two spurs.

City lights hug the peninsula slopes.

EXT. LOWER SLOPES

Loose shale slides down the side of the mountain. RACHEL KORI (22, Indian, Russian) slides down on her butt. She catches herself and flings herself behind a rock outcrop.

She's a mess - her torn gray Oxford hoodie is covered in bloodstains. There's blood on her hands, blood spray on her face.

A soldier, DEVERE (30s, black fatigues) pursues her.

He slides until he reaches her traces. He looks around, but can't see Rachel from where she is hiding. He tries not to make a noise as he searches for her.

The ledge Rachel clings to gives way. She slides down the mountain face until she comes to rest on a patch of more level ground.

The dust cloud hides her from view, but Devere tears after her. He stops, can't see her, and proceeds more carefully down the unstable rock face.

Rachel rolls, and lands on her hands and face. A small bird catches her eye through the encompassing dust- **a red-billed chough**.

It perches on something alien to the landscape- **a black antenna that rises three inches above the ground**. The sound of SLIDING ROCK scares it away, alerting Rachel.

She slides away as quickly as she can but falls again on her backside. The air clears, and suddenly Devere is there at the bottom of the incline five yards away. He grins.

Silently he beckons: **come here**. She shakes her head. Then she sees them- **dozens of the little black antennae**, sticking out of the ground at regular intervals.

Devere sees them. He takes a step back. His boot disturbs one of them. A tiny light flashes at the tip of the antenna. An electric HUM turns into a WHINE.

Rachel throws herself down. The **EXPLOSION** obliterates Devere. She is knocked back into a boulder, crumples, concussed.

As her vision fades, she sees the chough. It hops towards her, tilting its head inquisitively. She passes out. We leave her there, lying on her back, unconscious.

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN:

EXT. THE CROWN DAM - DAWN

Rachel stands at the lip of the dam, staring down into the slowly lightening expanse. Distant city lights illuminate the slopes.

The dam faces south, and the sun breaks the east. The streaks of colour are a little too intense: hints of acid green and purple here and there.

She looks down. Her toes touch the edge. She seems calm, almost sedate, as she contemplates the drop. She wears the same Oxford hoody, but **it's clean and intact**, if frayed.

Her brother VIKRAM (24) approaches. There's something bookish and old-world about his dress and appearance. Twenty-five years ago he might've been a hipster.

He approaches her slowly. Rachel doesn't look up from her study.

RACHEL

I miss the watching the eagles from up here. The best hunters could take an antelope. After the antelope disappeared, the eagles were the first to die.

VIKRAM

Except the ones that learned to scavenge with the vultures.

RACHEL
I guess they wanted to live.

VIKRAM
So do you.

She finally looks at him.

RACHEL
You say that every year.

VIKRAM
I wouldn't have to if you'd find a
different way to mark the occasion.

RACHEL
Three years.

VIKRAM
Please, Rachel.

He holds out his hand, pleading. After a long, long beat,
she takes it. He breathes a sigh of relief.

He pulls gently on her hand, urging her away from the edge.
She turns to follow -- then stops, pulling his hand to get
his attention. She looks out at the brightening sea.

RACHEL
Vikram, wait.

VIKRAM
What is it?

RACHEL
A ship.

VIKRAM
It's probably another salvage.

She shakes her head. Something is different about her
expression. Curiosity.

RACHEL
Come look.

Vikram looks too. He looks closer. Then he looks at his
sister, both of them stunned.

EXT. THE BLACK MONASTERY - MORNING

Vikram and Rachel make their way up a long path cut out the
mountain face towards a towering black stone building.

This is the ancient Black Monastery, beautiful, imposing and
built for discomfort. Ornate columns are carved directly
into the reaching southwest spur of the mountain.

Rachel looks up at the monastery, which is too large and too high up the rock face for comfort. It is both intricate and intimidating.

EXT. BLACK MONASTERY - VERANDA - MORNING

NADIA KORI (50s, Russian) sits erect in an old rattan chair, looking south east towards the dam. She has dark hair streaked with grey, and her aspect is patrician.

From her perspective, the curving eastern edge of the dam is visible, but her eyes scan the causeway cut into mountain face, leading to the monastery.

Mist obscures part of the view, not yet dissipated by the warming sun.

RADHESH KORI (50s, Indian) comes from behind her, two cups of steaming tea in his hand. He hands one to his wife, squeezing her shoulder in a comforting way.

He also has the appearance of premature age, but is as dignified as his wife.

RADHESH

There they are.

In the middle distance, walking the causeway, are Vikram and Rachel. They walk in single file, Rachel hunched under her hood, hiding her face.

Nadia watches them approach, observes her son reach out to his younger sister, take her hand. Rachel hesitates, looks out at the water -- then follows. Nadia lets out a breath.

INT. THE BLACK MONASTERY - KITCHEN/DINING AREA

Radhesh prepares breakfast, bustling a little excessively with the chipped bowls. It's nothing fancy - oats - but he makes a show of it.

As his slightly damp children saunter in. Nadia watches them carefully from one of the table, keeping a side eye on Rachel.

But Rachel, suddenly animated, goes straight for the countertop and grabs a bowl from her father. She goes over to the window, eating as she looks out.

This is clearly not normal procedure. Nadia glances at Vikram for explanation. He smiles, and walks towards the veranda.

NADIA

What's going on?

VIKRAM
 (to Rachel)
 You should tell them.

Rachel does not stop eating, and doesn't turn her gaze -- she frowns out at the view.

RACHEL
 (mouth slightly full)
 --Ship.

Nadia turns around in her chair.

NADIA
 I beg your pardon.

Radhesh looks to his son. Vikram gives him a small nod, and beckons him. Radhesh drifts towards the window.

NADIA (cont'd)
 (to Vikram)
 It's probably--

RADHESH
 Nadia.

Frowning, she gets up and goes to the window, and looks out.

INSERT: The ship, distant but shining. Something distinctly military about it - it has a tall bridge tower.

NADIA
 My god.

Vikram backs away from the window, catches Rachel's eye. She sets her bowl on an end table.

RADHESH
 Where have they been all this time?

Vikram looks directly at his sister, introspective. Why are they here now?

EXT. THE CRADLE - SHELL TOWN - DAY

A large military personnel truck drives fast through an incredibly filthy, impoverished slum that clings to steep, furrowed hills.

It speeds along one elevated main road, clearly built prior to this settlement. It cuts north-south straight through the slopes.

Narrow irregular alleys make up the crossroads, running east-west. A thin strand separates the sharp elevation from the surf.

It looks like a cross between Liberian slum and a Shanghai shipping container village, with Porto-esque alleys, both narrow and steep.

This is **the Cradle** - the newest, largest, and last of all urban human habitation.

The "nicer" homes are made from welded together cargo containers, secured to the steep grade by networks of guy-wires.

The worst are just shacks or boards cobbled together and piled on top of each other. There are sick and starving people everywhere.

The destitute people who are mobile enough take cover when the truck passes.

EXT. THE CRADLE - THE MARKET DISTRICT - DAY

This area is more orderly, with sales stands and blankets manned by healthier, though still ragged looking people. The truck trundles through.

Everything is for sale - cans of food, books, weapons, scrap, radio and electronic parts, anything and everything.

Each seller's personal condition is reflected by the value of their wares. There are also open workshops where craftspeople repair and build electronics and goods.

These people also look apprehensively on the passing truck, but they don't cower, but business freezes. They follow it with their eyes, then avert them.

EXT. NORTH BARRACKS

The truck fishtails and makes its way towards a leveled complex, including large squat building, a modern cement construction that resembles a colonial armory.

It has four corner towers, gun emplacements, and ramparts around its borders. It stands about four storeys high.

Behind it in the middle distance rises a switchback road cut into the side of the mountain. Close to that, partially obscured, a corner of the dam.

The truck goes through the gates into a large yard, which contains a few more trucks. It comes to a stop.

Two men, TYREK (30s) and our friend Devere get out from the drivers and passenger's side respectively.

These men are uniformed in the same black fatigues, and are armed with pistols, knives and other weapons.

On their shoulders, they bear rank stripes, a patch with Russian A and G, and below, a patch depicting a vulture skull.

These are the insignia of the **Lammergeiers** - an elite paramilitary that appears to be extremely well resourced when compared to the squalor and degradation of others.

Another small group of Lammergeiers stands in the shade of the building.

Easily the most impressive of them is SERGEI VETROV (25). Unlike the others, he wears a black commando sweater, and his insignia includes commander stripes.

Six feet in height, with white blonde hair, he's all heavy muscle and grace, built like he trained at the Bolshoi when he wasn't doing knuckle pushups on concrete.

He cleans his nails with a large knife, seemingly disinterested in the truck's arrival. Everyone waits on him while he finishes this task.

He lowers the blade and moves forward. Devere approaches him but Sergei cuts him off with a hand before he can speak. He gestures instead to the truck.

They haul a prisoner, a TATTOOED MAN (40s) out of the truck and throw him on his face. His whole body is tattooed, he's strong, but bloodied.

Sergei puts one boot on his shoulder and shoves him over. He looks down at the man, and shakes his head in mock pity.

SERGEI

(softly)

You should've put up a better fight,
after what I did to them.

The Tattooed Man, his eyes red from pain and rage, comes alive suddenly and lunges for Sergei's legs. Sergei steps aside gracefully.

The man staggers to his feet. He tries to take a step towards him, but he's on his last legs. Sergei approaches him, leans in close, as though he's going to speak into his ear. He smiles.

The man tries to speak, but his words turn into blood. Sergei slides the knife out of him as he falls to his knees, collapses, and bleeds out.

Sergei looks to Devere, now inviting him to approach with his news. He speaks into his ear. Sergei looks at him: **speak sense, man.**

INT. NORTH BARRACKS

Sergei, followed by Devere and Tyrek, head up the stairwell. Devere hands him a radio - he sends some MORSE CODE.

INT. SOUTH TOWER

Vikram gazes out the window at the ship as he sits over the radio console. MORSE CODE trills. He picks up.

INTERCUT SERGEI/VIKRAM

VIKRAM
Have you seen it?

SERGEI
Not yet.

EXT. NORTH BARRACKS - ROOF

Sergei heads for the southern wall. He stares out at the ship. He looks at the closest guard, in the tower to his right.

He WHISTLES at the guard. The guard approaches, tosses him a pair of binoculars. Sergei raises them.

INSERT: An aircraft carrier of huge size. Too far to see the colours or markings, but still close to be recognizable.

VIKRAM (O.S.)
(filtered)
Come here as soon as you can. Leave
your pets.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. THE BLACK MONASTERY - LIVING AREA - DAY

INSERT: The binoculars lower from the view.

Rachel lowers the binoculars, and contemplates the silver dot out to sea.

Nadia sits at the couch while Radhesh sits at the table, looking tense.

RADHESH
Can you see any markings? Insignia?

Rachel shakes her head and puts the binoculars down on the table.

RADHESH (cont'd)
How can any vessel stay out for three years?

NADIA
One of the many things we'll have to ask them.

Rachel looks at her mother, shows her silent agreement. She moves to sit down when Vikram and Sergei arrive, stopping her cold.

Sergei's eyes immediately go to Rachel. She stares contempt at him, then turns her annoyance on Vikram. He frowns at her: *don't make a scene.*

RADHESH
Sergei. It's been some time since we've seen you.

NADIA
But we've certainly heard about you. More every day, it seems.

He smiles benignly at her, taking in his surroundings.

SERGEI
You shouldn't be concerned about rumours, Mrs. Kori.

Nadia looks at him coldly. Rachel moves closer to the veranda door, arms crossed around herself protectively.

Nadia rises from her seat, and looks directly at Sergei, utterly without fear. He ducks his head respectfully, but his smile matches her frown for coldness.

NADIA
I expect my son has brought you here for a reason.

VIKRAM
Yes.

Vikram gestures.

Sergei holds Nadia's gaze for a beat. Then pulls out a dented, battered looking iPad and holds it up before setting it on the table.

SERGEI
My father collected these American military magazines as far back as I remember. He kept them on here.

He activates the slightly cracked screen, then sets it to show a jittery, but none-the-less watchable hologram.

It shows a vessel, the aircraft carrier we've seen. It's now clear: it's a US carrier, **hull number CVN - 90, "The Loretta P. Walsh"**

HOLOGRAM
(scratchy female
voice)

The Obama-class aircraft carrier has been designed to meet the US Navy's new family-deployment mandate and is the first naval vessel equipped with IBM's gesture-controlled **Neurocommand technology**. The first O-Class carrier, the **Loretta P. Walsh**, is currently under construction and is scheduled to launch this coming fall.

Radhesh taps the iPad, freezing the image and silencing the voice.

RADHESH
We need to meet with them.

SERGEI
I agree. I'll provide security.

NADIA
That's thoughtful of you.

VIKRAM
Mother. We don't have an alternative.

NADIA
Ashram's team should be perfectly adequate.

VIKRAM
We can't know that.

Rachel, incensed, steps outside.

EXT. THE BLACK MONASTERY - VERANDA - DAY

Rachel stands and looks out at the ship, now much larger. The DOOR OPENS behind her, but she doesn't turn around.

RACHEL
I can't believe you brought him here.

SERGEI
Admit it.

She tenses as she realizes it's Sergei, not Vikram.

BEGIN
FLASHBACK:

INT. BARRACKS - SERGEI'S QUARTERS - NIGHT**Rachel recollects in a lightning quick flash:**

Unnatural green light. Rachel, her face a mask of anguish. Sergei, intimately close. He thumbs away her a tear from her cheek, and sucks it from the end of his thumb.

He smiles wolfishly.

END FLASHBACK.

SERGEI

You missed me.

Rachel balls up her fists. He looks her up and down, takes in her lank hair, her holey Oxford hoodie.

SERGEI (cont'd)

You look tired, Rakhila.

RACHEL

Don't call me that.

Behind him through the plate glass she can see her parents and Vikram arguing. Sergei follows her gaze, then looks back to her.

SERGEI

(Russian, subtitled)

It's been two years since we last saw each other.

RACHEL

(Russian, subtitled)

No reason to break with tradition.

She turns away to go inside -- he catches her hand.

RACHEL (cont'd)

Let go of me.

SERGEI

I've tried.

She glares at him, but doesn't withdraw her hand.

SERGEI (cont'd)

Look out there. Your tradition ends today.

He tilts his head. Something in his playful expression slips, turning to naked hunger. She yanks back her hand, sneers and goes to the door, stepping back inside.

He turns and contemplates the ship, in a good mood.

INT. THE BLACK MONASTERY - LIVING AREA - DAY

Rachel approaches the table.

RADHESH

I understand your concerns, Vikram, but I agree with your mother. It will change things forever if we become associated with him.

NADIA

Thank you, Radhesh.

VIKRAM

Without his cover, we go without protection. We'll be completely vulnerable. While we don't know their dispositions, they have the initiative.

RACHEL

We don't have a choice.

They look at her. They fall silent as she approaches.

NADIA

My darling, listen to me --

RACHEL

All of us, all together... it's too great an opportunity. If we don't go, then Sergei gets to decide how he'll deal with these people. And if it comes to shooting, at least he and his men will get shot first.

Nadia contemplates her daughter. Then she stands.

NADIA

All right. But I want to make radio contact first. I don't want to go in blind. Vikram, come with me so we can discuss security arrangements.

He and Nadia leave. Rachel goes to her father's seat. They watch through the plate glass as Sergei drops into a chair and props his boots up on the table.

RADHESH

His father was such a good man. I'll never understand it.

INT. SOUTH TOWER - DAY

Nadia and Vikram ascend the curving stairs together. He has the iPad under one arm.

NADIA
How can you be so sure?

VIKRAM
It's what I'd do.

She pauses, fixes an eagle eye on her son.

VIKRAM (cont'd)
(innocent)
Wouldn't you?

She narrows her eyes. They walk on.

INT. SOUTH TOWER TRANSMISSION ROOM - DAY

Nadia sits down at a radio console. Vikram goes to work setting frequencies, tapping out MORSE CODE for broadcast, then changing the frequency, and tapping out more CODE.

He does this incrementally, while Nadia holds on to the headset, holding it up to one ear.

AERIAL SHOT DRIFTS FROM THE BLACK MONASTERY TOWARDS THE COAST.

SOUND: MORSE CODE

EXT. THE WALSH - FLIGHT DECK - DAY

HUDSON FORD (31) plays soccer with a group of Marines. He's average height, fit, a mix of southern creole and Crow Indian. He wears a sweaty Navy t-shirt and he's given to smile easily.

His brother DELAWARE (33) taller, more stoic, plays forward for the opposite team. They sweat in the heat, but they, along with everyone else on the deck, are in peak fitness.

One of the other players kicks the ball off the deck. Hudson jogs to the edge, where the disappeared ball suddenly reappears - a fully 5-sense interactive illusion.

MAJOR JULIA ORTIZ (50s) a Marine officer, makes her way to the edge of the game. Delaware spots her. She meets his eyes.

Delaware goes to meet her, signaling for Lieutenant SADIE GOSSETT (20s) to go in for him.

Hudson grabs the ball off the deck. He hesitates for a moment, following his brother's progress as he heads towards the bridge.

He throws the ball. It makes a distinctive soccer ball "thwack" as he bounces it off the tarmac. He rejoins the game.

INT. BRIDGE

Delaware wipes his face with a towel as he makes his way towards the captain's chair. A screen hovers in midair, showing a waveform, a frequency.

Other naval personnel sit by their stations, but idle, their attention on him.

Delaware tosses the towel over the back of the chair and sits. He controls the screen with gestures, his fingers lighting up with tendrils of orange pixels.

DELAWARE
(Louisiana accent)
I apologize for keeping you waiting.

INT. SOUTH TOWER TRANSMISSION ROOM - DAY

Nadia sets the headphones over her ears.

INT. SOUTH TOWER

Rachel hovers outside, tapping her fingers against her thigh impatiently. Vikram goes over to her. She wants to speak - he holds a hand to his lips.

Then he closes the door. She fumes.

INT. TRANSMISSION ROOM

Vikram makes an adjustment to two dials - setting them the frequencies for real-time discussion.

NADIA
Who am I speaking with?

INT. BRIDGE

INTERCUT NADIA/DELAWARE

DELAWARE
My name is Delaware Ford. Captain of the U.S.S Walsh. May I ask your name?

NADIA
My name is Nadia Semyonova Kori. I live with my family in the upper elevations.

Delaware calls up a screen with a gesture. It hovers before him, adjusting as he sits back.

DELAWARE
(to the screen)
Nadia Semyonova Kori.

ON SCREEN

A brief message: "Searching Cloud Archive." It opens - an image of a ten years younger Nadia, along with credentials as a professor of education.

Listed also, family members Radhesh, Vikram, Rachel.

INT. TRANSMISSION ROOM

NADIA
I would like to know more about where
you come from, and what your
intentions are now that you are here.

Nearby, Vikram bullies the old iPad into showing the information about the Walsh, trying to access the technical part of the article.

ON SCREEN

Vikram studies a section referring to the Neurocommand, which plays a little simulation depicting something similar to what we've seen Delaware do.

INT. BRIDGE

DELAWARE
That's a fair question, Miss...Mrs.
Kori?

Delaware opens Radhesh's information, knows perfectly well the answer to that question.

EXT. FLIGHT DECK - DAY

Hudson winds up to take a penalty kick.

INT. BRIDGE

Delaware goes to the window - the audio and archive screens follow him. He watches his brother take the kick, then snaps his fingers.

EXT. FLIGHT DECK

The soccer ball **dissolves** into orange pixels just before reaching the net. Hudson, annoyed, looks up at the bridge. Delaware beckons.

INT. BRIDGE

Hudson comes into the bridge, about to speak, but sees his brother is engaged with the communication. Delaware "hands" him over the information screens.

NADIA (V.O.)
Unfortunately, no secure frequency
exists.

Hudson scrolls through the screens. He opens up Vikram's and Rachel's details. He takes in their superlative achievements.

ON SCREEN

*Rachel, Oxford, first year medical school at age 18.
Publication history beginning at 16, awards for chemical
research.*

*Vikram, record breaking linguist at 37 languages - accepted
into British Foreign Service at age 19 directly out of
Cambridge.*

*Other images turn up, including one of pensive baby Rachel
being held in his lap by solemn toddler Vikram. He is
clearly protective of her, his concern advanced for his age.*

Hudson studies these images. Delaware studies him.

DELAWARE
(to audio screen)
Do you have any suggestions?

INT. SOUTH TOWER TRANSMISSION ROOM

Nadia looks over at Vikram, a frown on her face.

NADIA
(into the mic)
I have a proposal.

INT. BRIDGE

Hudson looks again through the images, stops on Rachel and examines her academic credentials.

ON SCREEN

A photo of Rachel, younger, laughing at something.

DELAWARE

(to the
communications
screen)

Very good. We'll meet with you as
soon possible.

INT. TRANSMISSION ROOM

Nadia lets out a breath, then sets down the headset, and turns off power to the console. She looks at Vikram, suddenly apprehensive.

Vikram touches her arm, trying to reassure her.

INT. BRIDGE

Delaware closes the communication screen. He goes to stand by his brother, looking into the faces of the Kori family. He too is concerned, and Hudson picks up on it.

HUDSON

(also southern)

You hate it.

Delaware nods.

HUDSON (cont'd)

You can send someone else.

DELAWARE

But I can't really, can I?

He looks pointedly up at the images of this family, tight knit, together. He looks especially at the photo of baby Rachel and Vikram. Siblings.

INT. RACHEL'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

Rachel sits alone on her bed in her cluttered room, staring into the middle distance.

Surrounding her are medical textbooks, and tattered posters of Nirvana and other grunge bands from sixty, seventy years ago.

Nadia knocks twice at the half open door, and enters the room. She looks her daughter up and down. She looks as unmade as her bed.

NADIA

You're a mess.

Rachel smiles weakly. Nadia goes over to the chest of drawers and grabs a brush, and an armload of clean, presentable clothes.

Nadia nudges Rachel off the bed. Rachel looks at her -- **do I have to?** Nadia nods. Rachel goes to sit in an old Jefferson desk chair, which faces a dusty floor length mirror.

Nadia drops the clothes on the bed, goes around behind Rachel and begins to work the knots out of her long black hair, brushing it until it shines.

NADIA (cont'd)
Dorogaya Rakhila. Where have you
been?

Rachel shrugs, but it's clear she's soothed by the attention.

NADIA (cont'd)
Do you think you might stay with us
for another year?

Rachel looks at herself, and her mother in the reflection. Nadia kisses the top of her head, eyes full of sadness.

INT. PERSONNEL TRUCK - EVENING

Rachel, hair now braided and dressed in a neat black knit top and jeans, sits up front with Vikram, and a Lammergeier driver.

Rachel looks out, watching the people withdraw resentfully. They forget their arguments and amusements, and flee for cover.

Many of them are slower than others - they are visibly sick, covered in sores, and some of them too ill to move at all.

She leans back away from the window.

RACHEL
It's worse than last time.

She looks to her brother for explanation.

VIKRAM
(shrugging)
Disease.

RACHEL
Yes, obviously. I'm not blind. Why is
it getting worse?

VIKRAM
 Conditions have been steadily
 deteriorating since the Fall.
 Everyone suffers.

Rachel watches more of the people flee at the sight of the
 convoy. Children look at them in fear from behind meagre
 shelters.

RACHEL
 I hate being seen like this.

VIKRAM
 We're not flush for options. Ashram's
 team isn't enough to protect all of
 us from anyone who has a grievance.
 And they all have a grievance.

Rachel looks over at him resentfully.

RACHEL
 And why is that?

EXT. THE CRADLE - DOCKS - EVENING

Three personnel trucks in total pull up to the docks, and
 disgorge at least 30 Lammergeiers, armed with assault
 rifles.

Sergei gets down from one of the truck cabs. Nadia and
 Radhesh, and Rachel and Vikram from the others. Sergei
 gestures, and a set of four Lammergeiers approach.

He snaps his fingers and points down, as though to a dog:
stay.

They salute, and go at-ease. At a nod from him, four of them
 break ranks, and follow.

The Kori family walks towards the docks, tailed by the four
 soldiers. Sergei sidles up to Rachel.

SERGEI
 Don't you like what I've done with
 the place?

She studiously ignores him. He grins, then moves back to
 walk with Vikram.

SERGEI (cont'd)
 One day...

VIKRAM
 One day she'll cut you up for lab
 specimens.

SERGEI

 If she wants my specimen, all she has
to do is ask.

Vikram grabs his shoulder.

 VIKRAM

 This isn't a joke.

Sergei casually shrugs off his grip. Nothing about Vikram fazes him.

 SERGEI

 Don't worry. I'll keep her safe.
She's family.

 VIKRAM

 Don't use words you don't understand.

INT. MARK 8 PATROL BOAT

The sizable, well armed boat approaches the docks.

Delaware and Hudson, now very well groomed, wear their green camouflage Navy uniforms. A group of ten Marines fill the patrol boat with them. One pilots it towards the docks.

 DELAWARE

 I make it twenty six, less the four
body guards.

 HUDSON

 Plus one commander. Must be Vetrov.
Lots of chatter. 100 percent negative
mention.

 DELAWARE

 Looks chummy, doesn't he.

Delaware broods over the figure of Sergei, his arrogant authority clear even at a distance.

Subconsciously, he toys with a wedding band on his finger. Hudson notices.

 HUDSON

 Delaware.

Delaware glances at his younger brother.

 HUDSON (cont'd)

 If I hear anything--

Delaware holds up a hand.

DELAWARE
Don't put yourself in danger just to
confirm a fact we already know.

HUDSON
We don't know.

DELAWARE
I do.

He looks at the ring on his finger, then up at the
approaching family, and the armed soldiers arrayed some
distance behind them.

EXT. THE CRADLE - DOCKS

Four Marines exit the patrol boat on to the dock, and stand
at attention. They part neatly for the Ford brothers, and
salute.

Sergei stands at some remove from the family, watching
Rachel as Nadia approaches and holds out her hand to
Delaware.

NADIA
Captain Ford.

He shakes it, his expression difficult to read. She offers
it then to Hudson.

DELAWARE
Ma'am.

NADIA
Commander.

HUDSON
Just Dr. Ford is fine, Mrs. Kori.
It's a pleasure to meet you.

NADIA
My husband, Radhesh. My children,
Vikram and Rachel.

Delaware turns his attention to Sergei.

DELAWARE
And you are?

SERGEI
Just a friend of the family.

DELAWARE
A friend in what particular?

RACHEL
No particular.

Delaware turns his attention to Rachel. She just stares right back at him in suspicious dislike. Nadia steps forward.

NADIA
 Captain Ford, Dr. Ford. I believe we made an arrangement.

Hudson moves forward.

HUDSON
 Yes, ma'am. I'd be honoured.

Delaware, meanwhile, looks over the family as though selecting a victim. He looks at Rachel, singling her out as the weak one.

She looks at her mother, just starting to cotton on.

Sergei's lip twitches at the corner when he sees this, but Vikram steps forward. Rachel turns to stare at her brother, sudden dawning on her face. Her eyes go wide.

VIKRAM
 I would be happy to answer any questions you might have about the situation here, Captain Ford.

Delaware nods, satisfied but not particularly interested. Radhesh puts a hand on Rachel's shoulder, warning her not to speak.

Rachel pushes her father's hand off her shoulder and pulls Vikram aside.

RACHEL
Why didn't you tell me?

VIKRAM
 Because we knew how you'd react.

She glances at her parents, but neither meet her eyes.

RACHEL
 (furious)
We?

VIKRAM
 Everything will be all right. Trust me.

He kisses her forehead. She fights tears, not quite succeeding. Vikram follows Delaware to the patrol boat. He makes a show of being primitively intrigued by the vessel.

Hudson watches Rachel, noting her extreme distress at this, taking the opportunity to get a long look at her.

Delaware goes to his brother. They grasp each other's forearms, and embrace.

They don't say anything, but exchange their sentiments in silence. Delaware almost speaks -- but Hudson just smiles. They know what they'd say.

Delaware follows Vikram to the patrol boat, and they pull out of the slip.

Rachel watches the boat sail away back towards the distant ship. She turns and walks back toward the trucks, fists clenched. Scenting her pain, Sergei follows.

Hudson follows Nadia and Radhesh towards one truck, then hesitates, looking after Rachel. He motions that he'll be right back. Nadia and Radhesh look at each other.

EXT. BETWEEN TRUCKS - EVENING

Rachel stands, arms crossed, looking up at Sergei as he leans over her.

SERGEI

You think you can trust him? Don't be a fool.

RACHEL

Oh, like I trust you.

She turns to go but he grabs her shoulder and pulls her back, just this side of gentle. He turns her to face him.

SERGEI

You know I would never hurt you.

She pulls out of his grip.

RACHEL

If you ever touch me again, I will flay you living.

Sergei smiles, bends closer, bringing his mouth close to her ear.

SERGEI

(whispers)

You always know what to say to get me hard.

She shoves him back against the truck, and he grins at her. Then they both notice Hudson standing nearby - it's clear he's been there this whole time.

HUDSON

Hope I'm not interrupting.

Rachel walks off without another word. Sergei says nothing, only smiles a nasty smile, and heads to the passenger side of the truck cab.

EXT. THE CRADLE - MARKET DISTRICT - NIGHT

Rachel stands alone in the open space, looking out at the ship. Hudson comes up beside her.

HUDSON
What do you know about flaying
someone living?

A beat. She evaluates him.

RACHEL
(abruptly)
In classical depictions the victim is
inverted before the procedure, in
order to maximize the blood flow to
the head, and keep the victim
conscious for as long as possible.

He considers her in turn. Then he looks back in the direction of the trucks.

HUDSON
How long has that been going on?

Rachel does not want to disclose this painful information. She lets out a held, tense breath.

HUDSON (cont'd)
Is there anything I can do?

Rachel looks him up and down, taking his measure. Then walks away towards her parents, who wait a stone's throw away.

EXT. THE ACADEMY - NIGHT

Nadia, Radhesh, Rachel and Hudson make their way through the more-or-less deserted thoroughfare in the direction of squat cement building, surrounded by high chain link gates.

Behind them, one of the trucks follows slowly.

In spite of its stature, it somehow still manages to be a friendly building, with pillars decorated with chalk, and prayer flags.

NADIA
(to Hudson)
I wanted you to see this before I
left you for the evening.

HUDSON

You aren't returning with us, Mrs. Kori?

RADHESH

My wife conducts educational seminars in the evening. I built this to act as a pumping station, but...well.

HUDSON

Well?

RADHESH

Needs must.

Nadia keys in to a keypad and opens the door, pulling it all the way back to the chain link, and securing it. Rachel hangs back slightly as she watches.

NADIA

(to Hudson)

Reading and writing, mainly. Maths for some of the older students. But schooling is a poor substitute for food in the belly.

They go into the complex.

INT. ACADEMY

ERIC ASHRAM (50s) sits just inside on a chair, reading an old worn book.

He wears a friendlier short sleeved version of the Lammergeier uniform - the patch on his arm a Cyrillic ASC, showing a faded embroidered pine tree and mountain peak.

He wears a t-shirt under his uniform, and looks for all the world like an ordinary security guard.

The room is sunken like a shallow amphitheater, with what appear to be sealed off pipes welded flush with the walls. A chalk board stands in the middle of it, surrounded by desks.

Ashram rises as the family and Hudson enters.

ASHRAM

You're early.

He looks at Hudson, the newcomer, tilts his head. Nadia touches his elbow.

NADIA

I'll explain later, sergeant. Would you mind?

Ashram nods, and ducks out.

NADIA (cont'd)
Sergeant Ashram's one of our old
friends.

Hudson looks around after Ashram. Then he glances at Radhesh questioningly.

RADHESH
He's a good man. His team is small,
but they've been with us since the
beginning.

Nadia goes down to the chalk board and begins to wipe it clean.

Children begin to trickle in, many of them undersized and scabby, but not yet starved enough to really feel it. They're still pitiable as they take their seats.

They look on Nadia with a hunger of a different kind -- a hunger for a break in the monotony of their reduced circumstances.

Rachel watches this, her face closed, not sure how she feels about it. **A little girl**, ANGELICA (10), blonde with gigantic blue eyes, turns and looks at her -- then turns away.

Hudson watches as Nadia begins to chalk the lesson on to the board, covering his mouth. It's clear that this display touches him, and that the state of these kids hurts him.

Radhesh quietly touches his elbow -- time to leave. The children stare at them curiously as they go.

EXT. THOROUGHFARE - NIGHT

The marketplace appears to have resumed its bustle. Hudson follows the party towards the trucks, but a FEMALE VOICE lectures from a short distance away.

Rachel watches as he turns to it, and begins to stride in that direction where a crowd has assembled. Radhesh follows him.

Rachel lingers behind at a distance, clearly uncomfortable with the glances she's getting from the destitute.

EXT. CORNER - NIGHT

MIRYAM LECLERC (50s) pontificates in front of an attentive crowd. She is a preacher of some kind, and wears a red stole over her shoulders.

She has venerability and a powerful voice, but none of the hysteria of the evangelist.

MIRYAM

We who walked in blindness. We who cast aside our garden. This is our final Eden, and we must now honour God's trust as her caretakers. We must bring about salvation not through destruction, but through the power of love and comradeship. We are the nation of Himalaya, and we can rise together.

Hudson leans close to Radhesh.

HUDSON

(sotto voce)

Seems like a pretty positive message.

RADHESH

It does seem that way.

Hudson glances at him for explanation. Radhesh takes his elbow, and they turn away.

RADHESH (cont'd)

They call themselves the Penitents, or the Church of Eternal Penance. Miryam founded it in the wake of the Fall, and has more than a thousand followers. They have a complex, and a water supply hidden somewhere in the slopes, so they've been relatively untouched by the chaos.

HUDSON

I don't recall hearing mention of them in any of our intercepts.

RADHESH

They don't like to use radio. Keep their affairs very closed. Those who become members of Miryam's church abide by her rules. In exchange, they get protection, nourishment, community.

HUDSON

Those aren't good things?

RADHESH

The rumour is that the Church of Eternal Penance is Miryam's own personal mea culpa. The rumour follows that prior to 2040, she was a Revelationist herself.

Hudson, slightly alarmed, glances back.

HUDSON
Nobody's tried to...?

Rachel appears between them.

RACHEL
Well. She said she was sorry.

They walk back towards the trucks.

INT. TRUCK CAB - NIGHT

Ashram leads them towards a different personnel truck - this one marked ASC, with a logo matching his arm patch.

Rachel approaches from the outside, but Radhesh motions -- you're in the back. She stomps off. Hudson, bemused, follows.

INT. TRUCK - BACK

Rachel gets in the back, and sits on the bench hugging herself. Hudson follows, sitting opposite.

As they get underway, Hudson pulls open the canvas and looks out at the passing scene.

INSERT: Near the market square and the harbour, dwellings are mostly containers welded and tied together. People look out windows, curious but afraid.

Outside, people sleep on the street under what they can find.

Hudson looks at Rachel.

HUDSON
Is it radiation?

Rachel sighs, waits a beat to answer.

RACHEL
That and scarcity, mostly. There just isn't enough of anything. Half the population has cancer.

HUDSON
And your family...your father built the dam. That's why you've been able to...

RACHEL
(ironic)
Yes, we're very privileged.

INSERT: Rachel looks out at the trucks following, full of armed soldiers.

HUDSON
And Sergei Vetrov commands the security team.

Rachel laughs softly.

HUDSON (cont'd)
Something amusing?

RACHEL
Crown Hydro hired the Alpine Security Company to protect the works. Sergei took over when his father died.

HUDSON
And changed the mandate.

RACHEL
They call themselves the "Alpine Guard", but the people who live in the Cradle call them the Lammergeiers.

HUDSON
What is a Lammergeier?

Rachel doesn't answer. He'll see.

INT. THE WALSH - BRIG - SOLITARY - NIGHT

Vikram lays on his back on the narrow single bed, and looks up, taking in the sparse details of the slightly pinkish walls, the commode, the sink.

INT. THE WALSH - FLIGHT DECK - NIGHT

Vikram makes his way up the stairs leading from below into the night air. Ortiz, he notices, appears to be smoking a cigar.

ORTIZ
Well?

VIKRAM
Cramped.

ORTIZ
Yes, I avoid going down there.

He quirks his eyebrow.

VIKRAM
Claustrophobic, major?

ORTIZ
 Colour of the walls gives me a
 headache.

She looks out at the rough mountain valleys, their climbing spiderweb of lights, and flicks an ash from the cigar.

Vikram follows the progress of the ash - and notices it disintegrate in midair, in a little orange glow of pixels.

She notices him looking, and smiles.

ORTIZ (cont'd)
 Would you like one, Mr. Kori?

VIKRAM
 (a little bemused)
 Not much of a smoker, I'm afraid.

She smiles, ashes the cigar again, then tosses it out to sea. It vanishes in a little ripple of glowing orange pixels. Vikram stares in unblinking fascination.

He looks to Ortiz for an explanation. She blows smoke -- which also glows, pixelates and vanishes.

ORTIZ
 Captain Ford will explain. He should
 be finished with his meeting
 presently.

INT. THE WALSH - CAPTAIN'S LOUNGE

Vikram is shown into the dim room. He alone in the space, which is pleasant but utilitarian, luxurious only by its spaciousness.

There are couches, and a coffee table, but it does not feel like a lived-in space.

As Vikram moves forward at a leisurely pace, the lights slowly come up.

Empty picture frames on the wall flicker -- and fill with perfect, tactile looking photographs, gently illuminated. Some of them show a lazy slideshow, some remain static.

These catch his eye. He slips around the coffee table, and approaches the wall, hands folded behind his back like he's examining the wall of an art gallery.

He scans over each image - Delaware, Hudson, family, strangers - and pauses at one.

INSERT: A U of Hawaii Faculty of Medicine graduation photo - class of 2037.

Hudson is visible close to the middle front. Next to him, a beautiful Hawaiian woman wearing a lei over her black robe. Vikram marks her.

DELAWARE (O.S.)
I apologize. My briefing ran longer than expected.

Vikram glances over at Delaware, who stands by the entrance, unsmiling.

VIKRAM
Not necessary. This is your ship. I'm just your... guest.

Delaware looks hard at Vikram for a beat, not sure what to make of him. He walks over to the wall, and looks at the photos.

His eyes flick to the U of Hawaii one, too. He unconsciously twists the wedding band on his finger, holding the silence.

DELAWARE
You're not what I expected, Mr. Kori.

VIKRAM
You were expecting the spoiled son of a despot.

DELAWARE
About the size of it, yes.

VIKRAM
Does my family strike you as despotic?

DELAWARE
Not to look at. I imagine I'll find out more when my brother reports back.

Vikram holds his gaze. Then indicates the **woman in the class photo**.

VIKRAM
I don't know her.

Delaware looks at it -- at **Rhiannon**, his wife -- and then looks down, as though the glance were casual.

VIKRAM (cont'd)
But I've seen her.

Delaware looks up. A small fracture in his mask of command.

DELAWARE
When?

VIKRAM

Three years ago. Almost exactly.

Delaware's face hardens as he forces the grief down. He doesn't try to hide it -- but he doesn't want to confide it, either.

Vikram gives him a look of quiet pity. He notes the wedding band on Delaware's finger as Delaware gestures -- the photos all go dark. The characteristic NCOM pixel glow follows his hand.

VIKRAM (cont'd)

Forgive me...Major Ortiz said you would explain.

He indicates his own hand.

VIKRAM (cont'd)

She called it the NCOM.

Delaware relaxes a little, grateful for the change of topic.

DELAWARE

Yes. The Neurocommand. It's the ship's OS. There was an order to upgrade all service vessels, but the Walsh was the only one to launch with it already installed.

Vikram puts on his naive face, pretending this is news to him.

VIKRAM

I read something about it at the time it was being developed for medical use. The neurological interfacing would have to be quite powerful to act on this scale. And require some discipline.

DELAWARE

It depends on the individual. For recreational purposes we have amplifiers that run programs. Some people even have their own presets.

VIKRAM

Like the major's cigar.

Delaware holds up his hand, manifests the cigar, hands it to him. Vikram takes it, gingerly, and then visibly reacts to it - to him, it feels solid, the cherry end feels hot.

Delaware makes a slight gesture - it disappears out of Vikram's fingers in a puff of little orange pixels.

VIKRAM (cont'd)
Extraordinary.

DELAWARE
I'll certainly never get used to it,
and I probably have more insight into
it than anyone living.

Vikram glances at him, trying to suppress his covetousness.
Then, he can't help himself:

VIKRAM
What about real time? Live
interfacing?

Delaware picks up on Vikram's eagerness.

DELAWARE
Is there a reason you're asking?

Vikram decides there's no point pretending. He straightens,
adopts an almost professorial mode.

VIKRAM
If everything you say is accurate,
the NCOM runs on an operating system
that is dynamic, converting brainwave
energy to operational behaviours. A
human mind interfacing with it should
be able to act as a file index, which
can then be accessed and interacted
with.

Delaware cocks a brow at him.

DELAWARE
Is there a reason you're asking?

Vikram assumes a more empathetic disposition.

VIKRAM
I only want to help.

DELAWARE
(a beat)
Son. The human mind is not a flash
drive. Human memory is fragmentary.
Impressionistic. Even if --

VIKRAM
--Even if my recollection could be
accessed, you couldn't reasonably be
expected to trust the veracity of its
contents, is that what you mean to
say?

DELAWARE
It's not personal.

Vikram sighs, as though it's a burden for him to tolerate being underestimated like this.

VIKRAM
 (gently)
 Captain Ford, If I verbally described to you that woman's fate, would you be satisfied?

Vikram points to the wall, indicating where the photos hovered in their frames.

Delaware looks back at them. His fingers goes unconsciously towards his ring, but he resists the urge to toy with it. His hands drop to his side.

DELAWARE
 No.
 VIKRAM
 Let me make an attempt. What do you have to lose?

They stare at each other for a long beat. Then Delaware gestures, using the NCOM to give Vikram a clearance.

INSERT: Floating text in a box - ARCHIVAL CLEARANCE

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. BEACHHEAD - DAY

Reality wobbles for a second as Vikram gets his bearings. Then the world resolves from glowing orange gridlines and pixelated shapes into the realistic, highly detailed memory.

Delaware looks around. He covers his mouth. This is an impossible level of detail -- and he's just given this freak access to the technology.

He looks to Vikram for explanation. Vikram taps his own temple.

VIKRAM
 It's a form of hyperthymesia. Rachel has it to a lesser degree. Her memory is systematic. Mine is more... holistic.

DELAWARE
 So you have what, perfect recall?

VIKRAM
 Not exactly. It's more that living in the present is an act of constant discipline.

Delaware follows alongside Vikram as he picks his way over the steep new beachhead.

Radhesh, Mikhail and Sergei work with the Alpine Security team to assist refugees, and move washed ashore bodies.

Delaware looks out. There are hundreds of corpses in the water, many of them not yet bloated, but atop floating refuse they died clinging to.

There are also living people trying to make their way towards the land, on makeshift rafts or small boats.

Vikram goes over and takes his place next to his father, watching as Sergei and Mikhail, both in the Alpine Security uniforms, lift a woman's body from a boat full of refugees.

Some of them are still alive, but more are dead, and the team lays them out. Vikram fits himself into the memory.

VIKRAM (cont'd)

(to Radhesh)

There'll be more survivors. At least for the next few days.

RADHESH

We can only hope.

VIKRAM

We can't save everyone.

Radhesh doesn't seem to hear him.

VIKRAM (cont'd)

Father?

Radhesh trudges over to Mikhail, and Vikram follows. He looks down at the woman's body. She has dark skin, and wears soggy blue scrubs.

Gently, Vikram lifts the woman's body with Radhesh, and pulls her dark hair from her face.

Rhiannon Ford. She almost looks asleep, but as she's lifted, her body's limpness belies her condition.

Vikram glances at Sergei, who hovers, sweaty and red from physical exertion.

He bends down, lifts Rhiannon's hand, and lets it fall.

SERGEI

Less than a day.

Vikram gently moves her limbs, folding her hands together.

Visible under her hair are distinctive silver earrings, and under her collar over her heart, a small tattoo -- a **Polynesian turtle**.

INSERT: A nametag reading DR. RHIANNON FORD

Behind him, Delaware makes a sound like the wind's been knocked out of him. Vikram looks around at him -

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. CAPTAIN'S LOUNGE - NIGHT

Delaware, sweating around the collar, holds his shaking hand up as though to indicate: halt. It glows for a second, then he lowers it.

Vikram turns to him and adopts a sympathetic expression that is just a little too hungry.

VIKRAM

I apologize.

Delaware takes a seat on the edge of one of the couches. He looks ten years older.

DELAWARE

For what?

VIKRAM

Subjecting you to my nightmares.

Delaware evaluates him, eyes moving over him, picking out vulnerabilities - pressure points, arteries, internal organs. He knows an enemy when he sees one.

DELAWARE

(dangerously calm)

We all have nightmares.

He gets to his feet, holds out his hand. He removes Vikram's NCOM clearance with a casual gesture.

Vikram makes a small bow of assent, eyes down. Delaware goes back to the picture wall - it lights up. Vikram turns to leave.

DELAWARE (cont'd)

(abruptly)

I don't want you to think I'm ungrateful.

Vikram turns.

VIKRAM

Perish the thought, Captain Ford.

RADHESH

I'm sure you're tired, Dr. Ford. Show the doctor to his room, won't you, Rachel.

HUDSON

Please call me Hudson.

Rachel says nothing but walks forward. Hudson shares a glance with Radhesh, who rolls his eyes, giving a little exasperated shake of the head.

Hudson turns and follows Rachel.

INT. ROOM

Rachel pushes the door open. The room is dark.

She reaches inside, finds a gas lantern, and turns it on, revealing a small room that was once a monk's cell. It has a narrow bed, a desk, a chair.

Hudson follows her in, and drops his pack on the bed. Rachel hangs the lamp on a hook where it hisses gently. She turns to go.

HUDSON

Rachel.

RACHEL

What?

HUDSON

I know it's none of my business--

RACHEL

It really isn't.

HUDSON

I meant it. I'd like to -- if there's anything...

He holds his hands out - **help?**

RACHEL

Good night, doctor.

She leaves him there.

INT. VIKRAM'S ROOM

Rachel walks into Vikram's darkened bedroom. A stream of moonlight illuminates it.

It's different from the others - with unusually high ceilings, walls hung with ten foot tall sliding blackboards.

It has the feel of an old university lecture hall, but smaller. Whereas Rachel's room is a mess, Vikram's is dictated order.

There are intricate, exact drawings and diagrams on every available chalkboard surface. Rachel goes to look at them.

INSERT: List of all the regions of the Cradle, before and after the rising water.

INSERT: A diagram of the rising water's progress.

INSERT: A diagram of the earth's tilt

INSERT: A diagram of a massive satellite with the words ATMOSPHERIC REGIONFREE CLOUD - ARC emblazoned on the side, next to a nuclear warning symbol.

Sounds of **SOMETHING TEARING THROUGH THE SKY, OF RUMBLING, OF MUTED SCREAMS**, artifacts of Rachel's memory.

INSERT: Calculations amounting to 78,012.988 MTs, and diagrams depicting a change in the earth's axis as the result of deep impact penetration.

She closes her eyes, trying to shut the memory out.

INSERT: An alphabetized list of names, underlined: Revelation, the Church of.

She opens her eyes, walks over to Vikram's desk. She picks up a round, flat stone ordinary but for a single band of quartz running through it.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY [2032]

YOUNG RACHEL (10) broods on a rock overlooking a beautiful rhododendron forest. She crumbles up a biscuit. An alpine chough hops around in front of her, curious.

She regards the bird, then tosses a few crumbs at it. It samples a piece, and then grabs another. She continues to feed it, still moping.

NADIA
(O.S., distant)
Rachel!

Rachel tosses the rest of the biscuit at the bird, which flutters a little, startled.

She turns and heads towards a ridge where a green Land Rover is jacked up and missing a wheel.

Stuck behind it on the narrow road are a couple of vans, and further down some large excavation machinery.

This unscheduled flat has backed everything up down the steep road.

From this viewpoint, the natural state of the Himalayan Mountains is visible -- no swollen ocean, no sign of a large settlement -- it is the Himalaya we know today.

Rachel's father RADHESH (40) works with MIKHAIL VETROV (50s) to change the tire. Both men are capable - Radhesh is of a slighter build.

Mikhail is bearlike and blonde. He wears a light uniform with epaulets, commander stripes and a badge on his shoulder, with the initials A.S.C. on it.

RADHESH

To the left.

Mikhail grunts as he maneuvers the tire. Radhesh tightens the lugs with the tire iron, working methodically and precisely.

NADIA (40) walks down the side of the ridge and extends a bottle of water to Rachel. Rachel doesn't say anything, but takes it and drinks.

NADIA

They'll be done soon.

RACHEL

I'll get Vikram.

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY

Rachel crests the other side of the ridge and finds YOUNG VIKRAM (12) and YOUNG SERGEI (13) standing near the lip of a steep incline.

Sergei favours his father Mikhail in form, but not temperament. He has close cropped platinum blonde hair and a mean stare.

He throws rocks, aiming at a couple of curious Griffon Vultures that have landed near by.

Younger Vikram by contrast is contemplative, with large, expressive eyes. He holds a rock in his hand as though he wants to throw it, but doesn't.

Sergei hits one of the birds and it flutters into the air.

RACHEL

Stop it.

SERGEI

Why?

RACHEL

They're not hurting you.

Rachel steps up to the older, taller Sergei and gives him a shove. It barely moves him, and he stares down at her, bemused by her display.

Vikram looks on, smiling behind his hand.

Sergei turns his head, spits through his teeth, and skulks back up the ridge. Vikram looks up at Rachel, his smile a little weary. He's not pleased to be here, either.

RACHEL (cont'd)

Mother says they're almost done.

Vikram looks at the stone in his hand, contemplates it, then slips it into his pocket. He follows his sister back towards the others.

He slips a little on some loose shale, but she catches his elbow and helps him up.

INT. LAND ROVER - MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY

Radhesh drives, Nadia sits in the passenger's side. They're knocked about by the bumpy road. Vikram and Rachel sit in the back seat.

Silently, he hands her the stone he was toying with - the one with the quartz band. Through the front window, the Black Monastery looms.

END FLASHBACK

INT. VIKRAM'S ROOM - NIGHT

Rachel thumbs the stone as she sits down on Vikram's bed, thin lipped with the effort of fighting back tears.

INT. THE BLACK MONASTERY - KITCHEN/DINING AREA - NIGHT

Radhesh prepares dinner. Hudson arrives from his nap, dressed smartly. He looks around.

HUDSON

Just the two of us?

Radhesh turns around and puts a plate of rice and roast pigeon in front of Hudson.

RADHESH
I'm sure Rachel's sulking. She's
hasn't been apart from Vikram, not
since they were both at university.

Hudson considers, calculating in his head. Radhesh hands him
a cup of tea.

HUDSON
They must have been quite young.

RADHESH
Let me show you something.

INT. RADHESH'S STUDY

Radhesh pulls a small box down from a pile of books. He
pushes some architectural blueprints aside, pulls out a
patched up laptop from under them.

He rummages through the box and comes up with a memory
stick. Similar to memory sticks of today, only this one
requires mere proximity to be opened.

Radhesh sets the laptop to project a wall of images, not
unlike Delaware's picture wall, only without the lifelike
realism. These images are less high resolution.

Hudson moves closer to the images.

INSERT: Photographs of Vikram and Rachel, clothed
respectively in Cambridge and Oxford branded apparel.

INSERT: Graduation photos, from different times and
different places, but both of them are draped with symbols
of honours and achievements.

INSERT: Vikram, winning a UN award for Extraordinary
Service.

INSERT: A glossy Oxford brochure style photograph taken
through a surgery observation window. Rachel stands and
takes instruction from an instructor during live surgery.

INSERT: A BBC video of Vikram, in the British Foreign
Service taking an oath of office.

CHYRON: First Junior Foreign Service Assistant Office
Created for 19 Year Old Linguistic Prodigy Vikram Kori.

INSERT: Video of Rachel as she stands before a group of
Oxford undergraduates, all of whom are easily her own age
and some older, but it's clear they look on her, their TA,
with respect.

She uses a slideshow to show them a discussion of complex
anatomy.

INSERT: An Interactive Guardian Magazine photograph series of primary school aged Vikram and Rachel playing a row of ten games of chess against each other.

Then laughing like it's a joke. Then hiding behind desks, throwing pieces at each other.

HEADLINE: The Persistent Memorizers: A Case Study

Hudson stands back from the images. He looks at Radhesh.

HUDSON

I see what you mean.

RADHESH

It's been a struggle every day for them, even before the Fall. Vikram is better at hiding it than Rachel is, but both of them suffer the effects of being wasted, deprived of potential. They are the only two people left who know what it feels like to be them, and Rachel in particular...

HUDSON

(prompting)

Rachel...

Radhesh sighs.

RADHESH

We've tried to convince her that she is needed. She's slipping away from us more every day.

HUDSON

It must be lonely.

Radhesh nods. He sips his tea. He closes the laptop, and beckons Hudson to follow him out.

INT. CORRIDOR - OUTSIDE VIKRAM'S ROOM

RADHESH

Understand, I am the least gifted member of my family, but as a result, I'm the also the most content. It hurts me to see my children so unhappy.

HUDSON

Maybe I can help.

RADHESH

You think so?

HUDSON

Possibly. If you can assist me on a few points.

Radhesh squeezes his arm, grateful.

INT. VIKRAM'S ROOM

Rachel, frowning, listens by the door.

INT. THE WALSH - BRIDGE - DAWN

Delaware sits alone, looks out at the brightening sky. He looks like he hasn't slept. He gestures, summons a communication screen.

DELAWARE

I sent Vikram back. Time to come home.

EXT. THE BLACK MONASTERY - VERANDA - DAWN

Hudson holds a small walkie talkie, staring out at the beautiful, strangely green sunrise. He lifts it, depresses the button.

HUDSON

One more day.

INTERCUT HUDSON/DELAWARE

DELAWARE

What for?

HUDSON

Just...trust me. I need more time.

A long beat.

DELAWARE

One more day. Then you come straight back, or I'm going to personally extract your ass.

Delaware closes the screen, and leans back in his seat, a headache visible on his face.

Hudson bends down and picks up a gym-sized bag with a medic symbol on it. He walks down the steps, purpose in his stride.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Rachel wanders in to the room to see her parents seated at the breakfast table, looking at her expectantly. She has circles under her eyes.

NADIA

Did you sleep at all last night?

Rachel looks around with an arch expression.

RACHEL

(snide)

I don't see the good Dr. Ford. Did he get lost?

RADHESH

Rachel.

NADIA

He wants to meet you at the school house.

Rachel frowns.

RACHEL

What for?

Nadia, annoyed, takes her daughter by the elbow and leads her towards the door. Radhesh looks on with mild interest, then returns to his tea.

Nadia turns to Rachel.

NADIA

This has to stop. This isolation. You can't cut yourself off any longer or your spirit will starve.

RACHEL

Why bother? There's nothing left.

NADIA

We have an obligation to the society that remains, and I will be damned if I let you spend the rest of your days slowly degrading because you're still mourning for a dead past. You no longer have the luxury of deciding who benefits from your gifts. And you are wasting them.

Rachel bites her lip. She looks at her mother uncertainly. Nadia reaches out and touches her hair.

NADIA (cont'd)

Go.

She puts a small pear in Rachel's hand, and nudges her towards the door.

EXT. SCHOOL HOUSE - DAY

Rachel munches the remains of the pear as she picks her way through the neatly landscaped gravel paths that lead up to the angular building, tucked in against the rock face.

Some short ways ahead of her, Hudson and ALI (40s) carry something heavy, wrapped in a tarp.

Rachel, stone confused now, follows their progress. She tosses the core away, and trails after them.

INT. SCHOOL HOUSE

The friendly space has been transformed by the addition of several tarps. Dividers have all been pushed to one side of their railing.

Rachel wanders in, but lingers at the doorway to watch the proceeding.

A stainless steel table dominates the centre of the room. Hudson and Ali lift the heavy object on to the table, and carefully unwrap it.

Inside is the freshly dead body of a woman, MARI (60s) dressed in a white linen shift. They pull the tarp out from under her.

Hudson takes a step back, folding his hands behind his back and watching respectfully.

Ali straightens the woman's limbs and touches her face gently, smiling. He reached out and grasps Hudson's shoulder.

ALI
(in Nepali,
untranslated)
Thank you for doing me this service,
my friend.
(to Rachel,
translated)
I will return for her before sundown.

Rachel nods, still obviously confused. Ali leaves.

HUDSON
What did he say?

Rachel holds back a beat.

RACHEL
He said...he's grateful for your
service to him.

While this conversation continues, Hudson arranges his tools and supplies, taking special care with his black canvas roll of bright scalpels.

Around him are other pieces of equipment: a large stock pot of boiling water on a stove, garden shears, tongs, wire, hacksaw, a bludgeon, and a blowtorch.

Most ominously, an 8mm Glock.

On another desk is more medically conventional equipment, including bandages, tape, gauze, so on.

HUDSON
Your father introduced him as the
village undertaker, and he agreed to
provide me with a body. I wasn't
aware I was doing him a service.

RACHEL
This is his mother, Mari. I think
he's relieved at not having to
prepare her corpse himself.

HUDSON
I was explicit in my intentions. They
aren't in the nature of ritual.

Rachel approaches the table, and looks down at the dead woman's face and for the first time, smiles broadly.

Gently she brushes a lock of grey-black hair away from her jaundiced forehead.

RACHEL
Have you ever seen a sky burial, Dr.
Ford?

HUDSON
Can't say that I have.

RACHEL
If I guess your intentions rightly,
this is the nature of the ritual.
More or less.

She goes around the table to his side, and heads over to the little medical station he's set up. As though performing a ritual herself, she dons an apron and disinfects her hands.

Hudson watches her closely as she stands, breathing steadily, holding her hands away from her in the air to evaporate the alcohol.

He offers her a pair of vinyl exam gloves. She accepts them, slides them on with practiced ease, and approaches the corpse again.

RACHEL (cont'd)
I take it we're not performing a post mortem.

HUDSON
No. And there won't be much pathological scope in the present circumstance, so I'm keeping it practical. Fractures, burns, wounds, amputations.

He studies her to see if she can handle this. She smiles at him - suddenly luminous. The shining, ironical girl from all the photographs. Then she sobers, focused. Mostly.

He looks at her steadily, all seriousness, then grins as he turns away to grab a tool. Rachel looks down at the roll of scalpels, and selects one. She examines it.

INSERT: An inscription: "**Primum non nocere**".

RACHEL
(to herself)
First do no harm.

Hudson turns to her, scissors in hand. He nods to the body. Rachel rolls the scalpel between her fingers. He cuts a line down the linen shift, and lays Mari bare.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

1. Rachel cuts a Y-incision in the chest. Hudson trades her the scalpel for a pair of large hedge-clippers. With audible SNAPS, she snips through the ribs.

2. Hudson uses the stout stick to break an arm, a leg, and the skull.

4. Using the blowtorch, Hudson burns the meaty part of the woman's thigh -- a first degree burn, then a second, then a third, all in a row. He points out the differences.

5. Hudson inflicts wounds on the woman's shoulder using the serrated hack saw, a standard pocket knife, and the scalpel. Then he oversees Rachel's stitching.

6. Hudson takes up the gun. They put foam earplugs in. Rachel watches Hudson load the gun and cock it. He fires several SHOTS into corpse. Rachel jumps slightly at the first shot, but adjusts easily.

Together, they survey the superlatively mutilated body. Hudson looks at her.

HUDSON

No harm done.

They stare at each other...then snigger, unable to keep a straight face. He nudges her forward. She grins as she goes over to the tray, and picks up a suture kit.

He directs her over to a contusion on Mari's forehead, which bleeds sluggishly. She begins, deftly and without hesitation, to stitch it shut.

He pulls out a **notebook embossed with the US Naval Seal** and begins to write in it, lifting his eyes to her work.

RACHEL

Tell me something.

HUDSON

Hm?

RACHEL

Why did you wait three years to come here? You would've made a significant difference.

HUDSON

I wanted to.

RACHEL

Your brother didn't.

HUDSON

He had valid concerns.

RACHEL

So he's captain. Does that mean he decides for everyone?

Hudson indicates another wound he wants her to treat - this one with wood fragments in it. She takes up the scalpel again.

HUDSON

He's not wrong to be concerned. We didn't know if we'd find a radioactive pile of rocks. No, don't cut across. Make a subcutaneous incision.

RACHEL

Hand me the forceps.

He hands her the instrument.

RACHEL (cont'd)

The trouble is, Dr. Ford, you must've known at once that there was a growing population of refugees.

(MORE)

RACHEL (cont'd)

You knew that the people here were surviving, but you didn't come to see for yourselves. You spent the better part of a decade doing...what, precisely?

Hudson lowers his notebook, gazing straight at her as she focuses on extracting wood fragments.

HUDSON

Becoming stronger. Training harder. Learning our technology. We have families aboard, and it was important to Delaware that those children had an opportunity to grow up before we made the decision to take them into...well.

He indicates in the vague direction of the Cradle, beyond the wall, miles below them.

RACHEL

Did they become sailors, too?

HUDSON

Some. Some became Marines. Some we trained ourselves, for more specialized applications.

RACHEL

How many?

Hudson opens his mouth. Then closes it, pursing his lips. She looks up at him, innocently. Then quirks an eyebrow. Then smiles, and returns to her task.

He raises his notebook, and returns to it, moving back and giving her space to work. Over his shoulder, we see him not taking notes, but sketching:

INSERT: A sketch of the scene, but emphasis on Rachel, not her work, but the shape of her face, the graceful lines of her cheekbone.

His pencil moves over the page, but his eyes follow her, trained on her small, unconscious smile of satisfaction as she makes herself useful.

INT. SCHOOL HOUSE - EVENING

Hudson sweeps away flies from the pot full of internal organs, and pours them back to the body cavity.

RACHEL

Do you want me to stitch her back up?

HUDSON
I'll do it. Get cleaned up.

He begins stitching the Y-incision with catgut, using a lazy whip-stitch. Rachel cleans up, pulls off the apron, disinfects, but does all of this almost reluctantly.

She watches him -- **not his work, but him**. She waits for him to speak, but he remains focused on his task. He finishes quickly.

HUDSON (cont'd)
All right. Help me with this.

She approaches and helps him close up the tarp, running a cord through the eyelets, obscuring the body completely from view.

EXT. SKY BURIAL GROUNDS - AFTERNOON

The slanting light illuminates the steep green slope. There are patches of oddly coloured moss, but no remains in sight.

A further hundred yards up the winding path, a small black temple is visible in the distance.

Ali and his two sons cart the wrapped body up the irregular path. Behind him follows his wife ZARAH (40s) and a pair of Buddhist monks, who shake goat hide rattles in time.

The entire Crown has turned out, and follows behind -- some thousand people. Rachel is joined by her parents.

Hudson walks behind her, his uniform and unfamiliarity drawing looks from everyone.

Hudson meanwhile notices the approach of the vultures, mainly Griffon Vultures but also Lammergeiers. They are golden, distinctive, intelligent looking.

The procession stops. With the help of his sons, Ali removes the bundle from the cart. They draw the cord out of the tarp's eyes, then step away, and back down the steps.

Zarah, a stately woman with a long veil of salt and black hair, steps forward. Working confidently, she rolls the tarp forward, then pulls it off the body.

One son takes it from her and bundles it away with the cart.

Hudson and Rachel look on as she holds her hand over it, apparently satisfied by its condition. She catches their eyes, and nods in gratitude.

She walks a respectful distance down the path. Then, turned away from them, towards the vultures, she begins to SING.

She sings a song in some dead language, **her voice like a cello**. The vultures rise to the sound -- it is a summons they have understood for generations.

They hop, flutter towards the body. The outnumbered Lammergeiers bully their way through the Griffon vultures. They investigate the body -- then swarm upon it.

They rip, tear, fight each other, and gulp down the torn flesh.

Zarah makes a small bow towards the birds, silently thanking them. Then she turns her back on the scene, and joins her family. They lead the rest of the villagers back down the path.

Nadia and Radhesh turn to go also, but not before Nadia squeezes Rachel's shoulder. She then gives Hudson a pointed look. They move off.

Rachel looks to Hudson. He walks forward towards the remains. The vultures flutter slightly, only momentarily distracted from their meal.

He looks directly at one of the Lammergeiers, which appears to have paused its feasting to look at him.

HUDSON

Lammergeier.

He looks at Rachel. She indicates the bird.

RACHEL

In their natural state they prefer bone fragments to fresh meat, but the scarcity of prey has forced them to adapt.

He turns away, eyes now looking towards the glittering urban streak miles below them.

HUDSON

It's a good strategy.

RACHEL

We're all just meat in the end, I suppose.

Hudson looks back at her, astonished and disturbed. This wasn't the lesson he intended.

Drawn by his silence, she gazes back at him as though he were an interesting specimen, demonstrating interesting reactions.

RACHEL (cont'd)

(gently)

Corpses don't feel pain, Dr. Ford.

He looks back at her, struck, harmed somehow not by her words, but by her sense of peace and contentment. He watches her walk away.

Then, angry, he catches up with her, grabs her arm and turns her around.

RACHEL (cont'd)
What are you---

HUDSON
You know, you could do some good in the world if you weren't such a perfect coward.

Her zen evaporates. She glares at him.

RACHEL
What did you call me?

HUDSON
I think you remember.

RACHEL
Remind me.

HUDSON
You've been so preoccupied with the loss of the status and admiration you had when you were a child prodigy that you have failed to exert yourself on humanity's behalf. Because you feel sorry for yourself.

She crosses her arms, shuddering with rage.

RACHEL
That's rich coming from a man who spent the last three years as far from the suffering of others as possible.

A beat. He doesn't have an immediate answer for that. She's right.

HUDSON
I'm here now.

Rachel looks out at the ship, than back to him.

RACHEL
While it's convenient.

She turns on him, and walks away, hiding her own angry tears from him.

EXT. NORTH BARRACKS - AFTERNOON

Vikram approaches a waiting personnel truck.

INT. TRUCK CAB

Sergei sits behind the wheel, drumming his thumbs. Next to him, Devere looks out into the darkness.

Vikram opens the passenger side door. Devere gets out, and heads around to the back. Vikram pulls himself in besides Sergei.

VIKRAM

Well?

Sergei says nothing, just smiles, and starts the engine.

INT. HUDSON'S ROOM

Hudson packs up his gear, expression stony. He sits, hesitates. He opens his **notebook** and begins to make notes. Then, he opens a new page, and begins to sketch.

INSERT: Another silhouette of Rachel's neck, bent gracefully as she looks down - a portrait from his memory of her work on the body.

He seems to calm as he continues to sketch.

EXT. CAUSEWAY ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Nadia waits alone by herself at the ornate causeway arch. She watches the prayer flags strung above it flutter. Below, down a series of steps, the village spreads before her.

She shivers inside a shawl. She looks pale.

EXT. VERANDA

Rachel sits with a book, pretends she's not watching the distant figure.

EXT. CAUSEWAY

Hudson approaches, pack on his shoulders.

NADIA

Are you sure you want to walk? It's hours until dawn.

HUDSON
I'll radio my brother when I get
tired. He'll send a transport.

Nadia holds out her hand.

NADIA
I hope this is a beginning, Dr. Ford.

He smiles, grips her hand warmly.

HUDSON
So do I, Mrs. Kori.

He glances back towards the monastery. Nadia follows his gaze. She coughs, then smiles.

EXT. VERANDA

Rachel sinks behind her book.

EXT. DAM - NIGHT

Hudson walks along the dam towards the switchback approach. The personnel truck passes him on its way towards the monastery.

He pauses, watches it trundle along, then looks again at the monastery.

EXT. CAUSEWAY ENTRANCE - NIGHT

The truck pulls to a stop. Vikram gets out, and faces his mother. Her eyes flick to Sergei behind the wheel. He gives her a little two fingered salute, and turns the truck about.

She catches the sight of combat boots under the flapping canvas.

Nadia looks at Vikram. He's about to speak -- she cuts him off.

NADIA
I don't want to hear it.

VIKRAM
It's not what you think.

NADIA
I think your boredom is overcoming
your common sense. And did you even
think about your sister? She--
she's...

She pauses, blinking like she's just been hit with a dizzy spell. She puts her hand out on the wall to steady herself.

Then her knees go out from under her. Vikram, eyes wide with shock, catches her before she can fully collapse.

VIKRAM

No.

EXT. VERANDA - NIGHT

Rachel, having seen this at a distance, throws down her book and bolts down the stairs towards the causeway.

EXT. CAUSEWAY - NIGHT

She skids to a halt before Vikram and her prone mother. Behind her, her father approaches from the monastery entrance, jogging hurriedly.

She leans down, touches her mother's pulse. Her eyes are just open. Rachel bends down to listen to her heart and lungs. She looks at her brother.

VIKRAM

Get him back.

She takes off running.

EXT. SWITCHBACKS - NIGHT

Hudson hikes down the switchback road. He pauses to look at the dam - colossal, the height of a skyscraper, its lights bright enough to illuminate his way.

A SCRAPING sound, FEET ON GRAVEL. Rachel pelts towards him, catches him on the shoulders. He steadies her, looking at her for an explanation, but she's breathing too heavily.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Radhesh and Vikram lift Nadia into bed. Radhesh looks at his son, who shakes his head, dumbstruck.

Rachel and Hudson come through the door. Hudson immediately opens his bag, and pulls out a field medic kit. He hands Rachel a small IV kit.

She looks at it for a moment. Then at him. He jerks his head: *get to work.*

Vikram gets out of her way, and goes to the other side of the bed, where his father bends down to his wife's side.

RADHESH

What is it?

Hudson pulls out a stethoscope and listens to Nadia's lungs. There is a CRACKLING WHEEZE when she breathes. Hudson listens to one, then the other, and frowns.

HUDSON

There's fluid in both lungs. Double pneumonia.

RADHESH

How is that possible? She wasn't sick ten hours ago.

Nadia coughs, wheezes painfully. Rachel shoots Hudson a frightened look.

HUDSON

Morphine, in my bag.

Rachel rummages through the bag.

INSERT: she pushes aside the old scalpel kit, nicking herself on an uncorked blade. She winces, but continues.

She pulls out a small bottle and a packaged needle. She tears open the needle, draws out a tiny dose, and injects it into the IV line.

Nadia's breathing relaxes. Vikram goes over to Hudson.

VIKRAM

She needs antibiotics. We don't have them.

Hudson looks at Rachel. She holds his gaze, then settles down next to her mother, and takes her vitals again.

HUDSON

I'll do what I can.

Vikram's expression tightens. He knows he's being lied to. He goes over to Rachel, puts a hand on her shoulder. Hudson withdraws.

INT. WEST TOWER - NIGHT

Hudson, sits at the radio console, hands together. He contemplates his notebook, which is made up of words in the **Crow Sioux dialect**.

INSERT: Crow Sioux language.

The DOOR opens. He turns to see Rachel, looking exhausted. He closes the book and stands.

HUDSON

Any change?

Rachel shakes her head. She looks at him long and hard.

RACHEL

The antibiotics?

He sighs. He really doesn't want to tell her this.

HUDSON

In the event they would get here in time, they're unlikely to be effective.

RACHEL

In the event?

She stares at him, waiting for him to explain himself.

HUDSON

Rachel.

RACHEL

Your brother, he could send a helicopter. He could send one right now, it would take ten minutes to get here.

HUDSON

He's had time to survey the military situation in the Cradle and he's not going to risk the lives of his pilots against the possibility of being shot down.

RACHEL

You bastard. You think she's going to die.

HUDSON

What was it you said? Corpses don't feel pain? Or is it different when it's someone you love?

Rachel takes a step back as though forced by the impact of his cruelty. She backs away, about to turn.

HUDSON (cont'd)

Rachel, wait.

He catches her just as she's about to bolt, pulls her around to face him. Her lip quivers.

HUDSON (cont'd)

I shouldn't have said that.

She can't hold back the tears. He tries to hug her but she stops him with a hand. She looks directly into his eyes.

RACHEL

Why not? It's true. It was never about helping people. It was just...

She breathes heavily, hurting, ashamed of herself. She steps away from him, sinks down on the chair in front of the console.

RACHEL (cont'd)

First, I played with cars. I wanted to be an engineer like father. I took our Landrover apart and put it back together five times before I was ten. Then I got bored. I thought I wanted to be a vet, do animal surgery. I used to repair our aging cats, the same way I repaired our cars, and our appliances. But it wasn't enough. It wasn't challenging enough. The risk wasn't high enough. There wasn't a machine or a domestic animal complex enough for me. Becoming a surgeon was...I just wanted better toys.

She laughs softly at herself, but it chokes through her tears. She turns her face up to him. He holds her gaze while she waits for judgment.

HUDSON

I performed my first surgery on a child, a little girl twelve years old. It wasn't especially complex, or traumatic, and she recovered fine. But I threw my guts up afterwards. Not because I felt bad about cutting up a human being...but because it felt...you know how it felt. Peaceful. Meditative.

He takes her elbows, lifts her from the chair and pulls her closer. Incrementally, eyes locked on him, she calms.

HUDSON (cont'd)

You are not a psychopath. You are very good at your job.

She cracks a small smile. He thumbs away her tears. Then, realizing the intimacy of these gestures, he pulls away just as she leans in and **brushes her lips against his**.

He hesitates, turning his head as to deepen the kiss, then pulls back with a heavy sigh.

HUDSON (cont'd)

Rachel.

RACHEL
Help me.

HUDSON
I can't.

RACHEL
Why?

HUDSON
Because. You are terribly vulnerable.
I am a stranger here. There are...
there other men, younger, closer at
hand--

She shoves him away with sudden force, cold with rage.

RACHEL
Like Sergei.

HUDSON
That's not what I meant.

RACHEL
Maybe one of his men...more young men
and women join his army every day.
They follow his example. Last year,
When one of his lieutenants tried to
challenge his rule, Sergei drowned
her in a pool of motor oil behind a
tavern with his own hands. Her son
was the one who betrayed her - so he
got her job. But according to you,
after my own mother dies I should try
and find a nice local boy to settle
down with.

She turns away with disgust and despair, but Hudson yanks her around to face him, face red with some rage of his own.

HUDSON
Listen to me. I thought I'd grow old
and die before meeting a woman like
you, in this life or the one before.
But in the cold light of day, you
will understand why I cannot allow
this to happen right now.

She pulls away from him, hurt, angry. Then she turns and walks away. She hesitates at the door -- those words "right now" -- and almost looks back. Then leaves.

He remains behind, shuddering with intense emotion. He goes to the window and looks down, trying to breathe through the waves of self denial.

He sees, far down below, an AG personnel truck cresting the top of the approach. He notices it turn -- it doesn't head towards the main road, but turns off a side road.

He stares.

Something **clicks**.

Hudson grabs his coat and stuffs himself into it as he exits the room.

EXT. SERVICE ROAD - NIGHT

Hudson stands in the shadow, looking through a chain link gate at the rear end of the truck as it drives away from him.

INT. TRUCK CAB

Sergei sits in the passenger side, watching aimlessly.

The truck turns down a road marked with a sign reading "WATER MAINS" and another reading "CAUTION: MINES" with an image of landmines lining a narrow path.

EXT. TRUCK

The truck parks.

EXT. ENTRY WAY

Hudson gets some elevation and is able to spot the truck by the sound of the TRUCK DOORS SLAMMING. It's too far to see more more than the edge of the canvas roof.

EXT. TRUCK

Sergei indicates "round up" with his hand. The other two Lammergeiers begin unloading something unseen from the back.

They carry out their task - there's a series of FAINT SPLASHES -- and then form back up.

EXT. ENTRY WAY

Hudson, hearing the TRUCK approaching, wedges himself into a shallow rock alcove not far from the gate. The truck heads out as the automatic gate opens for it.

Hudson waits for the truck to fully exit

And waits

And waits --

He breaks cover at the last minute and slips through the closing gate before it shuts.

INT. TRUCK

Sergei glances in the side mirror: did he just see movement? He indicates to the driver, slow up.

EXT. ENTRY WAY

Hudson, having thrown himself behind some rock face for cover, remains still.

The truck slows...but then starts up again. It drives off. Hudson breathes. Then he brushes himself off, and heads up the road in the direction they've just left.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Radhesh sleeps uneasily in a chair. Nadia breathes lightly, but she's gotten paler. Rachel stares at her, Vikram paces slowly.

Radhesh wakes up, and blinks at them.

RADHESH
You should get some sleep, both of
you.

Vikram shakes his head. He turns to Rachel.

RACHEL
I'm not tired.

RADHESH
Nonsense. Go get some sleep. In your
own bed. Or else you'll be no use to
anyone.

She looks at Vikram.

RACHEL
If anything changes.

Vikram gives her a thin smile, and kisses her forehead. She goes to kiss her father on her way out.

INT. THE BLACK MONASTERY - RACHEL'S ROOM - PRE-DAWN

Rachel, mostly clothed, sleeps on top of her bedcovers, still wearing her shoes. It looks like she fell asleep sitting at the edge.

Hudson lets himself quietly into the room, kneels down and shakes her gently.

She comes awake, and he puts his hand over her mouth before she can speak, indicating silence. She looks him up and down -- he's bloodied, his jacket is torn.

She sits up.

RACHEL
(whispering)
What's going on?

HUDSON
There's something I need to show you.

He grabs her Oxford hoodie off her chair, and shoves it into her arms.

INT. THE BLACK MONASTERY - CORRIDOR - PRE-DAWN

Rachel, pulling on the hoodie, follows Hudson in confusion as he leads her towards the main hall, and the exit.

Neither of them notice Sergei loitering at the corner behind them, looking thoughtful. He turns around the corner, disappearing the other direction.

EXT. SERVICE ROAD - ENTRY WAY - DAWN

They arrive at a tall chain link barrier. It's topped with razor wire, and completely surrounds the path going forward, and the narrow channel beyond.

Rachel notices the place where the razor wire is bent, and looks at Hudson, noting the corresponding wounds.

RACHEL
Why didn't you just ask me?

HUDSON
There wasn't time.

Rachel keys in the passcode for the door, looking at Hudson suspiciously. He's busy scanning the area for possible followers.

EXT. WATER MAIN COMPLEX - MORNING

They head up the path, careful to keep in single file. They walk along the right bank of the channel. Clean, clear water courses down it, the flanking paths mined on either side.

A few yards in front of them, a turning in the path forms an observation bridge over the place where the channel flows gently over a sudden drop.

Rachel glances at Hudson. He holds out a hand, inviting her to go to the bridge.

As she steps on to it, she looks down: A deep, elongated reservoir stretches out before her, terminating at the end in a large water main.

Abutting the netting that covers the water main entry are at **least eighty corpses in varying states of decay.**

Most of them feature visible symptoms of disease: bubonic growths, skin discolourations, gangrene. There is one distinctive body - the TATTOOED MAN Sergei murdered earlier.

Rachel wavers as her knees weaken, her eyes round, her expression absolutely stunned. Hudson steadies her.

She turns to him, her mouth open but unable to form words.

EXT. SKY BURIAL GROUNDS - MORNING

Rachel and Hudson hike up the twisty path. Hudson picks up his pack, which he's hidden behind a rock. Rachel frowns at this, but follows.

They pass Mari Rai's remains - nothing left but a stain on the grass. Vultures track their steps, but don't come closer.

RACHEL

It doesn't make sense.

HUDSON

I saw what I saw. So did you.

RACHEL

It still doesn't make sense.

He turns to her as they walk.

HUDSON

You can't be suggesting Sergei's not capable. Not after what you told me.

Rachel stops.

RACHEL

That's exactly it. Why create a plague in secret when your entire power-base is founded on open intimidation?

HUDSON

What if he's working for someone else? Moonlighting?

RACHEL

Sergei, work for someone else? Like who?

HUDSON

I don't know.

RACHEL

Sergei doesn't work for anyone. He takes whatever he wants.

HUDSON

You know the man better than I do.

She sits down on a boulder, considering.

RACHEL

I suppose it's not impossible. But it's not like him to let circumstance do his murdering for him. He depends on our water supply to support his soldiers, too.

HUDSON

Maybe he's diversifying.

RACHEL

He'd only poison our well if he thought he could seize another. The Penitents have the only other accessible source, and they guard the secret of the location closely.

She looks at him hard for a long beat.

RACHEL (cont'd)

I need to warn my family. My mother--

HUDSON

Control of the dam is the only thing that protects your family. If word gets out among those people that the water is contaminated, the situation will deteriorate. More people will die.

She stops, and just stares at him, caught between her desire to return home, and the truth of his words. He takes her face in his hands, and kisses her softly - then harder.

She leans into it, then wraps her arms around his neck. He pulls back, meets her eyes.

HUDSON (cont'd)
 (quietly)
 You're not as safe up here as you think you are. We can't act from here. It's better for all involved if it looks like you've been taken prisoner by me.

Torn, in pain, Rachel looks back towards the distant monastery. Then at Hudson. He squeezes her shoulder.

Without seeing if she's following, he turns towards the path. Up, far ahead of them, the Black Temple peeks out from behind a slope.

EXT. THE BLACK TEMPLE - DAY

They make it to the doors, breathing heavily.

They enter the space. The windows are all covered with old rattan, muting the dusty light inside. The room is octagonal, about 20 feet across.

An altar with a large Indian Buddha sits and looks on serenely. The space has been recently swept, and old incense sticks litter the altar.

Rachel shuts the door behind them. Hudson dusts off a place on the altar and sets down his bag, **showing an outside mesh pocket containing the scalpel case we saw them use.**

He pulls out his radio and presses in a series of MORSE CODE. He's not as quick as he could be.

BEEPS come back, and he listens, then tunes the frequency. He sends another MORSE CODE string, then turns the frequency again.

RACHEL
 Give it to me.

Hudson surrenders it to her. She makes an adjustment.

RACHEL (cont'd)
 What do you want me to say?

HUDSON
 (deep breath)
 To Captain Ford, U.S.S WALSH: Urgent.
 Requesting Shrike One at six and a
 half clicks northwest--

She rapidly inputs the code as he speaks, then stops when he does, startled by the the sound of ENGINES AND TIRES. Then -- BOOTS ON GRAVEL.

Hudson snatches the radio out of her hand, turns it off and flings it out of sight.

HUDSON (cont'd)

Hide.

RACHEL

No. I'm not afraid.

He takes her by the shoulders and hustles her back to the altar.

HUDSON

I know. For my sake.

He pulls his notebook out of his jacket, and shoves it into her hands. She drops down beside the altar, barely concealed.

He then reaches over her and rips the rattan window open. She moves to go through it, but then ducks at the sound of CRUNCHING from the front entrance.

Hudson rises and moves aside just in time to see Sergei's boot kick in the old rattan door. It flies off its hinges and comes apart.

He strides through, his presence greatly enhanced by full black fatigues, Kevlar vest, assault rifle, side arms, knives.

Tyrek and Devere trail him.

SERGEI

There you are, doctor. We've been looking all over for you.

Hudson takes in Sergei's appearance, just as Sergei takes in his.

HUDSON

Here I am. Wanted some fresh air.

SERGEI

That's a long way to walk with all of your equipment. Are you sure you aren't going somewhere?

Hudson smiles blandly. Instinctively he reaches down to his holster, where his Glock is. Sergei watches him, amused, not the least bit concerned.

Hudson lifts it -- it's too light. He pops out the magazine and checks: empty. He takes it in stride, and checks the chamber. Nothing.

HUDSON

I see you've thought this through.

SERGEI

Where is Rachel? She should be with her mother. They're very concerned.

HUDSON

Is that what you are? Concerned?

SERGEI

Since you ask, I expected to find you fucking like a couple of minks, but Vikram seems to think you're some kind of gentleman.

HUDSON

Well, I am sorry to disappoint if your expectations were otherwise.

Behind the altar, Rachel fumes. Her eyes travel to the medical bag, with the tip of the scalpel case peeking over.

Sergei's eyes flick to the gently flapping rattan cover hanging off the window over Rachel's hiding space. He moves slowly, intending to walk around Hudson.

Hudson blocks his path.

SERGEI

Are you going to make this fun for me?

HUDSON

No, son, I am not.

Sergei looks to Tyrek and nods towards the outside.

SERGEI

Find her.

Tyrek turns and leaves, and is momentarily visible through the broken window as he jogs up the slope.

Hudson looks anxiously out the window, playing up his "concern" about this new wrinkle, hoping Sergei will believe Rachel's gone.

Sergei, meanwhile, takes his adversary's measure, then surprises Hudson by disarming. He hands off his weapons to Devere.

SERGEI (cont'd)

She likes you.

HUDSON

(extra southern)

I couldn't say, Commander Vetrov. All I know is that she doesn't like you.

Sergei draws a stiletto from a sheath against his ribs, flips it in his hand.

SERGEI

My Rachel. She's always been stubborn.

Sergei stretches his neck, limbering up. He passes the stiletto from hand to hand.

SERGEI (cont'd)

You know, she broke one of my ribs when we were kids. It was worth it, to put my hand on something that soft.

Hudson stares at him, mouth thin with rage. He shrugs off his fatigue jacket and tosses it aside. Now down to his t-shirt, he rolls his shoulders and gestures: *let's go*.

Sergei smiles. He tosses the blade at Hudson's feet, inviting him to take it up. Hudson kicks it aside, and beckons with his bare hands.

SERGEI (cont'd)

That's right. You are a gentleman.

HUDSON

Yes, I am.

SERGEI

Show me.

Both of them stand absolutely still. Then they lunge at each other. They grapple, trying to shove each other off balance long enough to create a opening for a blow.

Sergei gets the best of the first exchange, driving a knee into Hudson's stomach. Winded, Hudson goes down on his stomach, but rolls out of the way and gets his feet under him.

Rachel seizes the medical bag by the edge. It falls, and its contents scatter, the case skittering out of reach as it bursts open.

This distracts both of combatants. Hudson recovers first and lands a roundhouse punch to Sergei's face hard enough to stagger him.

Devere catches Sergei, boosts him up to his feet and pushes him back towards Hudson. Lip split, Sergei spits blood and flashes Rachel a red smile.

Hudson knees him in the ribs for his trouble. Sergei cries out, goes to one knee, crouching down in pain.

Rachel notices his eyes go to the stiletto. It's only two feet away from him.

RACHEL

The knife.

Hudson glances at her, then the knife. He steps to the side, and kicks it away.

In that instant, Sergei rises, moving smoothly. He's been faking his injury.

Rachel's eyes go to him. They widen as his arm reaches behind his back.

RACHEL (cont'd)

(screams)

NO!

Hudson turns to Sergei. He tenses, adjusts his step, ready for an attack.

Sergei moves gracefully with him, then draws from behind his back a **ten inch Bowie knife**.

He drives it into Hudson's stomach.

Rachel SCREAMS. Hudson looks down, grunts as Sergei twists the blade once before withdrawing it.

Rachel goes to Hudson as he falls to his knees.

RACHEL (cont'd)

(whimpering)

No.

Hudson blinks up at her. She puts her hand over his wound, trying to stop the bleeding, but it just soaks into her sweatshirt.

Slowly, he shakes his head, his expression resigned.

Sergei turns and stands over her, and allows Devere to re-armor him.

SERGEI

He's here to spy. I have the intercepts if you want to see them. He's reporting on you, and your family. That's why he's been trying to get close to you.

RACHEL

LIAR.

SERGEI

When have I ever lied to you? This stealing you away while your mother dies, this makes more sense to you?

She swallows, trying to catch her breath to form response to this. She looks down at Hudson - he pants softly.

Sergei wipes his bloodied mouth and raises the bloody knife. He points it at Hudson. It drips.

SERGEI (cont'd)

There's a faster way to settle this.
(to Hudson)
How much time would you say you've got? Ten minutes? Twenty?

HUDSON

(weakly)
You didn't think this up on your own. Sabotaging the water supply, infecting the people living down there. That's not your style, is it?

He coughs, winces in pain, blood wetting his lips. Sergei approaches, holding the knife out at Rachel.

SERGEI

Move.

Rachel stays by Hudson's side and refuses to move.

Her hand searches behind her, finds buried in the layer of sediment - a **scalpel**. Her fingers close over it.

She holds it tight at her side and rises, putting herself between Sergei and Hudson. Sergei sighs, and lowers the knife.

SERGEI (cont'd)

(in Russian,
subtitled)
Get out of the way.

RACHEL

Make me.

Sergei looks to Devere, and nods to him. He goes to snatch Rachel, but she raises the little blade and points it directly in his face. He takes a step back.

SERGEI

For fuck sake. Go wait outside, I'll deal with this.

Devere, keeping an eye on Rachel, backs out. She turns the blade to Sergei, her hand shaking.

Devere takes off after her. Sergei looks at his bloody hand, giving us a flash of the terrible wound.

He presses his hand back over his face, kicks one of the ancient bricks into crumbs, and lets out a growl of frustration and pain.

EXT. THE SKY BURIAL GROUND - EVENING

Rachel bolts down the path. Devere chases her. She pelts full tilt, covered in blood and tears.

She makes a hard turn and heads down the rocky face of the mountain, surfing down in a stream of shale.

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE

Devere doesn't make the turn as quickly, and loses some distance as he follows after her.

Rachel tumbles, falls, rolls, becoming even filthier.

SERIES OF SHOTS

1. Rachel falling through the dust cloud.
2. Devere in pursuit.
3. The cough on the mine antenna
4. Devere appears from the dust. Rachel faces him, quivering.
6. Devere grins, beckons.
7. Rachel looks down at the mines.
8. Devere looks down also.
9. His foot steps back.
8. The explosion, this time experienced from Rachel's POV.

Dust obscures her prone form, but Hudson's notebook is visible a few feet away.

INSERT: The notebook, pages open. One loose leaf, flutters in the wind. As it drifts, we catch the English words hastily written on it: "Rachel--"

HUDSON (V.O.)

Rachel, If you're reading this, I've failed you. What I will have told you won't include the whole of my suspicions.

(MORE)

HUDSON (V.O.) (cont'd)
I intended for us to be far away
before I confessed them to you, but
my intentions do not matter now.

INT. BLACK MONASTERY - MASTER BEDROOM - DAWN

Vikram sits by his mother's side. She's breathing her last.
Radhesh holds her hand, his face a mask of tears and
disbelief.

HUDSON (V.O.)
I hope, for your sake, for your
family's sake, that I'm wrong.

Nadia turns her head to Vikram, as though about to speak.

Nadia does not speak. She dies, open eyed, staring at her
son. Vikram stares back, transfixed.

FADE OUT