

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.

Our perspective moves south. The steep base of the mountain slopes disappear into lapping waves.

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) slides down on her ass. She catches herself and flings herself behind a rock outcrop.

She appears to be of Indian descent, and beautiful most of the time. Right now she's a mess, her torn gray Oxford hoodie 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. He 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 rises three inches above the ground.** The sound of SLIDING ROCK scares the chough away, alerting Rachel.

She slides away as quickly as she can but falls again on her backside. The air clear. 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. She stares 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.

Rachel 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.

BEGIN
FLASHBACK:

EXT. THE CROWN DAM - EVENING

A stuttered, reverse memory flashes through Rachel's mind.

The seas retreat. The Himalayan range is restored below her. A distant, massive explosion over the horizon condenses, shrinks into:

A bright light, like a falling star, returns to the sky, hangs in place for a moment. It begins to move - a satellite in orbit.

The memory speeds backwards. The sunset reverses itself. Below the dam two golden eagles circle in reverse.

END FLASHBACK.

EXT. THE CROWN DAM - MORNING

Rachel stands, eyes closed, still in her memory. She opens her eyes and looks down at the drop. It's so far it disappears into haze.

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

Once I stood here and watched one of the eagles kill an antelope. She knocked it off the cliff face.

She doesn't look at him. She leans slightly over the edge, looking down into the haze.

RACHEL (cont'd)

The antelope disappeared, and the eagles starved.

VIKRAM

Except the ones that learned to scavenge with the vultures.

She shrugs.

RACHEL

Maybe they wanted to live.

VIKRAM

(insisting)

So do you.

There's pain in Vikram's voice. 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.

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 dead.

She looks out at the brightening sea, narrowing her eyes.

VIKRAM (cont'd)
What is it?

RACHEL
A ship.

VIKRAM
It's probably another salvage.

He pulls at her hand. She shakes her head.

RACHEL
Look.

Vikram looks too. He looks closer. Then he looks at his sister. Her shaking hand tightens around his.

EXT. THE BLACK MONASTERY - MORNING

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

This is the ancient Black Monastery. Beautiful, imposing and built for discomfort, its ornate columns carved directly into the 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) sits erect in an old rattan chair, looking south east towards the dam. Her dark hair is streaked with grey, and her aspect is patrician.

From her perspective the curving eastern edge of the dam is visible. Her eyes scan the causeway.

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

RADHESH KORI (50s) approaches, two cups of steaming tea in his hand. He also has the appearance of premature age, but is as dignified as his wife.

He hands her one of the cups, squeezes her shoulder reassuringly. Raises his eyes to the causeway.

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. His slightly damp children saunter in.

Nadia watches them carefully from one of the table, keeping a side eye on Rachel.

Rachel, now animated, goes straight for the countertop and grabs a bowl from her father. She goes over to the south facing 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 shrugs.

EXT. THE CRADLE - SHELL TOWN - DAY

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

A **white vulture skull** insignia is stenciled on the canvas.

It speeds along one elevated main road, clearly built prior to this settlement, cutting 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.

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

The worst are just shacks piled on top of each other. There are sick and starving people everywhere - those mobile enough take cover when the truck passes.

EXT. THE CRADLE - THE MARKET DISTRICT - DAY

This area is more orderly, shipping containers stacked two and three high, with open fronts. The truck trundles through.

It is a marketplace. Everything is for sale: cans of food, books, weapons, scrap, clothes, radio and electronic parts, anything and everything recoverable from cargo ships.

There are also workshops where craftspeople repair and build electronics and goods. Personal body guards are highly visible.

These people also look apprehensively on the passing truck. They follow it with their eyes, then avert them.

EXT. NORTH BARRACKS

The truck fishtails, making its way towards a leveled complex, containing a modern cement construction that resembles a colonial armory.

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

Behind it in the middle distance rises the 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 beneath the superimposed vulture skull insignia we've seen.

These are **Lammergeiers**: elite paramilitary, fit, extremely well resourced, cohesive and arrogant.

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

Easily the most impressive of them is SERGEI VETROV (25). He wears a black commando sweater over fatigue pants. His insignia includes a Russian-style commander's star.

Tall, white blonde hair, 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 inked. He's strong, but bloodied.

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

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 same view.

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

Nadia sits on the couch. Radhesh waits at the table, looking
tense.

RADHESH
Can you see any markings? Insignia?

Rachel shakes her head, 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.

Sergei 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, 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, 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, silencing the voice.

RADHESH

We need to meet with them.

SERGEI

I agree. I'll provide security.

NADIA

That's thoughtful of you.

VIKRAM

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, 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, realizes it's Sergei, not Vikram.

SERGEI (cont'd)
You missed me.

Rachel balls up her fists. He walks forward, 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 watches 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)
Time flies.

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. She
contemplates him. He runs his thumbs over her knuckles.

She seems to permit this. Then she looks up through the glass at her family arguing, yanks her hand away before they notice. Sergei smiles at her.

 SERGEI (cont'd)
Don't worry. They still don't know.

 RACHEL
Lucky them.

 SERGEI
So cruel.

She stares at him: *really?*

He rises, bends his head to hers as though confiding a secret.

 SERGEI (cont'd)
Come back with me. You deserve to be worshipped, not forgotten like this.

He reaches to touch her cheek, but she steps away, her expression going cold. She has no illusions.

 RACHEL
You were doing so well at minding your own vile business. I see no need to break with tradition.

He sneers, turns to look at the ship.

 SERGEI
Look out there, Rakhila. Your tradition ends today.

She follows his gaze. She spares him one contemptuous glance, then turns and walks back inside.

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.

(MORE)

VIKRAM (cont'd)
 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, 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, 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. 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, 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
To whom am I speaking?

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 this 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. Silent video of a CNN interview of him plays.*

*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, 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, 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. 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. An electric and acoustic guitar gather dust.

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

NADIA
You're a mess.

Rachel smiles weakly. Nadia goes over to the chest of drawers, 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)
Moya 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, dressed in a clean black 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, taking 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 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 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, points down as though to a dog: *stay*.

They stand at attention. 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, 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, arrogant authority clear even at a distance.

Subconsciously, Delaware 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.

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

DELAWARE (cont'd)

Hudson.

Hudson looks up, acknowledging he's listening.

DELAWARE (cont'd)
Watch out for the Witigo.

They both look at Sergei, who stares steadily back at them from the middle distance with predatory intentness.

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. Nadia approaches and holds out her hand to Delaware.

NADIA
Captain Ford.

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

DELAWARE
Ma'am.

NADIA
(to Hudson)
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
Gentleman. I believe we made an
arrangement.

Hudson moves forward.

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

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

Rachel 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, eyes going wide as she realizes.

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, taking the opportunity to get a long look at her.

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

DELAWARE
(eyes on Sergei)
Watch out for the *Witigo*.

Hudson grips Delaware's arms as they share a glance.

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, 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, looks 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. He grabs her shoulder, 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. 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?

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)

Anything I can do?

Rachel looks him up and down, taking his measure. Then walks
away to where her parents wait.

EXT. THE ACADEMY - NIGHT

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

Behind them, one of the trucks follows slowly.

It somehow 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, 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, over 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 sealed off pipes welded flush with the walls. A chalk board stands in the middle of it, surrounded by tables.

Ashram rises as the family and Hudson enters.

ASHRAM
 You're early, Nadia.

He looks at Hudson, the newcomer, tilts his head.

ASHRAM (cont'd)
 (to Hudson)
 You must be Commander Ford.

Hudson shakes Ashram's offered hand.

RADHESH
 Sergeant Ashram's team has been with
 us since the beginning.

NADIA

(Ashram)

The children should be arriving,
Eric.

Ashram nods, ducks out. 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 different kind of 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 (5), blonde with gigantic blue eyes, looks at her.

Hudson looks on as Nadia chalks the lesson on to the board. It's clear he finds this display touching, 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 has resumed its bustle. Hudson follows the party towards the trucks, but a FEMALE VOICE lectures from a short distance away.

Rachel watches as Hudson turns to it, 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, 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.

(MORE)

MIRYAM (cont'd)
 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. They turn away.

RADHESH (cont'd)
 They call themselves Church of
 Eternal Penance, or just the
 Penitents. 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.

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, sits on the bench hugging herself. Hudson follows, sitting opposite.

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

INSERT: Near the market square and the harbour, dwellings are mostly containers welded and tied together. Curious people look out windows.

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: pinkish walls, commode, sink.

INT. THE WALSH - FLIGHT DECK - NIGHT

Vikram makes his way up the stairs out the door, into the night air. Ortiz waits for him, smokes 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. She flicks an ash from the cigar.

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

She notices him looking, smiles.

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

VIKRAM
(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 gold pixels. Vikram stares, fascinated.

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 is alone in the space which is pleasant, utilitarian, luxurious only by its spaciousness.

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

As Vikram moves forward, the lights slowly come up.

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

He 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.

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

DELAWARE
My briefing ran longer than expected.

VIKRAM

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

Delaware looks hard at Vikram, not sure what to make of the younger man, then joins him by the wall.

Delaware's 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

I was expecting you to be taller.

Vikram laughs.

VIKRAM

You know, I almost miss it. The 24 hour news cycle.

Delaware's smile is chilly.

DELAWARE

Wonders never cease.

Vikram holds Delaware's gaze. Then indicates the **woman in the class photo**.

VIKRAM

I don't know her.

Delaware looks at it -- at **Rhiannon**, his wife.

VIKRAM (cont'd)

But I've seen her.

Delaware meets Vikram's eyes, a small fracture in his mask of command.

DELAWARE

When?

Vikram fixes Delaware a meaningful expression.

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

Vikram notes the wedding band on Delaware's finger as Delaware gestures, making the photos all go dark, characteristic NCOM pixel glow trailing his fingers.

VIKRAM

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
 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 the now-empty photo frame.

Delaware follows Vikram's gaze. 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 floating atop 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, 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, 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

It was unkind to subject you to my nightmares. I didn't anticipate that level of detail.

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.

Delaware 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, reactivating it. 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.

Smirking to himself, Vikram turns, and exits. Delaware looks after him, face twisting with rage.

INT. CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Delaware storms through the door, calling up an NCOM communication.

ORTIZ
 (O.S., sleepily)
 Captain?

DELAWARE
 I want him off my ship, I want him
 off now. Call up the Koris, get
 Hudson back here. We are sailing the
 fuck away from this place as soon as
 he's back on board.

He closes the communication, and sits down on the edge of his bed, fighting back tears. He tears off his khaki shirt and undershirt, and looks at himself in the mirror.

There's a small Polynesian horse tattooed over his heart, superimposed over a Sioux tomahawk. A clear match to the little turtle tattoo on Rhiannon's corpse.

Reminded of this, he knows there is no way Vikram lied to him. He looks away from his own anguish.

INT. PATROL BOAT - NIGHT

The Mark 8 patrol boat heads towards land.

Vikram leans against the bulkhead, looks back out at the ship. He's contemplative. He has a plan, and he's only just begun.

EXT. THE BLACK MONASTERY CAUSEWAY - NIGHT

Hudson follows, single file, behind Rachel, who follows behind her father as they navigate the approach.

It's been widened and reinforced, but Hudson moves carefully - the drop is intimidating.

He looks up as the monastery looms, only a few windows lit.

INT. THE BLACK MONASTERY - HALLWAY

Hudson follows into the dim corridor. Radhesh beckons him on, and looks at Rachel.

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, 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.

A diagram of the rising water's progress.

A diagram of the earth's tilt

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

A set of calculations amounting to **78,012.988 MTs, and diagrams depicting a change in the earth's axis as the result of deep impact penetration.**

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

SOUND OVER: **SOMETHING TEARING THROUGH THE AIR, OF RUMBLING, OF MUTED SCREAMS,** artefacts of Rachel's memory.

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

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, Vikram hands Rachel 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.

>>SERIES OF SHOTS

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

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

3. Vikram, winning a UN award for Extraordinary Service.

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

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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

END SERIES OF SHOTS

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 incredibly 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, leans back in his seat, a headache visible on his face.

Hudson bends down, 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
 leave already?

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. She picks her way
 through the neatly landscaped gravel paths that lead up to
 the angular building, tucked in against the rock face.

Ahead of her, Hudson and ALI (40s) carry something heavy, wrapped in a tarp. Rachel, confused now, follows their progress.

She tosses the core away, and trails after them.

INT. SCHOOL HOUSE

The school house is clearly intended to educate multiple grade levels but the friendly space has been transformed.

Dividers have all been pushed to one side of their railing, the walls and floor covered with tarps.

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

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

Inside is the freshly dead body of a woman: MARI (60s) wrapped dressed in white linen. The men pull the tarp out from under her.

Hudson takes a step back, watches respectfully as 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 considers Hudson for a moment.

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

Hudson opens his pack, arranges his tools and supplies, taking special care with his black canvas roll of bright silver scalpels -- clearly antique.

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

He pulls a holstered 8mm Glock from his pack, and adds it to the other equipment.

On another desk is more medically conventional materials, including bandages, tape, gauze, and more.

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, looks down at the dead woman's face. For the first time, she 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

This is the nature of the ritual. More or less.

Rachel heads over to the little medical station he's set up. She performs a ritual herself, donning an apron, disinfecting her hands.

Hudson watches her closely as she does this. She breathes steadily, holding her hands away from her in the air to evaporate the alcohol.

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

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.

Rachel follows his gaze, looking at the assortment of items -- and the pistol.

Hudson studies her to see if she can handle this. Rachel smiles at him, suddenly luminous and animated. He smiles back, and offers her one of the scalpels.

Rachel turns it in her hand, examining 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. They both put foam earplugs in as Hudson takes up the gun, loads and cocks it. He fires several SHOTS into corpse. Rachel jumps slightly at the first shot, but adjusts easily.

Together, they remove the ear plugs and survey the superlatively mutilated body, then survey each other.

HUDSON

No harm done.

Unable to keep a straight face, both of them laugh. Hudson then nudges Rachel forward. She goes over to the tray, and picks up a suture kit.

Hudson 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, sometimes 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. You knew that the people here were surviving, but you didn't come to see for yourselves. You spent three years 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 a potential conflict.

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, smiles innocently, then returns to her task.

Hudson 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. Rachel, almost reluctantly, cleans up, pulls off the apron, disinfects.

Rachel now watches Hudson in turn-- not his work, but him. Her respect is evident, but she's also a little taken.

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 half mile 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 population has turned out, some thousand people following behind. Rachel is joined by her parents.

Hudson walks behind her, dressed in his khaki uniform, his 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 body from the cart, draw the cord out of the tarp's eyes without opening it. They 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 to fresh meat, but the scarcity of prey has forced them to adapt.

He turns away, eyes now looking towards the Cradle, an 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.

Hudson 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 completely failed to
 exert yourself on humanity's behalf.
 Because you feel sorry for yourself.

Shuddering with rage, Rachel takes a step towards him.

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 answer to this: 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. Then sits back against the black stone wall.

HUDSON

(sighing)

Goddamnit.

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 Pinz personnel truck emblazoned with the Lammergeier emblem 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...

Nadia pauses, blinking like she's just been hit with a dizzy spell. She puts her hand out on the wall to steady herself, coughs -- it sounds ragged and terrible.

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

Rachel 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. Nadia's 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 are 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 to speak.

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.

She pulls out a small bottle and a packaged needle. She tears open the needle, draws out a tiny dose, 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**.

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

Delaware's had time to survey the military situation in the Cradle. 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.

Stung by the accusation, Hudson turns on her, gets right in her face.

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 shoulder 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 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 wasn't about practicing medicine. 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...

RACHEL

Satisfying. Like putting together a jigsaw puzzle made of living flesh.

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

HUDSON

You are not a psychopath, just extremely 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, the Lammergeier 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, 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. She fell asleep sitting at the edge.

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

She comes awake. He puts his hand over her mouth before she can speak, indicating silence. She looks him up and down. He's bloodied, his green camo 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, which 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. 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 from where it's been stashed behind a rock, and belts on his pistol.

Rachel frowns at this planning ahead, but follows. They pass Mari Rai's remains -- nothing left but a stain on the grass. Vultures track them, flutter behind, but don't come closer.

RACHEL

Mother knows not to drink Cradle-sourced water. The academy is a repurposed pumping station, there's a direct line to it, with filtration.

HUDSON

I can only tell you what I saw. That together with the rest of the evidence--

RACHEL

I wouldn't put anything past Sergei, but his power base is rooted in fear and open intimidation. This doesn't make sense. And he's poisoning his own wells.

He turns to her as they walk.

HUDSON

Maybe he's found a new patron. Your father said that the Penitents have a protected water source.

RACHEL
Possible. I don't know what Miryam's
true convictions are.

HUDSON
Maybe he found Jesus.

Rachel pauses.

RACHEL
Are you coming back?

Hudson turns to face her.

HUDSON
You're coming with me.

RACHEL
What?

HUDSON
You can't stay here. Whether your
mother survives or not --

RACHEL
My mother --

HUDSON
It looks better if I've taken you
prisoner.

RACHEL
To whom?

Hudson takes her arm and pulls her close.

HUDSON
We're being watched. Whoever is
watching now knows that you're aware
of that massacre. From a distance it
looks as though I'm crediting it to
your whole family and taking you as
insurance.

RACHEL
That doesn't make sense. My mother
wouldn't be sick. I can't help them
if I'm not with them.

HUDSON
People get sick all the time. You
can't help them if you stay here. I
need to speak to Delaware in person
about this.

RACHEL
 (accusing)
 You need me as a hostage or he won't
 act.

HUDSON
 Sergei has more fighters, has home
 advantage. And he thinks he has a
 claim on you, doesn't he.

Rachel looks down, takes a deep breath, then meets his eyes.

RACHEL
 It was a long time ago. And it was a
 mistake.

Hudson takes her face in his hands and kisses her -- gently,
 at first, then more passionately. He presses his forehead
 against hers.

HUDSON
 Come with me. I can't promise
 anything. But I will do everything I
 can to help.

Torn, Rachel looks back down the path, towards the distant
 silhouette of the Black Monastery. Then she exhales, turns
 to him, nods.

He kisses her again, swiftly, and they continue towards the
 slightly closer silhouette of the Black Temple. The vultures
 follow.

INT. THE BLACK TEMPLE - DAY

Rachel and Hudson make it to the doors, sweaty and 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. 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

The reservoir. You let me see it.

Sergei acknowledges this with a smile.

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 pack, containing 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 long 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 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.

 SERGEI (cont'd)
Put it down.

 RACHEL
No.

 SERGEI
It's not going to make his dying easier if I have to cut you first.

Rachel glances at Hudson, then edges behind him, still holding the scalpel out. She drops down behind him, wraps her arm around his chest.

Still conscious, but mellowed by his loss of blood, Hudson grips her bloody forearm to himself.

With some effort, he raises his eyes to hers. Sergei taps his knife against his thigh impatiently, then steps forward, ready to force this situation.

Hudson, eyes on Rachel's gives the smallest of nods, then closes his eyes. Rachel, with a sobbing gasp, draws the scalpel across his throat.

Hudson dies almost instantly, blood pulsing from the gash, the hands holding her arm across his chest relax, and fall to his sides.

Sergei stops in his tracks. Rachel bends her head over Hudson's, and sobs quietly.

Triumph in Sergei's face. He licks his lips, sheaths his knife and approaches.

 SERGEI (cont'd)
Rachel.

She ignores him, locked in her grief.

EXT. THE BLACK TEMPLE - AFTERNOON

Rachel pelts down the side of the slope, and goes straight for the rocky incline. Surprised, the guard looks after her, then back at Sergei, who kicks through the fallen rattan door.

Sergei holds his face together with one hand -- it's a mask of blood. Devere looks wide eyed at him, then after Rachel's retreating form.

SERGEI
GET HER, IDIOT.

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 chough 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. 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.