

THE REPUBLIC OF INFIDELS

CHAPTER 4: "The Mark"

Written by

Victoria De Capua

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vdecapua@gmail.com

INT. OHANA - KITCHEN - NIGHT

RHIANNON KAHELE (20s) walks into the yellow light of the old kitchen, her kitten heels clicking angrily as she makes her way to the table.

Delaware Ford, in commander khakis, watches her in confused trepidation. She drops her mobile phone in front of him, and invites him to look. He pulls it towards him.

DELAWARE

Is this for real?

RHIANNON

When your brother and I discussed "long distance" I can only assume we had two completely definitions of the word "relationship".

Delaware looks at the text message again.

DELAWARE

(reading)

"I didn't mean for this to happen but now that it has, I can't take it back. I think we means we should re-evaluate. Talk soon."

He looks up at her. She's haughty, expensively dressed, beautiful - but her self command is clearly fraying at the edges.

DELAWARE (cont'd)

You want me to take him out?

Rhiannon's terse face splits into a smile. She shakes her head.

DELAWARE (cont'd)

You sure? Couple of phone calls. Done deal. Surgical.

Rhiannon sits down dejectedly. She takes the phone, looks at it. Tosses it aside.

RHIANNON

You could make me a drink.

LIVING ROOM - AN HOUR LATER

Delaware and Rhiannon, plied by a nearby bottle of bourbon, play video games - some kind of first person shooter. They've both unbuttoned a bit, and are functionably drunk.

Rhiannon wins the match, and tosses down her controller.

RHIANNON

Boom.

DELAWARE

You bushwhacked me.

She sways a little as she goes over to refill her glass. Delaware watches her, then catches himself, and looks away.

DELAWARE (cont'd)

Not working tomorrow, huh?

RHIANNON

Nope.

She goes over to the wall, and looks at some of the framed photographs. Some of them are digital holograms, and flicker to life as she nears. Some of them are hard copies.

INSERT: Delaware on horseback in Indian dress, posing for a rodeo photo.

INSERT: The image of Hudson and Rhiannon we've seen before, their U of Hawaii medical school graduation photo.

INSERT: A young Delaware, age 7 - stands by the knees of his Crow Indian mother in her Marine Pilot dress blues. He has two long braids. Hudson, 5, sits on the ground.

RHIANNON (cont'd)

Is this you?

She indicates the photo. He gets up and joins her.

DELAWARE

Yeah. I wore braids until I was 7.
Then I stopped.

She looks at him - his black hair in a neat cut, no trace of grey.

RHIANNON

What happened?

He shrugs, takes a slug of bourbon.

DELAWARE

Mom died, so I cut them off. They're buried with her.

RHIANNON

That's so sad.

She looks like she's about to cry.

DELAWARE

Hey, Annie...you don't have to. It's okay.

He sets down the half full glass and pulls her into his arms and hugs her tightly. He kisses her cheek. Then she kisses his mouth. They freeze like that for a split second.

Delaware hesitates.

DELAWARE (cont'd)

Rhiannon --

Rhiannon kisses him full on and he crumples. They end up on the floor, tangled up in each other, tearing each other's clothes off.

Rhiannon rides Delaware mercilessly. The force of impact shakes the small house, overturns the glass on the table. Bourbon whiskey leaks out over the finish, off the edge.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. PEARL HARBOUR - DAY

Delaware stands waiting as Hudson offloads from a destroyer. Hudson makes landfall, tosses his duffel aside and looks at his brother with deep contempt.

Delaware looks around. The other naval personnel are decidedly minding their own business.

DELAWARE

You want to do this here?

Hudson nods. Then begins to shed his camouflage jacket, and anything else bearing rank insignia, until he's just down to his wifebeater and dog tags.

He waits - Delaware gets it. He removes his khaki shirt, shedding the commander stripes in order to make equal this moment of judgement.

He looks up as he finishes doing this.

DELAWARE (cont'd)
Maybe we can --

Hudson clocks Delaware, hitting him with a straight left across the jaw. Delaware takes the blow, winces as he touches his jaw.

DELAWARE (cont'd)
We good?

Hudson spits over his shoulder.

HUDSON
Good enough.

He walks away, leaving Delaware to pick up their things.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Delaware sits on the edge of a bed, nervous, in a dress shirt and trousers. Hudson walks in, holding up a navy dress uniform in a dry cleaning bag.

HUDSON
You look like hell.

DELAWARE
I don't know why.

HUDSON
Because you have to smile and be friendly, and you won't be able to order the guests back to their posts.

DELAWARE
More reason for us to do this on company time.

Hudson grins, and helps his older brother into his dress blues, seeing to the details, and straightening his lapels. Delaware frowns as Hudson goes a bit misty.

DELAWARE (cont'd)
What is it?

HUDSON
I wish she was here.

DELAWARE
Me too.

They embrace, tightly.

EXT. COVE - DAY

A very large Hawaiian gathering. Delaware and Rhiannon exchange rings, kiss, make their way through the adoring, slightly oppressive family members.

Hudson stands beside their father, FRANKLIN FORD (70s) dressed in Army dress uniform with Engineer insignia. He is African American, upright, though he leans on Hudson for support - he's clearly ailing.

EXT. COVE - LUAU - NIGHT

Full scale luau. Delaware and Rhiannon - and her large family - preside, while Hudson and Franklin sit on Delaware's side.

FRANKLIN

(to Delaware)

You did one better than me, boy. I married your mother on a base chapel. Her inlaws still haven't forgiven me.

DELAWARE

I miss her every day, but today was...well. It doesn't seem right to mourn.

He takes a drink. Franklin puts a hand on his sleeve.

FRANKLIN

She sees you, Delaware.

He kisses his son's forehead.

EXT. BLACK SAND ISLAND - DAY

Delaware and Rhiannon, dressed in light clothes, make their way along a black sand beach towards a traditional thatch hut.

In her hands, Rhiannon carries a canvas bag. They walk barefoot, leaving tracks. Delaware catches her, kisses her quickly, and then she breaks away from him.

They continue towards the hut.

INT. HUT - DAY

The NEEDLEMAN (60s) stands to greet them. He's a leathery old Polynesian man, who wears a pair of ragged canvas shorts and nothing else.

Rhiannon offers him the bag. He looks through it - approves. Beckons. Delaware follows her in.

DELAWARE
(to Rhiannon)
How does it work?

She nods to the Needleman.

NEEDLEMAN
(in Hawaiian)
*You tell the truth about
your life, and your love.
Then I will interpret your
heart, and the blessing will
go there:*

RHIANNON
(translating)
You tell him about your
life, and the things you
love. He uses that to
decide -- then he tattoos
the blessing, here:

She touches Delaware's chest, over his heart.

INT. HUT - NIGHT

Rhiannon and Delaware hold hands as the Needleman performs the blessing, using incredibly skilled stick-and-poke methods to create pointilist images.

He finishes Delaware's as Rhiannon looks on: a bucking bronco. She smiles at him. On her own chest, an inflamed but perfect sea turtle.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. HIMALAYA - VIKRAM'S MEMORY - DAY

Delaware stands and stares down at Rhiannon's dead body, her sea turtle tattoo perfectly visible. He bends down, reaches for her face with quivering fingers.

He looks up, expecting Vikram, but it's Rachel who looks down at him -- not hungry for his pain, but anguished by it.

FADE TO WHITE.

FADE IN:

INT. CHOPPER - PRE-DAWN

Delaware holds Rachel against him. Her face is flushed, and she's wandering in and out. He touches her forehead with the inside of his wrist, testing for fever.

RACHEL
I didn't tell her. She asked about
you...about...but I didn't.

She slips into unconsciousness. He strokes her hair.

DELAWARE
I know, honey.

Major Ortiz, seated across from Delaware, keeps her eyes on him. He doesn't look up.

Below, visible through the hatch, a Landrover makes its way down the mountainside.

INT. LANDROVER - CROWN ROAD - PRE-DAWN

In the back seat, Radhesh drums anxiously against the arm rest. He's a twitching, anxious mess, his eyes red and unblinking as he stares at the minefield rolling past.

Orsine drives steadily forward, checks her surroundings, checks on Radhesh in the rearview.

The Alpine Guardsman in back is drowsing, the one riding shotgun almost asleep. Orsine slows down, and Radhesh notices.

RADHESH
Why are you slowing down?

ORSINE
It's easier this way.

RADHESH
What's easier?

She reaches down, pulls out a pistol, and FIRES once into each Guardsman.

The one in the passenger side goes down before he knows what hit him, but the other one fails to completely die so she SHOOTs him again.

Radhesh, splashed with blood, recoils. The air RINGS; the gun shots have taken all the sound out of the car.

Orsine keeps the pistol trained on him and turns the car off the road, heading past the sign that reads:

INSERT: DANGER: MINES.

She smiles beatifically, takes her hand off the wheel. She tosses the gun out the window. She laces her fingers together in prayer and presses her forehead against them.

Radhesh regains his senses, lunges for the wheel, but it's too late.

INT/EXT. LAND ROVER - DAY

They go over a mine. The EXPLOSION engulfs them.

EXT. GUILD ROAD - PRE-DAWN

Vikram stares up at the last of the helicopters as they fly off in the direction of the U.S.S Walsh. There is the faintest DISTANT CONCUSSION to the north.

Vikram is still engrossed in Rachel's abandonment of him. Sergei touches his arm.

SERGEI

Vikram.

He turns, and Vikram follows his gaze to a small cloud of smoke rising above the mountain ridge.

He faces that direction fully, his face full of disbelief and **dawning, horrible realization.**

EXT. THE WALSH - DAWN

Haines waits on the flight deck as the choppers land and disgorge their personnel.

He has a gurney with safety straps ready, but when Delaware exits with Rachel in his arms, she takes one look at this, and turns inwards, hiding her face with a whimper.

Delaware nods Haines off, and carries her himself.

INT. DELAWARE'S QUARTERS - DAWN

Haines follows behind Delaware as the latter carries Rachel into the bedroom. Rachel barely clings to consciousness.

HAINES

This would be easier in sick bay, sir.

DELAWARE

I am aware, Lieutenant.

He lays her down in his bed, and stands back. Haines leans over her, touching her forehead with the back of his hand. She tries to shift away from him, but she's too weak.

HAINES

She's burning up.

DELAWARE

What do we do?

HAINES

From what you've told me, she ingested about a gallon of infectious material. This is more in Dr. Ford's line.

DELAWARE

Well, he's not here now.

He sits down on the bed next to her. He puts his hand on her shoulder and shakes her gently.

DELAWARE (cont'd)

Rachel. Hey. Come on, stay with me.

She moans again, tries to roll away from him. He leans closer to her, slaps her cheek gently. She looks at him through bleary eyes, then closes them as though in protest.

DELAWARE (cont'd)

(to Haines)

What would Hudson normally prescribe for...whatever the hell this is?

Rachel sucks in a breath, drawing Delaware's attention. She has a moment of lucidity.

RACHEL
Levofloxacin.

Delaware looks to Haines. He nods.

DELAWARE
Go.

EXT. THE CROWN ROAD - DAY

Sergei and Vikram get out of the personnel truck. Before them, ten yards off the road, is a scene of burned carnage. Small fires burn at random. The ground is scorched.

The Landrover burns in earnest -- inside it, a silhouette -- Radhesh's body. The two Guardsmen have been thrown clear, and each obliterated by contact with other mines.

Vikram's face is blank. He's in shock, so far withdrawn into himself that he's barely registering anything that has happened.

Sergei comes up behind him, touches his shoulder. A beat. Vikram doesn't react. Then he blinks.

VIKRAM
Search the area.

Sergei signals to his Lammergeiers. They fan out, hunting carefully over the active mine field. SHORT LAMMERGEIER (20s) stands up and raises his hand.

SHORT LAMMERGEIER
Over here.

At his feet is Orsine, unconscious but still breathing.

INT. LAMMERGEIER BARRACKS NORTH - HOLDING CELL - DAY

Orsine, bloodied, bruised, but somehow alive, hangs suspended by her wrists.

Under normal circumstances she might be able support her weight on her feet from this height, but her legs are both broken, and drag under her.

INT. HALLWAY - HOLDING CELL - DAY

Sergei follows behind Vikram as they head towards the door. A Lammergeier stands ready, waiting to open it.

He does, and Sergei makes to go through, but Vikram stops him. Sergei backs off. Vikram goes in alone.

INT. HOLDING CELL - DAY

Vikram approaches Orsine, who looks malevolently back at him. He doesn't say anything -- he considers her. He walks around to examine her from both sides.

VIKRAM

I remember when you were a child. I suppose I wasn't much older, but then you all seemed small to me.

He continues to examine her, trying to deconstruct how they both arrived in this extremity.

VIKRAM (cont'd)

Was my father ever anything but kind to you?

She says nothing.

VIKRAM (cont'd)

Tell me how Miryam recruited you.

She remains silent, but only smiles at him. Her smile is bloody -- and bleeding. Vikram goes closer to her, observes the amount of blood coming from her mouth.

VIKRAM (cont'd)

Ah. No tongue. You must have bitten it off when you were thrown clear. Fine.

He stands close to her, his tone dropping down to an intimate softness.

VIKRAM (cont'd)

I'm not really interested in what you have to say.

He goes over to the small corner table and picks something up from it. It's a ball point pen. Her eyes follow it.

VIKRAM (cont'd)
Yes, I could have you write down your
answers. But I'm not interested in
those, either.

He moves in closer to her.

VIKRAM (cont'd)
Let me ask you this. Do you sincerely
believe that after you die, your
Almighty God will take you to
Himself?

She weeps fanatical tears. He taps the end of the pen
against her cheek, catching one.

VIKRAM (cont'd)
Look at you. You're in an ecstasy of
martyrdom, aren't you.

He paces one more circuit around her, now tapping the pen
against his lower lip.

VIKRAM (cont'd)
You really think, after I execute
you, you are destined to see
paradise.

Her expression is triumphant as she looks at him. He leans
in, palms her bloody face.

VIKRAM (cont'd)
Look at me.

She looks at his face. In that instant, she realizes his
intention, but it's too late -- **he stabs the pen directly
into her right eye.**

EXT. HALLWAY - HOLDING CELL - DAY

A HORRIBLE SCREAM erupts from the cell. The guard jumps
slightly, but Sergei perks up. He opens the cell, and looks
in to see Vikram wiping blood from his hands.

Orsine's eyes are a bloody mess- wordless, she brays in
pain.

Vikram wipes the blood from the pen, and polishes it with
the cloth. He is not shaken, nor anxious -- he is calm,
mild.

SERGEI

Do you want this cleaned up?

He indicates the woman, hanging by her wrists, blinded and tongueless. Vikram regards her.

VIKRAM

No.

EXT. LAMMERGEIER BARRACKS NORTH - DAY

A group of Deadwater residents gather, but stay well back from the proceedings. They watch as the Lammergeiers toss a line from east to west towers.

Then, a prone figure is brought out, carried between two soldiers.

It is Orsine. She is conscious, but unable to speak, unable to see, and unable to do much more than moan in agony.

She is dropped to her knees, and the pain from her broken legs causes her to SHRIEK.

Her hands are tied together with sturdy cord, which is wrapped and wrapped around them until she appears to be praying.

Then she is hoisted up by the rope, suspended between the two guard towers.

INT. WEST TOWER - DAY

Vikram and Sergei stand in the shade of the awning, and watch this proceeding. Orsine, exhausted, just wheezes.

Then, a Griffon vulture lights on her, and she SCREAMS anew. It flutters, then lands again, and takes a peck at her face.

VIKRAM

Muster your forces.

SERGEI

How many?

Vikram looks at him for a long time. Sergei grins wide as he turns away. Vikram returns his gaze to Orsine's hanging body.

INT. THE WALSH - BRIDGE - COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - DAY

Delaware walks in to find Ortiz listening at the radio.

ORTIZ
How is she, Captain?

DELAWARE
Sleeping. Fluid in both her lungs.

ORTIZ
But she seems like a tough one.

DELAWARE
Tough. Yes.

ORTIZ
Are you okay?

DELAWARE
What?

ORTIZ
I mean...it seems like you've got...

She gestures vaguely, stalling.

ORTIZ (cont'd)
You're taking this very personal,
chief.

Delaware shoves his hair back from his forehead, like he's trying to drag thoughts out of his mind.

She squeezes his shoulder in a comradely fashion. He grasps her hand. Then she indicates the console.

ORTIZ (cont'd)
Have a listen to the chatter. Some
weird shit going on.

Delaware takes the headphones and listens in at one ear.

DELAWARE
What am I hearing?

ORTIZ
English, Hindi, Russian, Mandarin...a
mix of Cradle pidgin. I started
active listening when the NCOM picked
up name "Kori".

She disables the headphones and puts audio on the monitor speakers.

SOUND: <call signs - beeps>

Malaka -- Miryam? -- Bird on a wire -- he bird? -- Sergei bird -- bird on bird crime -- bird done Papa Kori -- Nah it ain't so? <Hindi> Nadia and Radhesh both? -- Rachel --? No one seen her since the Choke -- Vultures flying your way, kill switch. -- Killing it.

The crackle dies, and the audio goes to STATIC. Delaware looks at Ortiz.

ORTIZ (cont'd)

It's a central channel. Like a... chatroom. Someone boosts the signal with amplification hardware, people use a call sign --

She picks up a handheld radio and demonstrates a series of MORSE BEEPS.

DELAWARE

(interrupting her)

That's how they stay out of Sergei's way. Change up the call signs, use an amped channel and move around. Probably keep private communication on very narrow frequencies.

ORTIZ

Our radio receivers do passive scanning, so we catch anything that goes out over the public airwaves, but the people on the ground probably need to ping frequencies with call signs in order to connect one on one. Lots of code layers.

DELAWARE

The NCOM should learn it with more exposure.

He pulls up an NCOM screen of the waveform, with text. He looks thoughtfully at the display.

DELAWARE (cont'd)

He said Nadia, Radhesh. Both.

ORTIZ

Dr. Ford sent back preliminary reports about the family. That's all I know about them.

DELAWARE

Start full time surveillance. Put cans on anyone who understands these languages. Run it through the NCOM but I want humans sifting for pertinence.

ORTIZ

Why don't we just let the kid listen in for herself? She could probably give you all the answers in half the time.

DELAWARE

If she doesn't die in the next twelve hours, I'll ask her.

ORTIZ

That bad?

He nods, massaging his jaw anxiously.

ORTIZ (cont'd)

It's not your fault, Captain.

DELAWARE

You're wrong about that.

He leaves.

INT. DELAWARE'S QUARTERS - DAY

Rachel continues to hover on the edge of consciousness. She wheezes. Haines sits nearby at the desk, and scrolls through a manual.

Delaware walks in.

HAINES

Captain.

DELAWARE

Any better?

HAINES

Not any worse. It's something totally other, though. Normally pneumonia works slower than this on a person who's healthy. This is some kind of super-strain.

Delaware picks up the bottle of water next to the bed, bends down and tries to get Rachel to drink from the straw. She rouses slightly. He holds her head up.

RACHEL

(murmuring)

She's getting worse.

HAINES

She's been talking a lot about her mother.

RACHEL

(switching between English and Hindi)

Why didn't you leave? You knew it was impossible...you knew...you'd still be alive.

Delaware strokes her hair.

DELAWARE

And Hudson.

Haines shrugs.

HAINES

I wouldn't take it to heart.

DELAWARE

Get some air. Gossett'll be here in a little while.

Haines rises.

HAINES

Sir.

DELAWARE

Anything I should know?

HAINES

Just keep her comfortable. All we can do is hope the antibiotics work fast enough.

Delaware nods. Haines leaves.

RACHEL
 (in Hindi,
 untranslated)
 What if I'm already dead, Vikram?

She smiles. Then she weeps, softly, unable to really sob. Delaware bends down and strokes her hair, strokes her tears away.

DELAWARE
 (whispered)
 I'm sorry, Rachel. Do you hear me?

He doesn't see Gossett approach. She stands in the doorway and watches Delaware silently for a moment. He jumps slightly when she makes herself known.

GOSSETT
 Anything I can do, sir?

Delaware sits back from Rachel. He rises.

DELAWARE
 I have to check on something. Any
 change, raise me.

GOSSETT
 Of course.

He squeezes Rachel's hand, then heads out.

EXT. THE CROWN - DAY

Vikram arrives at the Crown with a convoy full of Lammergeiers. These are the Old Guard, men and women who worked under Mikhail.

The Crown residents are at work -- most of them performing agricultural labour. Ali, the undertaker, stands waiting beside a pickup truck.

A rattan box lies in the open truck bed. Vikram gets out of the van and directs the Lammergeiers to take up posts. He goes alone to the undertaker, and puts his hands on the rattan box.

VIKRAM
 What will you do with him?

ALI
 We must use fire to finish it. The
 vultures will not take his soul as he
 is.

Vikram stares at him, unblinking, his eyes burning.

VIKRAM
 What is a soul?

Ali does not answer him. Vikram turns away.

INT. THE WALSH - COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - DAY

Ortiz, Sergeant Major DROZDOVA (30s) and two other Marines
 sit in on the chatter, all of them wearing headphones.

In the opposite corner, where the flat screens are, two
 drone pilots operate a set of chrome rotary drones.

DELAWARE
 Show me what you've got.

Ortiz beckons him over to the drone feed.

ORTIZ
 I hope you're ready for this. It's
 ugly.

She calls up some previously recorded footage, along with
 still shots.

ON SCREEN: The savaged remains of Orsine hang from the line.

Her hands are still intact, tied up in a "prayer" position,
 but her face has been pecked away, and her legs are mostly
 bloodied bone.

DELAWARE
 Jesus Christ.

ORTIZ
 It gets worse.

Delaware looks at her, and back at the screen.

DELAWARE
 Worse than that?

ORTIZ
 The chatter indicated that this might
 be Vetrov's work.
 (MORE)

ORTIZ (cont'd)
This woman was one of what they call
the Old Guard, nominally under his
command.

Delaware indicates his own eyes on his own face.

DELAWARE
Why nominally?

ORTIZ
They're mostly Crown-based, not known
for this level of brutality.

DELAWARE
Same bird, different species.

DROZDOVA
Captain, we intercepted call signs
from members of Vetrov's own force.
Lammergeiers.

Drozdova plays a piece of audio. It is in Russian and Cradle
pidgin, but she hits a button and the NCOM runs it through
into English, preserving inflection and tone.

LAMMERGEIER VOICE (O.S.)
She killed his old man. Drove into
the minefield. Somehow she lived. For
a little while.

CRADLE MAN VOICE (O.S.)
You crazy black vulture, his old man
ain't dead. No one want Radhesh dead,
everyone know he a good man.

LAMMERGEIER VOICE (O.S.)
He was a good man. Now he's just
another dead man.

Delaware is blank with shock. He turns to the flat screens,
where one of the drones is circling over a scorched, black
ruin of a Land Rover.

He needs a moment to think -- but then he understands. He
nods at the mutilated corpse, hanging from the rope.

DELAWARE
Vikram did this.

ORTIZ
Chatter says she was still alive when
they strung her up. Blinded, tongue
cut out. It must have taken hours.

He needs a minute to digest that.

DELAWARE

Verify the reports about Radhesh.

Ortiz follows his gaze.

ORTIZ

What are you going to tell her?

He clearly has no idea.

EXT. THE SKY BURIAL GROUND - THE SKY TEMPLE - DUSK

Radhesh's rattan box lies atop a funeral pyre that is made of someone's knocked-down house. A barrel of fire burns nearby.

The entirety of the Crown is in attendance. They are genuinely mournful, and a current of unease is present. They part for a contingent of five -- no, four -- Lammergeiers.

The fifth man, their leader, is Vikram. He wears the black fatigues. His shoulder length hair is now cut short. It ages him and make his pretty face more severe.

On his shoulder is a patch with the Hindi letter "K" ()

The escort, all of them older, sober soldiers, remain with the crowd. Vikram alone ascends to stand by the box, raised above the others by the uneven ground.

MURMURING. A thin ring of Lammergeiers border the crowd. The Crown's beloved son now wears vulture plumage. Vikram steps forward, commanding the space.

VIKRAM

None of us would be here now if it wasn't for my father. Radhesh asked for nothing, and gave all of his talent and ingenuity, his skill and his dedication in the cause of our survival.

He paces, ranging behind the rippling air above the barrel fire, then moving to the side, and surveying his audience.

VIKRAM (cont'd)

What will we do without his protection?

The crowd shifts. They look to each other. Some of them cast sidelong glances at the Lammergeiers.

VIKRAM (cont'd)

My mother was taken from me. My sister lost to me. My family is gone. Taken by foreign colonizers. Taken by extremists who want to murder what's left of us. They want us dead. They want this world to die.

He pauses, for effect.

VIKRAM (cont'd)

Many of you I've known since I was a boy. My family has worked to recover something of our society. They always avoided needless conflict.

He looks out in the direction of the distant Walsh, coming full stop for a beat, before turning back to the people listening to him.

VIKRAM (cont'd)

I do not want it, nor did I ask for it, nor do I believe that I have deserved it, but I can no longer ignore this challenge. The Americans murdered my mother and abducted my sister, and last night, these so-called Revelationists assassinated my father.

He takes a torch, and holds it ready.

VIKRAM (cont'd)

I am at war, whether I like it or not. You should all know that before you ask me to lead you.

He lights the pyre. It catches rapidly. He watches as the flames rise, then turns his back and walks through the crowd, slowly. Hands catch him, squeeze his shoulders, touch his face.

An old woman puts her arm around him, and he allows himself to be hugged. Then he gently disengages from her and continues towards a Lammergeier personnel truck.

A Lammergeier waits in the driver's seat, and another opens the passenger side.

He gets in, and the van drives away towards the Crown road. The entirety of the crowd watches this.

The children walk to the edge of the site and look out at the convoy as it takes the switchback road.

Beyond, the sun sets over the Cradle, and the distant U.S.S. Walsh beyond.

INT. THE WALSH - CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - DUSK

Delaware sleeps in a chair, head dropped on to his chest. Beside him, in his bed, Rachel begins to come to herself.

She opens her eyes. She takes in her surroundings with confusion. She looks over at Delaware, whose long frame looks awkward in the chair.

She reaches out with a shaking hand and touches his arm. He twitches. His eyes open. He sees that she's awake. He goes straight to her bedside.

DELAWARE

Hey.

She frowns at him, disoriented from her fever, but also confused about his attitude.

DELAWARE (cont'd)

How do you feel?

She indicates that she can't speak. He grabs the water, holds it for her to sip.

RACHEL

(rasping)

Like I'm breathing razor blades.

DELAWARE

Haines can get you something for the pain.

She slow blinks, like she's not quite able to absorb his words.

RACHEL

What are you...why?

She blinks, not quite able to finish the thought.

DELAWARE

Are you hungry?

RACHEL
 (dazed)
 I'm not sure.

There's a gentle KNOCK at the door. Delaware opens it. It's Ortiz -- she looks pale, concerned.

ORTIZ
 A moment, sir.

DELAWARE
 (to Rachel)
 I'll be right outside.

She nods, lays back on her pillow and closes her eyes. Then opens them, and stares confused at the ceiling.

INT. THE WALSH - CAPTAIN'S PARLOR - NIGHT

Ortiz pulls up an NCOM image for Delaware.

The scene of Radhesh's death, blackened ground and smoking remnants. Lammergeiers pull burnt body parts out of the back of the Land Rover, assemble them on a tarp.

ORTIZ
 Radhesh Kori was laid to rest earlier today by his son Vikram, in front of a thousand or so witnesses.

Delaware heaves a sigh as he watches the scene.

ORTIZ (cont'd)
 No one's taking responsibility, but no one thinks the girl acted alone, either.

DELAWARE
 We're spoiled for choice. Sergei. Miryam. Maybe even Vikram himself.

ORTIZ
 His own son?

DELAWARE
 Unlikely, but I wouldn't exclude it. Keep monitoring the situation. See if anyone retaliates.

She nods and leaves. He opens the door to the bedroom slightly, and looks in at Rachel. Ortiz hesitates on her way out, watches this. She smiles a sad smile.

INT. CHURCH OF EVERLASTING PENANCE - SANCTUARY - NIGHT

Everyone in the complex, some six hundred people, are gathered together for a service. Miryam is not present.

Instead, service is being conducted by the "Penitent" JOHN (50s) and is more of a revival than a service.

His family - his wife, and his daughter ROSE (13) looks on from the front row.

EXT. COEP - ELEVATIONS - NIGHT

Lammergeier snipers set up at a vantage point overlooking the COEP Sanctuary below. The Sanctuary is brightly lit, full to capacity, while the rest of the COEP complex is dark.

Vikram walks east from the central sniper position to the furthestmost.

He wears the black fatigues like the rest of them, but the Hindi letter K () patch on his shoulder is clearly visible and sets him apart. He has a handheld radio on his hip.

He raises his binoculars, and surveys the situation below.

EXT. COEP - GROUND LEVEL - EAST - NIGHT

The Left Wing of Lammergeier infantry waits in the darkness, eyes open, alert.

EXT. COEP - GROUND LEVEL - WEST - NIGHT

The Right Wing of Lammergeiers also stands ready, a touch of moonlight catching their weapons.

EXT. COEP - GROUND LEVEL - NORTH - NIGHT

Sergei approaches on foot with fifty Lammergeiers at his back.

He raises a pair of field glasses.

INSERT: Binocular POV. The church doors open and disgorge people.

INT. COEP - SANCTUARY - NIGHT

Churchgoers leave together in clumps, talking, leading with John. He talks with his family, with others.

EXT. COEP - ELEVATIONS - EAST - NIGHT

Vikram continues to look through his binoculars. At his feet, the sniper pair lie on their stomachs, eyes pressed to their scopes.

He pulls a flare gun from his belt, raises it and fires into the sky.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

1. The Left, Right and Centre Lammergeiers watch as the flare lights up the night sky. Sergei holds his hand up, signaling for the Lammergeiers to **wait on his command**.
2. The Penitents look up, their faces illuminated by the flare. Before it falls:
3. **A hole appears in John's head, and blows out the other side.** He looks shocked as he falls. The people around him hold their breath. His daughter Rose and his wife SCREAM.
4. The sniper shucks the cartridge, and takes aim again.
5. **John's wife is shot through the back from the other side.** Everyone scatters, except Rose, who stares at her parents. Another shot just misses her, and she flees to the Sanctuary.
6. The snipers fire at a continuous rate. Vikram looks on, approving, grim.
7. Sniper fire comes from all sides. Panic. People run in every direction- some towards the darkness of the complex, others back into the Sanctuary.
8. Sergei signals. Both wings and the centre advance.

EXT. COEP COMPLEX - NIGHT

GUNFIRE ERUPTS from all sides as people try to find shelter in their homes. Lammergeiers gun anyone they encounter -- men, women and children -- down.

The force filters through the rows, smashing windows and throwing grenades inside the housing units. EXPLOSIONS send fire through doors and windows. SCREAMS.

Sergei leads his detachment down a main thoroughfare. It's empty now, but he signals to his men to flank the row of housing units.

They fling smoke grenades and -- one live grenade -- down the rows. The live grenade EXPLODES in time with a SCREAM.

People run from their hiding places out into the open. Sergei raises his assault rifle, and looks down the sight.

This is his now own personal shooting gallery.

He tracks the terrified people with his barrel. He passes over an old lady, an elderly man, a child -- a teenage boy runs out, and Sergei puts a burst in his neck.

He shoots five more people this way, then becomes bored when no more run out. He beckons his men to follow on as they make their way along the row. He's in a good mood.

EXT. COEP - ELEVATIONS - NIGHT

Vikram watches through his field glasses. The GUNFIRE and SCREAMS and EXPLOSIONS are all audible from his position.

He hands them off to Lieutenant Ashram, leader of the Crown's Old Guard, and heads down the goat track towards the massacre.

Ashram and four other Guardsmen follow behind him.

EXT. COEP - SANCTUARY - NIGHT

The Lammergeiers advance on the Sanctuary, driving a group of about fifty people before them.

Sergei leads. He does a walking reload of his assault rifle, and signals to his troop to close in.

The Penitents, bloody and terrified, walk into the church with their hands on their heads.

EXT. COEP - SANCTUARY - EAST - NIGHT

Vikram and Ashram make their way towards the scene with their tail in time to meet Sergei.

VIKRAM
Set the charges.

Sergei lifts his radio.

SERGEI
Sappers.

A group of five Lammergeiers move away from the rest of the troop, carrying black bags.

INT. COEP - SANCTUARY - NIGHT

Light from outside illuminates the interior of the Sanctuary, which is otherwise dark inside.

Vikram walks towards the group of cowering, bloodied survivors, casting a long shadow over them.

They sit on their knees, still covering their heads, some weeping, most in shock.

Sergei follows behind. He looks on at these people like a vulture on dead meat. Those that meet his eyes look quickly away.

It's Vikram they turn to. He stops before them, considering them thoughtfully. He glances around, almost serene.

VIKRAM
I anticipated more resistance.

They just gape at him. He grimaces, then searches one out. Rose, John's daughter, catches his eye, and he beckons her to stand up.

Slowly, fearfully, she rises, but drops her gaze. There is blood on her dress, and her hair is matted.

VIKRAM (cont'd)
Where is Miryam?

Rose doesn't say anything, but shakes her head.

VIKRAM (cont'd)
I'll know soon enough if she's out there among your dead.

She looks blank. Sergei takes a step forward, but Vikram holds up a hand to stop him.

VIKRAM (cont'd)
What is your name?

ROSE
(tiny whisper)
Rose.

VIKRAM
I want to tell you a story, Rose. In 2034, the Foreign Service sent me to South America to aid the UN troops there against the Kaibil rebellion. The Kaibeles were kidnapping, trafficking the indigenous peoples there, and the UN needed a linguist.

Vikram slowly advances, taking his time, eyes on Rose.

VIKRAM (cont'd)
They brought me a little boy named Cristobal, who had swum the Amazon to get away from the Kaibil camp. He understandably didn't want to talk to the soldiers, but he remembered everything he'd heard about where the rebels intended to fly their prisoners, in order to sell them into domestic slavery.

Rose and the others watch Vikram with frightened eyes as he approaches, hands folded, a facimile of tranquility.

VIKRAM (cont'd)
Because of what he told us, we intercepted the transport, captured or killed all of the rebels, and recovered the captives. I hoped to return Cristobal to his family, but he told me that the Kaibeles had shot them, and thrown them in the village well. He and his two sisters were the only ones left. I arranged for them to get visas to the United States. A family in San Francisco adopted them. Happy ending.

Vikram pauses, wipes sweat from his face. Looks at it, shining on his hand. He's not as collected as he seems.

VIKRAM (cont'd)
He'd be about 17 by now. Looking around at colleges, maybe starting ahead of schedule, he was smart.
(MORE)

VIKRAM (cont'd)
 Now he's gone. Now he's less than
 dust. Nothing remains of him. Nothing
 remains of his resourcefulness, or
 his will to survive. None of it could
 save him.

He takes a deep breath, forcing back the sadness. He looks
 up at Rose, and she winces under his gaze.

VIKRAM (cont'd)
 And your rabbis...your mullahs...your
 padres. Your Reverend. Do you know
 what they'd have to say to that?

Now his face assumes an expression of unutterable loathing.
 Rose swallows, speechless.

VIKRAM (cont'd)
They'd call it God's will.

The words echo in the stillness for a long, beat. Rose
 blinks up at him, clearly in shock.

ROSE
 My whole family is gone.

He allows her to hold his hand, and frowns down at her.
 Gently, he disengages her grasp, and crouches down in front
 of her.

VIKRAM
 So is mine. And now Miryam has left
 you behind. Without her water
 supplies, you're just useless mouths,
 no longer an effective shield. Look
 at me, Rose.

She does look at him. Her face is open and sweet, her spirit
 so broken that it makes Vikram look like deliverance.

VIKRAM (cont'd)
 (voice dropping so
 the others won't
 hear)
 Do you really want to live another
 day after this? Another moment?

She looks down, then back up at him. The answer is in her
 face -- no.

ROSE
 (whispers)
 Will it hurt?

VIKRAM
You won't even know.

She looks relieved. Allows him to help her to her feet.

VIKRAM (cont'd)
Go back to your people. Tell them to pray.

He beckons Sergei, who follows him out. The survivors gather around Rose, and then all join hands together. The great doors close, blocking out all but the faintest of light.

They pray in WHISPERS. A long beat. Then another. Then the whispering falls to silence.

An EXPLOSION. The walls explode inwards.

Fire illuminates the faces of the survivors -- especially Rose -- for an instant before they are all blasted in different directions.

Most of them are killed instantly in the conflagration.

Except Rose. She is thrown clear of the main explosion, but her body is broken by the impact.

She lays across a shattered pew, bleeding from her nose and mouth, unable to do anything but twitch. She does not die quickly, and feels every second of it.

INT. CAPTAIN'S PARLOR - MORNING

Rachel, looking very much recovered, eats a bowl of some kind of soup. She wears a pair of navy standard pajamas, and her hair is lank.

Delaware comes in, looking troubled.

DELAWARE
How are you feeling?

RACHEL
Disgusting, if I'm honest.

DELAWARE
Otherwise?

RACHEL
Better. Breathing doesn't hurt so much.

DELAWARE

That's good. We were worried you might not pull through.

Rachel looks up at him, surprised by the sudden warmth from him. Then he looks down, and takes a deep breath.

RACHEL

What's going on?

Delaware hesitates for a beat. Then summons an NCOM screen and directs it to lie flat over the table. Rachel leans over to look at it, and begins to scroll through the images.

INSERT: Drone photographs of the scene of the massacre. Sergei and the Lammergeiers are very much in evidence, as are their gunshot victims.

As she goes through them, images of Vikram begin to appear. Indistinct, dark photos of him directing the snipers. Then clear ones of him next to Sergei, giving orders.

Rachel sits back, looking at the final image. It depicts Vikram clearly, his shorn hair, his new jackboot aesthetic.

Stunned, Rachel looks at Delaware.

DELAWARE

Last night, your brother led an assault on the Church of Eternal Penance.

RACHEL

Sergei --

DELAWARE

It's confirmed Vikram ordered it. Maybe seven hundred casualties, maybe more.

He puts the NCOM screen away. Rachel is appalled.

RACHEL

Why?

DELAWARE

Retribution. For what Miryam LeClerc did to you. And...

RACHEL

What else?

Delaware looks down again, steels himself.

DELAWARE

I don't know how to tell you this.

RACHEL

Just use your words like the rest of us, Captain.

A beat. He sighs.

DELAWARE

Yesterday morning, your father was heading to the Cradle when his driver turned off the road...into the mine field. He was killed.

Rachel goes blank. She sits back as numb shock overtakes her, and she's unable to speak. Delaware goes around the table and crouches down in front of her. He takes her hands.

DELAWARE (cont'd)

I am so sorry. I would've done everything in my power to prevent it.

She stares at him, stares at his hands as they hold hers. Slowly, she pulls her hands out of his.

RACHEL

(numb)

Thank you for telling me.

DELAWARE

Rachel.

They sit in long, painful silence.

RACHEL

I think...if you don't mind...I'd like to take a shower.

She swallows, dry washes her hands as though trying to get filth off of them.

DELAWARE

Of course.

INT. THE WALSH - CAPTAIN'S EN SUITE - MORNING

Rachel stands naked under the shower head. She stares at it, fearful. Then she turns on the water.

It hits her in the face. She closes her eyes. She grimaces, anguish sketched on her features. She lets out a sob that is more than just mourning: it's **terror**.

INT. CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - MORNING

Delaware works at his desk. A GASPING CRY from the bathroom turns his head immediately. He rises and walks quickly over to it.

INT. THE WALSH - CAPTAIN'S EN SUITE - MORNING

Delaware finds Rachel naked and curled up on the floor, close to hyperventilating, sobbing, her knees pulled up to her chest.

She holds either side of her skull like she's trying to keep it from falling apart.

She hides her face in her knees while the water pelts her. Delaware crosses the room in two quick steps, and shuts off the tap.

DELAWARE

Rachel.

He touches her shoulder. She tenses and jerks away. He doesn't hesitate, but strips down to his briefs and steps into the shower stall.

DELAWARE (cont'd)

There's an easier way to do this.
Come on, get up.

He lifts her by her elbows. Reluctantly, she rises, but her eyes remain clenched shut. She shakes from head to foot.

RACHEL

(whispering)

I'm sorry. I just wanted to be clean.

DELAWARE

You're having a panic attack. Look at me. Rachel, look at me.

She does, wide eyed, still panting softly.

DELAWARE (cont'd)

Take a deep breath. Come on, let me see you do it.

She breathes in deeply. Then again. Then again. Some of the panic subsides.

He grabs a bar of soap off the ledge and lathers up his hands.

DELAWARE (cont'd)
Keep breathing.

He soaps her down with workmanlike efficiency, the way he a nurse might scrub an invalid patient.

Even though there's little erotic in it, Rachel closes her eyes, allowing the feeling of being touched to penetrate her skin.

DELAWARE (cont'd)
All right, turn around.

Eyes still closed, she obeys. He fills his hand with shampoo, and works it into her hair. This relaxes her even more, in spite of his utilitarian application.

DELAWARE (cont'd)
I'm going to turn on the water for two minutes. Are you ready?

She closes her eyes, takes another deep breath, then nods. He turns on the tap. The water hits her face again, and she squeezes her eyes shut, tensing again.

But as he uses his hands to help rinse the shampoo out of her hair, she leans back into him, recovering herself. She is able to stand the water on her face.

He goes to shut it off, but she stops him with her hand. Instead, she turns up the hot water, lets it wash away her tears, breathing slowly until the fear subsides.

He moves away slightly.

DELAWARE (cont'd)
I should --

RACHEL
No.

She turns to face him. She reaches out with a shaking hand that steadies when it meets his bicep.

RACHEL (cont'd)
Stay.

He bites his lip, and lifts her hands gently away - but holds it.

DELAWARE

Rachel. You were just tortured. This is the opposite of what you need right now.

Her lip quivers. Her eyes are wide. Her desperation is evident.

RACHEL

Delaware. I almost died. This is exactly what I need.

He looks down, realizes her hand is squeezing his so hard her knuckles are going pale.

When he raises his head, she kisses him. He stares at her... then he kisses her back, going from gentle to fierce, all his restraint forgotten.

She helps him work his briefs off. He kisses her harder. She scales him, wrapping her legs around his waist as he pins her against the tiled wall.

DELAWARE

You want this?

She nods, eyes locked on him as the water drips off both of them. She kisses him, stops to gaze at him as he gazes back at her, both of them aware of their feelings.

Their eyes stay on each other as he enters her, as they move with each other.

INT. THE DEAD CHOUGH - MORNING

The crowd is pretty thin, but Sergei and a tail of six arrive.

They're all a bit worse for wear, a little bloody, but primed and alert.

They go to their usual table in the side room, and Sergei goes to the bar. He raps on the surface of it. MARTIN (50s) arrives at once to serve them.

SERGEI

Vodka. Raise Odessa and tell her to get the girls up.

Martin nods.

MARTIN

Right away.

One of the Lammergeiers breaks out some dice. The others join him in a game, while Sergei becomes suddenly contemplative.

Edward sits alone in the furthest corner, watching the assembly with interest. He drinks tea alone, and doesn't draw attention to himself.

The vodka arrives, and shortly thereafter, sleepy prostitutes wander in. They are higher quality than most, reasonably attractive and well fed.

They are Odessa's girls, and we've seen them before. They've improved.

Sergei catches the eye of one of them -- a young Indian woman named CHHAYA (20s) who vaguely resembles Rachel.

She saunters over to him. He snakes an arm around her and pulls her down into his lap.

CHHAYA

Why so early?

SERGEI

We're celebrating.

CHHAYA

But I was sleeping.

He thumbs her chin, and smiles.

SERGEI

I've been up all night. I couldn't rest until I'd seen you, princess.

CHHAYA

Up all night without me?

SERGEI

Jealous?

CHHAYA

No.

SERGEI

Guess what I was doing. Go on.

She looks around at his guard, then touches a fleck of blood on his face. He grins, and kisses her.

Edward is interested in this display. He crooks a finger at another of the women, HALEE (30). She goes over to him.

HALEE
What's your pleasure?

EDWARD
Does Odessa still traffic in rumour?

HALEE
Rumours traffic themselves.

EDWARD
What's her name?

HALEE
Chhaya.

EDWARD
How long as she been his favourite?

Halee shrugs.

Chhaya drapes herself over Sergei's shoulder and watches as Sergei dices with his men. Behind his back, she makes a hand sign.

Halee signals back, a cut across the throat. Chhaya stops.

Edward rises from his table, and presses some kind of currency into Halee's hand.

EDWARD (cont'd)
Radio ahead. Tell your mistress to expect me.

EXT. MARKET SQUARE - DAY

Odessa wanders the stalls, looking at the junk, searching for nothing in particular. Edward sidles up to her, and she ignores him as he walks along with her.

EDWARD
I have a proposition for you.

ODESSA
No small talk, no flowers. Right to the proposition. Your people used to have manners.

EDWARD
 Forgive me. How art thou, my dewy
 rose?

She heaves a sigh.

ODESSA
 Follow me.

EXT. MARKET DOCKS - DAY

Odessa leads him to a very handsome 65' Otam Millennium hard
 top bearing the legend "Arkangel"

A gaggle of security stand by it, armed with machine guns.
 They part for her, and she beckons Edward on board.

INT. THE ARKANGEL - SALON - DAY

Edward looks around, impressed at the sleek, luxurious
 craft.

EDWARD
 You, my dear, have definitely moved
 up. What occasioned such good luck?

ODESSA
 An American owed me a debt.

EDWARD
 Delaware Ford, one assumes.

ODESSA
 Know him?

EDWARD
 We've met.

He touches his nose, which is a bit out of joint.

ODESSA
 The boat helps me keep my girls safe.
 But the price was too high.

EDWARD
 Your youngest. What was his name?

ODESSA
 Why do you need to know?

EDWARD

I heard that it was Sergei who killed him. Knifed him through the back. Nasty.

Odessa sits down on the cushioned seat. Edward sits opposite from her, studying her.

ODESSA

Tell me what you want before I have you drowned.

EDWARD

I know your girl Chhaya reports on Sergei. Dangerous assignment.

ODESSA

What my girls do is of no concern to you, Edward.

EDWARD

Imagine if he ever found out.

ODESSA

If I have you cut up for chum, he never will.

EDWARD

Then we will both miss an opportunity for a highly profitable collaboration.

She evaluates him. Then motions for him to continue.

EDWARD (cont'd)

I need a private channel. One of your slender little 30 GHZ notches, small enough to be secure.

ODESSA

No frequency is secure. Why not just ask your question to his face? He might answer you before he guts you.

EDWARD

It's Vikram I want, not his pet. I want him alone, and I want him to hear me out. He won't agree to any of those things unless he gets to choose his own ground.

ODESSA

Are you asking me to send one of mine to deliver a tuner key to him? Because it's out of the question.

EDWARD

Not at all, dear. I just need one of your call signs to camouflage the transmission, and I need you to keep your people off the frequency.

ODESSA

If I arrange this, what will you give me?

EDWARD

Name it, darling.

ODESSA

Sergei, to start with. That's a given.

EDWARD

Naturally. What else?

ODESSA

There's someone else who owes me a debt. You're going to help me collect it from her.

INT. LAMMERGEIER BARRACKS NORTH - DAY

An operator sits listlessly at the transmission-receiver console.

A CALL-SIGN sounds in MORSE CODE. OPERATOR (30s) passes it over the first time, but then more MORSE CODE comes from the machine.

He leans in, and listens, then turns to one of his adjutants.

OPERATOR

Go find Vikram.

INT. EDWARD'S BUNKER - DAY

Edward sits at his radio console, tapping out the MORSE CODE. He waits an interval, then taps it again. Then waits again -- this time there's a return signal.

EDWARD
 (to himself)
 There you are, darling.

He taps out another MORSE CODE, this time speaking along with it.

EDWARD (cont'd)
 (staccato)
 For-Your-Ears-On-ly-Find-Secure-
 Trans-mission-Station.

There's a hesitation, then the console BEEPS MORSE CODE FOR "AFFIRMATIVE".

He leans back in his chair and picks up a book- a paper copy of Julius Caesar by William Shakespeare, and flips through it.

He puts it over his face, and lolls in his chair.

INT. THE BLACK MONASTERY - THE CROWN TRANSMISSION CONSOLE - SOUTHWEST TOWER - AFTERNOON

Vikram, annoyed, walks briskly towards the transmission console situated in the round tower room. He's alone, and he looks out on the sunny vista.

The Walsh is visible from here, and the sight of it makes him grit his teeth.

He sits down and sends out his call signal with MORSE CODE. Then he waits.

INT. EDWARD'S BUNKER - RADIO CONSOLE - AFTERNOON

Vikram's CALL SIGNAL comes through the receiver. Edward, dozing, wakes with a jerk. The book falls off his face. He pushes his hair back, and begins to transmit.

INT. THE BLACK MONASTERY - SOUTHWEST TOWER - AFTERNOON

A STREAM OF MORSE CODE COMES BACK, so fast that most people would not be able to decode it quickly. Not Vikram.

He taps his finger against the console, keeping time as his mind works it out. He then sends a MORSE CODE REPLY.

He immediately turns the tuner to 2.1.178.

INT. EDWARD'S BUNKER - RADIO CONSOLE - AFTERNOON

Edward turns his tuner, and activates the microphone.

INT. THE BLACK MONASTERY - SOUTHWEST TOWER - AFTERNOON

INTERCUT VIKRAM/EDWARD

VIKRAM

"For Antony is but a limb of Caesar."
Julius Caesar. Act 2, Scene 1, line
178. Almost clever, Mr. Blythe.

Vikram smiles to himself, pleased to have someone to needle.

EDWARD

Your approval warms me.

VIKRAM

What do you want?

EDWARD

Just to talk.

VIKRAM

Then talk.

EDWARD

What I have to say is of a rather
more sensitive nature than what I am
prepared to discuss over the
spectrum.

VIKRAM

I can have my men escort you here.

EDWARD

Your men, or Sergei's men?

Vikram considers this.

VIKRAM

What do you have in mind?

EDWARD

Choose somewhere in the Cradle.
Somewhere that feels secure. Don't
tell me where. I'll find you.

INT. THE WALSH - CAPTAIN'S SLEEPING QUARTERS - DAY

Delaware and Rachel lay together in bed. Tears roll down her face, but she doesn't try to stop them, or hide them. Delaware, untroubled, kisses them away as they come.

RACHEL

I still don't understand.

DELAWARE

I don't think understanding is possible at the moment, honey.

RACHEL

It's absurd. Even this, us. This is absurd. Hudson --

He touches his finger to her lips to quiet her.

DELAWARE

We don't have to talk about that now.

Frustrated, she gets to her feet. She paces a short circuit, then looks at him helplessly.

RACHEL

I killed him. I did it with his own...

She closes her fist, as if holding an invisible scalpel. He sighs, and sits up.

DELAWARE

I had those inscribed for him when he finished med school. It's was our joke.

RACHEL

What do you mean?

DELAWARE

Hudson called it a physician's paradox: you can't always do the right thing without doing some harm.
(reconsidering)
Actually he said "sometimes you have to cut people".

She smiles, but he looks down, and breathes heavily, looks up at her again, almost tearful. Ashamed.

DELAWARE (cont'd)
I didn't tell you this. In his notebook he asked me, asked me directly, to protect you. He knew you were in danger. I failed you worse than he could have imagined.

She goes to him, takes his face in her hands, now trying to comfort him.

RACHEL
You didn't fail. I'm here. I'm in one piece.

DELAWARE
I failed to understand why you couldn't keep the truth about what you'd done from me.

Rachel breaks a little. He pulls her close.

DELAWARE (cont'd)
Honour, not guilt. Loyalty. Hudson loved you. Or he would have, if he'd lived.

RACHEL
If it wasn't for me, he'd still be alive.

DELAWARE
I hate what you did. But what you did was courageous. If I'd done right by you I could've prevented all this death---

She cuts him off with a kiss.

RACHEL
Stop.

He pulls her closer. They kiss for a minute. Then, full of purpose, Delaware rises and goes to his closet.

He tosses her a set of clothes and starts to get dressed himself. She looks confused.

DELAWARE
Come on.

Still confused, she gets dressed. He opens his storage locker and pulls out a duffle bag, and a beautifully engraved M16.

He sets these things on the bed next to her while he pulls on his boots. She picks up the rifle, and looks at the engraving.

RACHEL
Did he give you this?

DELAWARE
When I graduated ROTC.

INSERT: Inscription: "*Caedite eos. Novit enim Dominus qui sunt eius*".

RACHEL
"Kill them all. For the Lord knows which are his."

He looks at her, waiting for her judgement.

She smiles.

RACHEL (cont'd)
In this case, none of them.

EXT. THE COEP COMPOUND RUINS - EVENING

Edward picks his way through twisted burnt rubble. He's cleaned up considerably, shaved, trimmed his hair. He wears an old bomber jacket and jeans. He looks good.

He passes the occasional clutch of vulture-covered human remains. The area is deserted and dark, but Vikram is visible. He contemplates the blasted ruins where the Sanctuary stood.

EDWARD
Neat work.

VIKRAM
Yours as much as mine.

EDWARD
I sold the charges. I didn't set them.

VIKRAM

Do you believe that because you're literal-minded, or is that a moral perspective?

EDWARD

"Oh, that we then could come by Caesar's spirit
And not dismember Caesar."

Vikram watches him thoughtfully, a little surprised.

Edward closes the distance between them. As they come closer, there is a weird chemistry between them. Vikram shifts uncomfortably.

EDWARD (cont'd)

I'm not a good person, young man. There was a time, the proverbial before, when I may have been.

VIKRAM

I had you investigated years ago. You were a weapons specialist. Special Forces. A real soldier. Now you're, what, a salesman?

EDWARD

Sounds maudlin when you put it that way.

VIKRAM

Why not join the Guard, if you're missing the life?

He seems to consider this, then laughs softly.

EDWARD

I could become a Lammergeier. Strike terror into the hearts of women and children. Poison their wells, burn their crops, and salt their gardens.

VIKRAM

Why not? You don't strike me as precious about your honour.

EDWARD

Serving under a troglodyte like Sergei Vetrov is about the most terminally boring thing I can think of.

Vikram can't help himself. He laughs. Edward moves a little closer to him -- not in a menacing way, but definitely creating an intimate distance between them.

VIKRAM

It's a marriage of convenience.

EDWARD

They never last.

VIKRAM

So you're here to court me with a fresh proposal. I'm flattered.

He gives Edward a bitter smile, then turns away, but Edward catches his shoulder and turns him.

VIKRAM (cont'd)

What --

EDWARD

Sergei almost killed Rachel. He's careless. You've seen him. His men have nearly gunned her down twice.

Vikram's face tightens.

VIKRAM

Sergei knows he'll lose my resources if she's harmed. He's not that stupid. Why should I listen to you?

EDWARD

I can do better. She encountered me shortly after his men chased her down the mountain. I interrogated her, and then I released her to Captain Ford's custody --

VIKRAM

(furious)

You did what?

EDWARD

-- As she requested.

A beat. Vikram looks directly into his face.

VIKRAM

I'll know if you're lying to me.

EDWARD

You know what Sergei is. You know it's only a matter of time. You think he was hungry before you let him off the leash.

VIKRAM

How do you propose I get Rachel back without his manpower?

Edward closes even more distance between them, so they're now a foot apart.

EDWARD

What will Sergei do if Rachel falls into his hands? How long does she survive? I rather think he wants to rape her before he makes any other important decisions.

Vikram grimaces, letting this sink in.

VIKRAM

Why does it matter to you? Your business won't suffer. There will always be plenty of terrorists and mercenaries to buy your product.

EDWARD

Don't be naive. You know why it matters.

Vikram stares him down.

VIKRAM

I want you to say it.

Edward tilts his head, almost as though he's going to kiss Vikram on the mouth, but holds back.

EDWARD

I help you facilitate a regime change, and in exchange...

VIKRAM

(dismissively)
You want Sergei's command.

EDWARD

Yes, that.

He brushes a knuckle across Vikram's cheek. Vikram stares at him.

EDWARD (cont'd)

And more.

EXT. SHELL TOWN - THE DEAD CHOUGH - NIGHT

LUCRETIA BYRNE (20s, Irish) and her cousin NATALIE (19) linger across the way from a tavern- the Dead Chough.

Lucretia is pointedly feminine in her summer Georgette dress, distinctive from most ragged Cradle fashion.

NATALIE

You're really going to go in there?

LUCRETIA

Aye.

NATALIE

What do you want me to do with your body?

Lucretia pats Natalie's cheek.

LUCRETIA

Stop worrying, kiddo.

NATALIE

I'm serious. If they don't tear you apart, Sergei--

LUCRETIA

Sergei will be a doss, believe me. Wait for my signal before you move the crew.

Natalie hesitates, then disappears into the darkness. Lucretia takes a few deep breaths to screw up her courage.

EXT. THE DEAD CHOUGH - NIGHT

A group of hardened thugs -- gang leaders -- enter the Dead Chough. At the door, they surrender weapons to two Lammergeiers, and submit to a pat down.

INT. THE DEAD CHOUGH - NIGHT

The tavern is busy, lots of black fatigues scattered in among the customers. Edward, shadowing Sergei, lingers in a corner.

The gang leaders head towards the far end, where behind a lattice screen, Sergei lounges against the wall. LIEUTENANT KHAN (20s, male) acts as clerk.

The gangsters get in line, but they grumble, disliking this order of precedence. ANTOINE (20s) a tall, stringy tough approaches the desk and disarms, setting his weapons down.

KHAN
How many fighters?

ANTOINE
36. Was 37, but I had to cut one loose.

He grins, missing teeth, and mimes a cut across his throat. This does not impress the clerk.

ANTOINE (cont'd)
Get it?

KHAN
(bored)
Sit.

He indicates the benches. The next thug approaches.

Out in the main gallery, Lucretia enters. Edward spots her at once, his interest immediately piqued -- it's clear he recognizes her.

He follows behind, out of sight.

Sergei cleans his nails with his giant knife as the final two arrive at the table. Fat DAVIOT (40s) and slender CHARLES (20s) jostle for precedence.

They break apart, and face off.

CHARLES
Shove me again, you fat fucker. Go on.

DAVIOT
Oh I'll shove you. Just like I shoved my cock in your mother.

Khan rises, about to call for backup but Sergei stops him with a gesture. He smiles at the two challengers.

SERGEI
Whoever kills the other in five
minutes, you get that man's cut. No
weapons.

They both look at each other. Sergei looks at his watch.

SERGEI (cont'd)
Well?

Lucretia watches from the lattice doorway, unnoticed.
They're all more interested in the fight. It's short. Daviot
wins, and kills Antoine with a stomp to the neck.

He turns and approaches Sergei.

SERGEI (cont'd)
What's your name?

DAVIOT
Daviot. Leader of the --

SERGEI
Whatever.

He almost dismisses the man and then stops.

SERGEI (cont'd)
You know, if you really fucked his
mother, how do you know he's not
yours?

Daviot nudges the dead man with his foot.

DAVIOT
If she looks anything like him, I
probably fucked her in the ass so I
wouldn't have to look at her.

LUCRETIA
One can only imagine her relief at
being spared the sight of you, you
boss-eyed cunt.

Daviot moves aside to reveal Lucretia, who makes her way
into the centre of the gathering. The other gangsters,
smelling fresh meat, rise from the long bench.

Edward continues to monitor the situation, keeping Lucretia
in view through the lattice.

Sergei, no longer languid but alert, straightens up. He
looks her up and down, liking what he sees.

SERGEI

I don't believe I know you.

She walks right up to the table, diminutive in this crowd, but fearless.

LUCRETIA

Lucretia Byrne. You won't know my people. We prefer to be discreet.

SERGEI

But your people have a name.

LUCRETIA

We are the Morrigan. Assassins. Thieves. The best. These:
(pointing to the others)
are worse than useless. You're wasting your time.

Sergei arches a brow. There's shifting, snickering from the others. Daviot laughs.

DAVIOT

Is that a challenge, little girl?

She faces him, and holds her hand out towards the exit.

LUCRETIA

You're free to leave. You should take your chance.

Davoiit moves closer, not quite sure how to proceed. Sergei is both charmed and amused, his predator curiosity aroused.

SERGEI

I gave them five minutes. I'd give you ten, but that seems like an invitation for a long death.

Lucretia looks Daviot up and down, disdainfully.

LUCRETIA

I wouldn't need two.

Sergei raises his eyebrows at her, not convinced. Then he pulls back his cuff, and looks at his watch.

DAVIOT

I'll give you two hours if you suck me nice enough.

Daviot reaches for her. She slaps his hand away. He grins like an idiot prepubescent boy, ready to yank some pigtails, and tries again.

This time she slaps his face -- a ladylike slap, a genteel rebuke. Annoyed, he goes to slap her back -- but she steps out of range.

Daviot advances in earnest at her, aiming to strangle her, but she steps away again, neatly. Suddenly, he halts. He bends at the middle, brushes his wrist against his nose.

He hesitates. The atmosphere in the room changes as they witness as a **small trickle of black blood drips** from his nose. He brushes it again, then looks at his bloodied hand.

He's puzzled. He frowns at her. He opens his mouth to speak, but dark liquid bubbles out instead of words. He wheezes, his air supply choking off.

Lucretia pokes him in the chest. Daviot collapses, dead.

Sergei watches, mesmerized, as she turns to face the others, smiling sweetly, beckoning with her index fingers.

The other gang leaders advance towards her, buzzing angrily. The closest one makes it two steps before he too is struck down by the curious malady. He goes to his knees, foaming.

One by one, they go down in rapid succession. Before long, they're all dead. The last one falls on his face.

Just outside, Edward looks on with genuine delight. He shoves a knuckle in his teeth to keep from giggling.

Lucretia, having worked her curse, turns to face Sergei.

She walks towards him, rests the heels of her hands on the table, and leans in with a knowing smile. Almost nose to nose, she has his undivided attention.

LUCRETIA

Time?

Sergei's clerk Khan drops forward on his face, staining the roster with dark bloody streaks. Sergei doesn't react - only stares at her.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. BARRACKS - INTERROGATION ROOM X

Going by the overturned tray of torture instruments and the open handcuffs on the floor, the planned interrogation has taken an unconventional turn.

Lucretia and Sergei fuck on the ceramic embalming table. She rides him while he digs his fingers into her ass.

SERGEI

(deep gasping)

You still -- haven't told me how you -- did that.

She grins.

LUCRETIA

Never said I would.

He rears up to a sitting position, pulls her close so they're face-to-face - still fucking, not missing a stroke.

SERGEI

It was impressive. But that was my militia. I had plans for them.

LUCRETIA

They had plans for you, too, Commander.

She kisses him, hard. He succumbs - for a moment.

SERGEI

What do you mean?

She hesitates. He rests his hand on her shoulder, draws his thumb over her throat -- a subtle threat.

SERGEI (cont'd)

What plans, *Lucrezia*?

LUCRETIA

When your men heard about the recruitment drive, they saw an opportunity, so they made a deal with the gangs. You were never supposed to leave that room alive.

SERGEI

Why would you help me?

LUCRETIA

I wanted to see if you were a good
lay.

SERGEI

And?

She leans in, kisses his mouth, then slowly licks the raised
scar on the side of his face. He shudders, his eyes rolling
back.

LUCRETIA

I'll get back to you.

She shoves him back, continues to ride him, hard. He
watches her, delighted and infatuated.

INT. BARRACKS - INTERROGATION ROOM X - CORRIDOR OUTSIDE

A CRY issues from the interrogation room. The guard on duty
glances over into the window, expecting to see the usual
bloody torture scene. Instead:

The captive appears to be riding the boss like a mechanical
bull. Lucretia YELPS again as Sergei's hand SLAPS her ass.

The guard watches for a few more seconds, issues a low
WHISTLE, and pulls out of sight of the window.

EXT. THE BLACK MONASTERY - MORNING

The light creeps up over the ornate carved stone,
illuminating it.

VIKRAM (O.S.)

Will she work with you?

INT. THE BLACK MONASTERY - VIKRAM'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Vikram walks into the room with two cups of tea in hand.
He's shirtless, wearing a pair of loose linen pants.

Edward meanwhile, is wearing even less. He's lost in
thought, his eyes wandering over Vikram's blackboard
designs.

He sees "Operation Baptist", touches his forefinger to the
chalk, and then uses his thumb to brush the white away from
his finger, smiling to himself.

Vikram offers him a cup. Edward snaps out of his reverie and takes it.

EDWARD
Sorry, I was far away.

Vikram settles back into his mussed up bed.

VIKRAM
Lucretia Byrne. You said you knew her from before.

Edward sips his tea, seems to take comfort from it.

EDWARD
We parted on less than favourable terms.

VIKRAM
Would she kill you on sight? She's quite good, according to Sergei.

EDWARD
He likes her, doesn't he. More than he likes most female companions.

VIKRAM
(puts on a slight Russian accent)
"My balls are so empty they've reached nirvana."

EDWARD
We should all be so transcendent.

Vikram sips his tea, watches Edward over the rim of the mug.

VIKRAM
Jealous?

EDWARD
Sergei's not really my type. I like them reasonably literate, it's nice if they can count past ten.

VIKRAM
You know what I meant.

Vikram lets his unblinking, patient stare do his work for him. Edward turns to him, sets down his cup, and kneels down at the end of the bed.

EDWARD

I'd be lying if I said she didn't leave a hole. Or three.

VIKRAM

I want to know if we can leverage her, if- when- he mistreats her.

EDWARD

That really depends. Luce likes to play rough. She doesn't scare easily.

Vikram gives him the barest ghost of a smile, folds his arms behind his head.

VIKRAM

Your influence, presumably.

Edward shrugs, and idly picks at the laces of Vikram's pants.

EDWARD

The real question is, how does Sergei like it? Given the body of evidence...maybe I should say "bodies".

VIKRAM

True, I've never had a firsthand account.

EDWARD

I bet he's a real giver.

Vikram looks at him: *stop clowning*. Edward rests his chin on his hands, and looks up at him.

EDWARD (cont'd)

She provides a service and her business is very successful. If she's breaking cover to make an alliance with Sergei, she'll have her reasons. If Sergei is stupid enough to cross her, she'll see that he pays.

Vikram looks at him, like he's reading this thoughts.

VIKRAM

I understand. She took what she needed from you, then cut you out. You think she'll do the same to him.

Edward stares at him, his mouth going thin.

EDWARD

Careful, lad. I'm the only thing standing between you and your old chum. If he cultivates her properly, Lucretia is a far greater threat to you than a couple of Shell Town bully boys.

Vikram strokes his hand through Edward's hair. Edward allows himself to be coddled.

VIKRAM

I don't intend to be at hand when he sets her loose.

EDWARD

Oh? Where will you be?

Vikram doesn't say anything, just gazes at him. Edward grins darkly, tugs Vikram's pants down by the ankles, and goes down on him.

Vikram seizes up a little, enjoying the sensation. His attention wanders, briefly, but in a moment he's fully distracted.

EXT. THE WALSH - FLIGHT DECK - MORNING

Rachel stands on deck, holding an assault rifle awkwardly, looking over her efforts. Delaware stands, hands on his hips, looking critical.

DELAWARE

You might be the worst shot I've ever seen.

There are thirty or forty neon targets floating in the water in the middle distance.

Rachel lowers the weapon.

RACHEL

Thanks.

Delaware takes the rifle out of her hand, and puts a pump-action shotgun in it instead. She looks at it, a little bemused.

DELAWARE

Like this. Plant your feet --

He uses his foot to move hers into position.

DELAWARE (cont'd)
Or you'll go over on your ass.

He shows her how to hold it.

DELAWARE (cont'd)
When you're ready.

RACHEL
Pull.

A disc flies into the air from an automatic launcher. Rachel aims, tracks it, then FIRES. It explodes into shards. She smiles behind the barrel.

Instinctively, she pumps it, ejects the casing.

DELAWARE
Good. Again.

RACHEL
Pull.

She blasts another target into bits.

RACHEL (cont'd)
That's better.

DELAWARE
As long as you stay at point blank range, you'll be unstoppable.

She gives him a look, then positions the barrel again. The target flies. She fires. It bursts into pieces.

INT. THE WALSH - GYM - AFTERNOON

Rachel and Delaware, both in sweats, train at knife-fighting with a couple of black dummy knives. Marines and sailors work out around them, while they train.

They rubber neck a little bit, noticing their commander getting a bit too up close and personal with his student.

Rachel is on the defense, unarmed. Delaware brings the blade down in an ice-pick stab. Rachel blocks his forearm with hers.

Delaware slaps her closed fist.

DELAWARE
 Keep your hand open. Closing your
 fist will slow you down.

They try again. Rachel does the block correctly.

DELAWARE (cont'd)
 Good.

They practice it.

DELAWARE (cont'd)
 Do it again, only this time, hit me.

RACHEL
 Hit you?

DELAWARE
 Punch me.

They do the move again. He's obviously not expecting her to punch that hard, and winces when she connects with a solid hit to the stomach.

RACHEL
 Like that?

Delaware massages the spot where she hit him. She grins. Everyone looks at them -- until Delaware turns and sees them -- suddenly they mind their own business.

INT. THE WALSH - CORRIDOR - AFTERNOON

Their training session done, Rachel and Delaware head towards the cafeteria -- but then Delaware glances around, pushes open a door, drags Rachel inside with him.

INT. THE WALSH - CLASS ROOM - AFTERNOON

They make out like teenagers in a high school closet, shedding bits of clothing.

INT. THE WALSH - CAFETERIA - EVENING

They sit at the officer's table across from Major Ortiz, who watches them with a frown as they both silently shovel food into their mouths.

They both sport some bruises from training, and some marks from other exertions.

INT. THE WALSH - DELAWARE QUARTERS - EVENING

Delaware gets out of the shower, and finds Rachel gone. Disturbed, he activates the NCOM to locate her.

INT. THE WALSH - GYM - NIGHT

Rachel works on knife attacks. She's not screwing around -- she's methodical and exact, pausing to silently berate herself when she makes a mistake.

Delaware watches from the entrance as she resets, and continues. He can't take his eyes off her. She doesn't see him. She only sees whoever she's attacking.

EXT. LAMMERGEIER BARRACKS NORTH - NIGHT

Vikram approaches the entrance. Two guards allow him inside.

INT. LAMMERGEIER BARRACKS NORTH - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Vikram makes his way briskly down the hall to Sergei's quarters. He opens the door without prelude.

INT. SERGEI'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Vikram enters. Sergei lies sprawled on his bed with Lucretia's head resting on his shoulder. Both of them are sweaty, panting.

Sergei raises his head to glare at the intruder, then sees it's Vikram and lays back down. Lucretia goes further under the covers, eyeing Vikram.

SERGEI

What?

VIKRAM

Is this all you've been doing for the last twelve hours?

Sergei looks at Lucretia, shrugs.

SERGEI

You were in the Crown.

VIKRAM

Now I'm here. We have work to do.

Sergei gets up, fully naked. He grabs a bottle of water off the table, pours some on his face, then drinks some, shaking his head like a wet dog.

 SERGEI
 (to Lucretia)
 Get up.

Lucretia, blankets up to her chin, eyes Vikram.

 SERGEI (cont'd)
 He doesn't care, trust me.

Vikram takes her dress off the floor and tosses it to her.

 VIKRAM
 We haven't been properly introduced,
 Miss Byrne. I understand you've
 offered Sergei your services.

Lucretia takes the dress, and rises from the bed. There are red marks, and some purple ones in various places on her body. Sergei watches her out of the corner of his eye.

 LUCRETIA
 Aye, you could say that.

She drops the dress over her head, twitches it straight. She turns to Vikram. She looks him up and down and gives him a mocking little curtsy.

 LUCRETIA (cont'd)
 Much obliged.

She moves to go, but Sergei catches her, kisses her, gives her a smouldering see-you-soon look. She smiles as she leaves.

EXT. DEADWATER - NIGHT

Vikram and Sergei walk alone through the slum lane. Flies buzz, and the evidence of the dead are everywhere -- visible through gaps in the pathetic shacks.

 SERGEI
 What do you think of her?

Vikram looks over the bodies, more interested than disturbed.

VIKRAM

She kept her organization hidden from me. She must be clever.

SERGEI

You should see her work.

VIKRAM

I intend to, later. Right now I'm more concerned with your dispositions.

SERGEI

Are you expecting an attack?

VIKRAM

I want you to reinforce the positions we agreed on.

SERGEI

First tell me what you have planned.

Vikram looks at him, then turns his pointed gaze to the ship.

INT. DELAWARE'S QUARTERS - DAWN

Delaware and Rachel lounge, full of early morning fatigue. Delaware kisses the back of her neck while she shifts, sleepily.

RACHEL

(eyes still closed)

Brush your teeth.

Delaware grins, then gets up. He slides on a pair of pajama bottoms and then heads to the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - DAWN

Delaware tosses Rachel's toothbrush back at her dozing form. She wakes up, stretches, picks it up from the bedspread.

INT. DELAWARE'S QUARTERS - DAWN

From her position, she watches him, taking in his tall, muscular form, the mundane task he performs. This window into domestic bliss makes her a little sad.

She gets up and joins him.

INT. OFFICER'S MESS - MORNING

Ortiz, and Marine pilot Commander OMAR SCHICK (40s) and a couple other officers sit around the table, drinking coffee -- or something like coffee.

Rachel and Delaware enter in the middle of their conversation.

SCHICK

One pass, and those thugs will fold like a blank hand.

ORTIZ

One pass would use up all the heavy ordnance we currently have.

Schick and Ortiz turn to look at Delaware. They rise, salute. He indicates that they should sit.

DELAWARE

Resume your debate from the beginning.

He pulls out a seat for Rachel, who sits down, and pulls the coffee pot and cup towards her.

ORTIZ

Schick wants to bomb them into submission.

SCHICK

I want to drop strategic ordnance -- no, listen, we can create the illusion of a large scale operation.

DELAWARE

How do you figure that?

SCHICK

They all chatter on the same frequencies. A couple of well placed strikes will panic them. Then we send the Marines --

ORTIZ

My Marines, if you please.

SCHICK

It's the quickest, easiest way to neutralize the Guard.

RACHEL

No.

They both look at her.

SCHICK

Excuse me?

Rachel shakes her head.

RACHEL

You'd be wasting your time, Commander. My brother won't be fooled. Even Sergei isn't that stupid.

SCHICK

All due respect, ma'am, I don't think you have the full -- grasp -- of the situation.

On the word "grasp" he glances at Delaware, meaningfully. Delaware doesn't rise to it, but just looks steadily back.

ORTIZ

She knows more about every aspect of this territory and its belligerents than we ever will. I want to know what you think, Miss Kori.

Rachel goes over to the wall, and unpins a large map of the Cradle. Schick and Ortiz move the coffee cups aside so she can lay it out.

RACHEL

Sergei has something like a thousand troops, about three hundred of which are capable soldiers of dependable loyalty.

She points out the barracks -- north, central and south.

RACHEL (cont'd)

We'll call it one battalion, with irregular companies. The largest stays with him wherever he goes, under his direct command. The rest are broken down into fragments, smaller platoons, each with a different commander. It keeps them from unifying into factions that might challenge him, but makes them less dependable in a pitched battle.

She points to north barracks, in Deadwater.

RACHEL (cont'd)
He normally operates from North Barracks, because of its proximity to the Crown.

Delaware moves in now. He looks down on the map.

DELAWARE
He won't risk getting pinned down in Deadwater. As we know from experience, the slums offer about as much cover as a tin can.

SCHICK
Where will he go?

Rachel points to the Market District.

RACHEL
Stable infrastructure means cover. It has harbour access. It's the closest thing to a grid in the city. With the central barracks located there, he'll have an easier time keeping his force in supplies and ammunition.

SCHICK
So we take out the barracks. Simple.

Ortiz sits back, rolls her eyes.

DELAWARE
I do not intend to waste what we have destroying single targets. Personnel represent the main threat, and the last thing we need to do is terrorize the populace and make them disinclined towards us. We don't have the numbers.

Schick opens his mouth, but Delaware cuts him off.

DELAWARE (cont'd)
I won't forget about you, Commander.

ORTIZ
You have something in mind?

DELAWARE
Right now the most important thing is splitting up Sergei's force.

RACHEL

Vikram is the real danger. Isolate him from Sergei and the Lammergeier leadership IQ drops by two thirds.

ORTIZ

Easier said than done. Sergei advertises himself, but Vikram's profile is low.

DELAWARE

We'll find him. Get your Marines on the water, ASAP. I don't intend to let the enemy dictate the landing ground.

Ortiz salutes, then makes for the door, but there's a knock before she reaches it. Sergeant Gossett pokes her head in, holding a radio.

GOSSETT

Sir.

INT. THE WALSH - FLIGHT DECK - DAY

Rachel, Delaware, and Ortiz walk across the tarmac. A distance away, an armed Marine trains an assault rifle at the back of Vikram's head.

He stands, arms up, fingers laced behind his head. He examines the approaching group with a blank face.

MARINE

(to Delaware)

This one rode in on a small craft under colour of surrender, sir.

Rachel steps out ahead of them, and approaches her brother.

RACHEL

What the hell do you think you're doing?

VIKRAM

Giving myself up.

Delaware looks to Ortiz.

DELAWARE

Search him.

Ortiz unclips her sidearm, hands it to Delaware, then pats Vikram down. He submits to this mildly, as he does when she cuffs him.

DELAWARE (cont'd)
Take him to isolation. Set a twenty-four hour watch.

Two Marines take Vikram away. Rachel looks after him, conflicted.

Delaware reaches for her, but she pulls away, and follows her brother at a short remove.

DELAWARE (cont'd)
Rachel.

Delaware looks at Ortiz, who just shrugs, bewildered.

DELAWARE (cont'd)
Stick to the plan. Tell Schick to bring his squadron, but leave his equipment in the hangar.

ORTIZ
He won't like that.

DELAWARE
He doesn't have to. And take the River with you.

ORTIZ
I thought you'd want them close.

He looks at her.

ORTIZ (cont'd)
Okay, I'm going. But you can brief those insubordinate little shits yourself, Captain. They're not my jurisdiction.

DELAWARE
I know.

Shaking her head, she leaves, mouth to her radio.

INT. BRIG - ISOLATION CELL - DAY

Gossett stands guard over the imprisoned Vikram. **We've seen this cell before and so has Vikram:** small, just long enough to lie down in, and includes a commode and a bunk.

Vikram sits on the bunk, keeping his own company in silence. His eyes remain open, unblinking, as he plays through something on he can see.

Rachel approaches, and looks at Gossett.

RACHEL
Five minutes.

GOSSETT
Ma'am, I'm not sure --

RACHEL
I'll call you as soon as I'm done. If the captain asks, just blame me.

GOSSETT
Five minutes, that's all. I'll be at the end of the hall.

She goes to the bars, stopping at an arm's length. Vikram stands to face his sister.

RACHEL
Explain.

VIKRAM
Explain what? Specificity is the soul of brevity, little sister.

Rachel takes a step closer and looks her brother directly in the eyes.

RACHEL
After Sergei butchered Hudson Ford. After I ran. After I lost my way. All I could think about was how to get back to you, and mother, and father.

He goes to interrupt her. She holds up a hand. He subsides.

RACHEL (cont'd)
But you were the one who ordered Sergei to do it.

VIKRAM
I didn't --

RACHEL
Don't deny it.

VIKRAM

I didn't intend to. I told Sergei to remove Dr. Ford -- quietly.

RACHEL

(snarling)

Quietly.

Rachel masters herself, swallows her anger.

RACHEL (cont'd)

Tell me why.

VIKRAM

You know why.

RACHEL

I know about the bodies in the reservoir. You were perfectly capable of playing it off, or blaming Sergei, or crediting it to any one of our enemies.

VIKRAM

Would you have believed it? If I'd given you my reasons, would you have understood?

RACHEL

Why did you order Hudson's death?

A long beat. He stands up straight, something manic in his eyes.

VIKRAM

Because I hated him. For years, I protected you. I watched you. I did everything I could to keep you away from that edge, every day since Miryam and her cult took our world away from us. And this man...just appears on our doorstep one day. One look at him, and you...

Suddenly overcome, he backs into the cell, and drops on to the bunk. He runs his hands through his hair.

RACHEL

Vikram.

VIKRAM

One hour of playing doctor with an old cadaver and you were more engaged than I'd seen you in years. This hero, this Doctor Ford walked off this ship into our family circle, and after three years of despair, you become yourself again! I'd tried so hard, and I couldn't bring you back to life. But he did, and he did it in afternoon.

Rachel blinks, trying to hold back tears.

RACHEL

But you did keep me from despair. You were always there to hold me back. You saved my life every day, Vikram.

VIKRAM

(bitter)

Ah. But not in recent memory. It was Captain Ford that saved you, this time. Saved you from dying like mother. Because of me.

RACHEL

(voice shaking)

And father?

VIKRAM

He discovered the truth and was on his way to confront me when one of Miryam's agents killed him.

RACHEL

So you massacred them. All of them.

VIKRAM

And would again. For my family.

Rachel takes a step back. Frightened, disgusted, she turns to go.

VIKRAM (cont'd)

Rachel.

She turns her head.

VIKRAM (cont'd)

I will forgive you when this is done.

She stares at him, her eyes full of heartbroken rage, then turns the corner.

INT. BRIG CORRIDOR - DAY

Rachel, brushing at her tear stained face, turns the corner, and jumps slightly as she finds Delaware leaning against the wall. He's clearly been listening.

He reaches for her. She walks into his arms. He lifts her face to his, checking on her, silently communicating together with her. Holding to each other, they walk away.

INT. BRIG - ISOLATION CELL - DAY

Vikram listens to their FOOTSTEPS dying away as he leans back.

A long beat.

Footsteps as Gossett returns. She glances in the cell, then sits down in her folding chair.

Vikram lays back on the bed, arms behind his head. He goes away behind his eyes.

Beneath him, a **small black package, taped to the underside of the frame**, waits ready for him.

FADE OUT