

Sunwake - Vindication
Revised

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EXT. VANA - DAY

CAPTAIN ORTEGA, CAYDE VANDERS, and VERIS pick their way slowly down the street. BODIES are everywhere: MANGLED CORPSES and MECHANICAL LIMBS strewn from one side of the street to the other.

The BRIGHT GREEN BLOOD of the Kalorai fills cracks and holes in the flagstone pavement, mixing with the black blood of the Cultists. Ortega's and Vanders' boots and Veris's legs are covered in it.

SMOKE and the metallic CRIES of the dying and grieving fill the air.

Ortega's face is ashen, her eyes flicking from one area of destruction to the next.

Vanders limps beside her. He wipes a tear away, smearing ash across his cheek.

Veris, their metal feet CLINKING on the stone, is three steps behind them. A Kalorai kneels on a pile of rubble, their four arms cradling the remains of another, and lets out a WAIL of despair.

A WHINE comes from Veris. Glancing back, Vanders opens his mouth to speak when Veris freezes, the blue GLOW of their eyes BRIGHTENING.

VERIS
No. They would not have...

Veris bolts towards a grey metal-and-glass building, the doors of which are twisted and falling off the hinges. Vanders and Ortega follow, dodging piles of rubble and remains.

As they reach the building Veris staggers to a halt, reaching a claw out to support themselves on the mangled doorframe.

It is a hatchery. Rows of white INCUBATORS line the walls, stretching back into the gloom of the destroyed building; the lights are shot. A broken heat lamp SPARKS and POPS before falling to the floor with a CRASH.

Coming up beside Veris, Ortega covers her mouth with a hand, eyes wide with horror. Vanders swallows and turns away.

KALORAIAN LARVAE and EGG SHELLS are strewn over the floor. Some larvae have been mutilated beyond recognition while some

twitch and wriggle in their own egg fluids, shells, and broken glass, SQUEAKING and MEWING as they die.

Others have been corrupted by the Cultists, black and purple goo oozing from stab wounds. As the trio watches, one of the corrupted larva squirms violently and SCREECHES before going still.

Veris falls to their knees SOBBING, the sound like a piece of sheet metal slowly being ripped in two.

ORTEGA
(sotto voce)
How could anyone do this?

Swallowing, she steps forward and around the dead larvae to rest a hand on Veris's shoulder. The Kalorai leans their head against Ortega's hip.

VERIS
So many. So many young... lost. They
were our future. They were our legacy.

Ortega wipes tears from her eyes as Veris takes a shuddering breath before continuing. Vanders closes his eyes, pressing a fist to his mouth.

VERIS (CONT'D)
Our young are the same. I do not
understand why the Cultists... would
have done this to a... hatchery.

Veris break down again, their cries echoing in the dead space.

Ortega looks back at Vanders, noting his grim expression. She grips Veris's shoulder tightly.

VANDERS
After all we've seen, Ortega, you
still want to leave these people to
their fate?

Ortega's shoulders slump as she takes in the scene, looking at the still-twitching bodies of dying larvae. Vanders joins her at Veris's side and rest a hand on the Kalorai's other shoulder.

She sighs sadly.

ORTEGA

Were it just you and me, Cayde, I would stay. But it isn't. The Sunwake, her mission, and crew must be considered. This isn't a simple matter to be decided by two people alone.

VANDERS

What do you propose?

Ortega looks Vanders in the eye, her expression resolute. She straightens her shoulders.

ORTEGA

A vote. Every colonist, crewmember, and soldier aboard her gets a say in whether or not we stay. Majority wins.

VANDERS

And if they vote to leave?

ORTEGA

Then we leave.

Vanders nods slowly, but doesn't look convinced.

ORTEGA

We must trust the honor of our people, Vanders. Or they won't trust us.

Running a hand through his hair, Vanders sighs heavily.

VANDERS

Alright. Tomorrow then. We wake those who are still in cryosleep and call for a vote.

Neither speaks, and in that time Veris's sobs subside into wheezing moans.

CAMERA PANS BACK AND OUT OF THE HATCHERY BEFORE TAKING AN ARIAL SHOT OF THE CARNAGE AND DESTRUCTION OF THE CITY.

END SCENE