

Nethru's Point of View:

A girl stands at the edge of a clearing. She is in the beginning of puberty, with shoulder-length copper hair. Her brown eyes are troubled; they have seen too much her young mind cannot understand. Orla holds her hand.

The girl looks up. "Mother, why did you bring me here?"

Shapes mill beyond the trees: hungry silhouettes.

"I can't keep you any longer, Iris. You belong to them."

The young face frowns, a flicker of fear concealed. "I don't like them."

Orla's voice grows stern. "You do as you're told. Go on." She pushes the girl forward.

The hands reach forward. They are human yet inhumane. Cloth tears and blood runs.

Suddenly the girl is closer, her hair disheveled, her face tear streaked. She looks up at you. "How could you let them do that to me? Why didn't you save me?" She raises a gun in a trembling hand.

Nihilus's point of view:

You are looking through a window. In it, a beautiful woman with lush black ringlets moves about the dim bedroom, straightening the sheets on a worn bed. As your vantage moves closer, you realize it is your mother. She is so much younger and less time-ravaged than the woman you found in a cargo crate, that it takes a moment to be sure.

Finishing with the bed, she pauses to open the door to a small closet, and smiles in adoringly at what can only be you and your sister in your infancy.

Then the door opens. She gasps and steps back. A man, dark and stubbled steps into view. Portia looks about, as though for escape.

"Where are they?" Kaarl demands.

She straightens. "Get out."

He grabs her by the shoulders. "Let me see them! Which one was first? The boy or the girl?"

"Get out!" She repeats.

"You're paid for bitch. You'll learn to obey." Gnarled ropes of flesh rip through his clothing as he shoves her to the ground. The window passes out of vision.

Balas's point of view:

A red-haired woman approaches your father behind the bar. You have seen this play out many times in your memory. But this time rather than across the room, your vantage point is right beside them. You can hear their conversation.

"I'll take a glass of wine, something Quaddis."

Your father tenses, and slowly turns to look across the bar. His fear is ill-concealed. "Orla."

"You ran a long way. But do you really think it was far enough?"

"Apparently not, if you made it here."

"That was your boy I passed on the way in wasn't it? Quite the little life you've made for yourself. But it won't save him when the time comes."

"You're not welcome here."

Her full lips turn a smooth shark's smile. "Are you and Kaisifus going to make me leave?"

His face grows hard, and suddenly a shotgun is in his hands.

She only looks amused. "Wrong answer."

The lights begin to flicker, and bottles to shake on the wall, just as you remember from the seconds before your father died.

Magnus:

You recognize the lower levels of the space station 41 Pry, just as you recognize the attentive face of Rhys Draken. She moves quietly through the dark, girder-crossed passages. In one hand she holds a stubber, pointed forward as she walks slowly.

Her left holds a vox, which she looks down at in frustration as she murmurs, “come on Magnus, why aren't you answering?”

A sound echoes in the darkness ahead. A rhythmic tapping, like something small and hard against the metal deck. A cane?

Rhys stiffens, but moves forward. Red streaks emerge on the walls around her.

She crosses the threshold from light to darkness, and suddenly stops. She is indistinct in the shadows, but the shape before her is even hazier.

“Emperor preserve us,” she whispers.

A rasping voice replies. “Not what you expected, am I, Investigator Draken?”

She fires at the shadows, which stir in response.

“You should have let this be,” the darkness whispers back. Then it moves on her.

Mord:

You recognize mother, suddenly weak and pale, from the day she turned forty and lay waiting in her bed. It is early morning, and your thirteen year old sister Jessa kneels beside her. They are speaking in low, serious voices.

“I'm sorry to place this on you, dear one. But someone has to know.”

Jessa nods, slowly. “I'll do my best to watch him.”

Suddenly your sister is eighteen. The scars your father left on her are still fresh beneath a blue cloak that flaps in the wind as she waits on an open plain. A storm brews overhead. The grass parts as two figures glide through it. They are tall and slender, with golden hair. And as they draw near, you can see that although they are beautiful, they are not human.

“You have reconsidered our offer?” one asks.

Your sister flinches at the alien lilt of their gothic. “This, procedure... you swear it won't hurt my brother?”

“It pales in comparison the the damage Her servant's whispers do, even as we speak.”

She nods. “All right then. Tonight.”

Nails:

You know the dim planet around you is Galtus. A woman explodes, claws and hatred spewing from her as a small girl cowers in the corner. Her stark white hair goes just past her shoulders.

Then, she is standing against the rocky gray landscape, and could almost be recruit for a sister chapter of the black and ivory adepta assembled. In front of them, speaking to the girl is a tall man with a rosette and dark hair that has a gray streak through it. At either side of him is a woman in dark synskin.

The man says something, and the girl points.

The Inquisitor and his forces fall upon the settlement she pointed to. Psykers fight and scream and die in their streets. A beautiful raven-haired woman shields her son with her body. She falls, and the boy stands there helpless, fists clenched as the slaughter continues around him.

Hilda:

Your mother wears mourning colors. So does the younger image of your brother, as he enters her room. You realize you must be looking at the past.

She gives him a sad smile, but it falls on him as though he were stone.

“Were you even going to tell Hilda about Father?” he accuses.

She looks down.

“She would have missed the funeral if I hadn't sent her a letter. You know how close they were. I know you've always had something against her, but how could you?”

Rosalyn Lancaster Von Eizenbrecht shakes her coiffed head. “You wouldn't understand.”

“Well I am the count now, mother. So make me understand. What it is about my little sister that offends you so?”

She is silent.

“Someday you're going to explain it to me. Just like you're going to explain why you changed your name from Borella before coming to Balecaster.”

Her head jerks up at the name.

“Our family shouldn't have these kind of secrets.”