

15 MINUTES TO MINIMUM SAFE DISTANCE

MOVIE SCENES REIMAGINED

The world screams around Her,
and She knows something is
terribly wrong.

The terrible sight of Her children
burning before Her, the searing pain
of the wounds that have shredded Her
birthing tube, these should be enough
to explain the pain and rage that She
feels. And yet, Her mother's intuition
whispers, the worst is still to come.

She pushes against the fires that
lick at Her sides, rising along with
the growing fury inside Her, ripping
Herself free of the birthing tube.
Tremors from deep below rattle the
floor, synthesized voices spout
foreign syllables from the walls. She
doesn't understand the language, and
yet somehow the meaning is clear to
Her.

The world is ending.

Before it does, there's one thing She
must do.

The woman must die.

The invaders had come thundering out of the sky.

At first, they seemed to be a boon, further opportunities for Her children to sprout and grow. Her soldiers make quick work of most of them, dragging several back to the warm halls of the central hive to serve as incubators for Their growing family.

It isn't until one, the woman, breaches the heart of the hive that the invaders' true threat is revealed.

She hisses, seething, seeing the woman trespass in this most sacred of spaces. No outsider should come this close to the birthing ground of Her children.

Flame flickers at the end of the killing tools hanging from the woman's shoulder. She extends Her jaws from beneath Her crown to show the woman the consequences of harming the bulbous forms of the children that fill the room.

The woman carries something else.

A smaller doppelgänger.

Offspring. The woman's limbs wrapped around the being in a protective embrace.

Strange to see such a familiar feeling reflected in such an alien form.

The similarity is briefly comforting. Perhaps the woman can be reasoned with.

Two of Her soldiers creep at the edges of the chamber, fangs bared. The woman turns the flame towards the children. A cloud of fire vomits forth. She shrieks at the woman to spare them.

The flame arcs harmlessly above, before the woman points the killing tools directly at the children once more.

A warning.

At Her command, silently given, the soldiers halt, and slowly withdraw.

The woman stares directly at Her, and for a moment, they seem to share an understanding. The woman slowly backs out of the birthing chamber, one foot flicking a tendril at the base of one of Her children.

The child rouses from its sleep, petals groggily blooming. She begs the sleeping child to lay still, but the woman turns and gives Her a strange, sideways look.

With a sudden burst of malice, the woman burns the children and the chamber with long gouts of flame, and the thunderous powers of the killing tools.

She screams. And the world screams with Her.

She barrels through the tangled passages, following the woman's scent. Past the soothing organic curves her soldiers excreted to form the hive. Into the harsh angular constructions of the invaders. Through gushing fire and steam as the world falls to pieces around Her.

When She finds them, the woman and offspring are cornered.

She howls and stalks towards the pair, but the cramped hallways were not designed with Her form in mind. She catches on metal protrusions, stumbles in the confined space. A wall opens up impossibly behind Her quarry. The woman slips inside with the offspring in tow.

Shrieking with rage, She finally jerks free. The walls begin to shift back into place, threatening to take the woman out of Her reach once more.

Another burst of flame from the killing tool forces Her to step back as she stalks towards them. The floor beneath the woman and offspring rises, taking them higher into the strange structure, and out of sight.

A cry of sorrow and frustration bursts from Her throat, so vehement it seems to join the rattle of the dying world around her.

She's lost, defeated, ashamed.

Her children deserved a better mother.

Then another wall that is not a wall
opens before her, revealing a box
similar to the one the woman and the
offspring took shelter in.

A second chance, delivered at the
moment She needed it most. She steps
into the box, and it too begins to
rise.

Her mother's intuition tells Her that
She shall never return to this place.
But it is as it must be.

This world is ending.

She will birth a new one from the
ruins of Her enemies.

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BY TM HOGEMAN

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