

CHAPTER 6



DECKARD'S FIRST VICTIM

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Back in Deckard's apartment, Rick is sitting at his piano, his head resting on the keys. He absent-mindedly taps one of the keys while deep in thought, mulling over his meeting with Rachael. On top of the piano are numerous old photographs of people, most are black and white. He briefly dozes and dreams about... a beautiful white horse with a single horn on its head - a unicorn. The unicorn is running in slow-motion through a forest...

Presently, Deckard awakens, gets up from

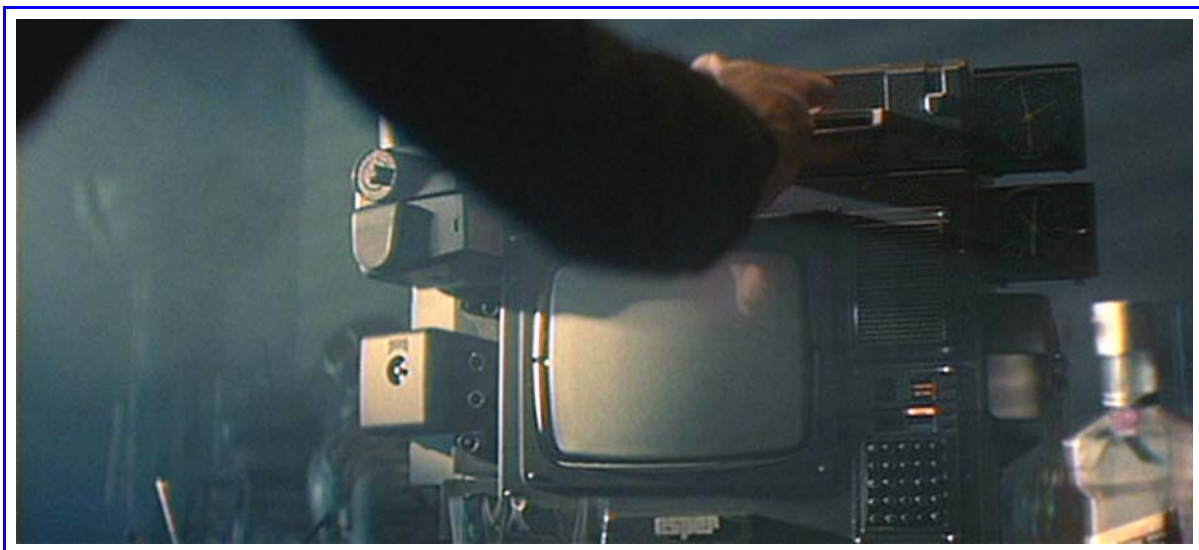


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the piano, and scans some of the photos. He picks one out from the group he found earlier in Leon's apartment. Putting it between his lips to give him a free hand, he grabs his half-full, square glass and with his other hand picks up the bottle of scotch that was also sitting on the piano.

He steps over his sofa from behind and switches on the Esper machine that is sitting on a table in front of the sofa. Making a few adjustments he then feeds the photo into the machine's slot and settles in for a long session to scan the photo for any clues about his



moves across the image. "Move in." The screen shows a close-up of the man's fist and face... "Stop. Pull out, track right. Stop." We see a corner of a newspaper with Chinese or Korean characters printed on it. "Center and pull back," the machine instantly responds as Deckard gets up from the sofa to sit on the floor, closer to the Esper's screen. "Stop!" ... the man on the left, a doorway on the right. Now Deckard's attention is fully engaged... "Track forty-five right. Stop. Center and stop." We're looking

quarry, the replicants.

Pouring a little more hard stuff into his glass and looking a little bored, he says to the machine, "enhance two-twenty-four to one-seventy-six," the machine springs to life as it moves a cursor to that section of the photo and enlarges it. That part of the image shows a shirtless man sitting at a table with his head resting on his right fist. Deckard studies this for a moment, then... "enhance..." the cursor moves a bit... "stop," he says as the screen now shows an enlarged portion of the man in the photo. Deckard leans forward to get a closer view as the cursor again

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ing through an open doorway at a dresser in the next room with a round mirror above.



Deckard examines this for a moment, then... "Enhance thirty-four to thirty-six," the screen zooms into an ornate drinking glass next to another newspaper. "Pan right and pull back. Stop." Now we see the round mirror above the dresser. Deckard spies something of interest... "Enhance thirty-four to forty-six," again the machine responds, zooming the cursor in on the right side of the mirror to... an extreme close-up of something with hundreds of sparkling objects on it. "Pull back... wait a minute... go right...stop." Now we see a woman's elbow. "Enhance fifty-seven-nineteen." We move in on



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the elbow a bit... "Track forty-five left... stop". We clearly see a sleeping woman, she's wearing a red bandana with what appears to be a sequined dress, the sparkling object we saw in close-up earlier, hanging nearby. "Enhance fifteen to twenty-three." The cursor zooms in on the woman's face. "Gimme a hard copy right there," Deckard says to the machine as he punches a button on top of the unit. The Esper makes some noises then spits out a small print of the woman's face in close-up which Deckard examines with great interest. It's Zhora, one of the missing repli-



cants. He now holds up his little plastic bag containing the small triangular object he found earlier in the bath tub and his mind makes some connections, adding two and two together.

Later, Deckard is back on the street, talking to an old Cambodian woman in her cluttered outdoor shop. She is deeply wrinkled as though the years were hard on her. An assistant stands behind her smoking a pipe as Deckard hands her the object in the plastic bag. A man walks by holding onto a hawk which is wildly flailing its wings and screaming, trying to escape its captor. Deckard asks, "Fish?"

She takes the bag, looks at the object inside for a moment, then puts it in her scanning electron microscope. After turning a few knobs an extremely magnified image of the object is displayed on a glowing screen.

"I think it was manufactured. Look," she says. Deckard also watches the screen intently. "Finest quality," she says, "superior workmanship. There is a maker's serial number... nine nine zero six nine four seven... XB seventy-one. Interesting." She quickly hands the object back to Deckard and exclaims, "Not fish! Snake scale!"

Deckard looks

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up in surprise, "snake?"

"Try Abdul bin Hassan. He make the snake," she replies. Deckard points questioningly down the street then nods and smiles, walking off toward a meeting with the man who "make the snake."

Deckard pushes through a crush of people of all shapes, sizes and colors, past small shops and stalls. Suddenly he stops and backs up to get out of the way of two men who are each shepherding an ostrich through the crowd. Other people move out of the way of the unusual parade of feathered giants.

Deckard continues his stroll, then turns to his



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right to peer into a glass box with a large snake inside. He taps on the side of the box which gets the attention of the shopkeeper and owner of the serpent. It's bin Hassan. He says something in some foreign language, presumably Arabic, and beckons Deckard toward him.

Abdul bin Hassan is a large, somewhat rotund man wearing a red fez on his head and a pair of magnifying goggles. Draped around his shoulders is another snake.

"Abdul Hassan?" Deckard asks as Hassan makes an expansive gesture in answer and mum-



bles something unintelligible. "I'm a police officer, I'd like to ask you a few questions." Hassan continues to mumble gibberish. "Artificial snake license XB71, that's you? This is your work, huh?" Deckard asks as he holds up the plastic bag with the snake scale inside.

Hassan shakes his head as Deckard asks, "Who'd you sell it to?"

"My work? Not too many could afford such quality..." Hassan answers.

"How many?"

"Many few."

"How few?" Deckard asks,

beginning to lose his temper. He then grabs Hassan by his tie and pulls him close "look, my friend..." and Hassan immediately blurts out, "Taffy Lewis's, down in four sector, Chinatown."

A little later Deckard finds himself inside a busy, smoke filled bar with people in all sorts of dress milling about, enjoying themselves. He takes off his coat and begins to mingle, looking for Taffy Lewis, the bar's owner. All around him against walls and on tables are large candelabras filled with lit tapers casting a soft glow throughout.

He steps up to

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an ornate bar... "Bartender..... Taffy Lewis?" The bartender who is just lighting an extremely long pipe points to a man sitting at Deckard's left. The short, balding Taffy Lewis is deep in conversation with a uniquely coiffed woman who is also smoking a long, white pipe.

"Taffy..." Deckard says, flashing his police ID card. Taffy looks none too pleased at the intrusion. "I'd like to ask you a few questions."

Taffy says something to his date who moves off...

Deckard takes the lady's place at the bar and asks... "You ever buy snakes from the Egyptian, Taffy?"



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"All the time, pal!" Taffy replies with obvious contempt.

"You ever see this girl? Huh?" Deckard shows Taffy the hard copy photo from his Esper machine...

"Never seen her. Buzz off!"

"Your licenses in order, pal?" Deckard asks derisively.

Taffy smiles, thinks for a moment, then looks at his bartender, "Hey, Louie, the man is dry. Give 'im one on the house, okay?" He then looks back at Deckard who's wearing a somewhat puzzled expression. "See ya," Taffy says.

Deckard doesn't reply but





looks away with a smile as Louie hands him a drink after Taffy leaves.

Sitting there, ignoring the music and cacophony of voices around him, Deckard takes a swig from the ornate glass then looks at the back of the photo that Rachael had earlier left in his apartment and that he'd been carrying around. He takes note of the phone number in the corner of the picture, then flips it over and gazes at the beautiful woman sitting on the porch with, presumably, "Rachael" as a child there in her lap.

It isn't long before Deckard is in front of a vid-phone dialing the number on the picture - 555-7583.

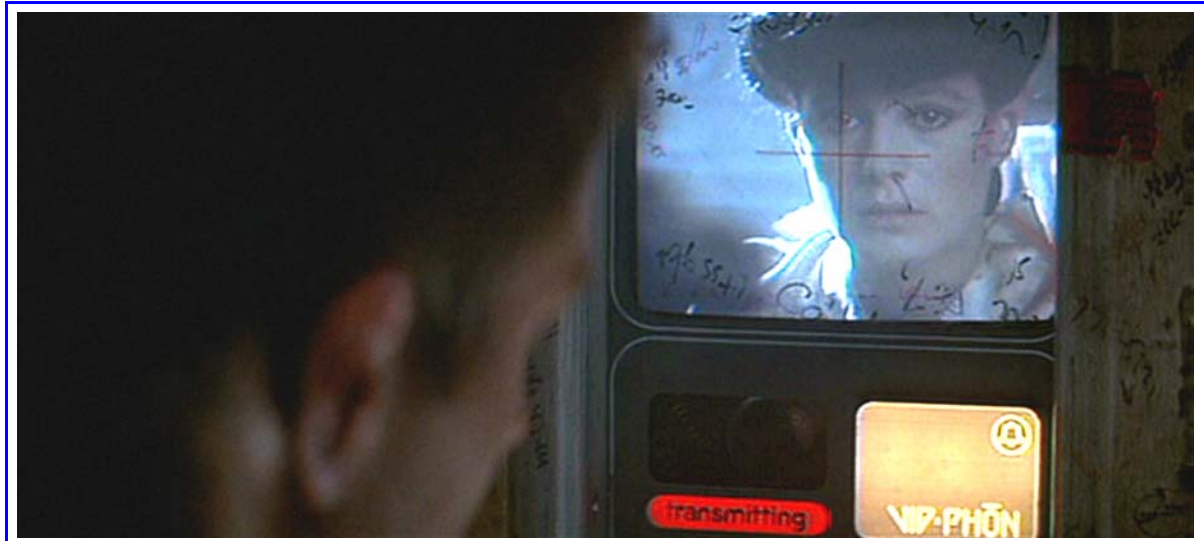
The monitor displays "Transmitting" and after a moment Rachael sits down at her end of the connection, she looks stunning even during a casual moment. "Hello" she says...

"I've had people walk out on me before," Deckard says with some whimsy, "but not when.... I was being so charming. I'm in a bar here now down in four sector. Taffy Lewis is on the line... why don't you come on down here and have a drink?"

"I don't think so, Mr. Deckard," she replies, gazing at him through the vid-phone, "that's not my kind of place."

"Go some-

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place else," Deckard says, hopefully.

At that, Rachael reaches toward the phone and hangs up without comment. Deckard is left staring at a screen that now reads, "Total Charge \$1.25".

About all he can do at that point is return to his place at the bar and finish his drink. He gets down to the last sip and accidentally sucks the olive at the bottom of the glass into his mouth. He retrieves it with a look of disgust and throws it away.

Behind him, a voice rings out, "Ladies and gentlemen, Taffy Lewis presents Miss Salome and the Snake!" Deckard's attention focuses on the speaker.



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"Watch her take the pleasure from the Serpent," the voice continues, "that once corrupted men!" At

this, Deckard can only shake his head and smile. He watches for awhile then looks away in thought.



A little later, after the show, Deckard is outside, leaning against a wall under a neon star reading, or making the appearance of reading, a newspaper. But he's looking around for someone as showgirls dressed in bright, flowery costumes, stream by.

Before long, his quarry approaches... she is nude from the



"I'm from the Confidential Committee on Moral Abuses."

She turns around and looks at him, unbelieving, "Committee of Moral Abuses?"

"Yes ma'am," Deckard replies, "there's been some reports that the management has been taking liberties with the artists in this place." All the while, "Miss Salome" is undraping the snake from her body and placing it on a tall snake stand nearby.

"I don't know nothin' about it," she replies.

waist up, her hair slicked back, her upper body plastered with scales like a.... snake. Around her shoulders is draped a large, apparently living, boa constrictor.

"Excuse me, Miss Salome." Deckard says to her with a smile. "Can I talk to you for a minute? I'm from the American Federation of Variety Artists," he lies.

"Oh, yeah?" she says, with a grin, then moves on.

"I'm not here to make ya join, no ma'am. That's not my department. Actually, uh...." Deckard's smile turns into a frown as he follows her into her dressing room and closes the door behind him,

"Have you felt yourself to be exploited in any way?"

"How do you

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mean 'exploited'?" she asks as she finishes with the snake, holding its head and looking at it with a touch of nonchalance.

"Well, I... like, to get this job. I mean, did you do, or... or were you asked to do anything that's lewd or unsavory, or" Deckard's beginning to lose his cool a bit, "or otherwise repulsive to your person, huh?"

She stares at him for a moment, then laughs, "Are you for real?" she can only reply with laughing derision.

"Oh, yeah!" he replies. "I'd like to... check your dressing room, if I may?" She walks away toward her lavatory.



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"For what?"

"For, uh, for holes..."

"Holes?"

"You... You'd be surprised what a guy'd go through to... get a glimpse of a beautiful body..."

She looks at him now with rising anger at the sheer ludicrousness of this whole scene, "No, I wouldn't!" She steps into her shower and turns on the spray.

"Uh.... Little, uh, dirty holes they, uh, drill in the walls so they can watch a lady undress."

She doesn't reply as she begins washing off her "scales".

Meantime, Deckard is look-





ing around and sees one of the sequined dresses he viewed earlier in the photo at his Esper machine. He snaps off what appears to be a large gemstone and holds it up. At this point, Miss Salome is in her hair dryer.

A moment later as she sits down to put on her boots, Deckard continues looking around and comes face to face with her snake. "Is this a... real snake?" he asks.

"Of course it's not real," she says with a touch of anger. "You think I'd be working in a place like this if I could afford a real snake?"

He doesn't answer but is fascinated by the slithering beast

as he briefly touches it, then recoils.

Now she comes back into the room where he's standing, rubbing her hair with a towel. "So if someone does try to exploit me, who do I go to about it?"

"Me!" He says with a wide grin.

"You're a dedicated man! Dry me." She throws him the towel and turns her back to him as she puts on her sculptured bra-piece. He slowly begins to towel her off...

Suddenly and swiftly "Miss Salome" who is really Zhora, one of the escaped replicants, rams her elbow into

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his midsection and he doubles over as she spins around and slams him hard with her outstretched arm knocking him backward, flailing his arms. She stops for a moment, wildly looking around, then grabs her transparent raincoat and puts it on, looking down at the pathetic figure on the floor writhing in pain, trying to move up onto a soft chair.

Now she smiles demonically, violently grabs him by his tie and pulls him close. With a look of unbridled rage she begins strangling him with the tie. He fights to get loose but to no avail.

Suddenly, she hears a noise behind her and



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drops him to the floor. She pushes past two other showgirls who entered her dressing room knocking one over then bolts through the back door out into the street, sprinting as fast as she can.

Deckard is soon right behind her, blaster drawn and ready. He jumps out the back door from which Zhora made her escape, then pauses for a brief moment to get his bearings. Then he leaps into action, knocking over a pedestrian in the crowded, damp street. He wildly runs back and forth, knocking over trash cans and bumping into other pedestrians. In



vehicle. Deckard continues his search looking above and around various automobiles and other parked machinery.

Presently, he finds himself amidst a group of Hari Krishnas with their bald heads and bright yellow saris, chanting, "hari hari, hari hari...".

As he walks along he turns and catches a glimpse of Zhora, herself walking on the other side of a railing. He runs over to try and get a clear shot, his blaster thrust between the railings, his body cast in the green glow of overhead florescent lights. Zhora turns, sees him and in

the meantime, Zhora is weaving her way through the maze of street vendors and hawkers, trying to get away from her hunter.

Deckard stops for a moment near a parked cab, looks around wildly, but can't seem to spot his quarry. Around him are strangely clad people, nuns wearing huge, white headpieces, people carrying lighted umbrellas. He pushes between the crush of humanity and comes to a street corner, the automatic crosswalk siren blaring the message, "cross now, cross now, cross now...." A beautiful woman wearing a 1930's style hat watches somewhat bemusedly from inside a

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panic, picks up her pace and speeds ahead before Deckard can fire his weapon.

Deckard jumps over the railing and runs through the open doors of a parked bus but loses sight of her again, the relentless crowding of rushing bodies all around him blocking his view.

"Cross now, cross now, cross now..."

Standing up on the side of the bus, Deckard scans the street ahead of and behind him. At the same time, Zhora has stopped and is leaning quietly against a wall, hoping she gave him the slip.

The crosswalk



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changes its message to "don't walk, don't walk, don't walk" to warn the onrushing pedestrians. Deckard notices something and jumps off the bus to press through the crowd. He cautiously moves toward an open stairwell and... sees her down below trying to blend in with everyone else. Slowly he moves toward her, like a lion zeroing in on its prey. He pushes someone away from him and thrusts his blaster forward but, again, she looks up, sees him trying to take aim, and runs up the stairs and out into the street.

"Cross now, cross now, cross now..."



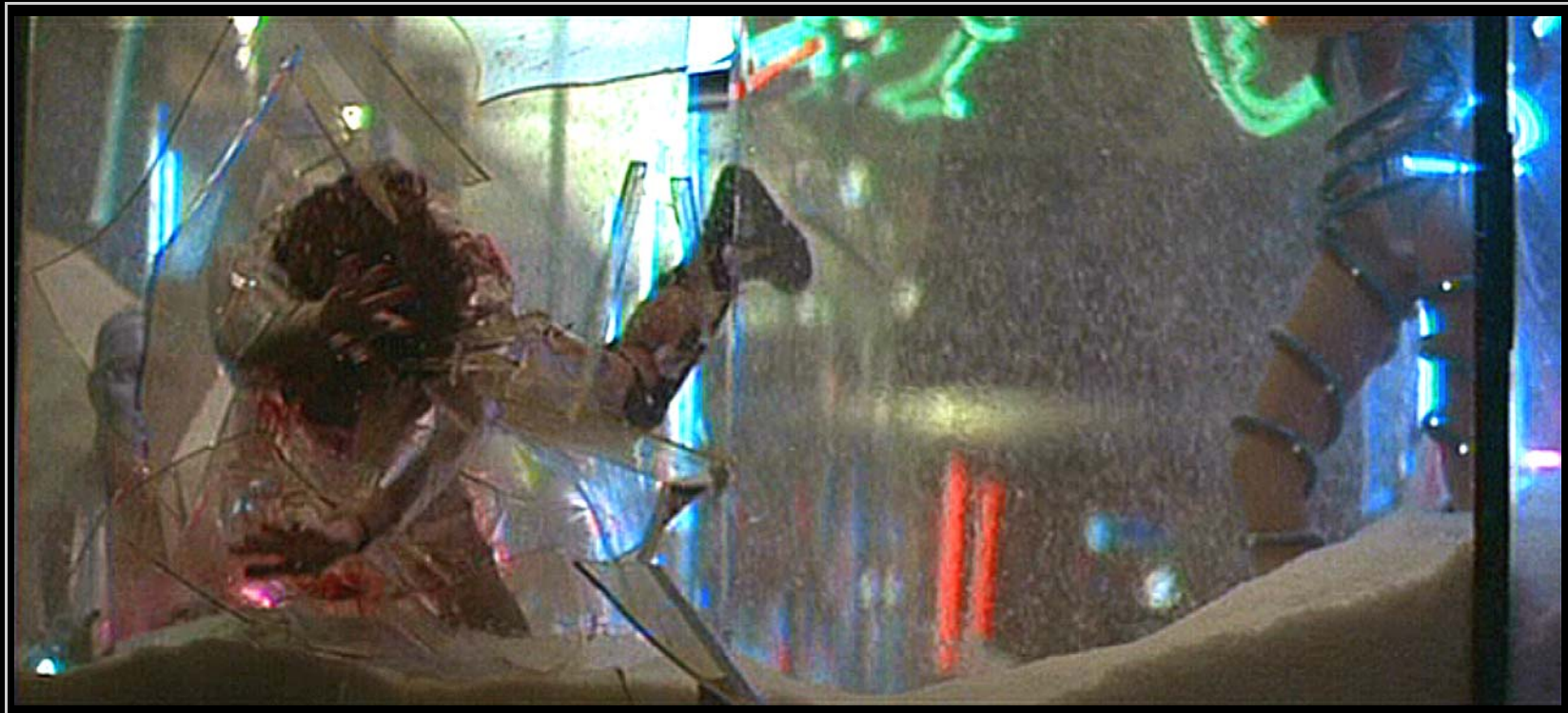
Deckard quickly follows, trying to get her in his sights. Sprinting as fast as possible, Zhora jumps up and runs over the top of a parked vehicle, Deckard in hot pursuit. Suddenly he stops and yells at someone in front of him, "Move! Get out of the way!!"

Finally he has Zhora in the clear, takes aim and fires... but misses with his first shot. Zhora, in a wild panic now, runs into a swimwear boutique, brightly lit with neon signage. At the same time, Deckard fires a second round, again missing his mark. His third shot, though, finally strikes Zhora in her upper back. She breaks through a

window inside the shop, falls, rolls on her back and struggles to get back up to continue running. But she's trapped inside the shop now and Deckard, both hands holding his blaster steady, fires a final time, again hitting Zhora in the back. She crashes through a plate-glass window, falling forward through a fake snowstorm in a strange swimsuit display before breaking through another window. Now she falls outside of the shop to the sidewalk on her face, blood splattered across her transparent raincoat. She is finally quiet, her last, faltering heartbeats fading away.

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Deckard follows slowly behind, stepping through the fake snowstorm and the broken glass to see the result of his chase. Zhora lay there, her eyes open, her hands spread out on either side of her. Unbeknownst to anyone, Leon had watched the whole, bloody pursuit and is now gazing at the scene from afar, his anger boiling within.

Soon, the police arrives and moves over to Zhora, carefully taking hold of her lifeless body on either side and turning her over as Deckard watches. One of the officers moves Zhora's head back and forth to get a good look at her, again her eyes still wide



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open, one tear falling slowly from her right eye. Deckard moves forward with his wallet ID out and says to one of the officers, "Deckard, B two sixty-three fifty-four." The officer takes the ID to check it out then hands it back. Out in the crowd Leon moves forward to get a better look at what's happening.

Deckard then quickly leaves the scene, turning up his collar against the ever-present, driving rain, leaving the officers to clean up the mess. A police spinner hovers overhead, its engines whining and its loudspeaker blaring, "move on, move on, move on" to the crowd



below.

Not far from the scene of his kill, Deckard finds an outdoor liquor store and steps up with money already in his hand, ready to give to the attendant who says, "A minute..." She's short, a bit overweight and wears a patch over her left eye and a small turban on her head. She comes back quickly and says, "Yeah, whaddya want?"

"Tsing chao," Deckard replies quietly. She brings a bottle filled with colorless liquid and displays it to him for approval... he nods his head. While she wraps it up for him he opens his palm asking, "this enough?"

"Yeah."

While he's distracted with paying the woman, Gaff steps up from out of nowhere and taps Deckard, none too softly, on his right shoulder with the end of his cane. Deckard wheels around and grabs the offending instrument, glaring at the intruder but saying nothing. Gaff simply says, "Bryant," with his signature sneer.

Deckard can only release the cane and nod slightly. While Deckard finishes with the liquor store attendant, Gaff watches him intently from behind, patiently waiting. Deckard grabs his bottle and with a

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quick glare at Gaff, walks over to a waiting spinner parked on the pavement.

The passenger side door opens and Bryant steps out onto the sidewalk.

"Christ, Deckard, you look almost as bad as that skin-job you left on the sidewalk," he says with a smile.

"I'm going home," Deckard replies, also with a smile, all the while Gaff is still watching him from behind.

"You could learn from this guy, Gaff," Bryant says, "he's a god-damned one-man slaughter house, that's



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what 'e is. Four more to go!" Deckard's smile instantly turns to a frown. "C'mon, Gaff, let's go." Bryant

says, starting to turn away.

"Three," Deckard states, moving forward, "there's three to go."

Bryant stops, looks up at him and says, "There's four. Tha... tha... that skin job you VK'd at Tyrell Corporation? Rachael? Disappeared, vanished. Didn't even know she was a replicant. Something to do with her brain implants says Tyrell. C'mon Gaff," Bryant says again, "Drink some for me, huh, pal," he offers to Deckard as





he steps back into the waiting spinner. All the while Deckard says nothing as the spinner moves off down the street in the pouring rain followed by a 1960's-era pink Cadillac, proudly displaying its tail fins.

Across the street a beautiful young woman in a fur coat has been watching this exchange between Deckard and Bryant... it's Rachael. Deckard is still standing at the curb, lost in thought. He looks up and catches sight of Rachael as she turns to walk away. He begins pressing through the crowd, craning his neck to keep her in his sights. Now he's becoming

more frantic as he loses sight of her in the teeming crowd. He searches around moving cars, honking as they pass by. Suddenly he's grabbed from behind and shaken like a rag doll.

"Leon!" he exclaims as he realizes who his captor is.

"How old am I?" Leon asks with derision, not expecting an answer.

Deckard's answer is a fist across Leon's jaw, but Leon springs back, as though swatted by a weakling. He again grabs Deckard who finally answers, "I don't know," to Leon's rhetorical query.

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At that, Leon throws Deckard against a parked vehicle with a resounding clang. He again grabs Deckard by the lapels, his face close to Deckard's... "My birthday's April 10th, 2017, how long do I live??"

"Four years," Deckard replies.

Still holding Deckard by the lapels, Leon now wheels him around and slams him against a storage tank. Deckard whips out his blaster but Leon, quick as a cat, slaps it away, hurling it far down the street. He points at Deckard and yells, "More than you!" and aims a blow to Deckard's head but misses his ducking target, his fist penetrating the metal side



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of the vehicle as though it were cardboard. Steam erupts from the tank, hissing loudly.

Leon again grabs Deckard, his eyes now wild with anger as he says "Painful to live in fear, isn't it??" and lifts Deckard up, throwing him onto a car windshield, shattering it. Deckard rolls over onto his back on the car hood as Leon hovers over him with a demonic smile. "Nothing is worse than having an itch you can never scratch!" he says to Deckard, still on his back.

"Oh, I agree..." Deckard, his face now streaming with blood from his nose, replies.



Leon lifts him up by his lapels and looks at him for a moment. Then he smiles and smacks Deckard once, twice across his face, hard. "Wake up!" Leon exclaims, "Time to die!" and he begins to press two fingers into Deckard's eyes...

Suddenly, a shot rings out and a bloody exit wound appears on Leon's forehead, his eyes wide with surprise...

Not far behind Leon stands Rachael, her arms outstretched, gripping Deckard's lost blaster that she has just fired. She stands there breathing hard, almost not believing what she's just done.

Leon's now lifeless body lands on top of Deckard as he falls to the pavement.

Rachael steps forward, slowly lowering the blaster, the enormity of the event showing on her face...

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