

**All Soldiers Sides:**

INT. REMOTE DESERT HILLSIDE - TUNNEL - NIGHT

Zak has his ear to the radio. He looks at his men then keys the transmitter.

ZAK  
Manaus -- Agartha. Did you  
receive last transmission? Please  
advise. Over.

STAFF SERGEANT Calhoun (30's), the team's very muscular S.A.W. wielding N.C.O.I.C. shakes his head in frustration.

SSGT CALHOUN  
Great. Now what Cap?

Zak puts his transmitter back and looks at his men.

ZAK  
Nothing's changed. We do what we  
came here to do.  
(to Sergeant Pierce)  
Let's get some shape charges on  
this thing.

The team's demolitions expert, a don't mess with me New Yorker, SERGEANT DANNY "DINO-BRONX-BOMBER" PIERCE (mid-20's), removes his backpack.

SGT PIERCE  
On it.

SSGT CALHOUN  
And if the W.M.D.s are behind  
this thing?

ZAK  
Then we'll find out soon enough  
won't we?

Zak shines his flashlight up and all around the edges of the wall, assessing the situation.

ZAK (CONT'D)  
Careful Dino. We don't want to  
collapse the tunnel.

SGT PIERCE  
Roger that.

EXT. REMOTE DESERT HILLSIDE - TUNNEL ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Sergeant Jakes takes chemical and radiation readings before the team proceeds back into the tunnel.

SGT JAKES  
All clear sir.

ZAK  
Alright. But stay masked. We don't...

Suddenly, a blast of cold air bursts out from deep within the hillside, followed by a long and ominous, FERAL GROWL. As a couple of GOAT SKULLS roll out of the cave in front of them, Zak looks at the corporal, then cocks his assault rifle as he heads inside.

ZAK (CONT'D)  
Stay alive.

SOLDIERS  
(in unison)  
U-wah!

INT. REMOTE DESERT HILLSIDE - TUNNEL - NIGHT

Making their way around a lot of fallen rocks, Zak and men arrive at the wall, which inexplicably appears undamaged.

SGT PIERCE  
I don't understand. There should be a...

As Pierce moves in to investigate, he trips on a LEG.

SGT PIERCE (CONT'D)  
What the...? Uh... cap.

Everyone turns toward Pierce.

ZAK  
What is it?

Pierce bends down and rummages through a pile of rubble to uncover the decayed body of a regally dressed CORPSE. Seeing an ORNATE SCEPTER clutched in its right hand, Pierce pries it out. As he stands back up, Zak takes it from him.

SGT PIERCE  
Yeah... so, uh there ya go sir.

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Pierce moves to inspect the wall as Zak inspects the scepter. It has a massive jeweled head that spins. When twisted the other end produces a rod, which extends from within.

SGT PIERCE (CONT'D)

I don't get it. This wall should have been pulverized.

ZAK

Well it wasn't. Got anymore firecrackers in that pack?

SGT PIERCE

Yeah, but...

Something catches Zak's attention.

INT. MASSIVE CAVERN

They see something extraordinary - a large, brightly glowing FRUIT TREE that has grown out of a stone encircled mound in the center of the cavern.

ZAK

(whispers)

My God... It's true.

Zak rushes toward the tree as the others follow, each pointing their weapon in different defensive positions.

Martinez's mask begins to fog up.

SP4 MARTINEZ

(pointing to his mask)

Think it's safe, sir?

Zak looks to Jakes who confirms with a nod.

ZAK

(to Martinez)

Thanks for volunteering.

Martinez rolls his eyes and shakes his head in regret.

SP4 MARTINEZ

(to himself)

Had to ask.

Taking in a deep breath, Martinez holds it as he cautiously removes his protective mask. Everyone watches as he exhales and breathes in the cavern's air. He shakes his head indicating it is OK.

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CONTINUED:

ZAK

All clear.

They all remove their masks and stand gazing in amazement at the inexplicably bright, beautiful tree standing before them. Quite out of place in this underground cavern full of sharp, upward protruding rocks, it's fruit glows like mesmerizing ornaments. They step up to the mound to investigate.

SP4 MARTINEZ

What is this?

SGT PIERCE

(smacking Martinez in the back  
of the head)

It's a tree dumb-ass, what the  
hell do you think it is?

ZAK

(utterly amazed)

The Tree of Life.

Everyone looks at him in shock.

Specialist Martinez curiously reaches out to touch the GLOWING FRUIT hanging from one of its branches. As he grabs it, Zak screams.

ZAK (CONT'D)

Martinez don't!

Too late. Pierce had already pulled it from the branch. Suddenly the mound begins to shake. Everyone jumps back as the mound and the tree begin to levitate.

They all aim their weapons toward the tree/mound as it rises to about seven feet above its base and holds, suspended in the air. Underneath, Martinez notices something moving.

SP4 MARTINEZ

What the...?