

SEE

Episode One
By Steven Knight

'Godflame'

Third Draft
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OPEN ON PITCH BLACK

Over darkness we hear a woman in her mid twenties screaming in the agony of childbirth. The woman almost finds words...

MAGHRA (OOV)
Faaaag! Faaaaa! Faac! Fa. Fa. Fa.
Fa. Fa. Paris!!! I feel water!
Come!

In the near distance we hear the sound of voices, people in distress and running.

Then we focus on a line of dew drops on a thin thread, barely visible in half light. The thread is touched and the drops fall. Then we see the hand of a woman (PARIS) running along the line of thread and passing through shot...

PARIS
Calm. I'm here.

Half darkness, a figure settling....

MAGHRA (OOV PANTING)
Paris, where have you been?

PARIS
I was diverted.

MAGHRA
What's all that noise outside?

Paris blows life into a small fire and the crackling flames give a little light. We see two silhouettes. Paris ignores the question...

PARIS
Now I will sing your baby into the world.

The older woman begins to sing, a lilting melody which is beautiful but unfamiliar in tone. As she sings, another blade of light illuminates the scene. The Sun has risen over a hilltop somewhere and the light has entered this dark place.

For now we don't know where we are.

We see the dark outlines of Paris on her knees and a younger woman, Maghra, lying on the ground. We might just make out the bulge of Maghra's pregnancy. For now the oddness of their appearance could be a trick of the light.

PARIS (OOV) (CONT'D)
I'm going to feel around the head,
because the head is coming first.
And that is good news...

Maghra feels a contraction....

MAGHRA (OOV)

Strong now. Get it out! Mother. Of.

Maghra grunts and pants like an animal. We come around to face the beam of sunlight and begin to see things more clearly from the shadows. Paris turns and raises her palms to the light..

PARIS

I feel warmth. The God Flame is rising. That's a good omen. A birth blessed by morning.

We now see we are in a cave. Water drips from long strings strung across the cave and pulled tight. The threads are beaded with morning dew and they glisten.

PARIS (CALM) (OOV) (CONT'D)

There now, I feel a little ear like a slippery bud.

Maghra screams again and her screams seem to have the power to make the screen lighter as the Sun climbs. The cave turns from dark orange to orange.

Now we see the two women more clearly and their appearance is shocking. Their hair is long and pulled into ornate swirls. They wear furs and clothing made from hemp and grass. Paris leans into some embers and blows them into flame.

More light is shed. (We feel we are glimpsing into an unseen world).

We might think we are in the stone age until Paris takes a plastic water bottle from under a fur and pours some onto Maghra's face and gives her some to drink. She is between contractions...

MAGHRA

Where is Baba Voss?

Paris carefully places the bottle to Maghra's lips. By now we should begin to notice an oddness in the way they move and the way they use their fingers to locate objects.

PARIS (EVADING)

He is busy. Sip.

MAGHRA (GROWLING)

Busy?

PARIS

We don't need the big lump for this. It's women's work.

Even in pain Maghra reacts.

MAGHRA

I want my husband to be first to
see the baby.

PARIS

He will come when he can.

Then Maghra (and we) hear a strange noise in the near
distance. A low hum, a whirring pulsating throb, along with
the sound of men yelling.

MAGHRA

What is that sound?

Paris diverts...

PARIS (OOV)

Soon you'll have a little life in
your arms. Think of that.

MAGHRA

Paris? I can hear killing ropes.

Maghra struggles to sit up. Dew cascades from three of the
silk threads. We hear the throbbing whirring sound louder.

MAGHRA (CONT'D)

Why have they brought out the
killing ropes? Is the village under
attack?

PARIS

I will sing again.

Paris begins to sing her strange hypnotic song and Maghra
grunts in pain and panics.

MAGHRA

No! Hush. Let me hear.

Maghra angles her head to hear. She does it like a dog or a
prey animal, her ear twitching just a little. She has a
circle of small blue scars around her ear which are raised
up. From outside we hear the yelling of men and now the
whirring, throbbing sound is accompanied by the sound of
drums being beaten to a fast rhythm.

MAGHRA (SHOCKED) (CONT'D)

I can hear fear in the voices.
They are beating for war. What is
happening?

Paris takes a moment. The shaft of light is lemon yellow and
we can see her weather beaten face.

*For the first time we notice her eyes, reflecting fire light
blankly. The sound of throbbing and whirring grows...*

PARIS

I wanted to get this baby born
before I told you but yes, our
Scentiers reported a raiding party
coming down the valley. Men with
horses and dogs. They are at the
foot of the mountain...

Maghra fights another contraction...

MAGHRA

And where is my husband?

PARIS

Baba Voss is commanding the
defence.

Suddenly...

EXT. ALKENNY VILLAGE - MORNING

We enter a world the like of which we have never seen before.

A giant of a man (BABA VOSS) is striding through a village. He is dressed in furs and is carrying a heavy metal helmet. He has a steel blade in his hand and a sling draped around his neck. He is big boned, with a straggly beard and hair coiled around on top of his head.

He walks with one hand lightly skimming a rope stretched between two dwellings. He yells...

BABA VOSS

All those with strength to raise a
blade take a weapon from Arca and
join me!

As he walks we slowly rise up and take in the nature of the village and the world we have entered.

(We will swirl around the village and the images will be fleeting but the description of it here at the beginning is necessarily long).

We begin with Baba Voss as he approaches a communal fire in the middle of the village. The wind catches the fire and sparks fly. We join the sparks and move on.

The settlement is a collection of shelters made from wood. The shelters are all rectangular or square. They have small vegetable gardens around them which are divided into perfect squares by wooden barriers.

Every man-made thing we see, where possible, is a square or a rectangle.

Between the dwellings, at head height, ropes have been strung and criss-cross the village in an intricate pattern. Each rope is a different thickness and we will learn the people use them to navigate (as will be explained).

All the villagers are dressed in furs or skirts and tunics made from woven grasses, though some are almost naked. Women show their breasts and some men and women have single tunics pulled around their naked bodies.

We should notice that some of the men are whirling long leather ropes around their heads and these are making the noise we heard in the cave. The ropes have blades and rocks fastened to them and they orbit fast. The throbbing, roaring noise adds to the strangeness.

The village has been built on a plateau near the top of a mountain and beyond, there is a breathtakingly beautiful view of mountains and a river valley.

The sun is rising magnificently and we see a caption.

'The Adirondak Mountains. New York State. June. 2617'

As we join, the village is in a panic. Men and women race around, all holding the ropes which act as tram lines. Some of the men beat war drums. A second caption.

'Following the outbreak of a deadly virus in the 22nd century, the earth's human population has been reduced to less than two million'.

Fade out and up...

'Those humans who still survive are all blind'.

We come close to a warrior (ARCA) dispensing weapons and we see that his eyes reflect the sunrise without focus. Those coming for weapons hold out hands and feel the air for the blades that are held out for them.

The people have their hair greased into twisted ringlets with elaborate contours. The intricate 'dread locks' worn by women are different to those of men but, on both sexes, the result should be (accidentally) beautiful. Caption...

'The Tenebris virus spread across the globe, altering human DNA, causing the human retina to thicken and lose all sensitivity to light'.

We come back to Baba Voss at the bonfire. (Beside the fire there is a large steel BANK SAFE of 21st century vintage with its door closed. It is close enough to the fire to be heated by it. For now we don't dwell).

Baba Voss is now joined by a man in his fifties, though his limp and thin frame age him.

He wears furs and dozens of odd metal items such as keys and twisted nails which hang from a leather necklace. This is THE DREAMER.

He comes to Baba Voss, fretting...

DREAMER

Baba Voss! Baba Voss!! Before you go into battle we must make sacrifice to the Gods.

Baba Voss appears reluctant to delay but yells...

BABA VOSS

Very well. Empty the traps!

Instantly the younger villagers reach up and grab particular ropes and run with one hand cupped around their ropes. The ropes lead them in different directions and we follow a young boy as he runs to the edge of the village (where there are shells and bones tied into bundles on ropes to make a rattling noise when the wind blows).

The boy feels with his hand and finds an intricately built trap made of sticks with a trap door entrance. Inside are two mice. The boy reaches in and grabs the mice.

Caption; 'Since the virus struck, humanity has survived using the technologies of darkness, without sight or even the memory of sight'.

A little way beyond, a young girl has followed her rope to a tangle of twine which has captured a struggling pigeon. The girl grabs the pigeon and then grabs her rope with her free hand and runs back toward the fire.

The young villagers who emptied the traps now bring their captured animals to the fire. As they return they hand the animals to the Dreamer, who with shaking hands begins to impale the living creatures on skewers and put them on the flames.

As he does, he offers a prayer...

DREAMER

Great Flame. May my prayer rise with the smoke. Put your heat into our God bones. Protect our mountain home, fill the enemy's bowels with our rope music. Amen.

Over this prayer another caption...

Caption- 'In this age of darkness, blind Kingdom fights blind Kingdom. Village fights village. The idea that vision ever even existed is now a dangerous and forbidden heresy'.

We move back through smoke to where Paris is emerging from the darkness of the cave. She uses a rope to hurry to the fire. As she approaches, a final caption...

Caption: But this is all about to change...

Paris takes Baba Voss's arm and he turns.

PARIS

Baba Voss, the baby is about to be born...

He touches her face gently....

BABA VOSS

How is Maghra?

PARIS

Afraid for you.

Baba Voss and Paris touch each other's faces and we see their closeness. Baba Voss whispers....

BABA VOSS

Please tell her this. I will return. I will love and protect them both.

Paris half smiles....

PARIS

You are a sweet big lump Baba Voss.

She tweaks his nose.

PARIS (CONT'D)

But right now the tribe needs you to be a bear.

Baba Voss grunts assent. He uses his sword to sweep the air toward the steel safe beside the fire. He stands on top of it, framed by smoke and flames and he yells...

BABA VOSS

From our holy altar, I swear to defend from man, wolf or bear the flame of the Alkenny.

The villagers around all yell. Baba Voss holds his sword in the flame for a moment then spins...

BABA VOSS (CONT'D)

To the wall!

EXT. HILLSIDE, DAWN

The sun is rising, There is a roaring, throbbing, howling sound. Close up now and terrifying.

Then we hear the clatter of men and metal, chains and boots and grunts. The warriors wear metal armor fashioned from reclaimed steel, iron, brass, even old oil drums, though we can't yet make out what these things once were.

The metal has been beaten flat and held together with leather or wire. There is no decoration of any kind on any of the warriors.

The men all wear helmets that have no slits or holes for eyes. There are holes cut for ears and a hole for the nose, but this army fights without vision.

The line of warriors at the front are the ones spinning the leather ropes. As well as being weapons, the spinning ropes also find obstacles.

(When a rope hits a tree or a rock it tangles around it. The man holding the rope then pulls himself to the obstacle. Once he is at the obstacle he begins to hit it with a hollow stick. The noise prevents others hitting the obstacle and they walk around the sound).

Other warriors beat drums to keep the army together. All the men are armed with swords and lances fashioned roughly from steel or iron. They are now chanting a tuneless war song as they march forward.

Baba Voss is at the head.

As the army reaches the crest of a hill Baba Voss removes his eyeless helmet. He yells...

BABA VOSS

Halt!

The drumming and wailing stops and the men fall silent. Those with leather ropes suddenly direct their leashes into the ground and they hit the earth with a thud. A dry wind blows.

BABA VOSS (CONT'D)

Scentiers! Dream the wind!

Four warriors selected for their evolved enhanced sense of smell (SCENTIERS) remove their helmets and begin to sniff the air like dogs. The four take huge breaths in and out through their noses, their breath clouding. They breath in unison.

As we study their faces we see that they have livid raised scars running across their faces, from cheeks and ears and foreheads to the base of their nostrils, as if guiding energy into their noses.

As they snort the air they stare directly at the sun. Finally the four Scentiers consult quickly and then one of them calls out.

SCENTIER 1

Dogs, horses and men cutting up mud and reeds.

SCENTIER 2

Mixed with wet clay. They are crossing the river.

SCENTIER 3

They burn Beechwood smoke of the Payan-Ne-Shon tribe.

A pause as the wind blows more information. Baba Voss is puzzled.

BABA VOSS

Why would the Payan come so far?

ARCA

Maybe they are just passing by.

BABA VOSS

No one comes to these mountains for no reason. Ayuras! How many?!

Two warriors angle their heads and listen to the wind.

AYURA WARRIOR

Hooves squashing pebbles.

The two consult, angling their head....

AYURA WARRIOR 2

A hundred horse.

The second Ayura then gets down on his knees and puts his ear to the ground. He places the flats of his palms on the ground, then calls out.

AYURA WARRIOR 2 (CONT'D)

Two hundred horse. And men marching. Four hundred, maybe more.

Baba Voss is now incredulous.

BABA VOSS

This isn't a raiding party, it's a whole army.

There are less than a hundred warriors in Baba's army. On hearing the numbers they slowly begin to remove their helmets and shake out their hair. We see some are young men, some are women, some are teenage boys and girls.

ARCA

Maybe they are just following the river to another valley.

BABA VOSS

Matal? *Presage*. What is their intention.

A woman in her thirties with her hair pulled back sharply and with a scroll of raised tattoos on her face raises her head a little. (We will get to know MATAL well, she is a woman with gifts of intuition).

MATAL

I feel savage intent in the air.
Savage and soon. I would need Paris here to know for certain.

Baba Voss senses fear in his troops. He speaks calmly...

BABA VOSS

Then prepare for steep ground.

The soldiers instantly and in unison begin to unfasten leather mittens that hang on sinews from their belts. They expertly (and without looking) pull draw strings tight around their wrists with their teeth. Some have bear paws which have been hollowed out to make mittens.

Having pulled on their mittens the warriors squat down onto all fours and begin to make their way down the steep slope like an army of four legged animals.

The warriors almost bounce down the slope, with their palms protected by leather. Their animal movement is even and graceful, legs strong as Cossack dancers. Sometimes they turn and roll for a few yards then straighten and bounce down the slope again.

Their strange advance is as fast as a gallop.

Only Baba Voss walks upright, and he treads with a deliberately heavy step, digging his heels into the scabble of loose rock, using a long stick dug into the earth. He looks mighty as he walks and knocks a small hollow stick against his larger stick and the sound echoes...

Baba Voss now cups his hand to his mouth to direct his voice and begins to exclaim as he strides down the mountain....

BABA VOSS (CONT'D)

Ba, ba, ba, ba!

He listens to the echo of his voice. He then whacks his stick against the rocks as he walks and listens again to the echo. Finally....

BABA VOSS (CONT'D)

Slow!

The warriors in unison roll onto their sides and roll a couple of times then spring back to all fours. Baba Voss marches through them and we realize he is using a kind of echo sonar to guide himself...

BABA VOSS (CONT'D)

Ba! Ba! Ba!

We walk with him until he stops dead in a shadow. Then we come around to a surprise.

Five yards ahead of him there is a wall of boulders, twenty feet high. Baba Voss extends his staff and walks forward until his stick hits the wall of boulders. He hits the wall three times then whispers to the rocks.

BABA VOSS (CONT'D)

Blessed rocks. Gift of the ancestors. Protect us as you have always done before.

The other warriors get to their feet and walk slowly toward the wall of boulders. They walk evenly, with a particular rhythm, with one hand in front of their faces until their palms touch the rock.

As they approach, we rise up to see the extent of the wall and its shape.

For a mile in both directions rocks and boulders and debris has been piled up against a huge fence made from cut timber. The wall is on the steepest part of the slope, so that it 'leans' over the mountain at an angle. If the wooden supports were to be removed, the boulders would cascade down the mountainside.

At each end of the wall the mountain turns into a sheer cliff. There is no way up or down other than over the wall.

BABA VOSS (CONT'D)

Now sharpen your God-bone!

The warriors begin to spit on the boulders and use them as whetstones to scrape their blades sharp. As they work....

Meanwhile Baba Voss uses his sense of touch to climb up the stone wall and reach the summit. Below we see (though he doesn't) a line of men and horses crossing a river a mile down below at a shallow point. We will learn that this is Queen Kane's army but, for now, they are just the glints of metal armor and trails of smoke (to be explained) which rise from the warriors.

Baba Voss angles his head and listens to the wind blowing his thick straggle of beard. He hears the odd clank of metal, voices, horses, dogs barking. He yells...

BABA VOSS (CONT'D)
I can hear *them* so they can hear
us! Sharpen louder!

The men scrape and drag their blades harder across the rocks and the air is filled with the sound of screeching metal. Down below, dogs begin to howl. We stay on Baba Voss's defiant face as he listens to the wind.

Baba Voss clambers down the stone wall and lands heavily. He calls out.

BABA VOSS (CONT'D)
If they come, we will send them
back to their Queen Kane in the
bellies of their own dogs!

The warriors, (terrified but defiant) all roar.

INT. CAVE - DAWN

The roar of the warriors becomes Maghra grunting in pain. Paris is an experienced midwife and is feeling for the baby's head. The cave is now almost lit and we see more detail. Beyond the mouth of the cave we can just make out smoke from fires, the outlines of indistinct structures. Lots of ropes and threads running in all directions.

We see people hurrying, gathering belongings in panic. Inside the cave there is now a living quality to the color. A swirl, movement like dust in a flashlight beam. It should be beautiful.

Maghra's contraction ends and she gathers her breath...

MAGHRA
Who is attacking us? We paid our
taxes before the rivers froze.

Paris feigns indifference...

PARIS
Perhaps it's just nomads hunting
for slaves. Now I must ask you to
push.

Maghra gasps with pain but reaches out to feel Paris's face.

MAGHRA
Don't forget, Paris, I am an Ayura.
Nothing escapes my ears. I have not
known you long but I hear doors
closing in your voice.

Paris takes hold of her face.

PARIS

Your job right now is to breath and push.

MAGHRA

I hear secrets. What are you not telling me?

A pause.

PARIS

How would I know anything. I am an old woman....

MAGHRA

...Who talks to birds and hears the future in her sleep.

Maghra fights a contraction. Paris looks deeply uncertain as she busies herself and reveals...

PARIS

For three nights a raven has been calling out in the night.

MAGHRA

Saying what?

Paris strokes damp hair from Maghra's face.

PARIS

Saying that The Witchfinders are coming.

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE

Horse hooves splash across a ford. An army of terrifying, elite warriors has just crossed a river and is preparing to climb a mountain.

We see a line of men on horseback. The horses each have a dog ahead of them and the dog collars are tied to the horse bits, so that the dogs are leading the horses.

The warriors on the back of the horses are wild and fierce. Their hair is greased into huge plumes and swirls. Their faces and bodies are branded with deep swirling designs.

They wear wooden armor, like the armor of Japanese Samurai. They all have spiked collars around their necks to deter fatal animal bites. They carry long spears with tips burnt and sharpened. The lead warrior carries a small metal bucket which contains burning embers. As he rides he adds wood chips and herbs to the embers, so that a plume of smoke engulfs the riders.

On the woven saddles of the warriors we see severed human heads dangling, along with severed hands and feet.

There are other dogs trotting beside them, a stringy breed of hunting dog. The rider behind the rider with the fire bucket has a tunic made from snake skin and it is swirled around his body as if he is being consumed by a giant python.

This man is TAMACTI JUN, THE WITCHFINDER GENERAL.

All the men have long mustaches and beards, twisted into points. They also have bear skins slung over the rumps of their horses.

They have odd metal objects clanking from their saddles and around their necks. Wrenches, nails, pieces of car engine. The oddest things seem precious, all are metal...

In the near distance we see the smoke of Alkeny village. We also see the long line of boulders that form the wall high up the slope. The dogs begin to bark and howl and the column is halted by Tamacti with a grunt.

Tamacti sniffs the air and calls out....

TAMACTI JUN

Who goes there!

A galloping horse breaks cover on the other side of the river. A warrior on horseback is dragging a man in his early twenties behind him. (We will learn the man being dragged is GETHER BAX) He has been lassoed and the mounted warrior drags him across the river, pulling him over gravel shallows and through deep water.

Flies buzz around the severed heads as Tamacti sniffs the air and listens to the man's cries. On the wind we can hear a sharp scraping noise of swords being sharpened from high up the mountain.

The dogs begin to snarl and bark as the warrior comes to a halt.

WARRIOR

I smelt a boy in the bushes.

Gether Bax, twisting in the rope...

GETHER BAX

Untie this fucking rope right now!

Instantly....

TAMACTI JUN

Ah. A boy in need of education.

The warrior tosses the rope to Tamacti Jun and Tamacti gives the rope a mighty tug and Gether Bax falls to the ground.

Tamacti Jun winds the rope around the horn of his saddle and then quickly dismounts and follows the rope to Gether Bax.

TAMACTI JUN (CONT'D)
I am Tamacti Jun, the Witchfinder
General. In my presence it is
customary to kneel.

Gether Bax gets up onto his knees.

GETHER BAX
Forgive me Sir...

Tamacti Jun whacks him across the face with his cane. Gether Bax explains fast...

GETHER BAX (CONT'D)
...But I am Gether Bax. It was me
who sent you the message to come
here.

Tamacti Jun reacts then hauls him to his feet with the rope...

TAMACTI JUN
Ah. Then it is I who should
apologize.

Tamacti Jun half turns to his warriors then speaks with heavy irony....

TAMACTI JUN (CONT'D)
Behold. Our informant. A man who
would betray his own tribe to fight
the devil and do God's work.

Gether wipes blood from his face and we assess him for the first time. He pumps himself up....

GETHER BAX
That I am indeed.

Gether is a skinny man with an intelligent look. He has his hair twisted into a coil on his head and has a steel coil hanging from a leather cord around his neck. We will get to know Gether Bax well.

Tamacti Jun then reaches to his belt and takes a length of string, half a yard long.

TAMACTI JUN
Your message says you have
information of use to the Holy
Guardians...

We come close to the string and see it has a complex series of knots in it. Tamacti Jun licks his thumb and forefinger and begins to feed the strings through his fingers...

TAMACTI JUN (CONT'D)
...regarding a particular disciple
of the devil...

Gether Bax interrupts with authority.

GETHER BAX
...Who as I understand it, you have
been hunting for two winters.

Gether's voice suggests he believes this gives him leverage.

GETHER BAX (CONT'D)
...A heretic who Queen Kane herself
has condemned to death. A conjuror
who turns into a bird or a wolf
sometimes...

Tamacti Jun grabs Gether's face.

TAMACTI JUN
Just tell us what you know about
him.

Gether Bax gathers courage and dares hold back...

GETHER BAX
I know from your heralds that there
is a reward for information
leading to his capture.

A dry wind blows.

TAMACTI JUN
So your motivation is not holy.

GETHER BAX
A reward of a girl slave and a
Royal permit to own two trained
dogs. That's what I heard.

Silence quickly makes Gether lose his nerve...

GETHER BAX (CONT'D)
Though actually I will settle for
just the girl. I hate dogs.

Tamacti effortlessly winds the rope around Gether Bax's
throat and tugs it. Gether Bax breaths fast, terrified now...

TAMACTI JUN
Your reward will be your next
breath if the Holy Guardians find
your information of use.

Tamacti Jun pulls the rope. Gether Bax whispers...

GETHER BAX

To speak, I need my throat.

Tamacti Jun loosens the rope. Three Ayura warriors step closer.

TAMACTI JUN

My Ayuras will hear any lie like a foot through ice.

GETHER BAX

I promise Sir. No ice will I break.

TAMACTI JUN

Speak.

Gether Bax feels the heat and speaks for his life...

GETHER BAX

At the end of winter a woman wandered into our village. A stranger to us...

INT. CAVE

We come close to Maghra. She is in the final stages of child birth. Paris has prepared a bowl of warm water on the fire.

GETHER BAX (CONT'D)

...she was found among our berry bushes. She is Mascaripok tribe. She said she had got lost in a blizzard...

Paris feels the head...

GETHER BAX (CONT'D)

She asked to be taken in. Because she was two months pregnant...

We see Maghra react to a huge contraction and she screams.

PARIS (SOFTLY)

Maghra, the baby is coming....

Paris takes a position to deliver the baby. Gether Bax continues in voiceover...

GETHER BAX (OOV)

We held a Parliament. The head of the village said he would take care of her. He has not been able to have children of his own so he married her. She has been with him ever since...

The baby slithers into the world and Paris takes the baby up with a gasp. Suddenly....

EXT. RIVERSIDE

...Tamacti Jun has pulled a knife and puts it sharply to Gether Bax's throat...

TAMACTI JUN

Tell me something that I can use.
Quickly.

Gether Bax fumbles in his tunic. He finds a length of leather strap a foot long.

GETHER BAX (HURRYING)

She never said who the father of her baby was. But when she came to the village, she was wearing this necklace. Goat leather so it's a love token.

Gather Bax stretches the necklace out between his hands and we see intricate knots tied into it. His hands shake a little.

GETHER BAX (CONT'D)

It has a name written into it.
Read.

Tamacti Jun licks his fingers and reads the knots...

TAMACTI JUN (READING)

'Je', 'la', 'ma', 'rel'.
Jerlamarel.

On hearing the name the other warriors shiver a little. A raven in a nearby tree begins to caw. A wind blows the thick fur on Tamacti's coat.

GETHER BAX

That is the name of the heretic you have been seeking for two winters. Yes? The one Queen Kane fears.

A pause.

GETHER BAX (CONT'D)

Well even now in the village on the mountain a woman is giving birth to that devil's child. That counts as information doesn't it?

Tamacti Jun snatches the necklace from him. He half turns to his warriors.

TAMACTI JUN

Ayuras? Does this boy speak the truth?...

A warrior speaks up.

WITCHFINDER AYURA

The truth as he believes it.

A pause. More Ravens are cawing in the nearby trees. Tamacti Jun buries the necklace in his pocket and walks quickly to his horse and calls back...

TAMACTI JUN

Gether Bax. Tell my Generals how your village is defended...

He leaps into the saddle...

TAMACTI JUN (CONT'D)

If we find a woman giving birth to a devil I may let you live.

He wheels his horse around...

TAMACTI JUN (CONT'D)

If not, you will burn too.

EXT. WALL OF BOULDERS

The Alkenny army is now lined along the top of the boulder wall. Baba Voss is standing tall with his head angled. He hears (and we see) the army down below beginning to fan out into a line ready for the ascent and assault on the village.

BABA VOSS

Ayuras!

The two Ayuras angle their heads.

WARRIOR

They are forming a battle line.

The Alkenny warriors pull their swords.

WARRIOR 2

There are two lines. The horses are still at the river's edge.

Baba Voss begins to walk along the top of the line of the boulders and bolsters their resolve.

BABA VOSS

They are many and we are few but we have the slope.

He marches on, sure-footed with his stick tapping the boulders gently...

BABA VOSS (CONT'D)

And we have the help of our brothers, the rocks.

He hammers the rocks beneath his feet with his stick as he returns along the line of boulders...

BABA VOSS (CONT'D)

It took our ancestors many years to
build this wall. It has served us
well. And will do so again.

Baba Voss also stares up at the sun, which is now blazing...

BABA VOSS (CONT'D)

Great Flame. Protect us.

A pause. He speaks more softly...

BABA VOSS (CONT'D)

....And deliver Maghra's child
safely into the world.

He yells....

BABA VOSS (CONT'D)

Spin the ropes!

The warriors carrying the long ropes stand and begin to spin them. The unearthly throbbing wailing sound begins and the warriors pull on their eyeless helmets.

INT. CAVE - DAY

Paris is inspecting the baby's body with her fingertips. Maghra is just recovering. Paris clutches the baby's hands and feet....

MAGHRA

Boy or girl?

PARIS

Boy. Whole. Ten fingers, ten
toes.

The baby begins to cry loudly...

PARIS (CONT'D)

Two clean lungs.

Paris hands the bloody baby to Maghra who sobs and holds the baby tight.

PARIS (CONT'D)

I will cut the cord....

Paris reaches into her tunic and produces a blade. She reaches down and, as Maghra smiles love to the bloody face in her arms...

PARIS (OOV) (CONT'D)
Ah! No! Gad! A little foot.

MAGHRA (SLURS) (OOV)
A what?

PARIS (OOV)
There are two. There is another.
Sinjay!

MAGHRA (OOV)
A foot?

PARIS (OOV)
It's two. The second is the wrong
way. Sinjay!...

We hear a clatter as a metal bowl of water is kicked over and a young girl (SINJAY) yelps in pain and approaches, running her hand along one of the threads.

PARIS (OOV) (CONT'D)
Bring the knife hanging on the
wall. Here. No, here.
Papapapapa...

The rapid pop of the 'papapapa' echoes. Sinjay feels the rock wall then finds a bone handled knife. Paris takes Maghra's face in her hand...

PARIS (OOV) (CONT'D)
I must bring the other out quickly
or you will both die.

Maghra growls like an animal with visceral agony....

EXT. ROCK WALL

...A blade smashes the head of one of Tamacti Jun's warriors.

Now we encounter 'blind combat' in all its savage glory.

We find Baba Voss in the middle of a battle that is now raging. The Alkenny army are on the wall and are using their long killing ropes to good effect. The ropes cut and scythe through the mounted warriors and become entwined around arms and necks.

We might notice that no cavalry are involved in the attack.

Each time a rope hits an enemy the warrior yanks it tight to strangle or pull the victim close to be stabbed by the long lances the defenders are using.

The attack dogs of Queen Kane's army are no use at the foot of the wall and the warriors hurl boulders down from on high.

However, Tamacti Jun's men are also using killing ropes too and the ropes of attackers and defenders become tangled. The warriors then engage in a deadly tug of war. Defenders are pulled from the wall to be devoured by dogs.

The ropes skim the top of the wall, wrapping around ankles and legs. Baba Voss is in the middle of the line, using a long length of steel, too heavy for most men to handle, and is sweeping it and stabbing it into any flesh that comes close to the wall.

This blind fighting is targeted and random at the same time.

Soon attackers are finding footings in the rock and are climbing up the steep wall.

Ayuras angle their heads and listen for the sound of climbers. When they locate one they drive down with long sharp spikes to cut them from the wall.

The battle is hand-to-hand and bloody. Baba Voss gets a killing rope wrapped around his ankle and is pulled over. He is about to be dragged off the wall but he uses his super strength to hold on. He then grabs the rope and pulls with all his might. An attacker is pulled from his saddle.

Baba Voss cuts the rope and gets back to his feet. He hears Arca yell....

ARCA

Baba voss! They are too many!
They are on the wall!

The battle continues and Baba Voss feels a blow to his back and spins and beheads attackers with a sweep of his blade. The battle is now happening on the top of the wall and is murderous.

Baba Voss takes a moment then makes an agonizing decision. He yells....

BABA VOSS

Fall back! Fall back!

The defenders take the cue and begin to scramble away from the wall. The attackers yell and begin to swarm up the rock face.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the wall, Baba Voss has found three thick steel chains that run from the timber supports that hold the wall in place.

Baba Voss uses his mighty strength and an iron bar to hammer open a metal lock that holds the chain in place around a steel spike driven into the ground. Arca calls out...

ARCA

Baba Voss, what are you doing?!

BABA VOSS

Help me!

Arca approaches as Baba Voss unfastens another chain...

BABA VOSS (CONT'D)

We can't hold back a whole army.

He beats another lock open. With each beat..

BABA VOSS (CONT'D)

Parliamentary statute allows us to
release the rocks. As a last
resort. If there is no other hope.

A spinning rope zips overhead and they duck....

BABA VOSS (CONT'D)

And there is no other hope.

He yells...

BABA VOSS (CONT'D)

Locan! Ilun! Bak! Release the
chains!

Four big men are now hammering open locks. The chains, once freed, fly fast through the air and over the wall. Baba Voss and the others run relay to unfasten the chains and cut ropes.

BABA VOSS (CONT'D)

Clear the wall and may the invaders
be damned! Fly my brothers!

Soon there is a mighty crack as the first of the unsupported timbers give way under the weight of the rocks they are holding. Once the first breach is made, the other timbers begin to snap and pieces fly.

BABA VOSS (CONT'D)

Avalanche!!

On the other side of the wall the attackers can hear what is happening and begin to turn and run.

Tamacti's warriors fall onto all fours and begin to gallop and bounce down the hill.

The boulder wall bursts and the huge boulders begin to tumble down the steep slope. The infantry are soon being smashed to pieces by the wall of boulders.

We come around to Baba Voss, bloodied, breathless, as he listens to the terrible screams of the soldiers and the earth-shaking rumble of the avalanche.

EXT. RIVERSIDE

We see the avalanche and carnage from down below. Then find Tamacti Jun and his cavalry mounted beside the river. Gether Bax is on foot in the shallow water.

Tamacti Jun listens to the terrible sound of rocks and men.

TAMACTI JUN

Gether Bax, your prediction was correct.

A pause. Some rocks are now rolling slowly on the shallow incline into the water. We come close to Gether Bax and see a look of defiance and regret on his face.

TAMACTI JUN (CONT'D)

And there is only one way off this mountain, yes?

GETHER BAX

Ravines and sheer cliffs on all sides except this. That's why this place was chosen by the ancestors.

On the word 'ancestors', Gether Bax's voice breaks a little. Tamacti Jun assesses his voice.

TAMACTI JUN

How long has your tribe been here?

Gether Bax hears more rocks splashing around him. He takes a breath to hide emotion...

GETHER BAX

Since King John of the Nayak defeated the Alkenny Confederacy. Three generations. We are the only Alkenny left.

TAMACTI JUN

And you betray your people for what? A girl and a dog?

GETHER BAX

No.

A pause.

GETHER BAX (CONT'D)

My reason would disturb even your dreams Witchfinder.

A pause.

GETHER BAX (CONT'D)

Burn them all for all I care.

We will learn more about the motive of his betrayal over time. There is a rumble of thunder on the horizon. Everyone instantly angles their head...

TAMACTI JUN

Ayuras!?

AYURA WARRIOR

Storm coming from the warm wind!

TAMCTI JUN

How far?

AYURA WARRIOR

A thousand beats of a calm heart.

(We will learn that, in our world, South is 'warm-wind', north is 'cold-wind', East is 'sun-cradle' and West is 'sun-grave'.)

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY

Another crack of thunder. The defending army is silent as the rocks come to rest in the river below. Baba Voss calls out...

BABA VOSS

Ayuras! Scentiers!

The rocks have all come to rest. Silence. A wind blows in the faces of the warriors. Two Scentiers who have survived read the wind.

SCENTIER

Blood. Human offal. Many dead.

AYURA WARRIOR

But horses snorting. Pawing pebbles. Many horses....

On the breeze we hear the beat of drums from down in the valley.

AYURA WARRIOR (CONT'D)

Their cavalry untouched.

We come close to Baba Voss's face as he registers.

BABA VOSS

They knew to hold back. How could they know?

Matal has survived too and comes close....

MATAL

The Payan have presagers too. Maybe they read our intentions.

Baba Voss reacts to suspicion. But Arca comes to him and speaks softly.

ARCA

Baba Voss, we are defenceless.
What do we do now?

INT. CAVE - SAME TIME

We join just as a second baby is born. The baby girl is lifted into a roll of buckskin. Paris holds it while Sinjay cuddles the new born boy. Paris wipes her brow with a bloody wrist and takes the baby and inspects.

PARIS

A girl this time. Whole. Maghra please, no more.

Maghra is panting and laughs and cries at the same time. She has lost a lot of blood and is almost delirious.

MAGHRA

I heard the earth shaking. Or did I imagine that?

PARIS (AFRAID)

You didn't imagine it....

Maghra laughs and cries, hardly caring with the babies in her arms...

PARIS (OOV) (CONT'D)

Take them to your breasts and try to feed them.

Paris offers Maghra her babies but she is more concerned with the moment. ...

MAGHRA

Paris, I promised myself that the moment they were born I would tell you the truth about their father.

PARIS (SOFTLY)

Maghra, this is not the time and, anyway, I know more than you think. Take this one first.

Maghra takes one of the babies but continues...

MAGHRA

The true father was a man like no other...

PARIS

Push her firmly to the breast. Like this...

Maghra is babbling...

MAGHRA

He led me to safety in a blizzard on a mountain path. How did he do that? He found shelter in a strange place. And he brought me here to this village. I didn't wander here, he *brought* me here as if he had a reason...

Interrupting...

PARIS

Yes, a reason he had.

Silence. Maghra hears deep significance. Paris continues.

PARIS (SOFTLY) (CONT'D)

He knew things no man can know. He could do things no man can do. And he told you wild heresies about the history of humankind...

Maghra pauses, shocked.

MAGHRA

Yes. Paris, how do you know?

Paris touches Maghra's face gently....

PARIS

There is much I know that I must tell when you are healed. The future is beyond your imagination. For now, feed these precious ones.

Softly...

PARIS (CONT'D)

These chosen ones...

Maghra is about to speak but Paris puts her finger to her lips. At that moment we hear yelling outside and men running. Paris angles her head.

PARIS (CONT'D)

The warriors are back.

EXT. ALKENNY VILLAGE

Rain is falling hard now. Baba Voss is leading his warriors back into the village where the women and children who didn't fight are waiting. Villagers call out to their loved ones and use voices to find them and hug.

BABA VOSS
No time for this. To the fire!
Parliament!

The Dreamer comes to Baba Voss and hisses...

DREAMER
Baba Voss? You sacrificed the
rocks? Our brothers....

BABA VOSS
I had no choice. Half of Queen
Kane's army is in the valley.

The Dreamer trots beside Baba Voss as he walks fast.

DREAMER
If they are an army and not bandits
perhaps we can surrender to them.

BABA VOSS
No. They are led by the
Witchfinder General. Witchfinders
take no prisoners, they only burn.

The word 'witchfinders' spreads among the crowd gathering in
the rain.

DREAMER
But there are no witches here Baba
Voss. Why did they come?

Baba Voss steps up onto the metal safe beside the fire and
announces, quickening the formalities.

BABA VOSS
I declare the Alkenny Parliament in
session. Hear this. Our wall has
gone. We had no choice. But the
enemy remain in the valley.

Raindrops hiss in the fire and thunder rumbles.

BABA VOSS (CONT'D)
God flame has raised rain. They
won't attempt the slope in this
weather, so we have time.

VOICE
Time for what? We're trapped.

Silence, rain falls. There is hopelessness in Baba Voss's
voice.

BABA VOSS
We must prepare to make a last
stand. Here.

The villagers react.

VOICE

How can we defend? There are no defences.

BABA VOSS

We still have man and bear traps on the perimeter. We can string ropes to stop their horses. We need to do it before the storm passes.

No one moves. There is stunned silence. Rain soaks the villagers but they hardly feel it.

DREAMER

Is that your only plan?

BABA VOSS

Prepare! That is an order.

Baba Voss jumps down and hurries toward the cave.

DREAMER

Baba Voss, where are you going?

Baba Voss roars...

BABA VOSS

I said prepare to make a stand!!

INT. CAVE

One of the ropes inside the cave is plucked and we come around to see Baba Voss standing in the mouth. He follows a rope and comes to Paris and Maghra...

MAGHRA

Baba Voss?

BABA VOSS

No. A bear.

Baba Voss steps closer. He feels the air and touches the first baby.

PARIS

Baba there are two. A boy and a girl.

Baba Voss fights a tear and Paris touches his cheek. The ferocious warrior is now soft as a kitten.

PARIS (CONT'D)

Did the rocks take them all?

BABA VOSS

No.

A pause.

PARIS

So what will we do?

Baba Voss reaches out and touches the second baby with his giant hand.

MAGHRA

Baba Voss, will we survive the day?

A long pause.

BABA VOSS

Not without God's help. And I fear he has finally abandoned the Alkenny.

Outside, a crack of thunder.

BABA VOSS (CONT'D)

They have horses and dogs. When the storm is over, they will come for us.

Baba Voss smiles and touches the babies gently.

BABA VOSS (CONT'D)

All my life I have lain with my wives and never once did they bear fruit.

He smiles and kisses the first baby, his hands and face still covered in the blood of killing, the babies bloody from birth.

BABA VOSS (CONT'D)

And now, at the last moment I have two.

He smiles and touches each on turn....

BABA VOSS (CONT'D)

One. Two. And I would have loved them. So much.

He takes Maghra's arm.

BABA VOSS (CONT'D)

As I have come to love you Maghra. In this short time. From the first moment....

Suddenly they hear someone hurrying inside. A pot clattered. All heads turn. It is Sinjay. In the flickering firelight we can see a face.

SINJAY

Baba Voss, you must come. They have voted without you.

EXT. ALKENNY VILLAGE

Rain falls in sheets. The bedraggled villagers all hold weapons and have gathered around the mouth of the cave. The rain is extinguishing the fire which billows smoke. Baba Voss emerges and sniffs the air, feels the mood.

BABA VOSS

Did you string horse lines?

The Dreamer steps in front of the other villagers.

DREAMER

No Baba Voss. We continued the Parliamentary session that you called.

A pause.

DREAMER (CONT'D)

It was pointed out that Witchfinders only come if they believe there are witches. We have never been visited before in three generations.

A woman in her forties (SOUTER BAX, a member of the Bax family) calls out...

SOUTER BAX

Until that bitch in there came to drop her litter amongst us.

Baba Voss reaches for his blade. The Dreamer hears and lays his hand on the blade.

DREAMER

In our brief but productive Parliament in the rain, it was suggested that perhaps the Witchfinders are here for her.

VOICE

And her brood.

DREAMER

The motion was put forward that perhaps if we give the woman and the babies to the Witchfinders they might take her back to Payan and have her tried by Queen Kane. Then they might leave us alone. What say ye Baba Voss? She is new to you and the babies are not even yours.

A pause. A crack of thunder. The Dreamer, before diffident and fretful, is now deadly. As the thunder cracks, he calls out....

DREAMER (CONT'D)

Ayuras? How long until the storm passes?

VOICE

Three hundred beats of a calm heart.

DREAMER

And there are no calm hearts here. Baba Voss we have no time. It is the will of the people.

A flash of lightning that no one sees.

BABA VOSS

Very well. You must obey the vote.

Baba Voss noisily pulls his blade...

BABA VOSS (CONT'D)

But it will be difficult for any man to take a woman and two newborns down a mountain without his arms or legs.

DREAMER

Now, Baba Voss, you are a big man but we are many. You can't kill us all?

BABA VOSS

No, but I can kill the first six or seven. So those who wish to be among that number step forward. I have my blade ready to count you to heaven.

There is a tense stand off in the hissing rain. Arca steps forward and joins Baba Voss.

ARCA

Arca. Quartermaster. I stand with
Baba Voss.

Another warrior pulls his sword.

ILUN

Ilun. Killing rope. I stand with
Baba Voss.

Another warrior pulls his sword....

WARRIOR 2

I am the voice of the people and
we say we give the woman up!

Many voices begin to yell. Scuffling breaks out. Baba Voss
sweeps his sword through the air. The crowd begin to bay like
dogs around a bear.

INT. CAVE

We hear the yelling outside. Maghra tries to get to her feet
but Paris settles her.

MAGHRA

Paris. We must do something.

Paris stands.

PARIS

Stay. It is in hand. The moment has
come.

She unfastens her fur tunic. Around her waist we see a
leather string, intricately knotted.

MAGHRA

What moment?

The string is three yards long and coiled around her waist.
She begins to untie it....

PARIS

Sometimes ravens tell me things.
Sometimes it is more simple than
that.

Paris has untied the leather string and lets it unroll. She
puts one end in Maghra's hand.

PARIS (CONT'D)

The night you came to us, this
message was left on my altar.

Maghra wets her fingers and begins to feel the string as the
baby feeds. She feels one of the first words...

MAGHRA

'Jerlamarel'.

PARIS

When he left you here he also left explanations and instructions. And prophesies. I have kept it on my body ever since.

Maghra is feeling fast and runs three knots through her fingers...

MAGHRA

'Escape'?

PARIS

Yes. Now feel the next word.

Maghra runs two knots through her fingers. Before she can read aloud...

PARIS (QUICKLY) (CONT'D)

Prepare the babies for a long journey.

Paris leaves...

EXT. ALKENNY VILLAGE

The rain is easing but no one has noticed since the dispute has turned into an ugly brawl with Baba Voss presiding and protecting the cave. Everyone is falling short of using blades but they are imminent. The Dreamer is yelling...

DREAMER

The will of the people must prevail!

Suddenly Paris emerges from the cave and bangs a metal pot with a rock and yells...

PARIS

The storm is passing! Listen!

Quickly the crowd falls silent. Paris walks to the middle of the crowd.

PARIS (CONT'D)

You're so busy fighting you haven't even noticed. Feel. The rain has stopped.

A pause. Everyone feels the clear air. Drops drip. Paris addresses the terrified villagers with calm authority.

PARIS (CONT'D)

The Witchfinders are coming up the mountain. And if anyone here believes they could make a deal with them then they are mistaken.

A pause.

PARIS (CONT'D)

In the name of God they will rape the women and girls and boys, then they will burn everyone. That is their creed. Once Witchcraft is identified in a village the whole village must burn to contain the contagion.

They all hear babies crying inside the cave.

PARIS (CONT'D)

Those babies would not buy your lives.

A pause.

DREAMER

So what do you suggest?

PARIS

You believe we are trapped here. We're not. There is another way off this mountain.

VOICE (ANGRY)

If you are a bird, yes.

PARIS

No. There is a bridge.

Around the crowd there is incredulity.

VOICE

A what?

PARIS

Over the Western ravine.

SOUTER BAX

What bridge?

DREAMER

The Alkenny have been on this mountain for generations. There has never been a bridge.

PARIS

There is now.

DREAMER

Built by who?

PARIS

Built by a man.

DREAMER (INCREDULOUS)

The ravine is a sling shot wide.

PARIS

Nevertheless the bridge has been built. To allow us to escape.

VOICE

No man could build a bridge that wide.

PARIS

Then since time is short, think of him as a God.

DREAMER

Why would this God build a bridge for us?

PARIS

There is no time for 'why'.

VOICE

How do you know so much?

PARIS

In the way that I always know so much.

SAUTER

Perhaps she is a witch too.

PARIS

Perhaps I am. But the Witchfinders are already half way up the slope. If I am a witch, I am also your death sentence.

A couple of villagers angle their heads and listen....

VOICE

Three hundred heart beats away.

PARIS

Those who stay will burn or worse. Even if there were no bridge the ravine is a kinder death. Gather your belongings and follow me.

At last Baba Voss speaks up...

BABA VOSS

Do you know the way to this bridge?

PARIS

Yes.

BABA VOSS

How?

PARIS

You must have faith.

INT. CAVE

We find Baba Voss arriving at speed...

MAGHRA

Did Paris speak?

BABA VOSS

She spoke madness or salvation. But
it's our only hope.

Sinjay is gathering furs. Baba Voss kneels before Maghra..

BABA VOSS (CONT'D)

I will carry you.

Paris enters...

PARIS

The people have voted to follow.

Maghra is in pain. Baba Voss takes her up in his giant arms
and we see she has Jerlamarel's 'letter' coiled in her hands.
Sinjay wraps one of the babies in a papoose, Paris the other.

As Baba Voss lifts Maghra...

MAGHRA

If we live, I will explain
everything.

BABA VOSS

Baba Voss does not ask for
explanations.

They walk quickly to the mouth of the cave where the storm
has passed and the sun has begun to shine again.

EXT. SLOPE

We find Tamacti Jun and his army forcing their horses up the
muddy slope. It is a hard business with the horses slipping
and men falling. Gether Bax is among them on a black horse.
He calls out...

GETHER BAX

Beware. There are bear traps and
man traps. They are marked with
lavender.

Tamacti Jun calls out...

TAMACIT JUN

Scent the dogs for lavender!

Four riders slip from their saddles and select a bag of herbs
from a selection. The dogs obey a barked order and gather
round. The bag of lavender is offered for them to sniff.
The dogs are then ordered ahead.

In the slick mud a soldier on foot slides down the slope. He
falls into a complex man trap made from saplings with metal
points driven into them. The soldier spins into the void and
is impaled on two shafts. The soldier is alive and screams.
Tamacti Jun calls out...

TAMACTO JUN

Push on! God's work is ahead!

INT. ALKENNY VILLAGE

Everyone is gathering their belongings at frantic speed. Baba
Voss is loading Maghra into a rustic hand cart with wooden
wheels. She grunts in pain but holds it...

MAGHRA

The babies....

Paris and Sinjay arrive and pass the babies to Maghra. Baba
Voss calls out....

BABA VOSS

Bring only what you can carry and
run with!

The Dreamer hurries to him...

DREAMER

We must take the altar and our
sacred bones of God.

BABA VOSS

If you can carry them and run with
them, you can bring them.

DREAMER

But they are gifts from the God
flame.

Paris brushes by....

PARIS

Perhaps the bridge will prove they
are not.

DREAMER

Am I among heretics now?

PARIS

I said 'perhaps'.

The dreamer turns in the swirl of people.

BABA VOSS

Form up as if for gathering
berries.

Quickly and efficiently the villagers pass two long ropes
from hand-to-hand and form two long lines. It looks like a
procedure carried out often. The two lines, linked by ropes,
reach a point at the front where the ropes join.

Paris hurries along the rope to the front. Baba Voss uses
his stick to sweep the ground in front of him. Men with
ropes form a phalanx near to the head of the line and begin
to spin them to feel for obstacles.

The people form up without orders. The result is impressive,
almost like a huge single organism, a centipede, with the
spinning ropes at the head as antennae.

Baba Voss joins Paris at the head of the column.

BABA VOSS (CONT'D)

Now tell me. How will you find this
bridge?

PARIS

His message said he built it at the
old temple. Where we used to throw
sacrifices. We follow the old
trail. I know it well.

BABA VOSS

Who is 'he'?

We hear the babies crying in their hand cart. Paris takes
Baba Voss's arm.

PARIS

Their true father.

Baba Voss takes a moment. He would dwell but time is too
short. And Baba Voss doesn't care for explanations. He
yells...

BABA VOSS

Forward!

Baba Voss grabs the yoke of the handcart and uses his enormous strength to begin to pull the cart with Maghra and the babies forward. The babies are crying.

The Dreamer stops and turns and calls back to the village...

DREAMER

Ancestors, forgive us!

EXT. ALKENNY VILLAGE

A magnificent curious sight. We see two columns of men, women and children, linked by ropes, following Paris and Baba Voss. To the left and right, ropes are being spun and used to navigate around trees. The two columns move quickly.

An Ayura calls out....

AYURA

Horses a hundred heartbeats behind us!

BABA VOSS

Faster!

The columns begin to run.

EXT. ALKENNY VILLAGE

The village is deserted and the fire is still burning. We hear the hooves of horses and the barking of dogs. Then twenty hunting dogs swarm into the village, racing into dwellings and tearing belongings apart.

EXT. HILLSIDE

The two columns are running, stumbling, carrying. They hear the dogs in the village and hurry even faster.

INT. ALKENNY VILLAGE

Tamacti Jun and his warriors gallop into the village with swords raised. They begin to dismount and swing their swords in the air, some spinning like spinning tops the way a warrior would do in an enemy village, ready for fights at close quarters.

However Tamacti hears the sounds the dogs are making and looks puzzled.

TAMACTI JUN

Silence!

Handlers yell at their dogs to heel. The horses come to a halt. A wind blows. Dogs pant. Other than that, there is no sound. Tamacti and the others react with incredulity.

TAMACTI JUN (CONT'D)

Scentiers?

A warrior sniffs the air.

SCENTIER

Only smoke.

TAMACTI JUN

Ayuras?

AYURA 1

No one even breaths.

Tamacti Jun grabs Gether Bax in his saddle and drags him close.

TAMACTI JUN

Where would they go?

GETHER BAX (SHOCKED)

There is nowhere for them to go.

An Ayura calls out.

AYURA

I hear footsteps. Babies crying.
Two new borns.

Then Ayura throws a rock in a certain direction, taken from a pouch he wears for the purpose. The rock hits rock and makes a noise...

AYURA (CONT'D)

That way. Toward the sun-grave.

Tamacti Jun spurs his horse.

EXT. HILLSIDE/GIANT RAVINE

We see the two columns moving fast. Straight ahead, a column of spray and mist is rising from a deep ravine. We also hear the deafening roar of a rushing river down below.

People instinctively slow at the terrifying sound but Baba Voss calls out.

BABA VOSS

Keep moving. Don't be afraid!

DREAMER

Since we were children we have been warned to go no further!

BABA VOSS

We are no longer children.

The column hurries on into the rising mist. We move on beyond them and hover over a deep ravine, a hundred feet deep, with a raging torrent down below.

We see that at the end of the ravine is a huge waterfall, roaring and casting the haze of mist.

At the very edge of the ravine Paris comes to a halt. Slowly the column breaks up and people move forward slowly to near the edge.

PARIS

We need to find the bridge. Spin the ropes into the void.

The rope carriers hesitate...

PARIS (CONT'D)

Trust me. It is there.

The rope carriers step forward and begin to spin their ropes in the mist and spray. The ropes cause the mist to swirl. They find nothing.

BABA VOSS

One go toward cold-wind, the other toward warm-wind. Carefully. It will be here somewhere.

The rope carriers begin to slowly edge their way in either direction. They have no idea where the edge of the ravine is Suddenly...

WOMAN

Maxi! Where are you?! Come back!

In the rising mist we see a TODDLER, three years old, breaking away from the column and walking directly toward the edge of the ravine. His mother stumbles in the same direction.

MOTHER

Maxi!

TODDLER

Mama!

The toddler is almost at the edge of the sheer drop. He walks into the mist and is one step from oblivion. But one of the rope carriers has heard his voice and swings the rope to snare the child and pull him back.

However, his mother stumbles and falls over the edge of the ravine. She screams as she falls. There is horror in the column. Souter Bax is first to call out...

SOUTER BAX

This is madness. No man could make
a bridge to span this divide.

AYURA

Horses a hundred heart beats away!

A man in his fifties with a young wife yells....

MAN

We will not fall into the hands of
witchfinders!

He grabs his wife and she grabs him and they walk with
purpose toward the edge of the ravine...

MAN (CONT'D)

I love you!

WOMAN

I love you!

They jump and fall into the ravine.

VOICE

I will not be burnt either...

PARIS

No! Wait! We will find it! Keep
searching.

We come to Maghra as she wraps her babies in furs from the
cold spray and mist. The rope men are edging away from each
other.

We join the man edging north. As we watch him spin his rope,
we also see....

A rope bridge, strung across the ravine, made from thick
ropes intricately tied like a jungle walkway.

To us it is as plain as day, hanging in the mist. But to the
villagers it is invisible...

ROPE MAN

Nothing! Only air!

PARIS

Keep searching.

VOICE

She lied to us!

AYURA

Horses fifty heart beats!

Baba Voss reacts. He pulls his sword, ready for a final
fight to the death.

MAGHRA

Baba Voss. I would have loved you!

Baba Voss reacts. Then...

We cut to a spinning rope connecting with a rope fastening on the bridge. The spinner tugs it and the rope bridge swings a little.

ROPE MAN

I have something! Here! Solid in the void!

Baba Voss follows the voice and reaches the man with the rope. He tugs and feels resistance. He walks a few paces and reaches the entrance of the bridge. He feels the air and then finds rope and knots.

BABA VOSS

Here! Ropes stretching into the mist!

We can now hear dogs and horses approaching. The people begin to panic and move quickly toward Baba Voss. In the panic some fall over the edge to their death.

BABA VOSS (CONT'D)

Slow! Form up!

The people begin to make a ragged line and approach where Baba Voss is standing. Paris hurries to him and the two of them reach out into thick mist and feel two sets of ropes heading into the void.

Paris calls out....

PARIS

This is it.

VOICE

If you have so much faith, you go first!

Paris takes a moment. Baba Voss reaches out and touches her face.

BABA VOSS

I will stay and hold them off.

Paris turns and, holding on to both sides of the rope bridge, takes a step into the void.

She finds the first of the short planks that form the walkway. The bridge swings and sags a little.

We see Paris, a lone figure in mist and spray, with the torrent raging beneath her. She takes another step and another.

PARIS

I am in the air! Miracle! He told
the truth!

Paris keeps on walking then, at last, she feels grass and
rocks and solid ground and falls to the ground. She turns
and yells across the spray.

PARIS (CONT'D)

I am on the other side! I am on
the other side!

The people begin to yell. Baba Voss begins to take charge.

BABA VOSS

Silence! We can hide ourselves in
the roar of the water. Families
first. Pick up your children but
keep a hand free!

People press forward and again some fall over the edge.

BABA VOSS (CONT'D)

Reach for my hand!

Women and children begin to crowd forward. They reach out and
find Baba Voss's hand then step onto the bridge and walk.
They hear horses close....

EXT. EDGE OF THE MIST

Tamacti Jun's cavalry are galloping but then their horses
rear and shy. A warrior calls out....

WARRIOR

Our horses smell the ravine.

GETHER BAX

It is just ahead.

WARRIOR

They won't go closer.

Tamacti Jun curses and calls out....

TAMACTI JUN

Dismount! We go on foot.

A warrior wheels his horse and they all begin to dismount.

EXT. RAVINE

We see the bridge and the people making their way across.
Mist and spray almost hides them and the sunlight filters
through.

A *rainbow* forms in the spray as the silhouettes of people keep walking, casting shadows on the mist. It is a beautiful sight but then someone loses their footing and the bridge swings. Two people fall to their death before the bridge swings upright again.

EXT. RAVINE'S EDGE

Baba Voss hurries to Maghra. He picks her up with the babies in her arms. He takes her to the head of the bridge. More than half of the tribe are either across or on the bridge. Baba Voss hands her gently to Arca.

BABA VOSS

Take her across.

MAGHRA

No!

BABA VOSS

They are close. I will hold the bridge.

Before she can speak.

BABA VOSS (CONT'D)

Arca, take her.

Arca takes her weight in one arm and takes hold of the bridge with the other. Maghra clutches her babies. Baba Voss takes over the task of feeding people onto the bridge.

EXT. RAVINE'S EDGE, FURTHER SOUTH

Tamacti's army on foot are making their way through the mist as the river roars. Tamacti yells...

TAMACTI JUN

Ayuras!

AYURA WARRIOR

We can hear only the roar of the river.

TAMACTI JUN

Scentiers!

SCENTIERS

Mist and water!

Tamacti Jun curses.

TAMACTI JUN

Where are they?

GETHER BAX

Perhaps they have jumped.

TAMACTI JUN

Onward!

In the mist the warriors walk forward, deafened by the roar of the river. After a moment, one, then two, then three warriors fall over the edge of the ravine. We hear their yells.

WARRIOR 1

I go no further!

WARRIOR 2

Nor I!

Then an Ayura calls out.

AYURA

I hear babies crying! Toward cold wind!

TAMACTI JUN

To cold-wind! Move!

The warriors begin to carefully move north.

EXT. BRIDGE HEAD

The last of the people are almost across. Baba Voss is helping a huddle of men forward when suddenly one of Tamacti Jun's warriors emerges from the mist.

Baba Voss hears him and swings his sword. Some of the Alkeny men pull swords and begin to defend the bridge.

Baba Voss is a ferocious warrior and cuts down the first of Tamacti's men. The defenders back toward the bridge and begin to filter onto it to escape.

Baba Voss stays to hold the position. We see the wild swinging nature of 'blind fighting' again. Baba Voss is a Samurai.

Again the sound of babies crying cuts through the roar of the river and Baba Voss takes a step back. Two more attackers are sent to the ravine by heavy blows.

No more warriors come for a moment. Baba Voss takes the chance and steps onto the bridge and walks. Then Tamacti Jun arrives with two warriors. One of the men wounded by Baba Voss staggers to his feet...

WARRIOR 2

They flew. Witchfinder! They stepped into the void.

Tamacti Jun reacts.

WARRIOR

They are witches, they flew.

Tamacti steps up and feels the rope of the bridge. He feels the rope on the other side.

TAMACTI JUN

No.

The warriors step back...

TAMACTI JUN (CONT'D)

It's a bridge. Cross it. That is an order!

WARRIOR 2

We have burnt a thousand of the devil's disciples. Do you think his bridge will hold for us?

Tamacti Jun takes a moment then calls out.

TAMACTI JUN

Gether Bax!

Gether gets it immediately....

GETHER BAX

No!....

TAMACTI JUN

Bring him.

Gether Bax is bundled forward. Tamacti Jun grabs his arm.

TAMACTI JUN (CONT'D)

You go first. Show them it's safe.

Gether Bax struggles. Tamacti Jun puts his blade to Gether Bax's throat.

TAMACTI JUN (CONT'D)

Go. Report.

GETHER BAX

No! The ravine is death.

TAMACTI JUN

Staying another second is death!

He pushes Gether Bax onto the bridge.

TAMACTI JUN (CONT'D)

Walk.

EXT. RAVINE

In mist and spray we see Baba Voss on the bridge and then the crouching figure of Gether Bax. We come close to Gether Bax as he takes three then four then five steps. He continues, straightening, believing now that he is safe....

EXT. RAVINE

We see Baba Voss, a giant figure, crossing the bridge close to the other side and safety. Gether Bax is now almost half way across.

EXT. BRIDGEHEAD, WESTERN SIDE

The people are praying and thanking God but Arca is yelling.

ARCA

Form up and move away from the edge!

Baba Voss steps out of the mist and pulls his blade.

BABA VOSS

Now we must cut the bridge down.
Arca!

Baba Voss feel the ropes that hold the bridge, tied to the giant oaks that grow in the spray. Baba Voss and Arca begin to cut ropes at random and, once cut, they fly and fizz into the spray.

EXT. RAVINE

We see Gether Bax on the bridge as he feels the bridge begin to twist and sag when ropes are cut. A rope in his hand suddenly falls slack and he can hear the blades hacking at the knots on the other side.

GETHER BAX

Fuck.

He hesitates for a moment. He must assess which way to go, which side of the ravine is closest.

GETHER BAX (CONT'D)

Dear God flame. Do I go back or onward?

Another rope slips through his hands and the bridge sags.

EXT. BRIDGE HEAD, WESTERN SIDE

Arca and Baba Voss are hanging from branches, cutting ropes. We can see that the bridge now hangs by a single thick rope and that it is now just a tangle of rope and struts sagging into the mist.

Baba Voss swings his blade in the air and finds the last taught rope. He hauls himself onto a branch and begins to saw through it. He is almost through. Then a voice in the mist....

GETHER BAX

Wait!

Then Gether Bax emerges from the mist, half running, half crawling up the tangled bridge. Baba Voss cuts through the rope just as Gether Bax scrambles forward and grabs the edge of the ravine. He holds on by his fingertips.

Baba Voss has his sword raised....

ARCA

Who goes there?!

Gether is fighting for breath.

GETHER BAX

It's me. Gether Bax. I was gathering berries when they came. I hid.

Arca hauls him to his safety and Gether Bax slumps on the solid ground.

GETHER BAX (CONT'D)

I live by the will of the God flame.

A pause. Baba Voss reacts, perhaps suspicious. He comes close and hauls him to his feet.

BABA VOSS

Come. Your family, at least, were worried about you.

We rise high. The mist from the thundering waterfall rises. Across the ravine Tamacti Jun's army are at the bridgehead but the bridge has gone. We see the Alkenny, with Baba Voss at the head, forming up on their ropes and beginning to walk toward the west.

EXT. HILLSIDE, WEST OF THE RAVINE

We are in spectacularly beautiful mountains with a misty river valley heading west. A small stream trickles down the mountainside.

The villagers are gathered in a semi circle, seated on the ground. Baba Voss, the Dreamer and Paris are on their feet. Maghra has her twins wrapped in furs in her arms. Gether Bax is sitting beside Souter Bax and her husband TILLER BAX (who we will learn are Gether Bax's Uncle and Auntie).

BABA VOSS

I declare this Alkenny Parliament
in session.

A pause. Everyone is exhausted, hardly believing they are alive.

BABA VOSS (CONT'D)

This day we have crossed into a new world. No Alkenny has been this side of the ravine. We don't know what surrounds us. But there is one among us who can guide us.

He reaches out and touches Paris's arm. Paris has the length of Jerlamarel's 'letter' wrapped gently in her arms.

PARIS

The same man who built the bridge left directions. If we head toward the sun grave and have our scentiers dream the river willows, we will find a sanctuary that he has prepared for us. There is a path that goats use...

DREAMER

Perhaps, Paris, it is time to tell us all who this man is.

A pause. Maghra has handed her twins to Sinjay and struggles to her feet.

MAGHRA

His name is Jerlamarel. I knew him well once.

A pause.

MAGHRA (CONT'D)

He is a heretic. The Witchfinders came in search of him. He preaches a particular heresy.

There is a ripple among the villagers. We come close to Gether and Souter Bax. They reach for each other's hands.

MAGHRA (CONT'D)

He told me he has a power that we would call magical or evil. But which he says every human being on earth once had.

Maghra reacts to pain and breaths quickly. Paris takes over...

PARIS

He preaches that the God bone we use for weapons and tools was not left by the Gods as we have always been told. Nor the 'eternal smooth' that never rots...

Paris's voice bridges and continues into the next scene...

EXT. RAVINE, EASTERN BANK

...We cut back to Tamacti Jun who is standing in the mist close to the ravine. He stands alone, angrily and quickly tying intricate knots in a length of thin cord. His fingers work quickly and he pulls each knot tight with venom.

We hear Paris continue in voiceover...

PARIS

.....Nor the flat straight mountains of Payan, nor the bone temples that cross our valleys....

From the mist, a warrior approaches Tamacti Jun with a carrier pigeon inside a cage made from twigs and sinew....

EXT. RAVINE, WEST BANK

We rejoin the villagers as Paris continues...

PARIS

... It was all made by humans. Human beings like us, who had the same lost power that he has.

The Dreamer stammers...

DREAMER

Paris? This is the Vishiona heresy. It was forbidden two generations ago. By Royal order. To even speak this heresy can bring death.

PARIS

We are beyond the reach of the Holy Guardians now. Maghra, go on...

Maghra continues...

MAGHRA

Jerlamarel said he could not explain the power he possesses to me.

A pause.

MAGHRA (CONT'D)
He said only that he has the power
to 'see'.

A pause.

MAGHRA (CONT'D)
And if we follow his instruction,
we will find sanctuary.

Matal stands...

MATAL
How will we know when we have
reached this sanctuary?

PARIS
When we hear the rush of a
waterfall twenty men high, we will
have arrived.

A pause. The villagers reach out and touch each other's
hands.

PARIS (CONT'D)
Whether you have faith in me or
not, there is only one path, only
one choice.

Baba Voss gets to his feet and roars...

BABA VOSS
Then we will follow! All those in
favor!

One-by-one the Alkenny yell 'aye!' and their voices echo
across the valley....

Soaring music begins...

EXT. RAVINE, EASTERN BANK

Music continues as Tamacti Jun ties the knotted string to the
leg of a homing pigeon. He then mumbles a prayer and lets it
fly....

EXT. OPEN COUNTRY/SKYLINE

Music soars as we fly with the pigeon. Its knotted string is
trailing from its leg. We see the unspoilt mountain range,
restored to pristine beauty.

But we continue to fly with the bird and then, below, see the remains of a small town, which is now little more than a series of overgrown hills and make out the crumbling stacks of an old factory. Then we make out the line which was once a freeway and the crumbling remains of a bridge over a river. The concrete struts remain but the bridge itself has crashed into the water below.

We time cut and see the pigeon, with its string trailing, landing on a huge gas station sign which still is just about legible as an Exxon Mobil sign.

Down below is a car park which is filled with cars and trucks which have rotted down to their elements. There are other shells of vehicles all along what was once an approach road, and also scattered in the overgrown fields. This is the remains of what would have been a chaotic last dash by drivers to find gas for their vehicles as their sight faded.

The pigeon sips some drops of water then flies off again.

Once more we see the world as it now is. (We can explore all the possible physical remnants that we might see). In the far distance we can just make out the skyline of New York (now known as *Nayak*), though it is now eroded and worn to resemble a natural accretion of rock. The Sun is rising over it as the pigeon flies.

To the North, the dome of an old nuclear power station, overgrown now with vines, catches the first rays of the sun.

The pigeon swoops and, below, we see a huge lake. The lake is held back by a giant Hydro-electric dam.

As the pigeon circles and begins to descend, we see that the dam is still functioning. Two giant cascades of white water gush through the dam vents and the concrete and steel hydro electric complex (built to withstand weather, hurricane and earthquake) is still in one piece, though overgrown by vines and vegetation.

A cloud of mist rises from the rushing water. The pigeon heads for a particular window near the top of the giant slab of concrete that once housed the administration centre. Beside it, the huge turbines continue to turn, though as yet these are not visible.

A column of smoke rises from a rectangular stockade at the foot of the dam complex. From a birds' eye view we see a community of two thousand people, with dwellings built in concentric rectangles.

We glimpse horse drawn carts, people being led by dogs, and lots of soldiers in black fur. The pigeon, trailing string, disappears inside an open window, with the sun rising magnificently over the mountains.

Caption: KANZUA HYDRO ELECTRIC DAM

Fade down and up....

Caption: Still functioning...

Fade down and up....

Caption: 'Now as the Palace of the ruler of the Payan tribe. Queen Kane'.

A hand wrapped in gold chain reaches out and collects the pigeon.

INT. HYDRO ELECTRIC DAM, TURBINE ROOM

We see the huge steel mechanism of the turbine which is still and silent. It's ugly beauty is lit by morning light as a COURTIER, led by a large dog on a lead, enters on a blade of light. When the door opens we hear the roar of the water from the dam outside.

The courtier is dressed in tanned leather and fur and has his hair twisted and greased into shapes like three horns. He wears iron nails twisted into loops through his ears and around his neck. He has the pigeon in his hand with the string trailing. The dog hurries through the turbine room and disappears out through a second door.

Our weeping music ends. After a moment of silence a burst of different music...

INT. LARGE EMPTY CHAMBER

A vast room that once housed machinery now only has two giant, ugly dynamos at either end. Wires trail from them into a transformer. From the transformer, wires lead to various electrical gadgets.

One of them is an old fashioned gramophone player. We come close as a female hand decorated with gold puts the needle on a record near the start.

A Mozart Sonata begins to play and it echoes in the vast space.

(This is one of the only places on earth that still has electricity. When built, the complex buildings were powered by electricity generated on site. Though the grid that took the electricity across the state has long since disappeared, the system within the dam complex itself has survived and there is still power).

We then find QUEEN KANE herself. She is dressed in a thin satin night dress that may be three hundred years old. It shimmers in the light. She has her hair hanging loose and has small components of machinery fastened with leather around her neck.

She stands in a shaft of light and listens to the sound of the song for a while facing the shaft of light. Her eyes are wide open. She is beautiful and remote, in her early twenties, young for the power she wields.

All around there are freshly cut flowers and herbs. Water diverted from the river trickles down an indoor waterfall and stream. There are song-birds in cages and a heap of beechwood smoulders, trailing smoke into the sunlight.

Then Queen Kane pulls a hard-backed chair (hundreds of years old) into the beam of light and sits down. Her hand then falls between her legs and she pulls her night dress up.

Then...

QUEEN KANE

Father. Hidden from us. Whose power we feel but cannot touch. Your will resides in this holy place. Give us this day guidance and clear paths. Condemn those that trespass against us. Give to us flame and smoke. For thine is the darkness, the power and the glory. Forever and ever.

Queen Kane reaches orgasm as she finishes her prayer.

QUEEN KANE (MATTER OF FACT) (CONT'D)

Amen.

(We will learn that sex and orgasms are now seen as a form of prayer, the ultimate sensory experience in a sightless world).

She sighs and we sense this is a religious routine. After a moment the Courtier enters carrying the knotted message from Tamacti Jun. He comes close to the Queen, takes her hand and gently wraps the knotted leather string around her wrist.

COURTIER

From the Holy Guardians of the land toward the sun grave your Majesty.

The courtier turns and leaves. The two slaves turn and leave too.

Queen Kane licks her fingers and begins to read...

INT. SMALLER ROOM WITHIN THE COMPLEX

The room was once a boardroom. Now an open fire burns in the middle of the concrete floor and a chimney has been fashioned from brass and chrome. It sparkles in sunlight.

Near the fire there is a large oak table and two rows of hard-backed chairs, dating from the late twenty first century. On the walls hang hundreds of lengths of knotted leather.

These lengths of leather are the Payan Constitution.

After a moment men and women begin to enter, all led by small terriers of identical breed held on leads. The terriers lead their masters or mistresses to allotted seats and they sit and place the terriers on their laps.

These are members of Queen Kane's ROYAL CABINET, and they all wear black wolf fur. Their various ranks are denoted by small fur hats of various textures....

One of the ministers goes to a window and pushes it open. We go with him to the window and see across a wide divide the flat concrete wall of the turbine room. We see a man, stripped almost naked, hanging from a barred window, dangling. Crows are flocking around him picking at his flesh and he is yelling.

We move up from the ghastly sight and see Queen Kane as she walks quickly down a corridor, visible in barred windows...

INT. TURBINE HOUSE, CORRIDOR

As Queen Kane walks quickly, she is pulling on intricate net made from silk, sea shells and small silver bells. As she walks, the shells and bells tinkle and clack. She is led by a large hunting dog which snaps at couriers in attendance. Queen Kane carries a small and exquisite incense burner. As the smoke reaches each courtier, in turn, they fall to one knee.

INT. BOARDROOM

The courtiers and Ministers are waiting as Queen Kane enters, her characteristic noise causing everyone to stand and bow.

She sits down at the head of the table and takes out the knotted message that Tamacti Jun sent.

QUEEN KANE

Sit.

Her dog and the courtiers all sit. Queen Kane hands one end of the long message to the nearest courtier and he 'reads' it. The string is then taken by the courtier next to him and he reads and passes it through.

Soon the string is snaking it way around the meeting, being felt in turn by each of them. As they read particular parts, they react with shock. One of them, 'LORD DUNE', is a man in his mid fifties with a hard look.

When Lord Dune reads a particular passage, he hisses...

LORD DUNE
He has planted his seed...

QUEEN KANE
Hush.

The message snakes its way back to Queen Kane who elegantly coils it as it arrives. When the end of the message reaches her she taps her gold ring on the table then speaks...

QUEEN KANE (CONT'D)
So the devil Jerlamarel lives. And lives. And lives. And now passes his life on.

A pause. The clock ticks.

QUEEN KANE (CONT'D)
Physician....

One of the courtiers, (LORD UNOA, the Royal Physician), responds...

LORD UNOA
Yes your majesty.

QUEEN KANE
Can the power Jerlamarel possesses be passed through the cock into a woman and then into a child.

LORD DUNE
As a matter of record, the message says the Ayuras heard two babies....

Queen Kane taps her ring on the table (suggesting authority and annoyance).

QUEEN KANE
The number is not the issue. We are discussing the basic biology of light magic. Physician?

A pause.

PHYSICIAN
Queen Kane, may I speak heretically in this room?

One of the terriers begins to bark and his panicking owner feeds him a strip of meat.

QUEEN KANE
All in this room know the truth. We don't need to dance around it.

A pause. The physician relaxes a little.

PHYSICIAN

As we all know, Jerlamerel and others known and unknown to us, have the power once known as vision.

Outside the crows are cawing as they pull apart the dead man. One of the courtiers goes to the window and closes it.

PHYSICIAN (CONT'D)

My own research suggests that this power can not be learnt or taught. It is something these devils were born with.

QUEEN KANE

But can it be spread?

PHYSICIAN

I have been in dialogue with other physicians. In confidence.

QUEEN KANE

How many?

PHYSICIAN

Four. All loyal....

QUEEN KANE

Leave their names before you go. Continue....

PHYSICIAN

....We have come to the conclusion that some construction of elements behind the face is different in those who have the power.

A pause.

PHYSICIAN (CONT'D)

So it is possible the power can be inherited.

The physician hesitates. No one likes to give the Queen bad news...

PHYSICIAN (CONT'D)

In fact I would say it is probable.

A pause. Queen Kane angles her head at the window where the sound of crows is muffled.

QUEEN KANE

So the devil doesn't even need to preach. He just fucks.

(MORE)

QUEEN KANE (CONT'D)

And the more he fucks, the more their numbers will increase.

LORD DUNE

And all our dogs and horses and witchfinders will be as nothing against them.

The other courtiers are stirred...

LADY LAW

He built a *bridge*. Alone?

COURTIER

Perhaps he had help...

COURTIER 2

Even so. He built it within the span of a pregnancy.

LORD DUNE

The witchfinder and his guardians still believes it is witchcraft.

Queen Kane zips the leather knots through her fingers...

QUEEN KANE

I sensed no doubt in the letter.

LORD DUNE

My point is, knowledge that the power exists is almost as dangerous as the power itself. The villagers who escaped will each one carry a seed of doubt.

Queen Kane speaks quickly...

QUEEN KANE

Then it is our holy duty to burn the crop.

Queen Kane gets to her feet and begins to walk around the table without the aid of her dog. Her bells and shells tinkle. As she walks she touches each courtier in turn...

QUEEN KANE (CONT'D)

Here in Payan we have the power of the God Flame at our fingertips. Because the God Flame chose this holy place to bring his power to earth.

She walks on....

QUEEN KANE (CONT'D)

But out there in the wilderness we
have only the power of our
conviction.

She stops at a female courtier and speaks in her ear...

QUEEN KANE (CONT'D)

Lady An. How many whores can you
spare?

Queen Kane puts her hand on the courtiers face.

LADY AN

As many as you need.

QUEEN KANE

Lord Dune, how many soldiers?

LORD DUNE

A thousand who I could put in the
field.

Queen Kane walks quickly back to her seat at the head of the
table and taps her ring three times.

QUEEN KANE

Send soldiers and whores to give
out as reward. Send them to join
the witchfinder.

A pause.

QUEEN KANE (CONT'D)

And send with them this message.

A pause.

QUEEN KANE (CONT'D)

My virginity goes to the soldier
who finds the children of
Jerlamarel and brings them to me.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PATH, IN A SNOW STORM

We see the people of Alkenny in a long column making their
way toward a setting sun on a mountain path. Scentiers are
just below the column and a river flows down the valley. We
make out Baba Voss near the head with Paris. Maghra is
carrying her twins in papooses.

As we join, we see Baba Voss come and take the babies and
take the burden as they walk on. Then we see Matal hurry
past them and follow her as she finds Paris at the head of
the rope.

MATAL

I feel something ending. Something close.

Paris touches her face.

PARIS

Tomorrow I think we will reach the Holy place.

Baba Voss walks on with the babies in his arms, singing a lullaby to them as he walks. After he has passed, Paris smiles...

PARIS (CONT'D)

Big lump. Watch where you walk, your joy makes you careless.

Baba Voss walks on, singing....

EXT. FIRESIDE

The villagers have lit fires in a circle and families huddle around them, wrapped in furs. We come close to a fire where Maghra is feeding one of the twins under her fur. Baba Voss comes and sits across the fire.

BABA VOSS

I have placed scentiers and ayuras. This smells like bear country.

Baba Voss takes a roasted squirrel from the embers of the fire and begins to eat. After a moment.

MAGHRA

Baba Voss, Paris thinks we are close to our destination. Matal too.

A pause.

MAGHRA (CONT'D)

I know you don't need explanations but I want to explain...

BABA VOSS

You are my wife. My property....

He licks his fingers (mocking his society).

BABA VOSS (CONT'D)

I forbid you to explain.

Maghra smiles. Baba Voss puts the meat aside. After a moment...

BABA VOSS (CONT'D)

Unless that's what you want to do.

Maghra comes closer. She spreads the fingers on her right hand and puts them onto Baba Voss's forehead.

MAGHRA

Can I dream it to you?

Baba Voss closes his eyes. As Maghra begins to speak we see his eyes begin to move rapidly behind the lids, Rapid Eye Movement. Baba's eyes move quickly (we will learn this REM dreaming in response to a story is an evolved way of committing information to the imagination).

Maghra speaks in a soft, even voice....

MAGHRA (CONT'D)

Are you ready?

BABA VOSS

Yes.

MAGHRA

Then dream this. One year ago I went out for late blackberries and was caught in an early blizzard....

As part of the story Maghra blows the whistling sound of a strong wind. On Maghra's blowing of a blizzard we enter Baba Voss's dream....

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE, BLIZZARD

...Maghra's sound effect becomes a real howling blizzard. White-out, as blinding as darkness. But then we see the dark figure of Maghra, wrapped in furs, a sack of berries in her hand.

(These dream sequences should have a flickering reality, shot in a particular way).

In intermittent clearances of the blizzard we see that she is on a mountain path that is narrow with a precipitous drop down below...

MAGHRA (OOV)

...The blizzard howling made my ears useless. No scent beyond the smell of ice. I found myself on a steep mountain pass, unable to move.

Maghra sits down in a small recess in the rock and huddles against the cold. Maghra's voice begins to shiver in sympathy...

MAGHRA(OOV) (CONT'D)

I decided to sit out the storm but soon realized I would not survive the night. I began to pray to the God Flame.

We cut to Maghra a little later as the sun sets through the blizzard....

MAGHRA (OOV) (CONT'D)

But a man answered my prayers.

Then, in the darkness, we see a figure approaching, crunching snow. Soon we can see that it is a man wrapped in furs, even his face is wrapped in thick bear skin, caked in snowflakes. He uses a staff and has a bundle of belongings on his back.

He also has a bow and a quiver of arrows (and this should already be significant). Through the howling blizzard we see the man lift Maghra to her feet. She is half frozen and he helps her through the snow, walking easily down the mountain path with Maghra in his arms....

MAGHRA (OOV) (CONT'D)

He was walking on two legs even in the snow and ice.

He helps her toward the mouth of a cave.....

MAGHRA (OOV) (CONT'D)

Even in the blizzard he was able to find shelter. And find dry wood to light a fire. Click, click, whoosh....

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

...A flint strikes steel and the spark ignites tinder. Outside the blizzard howls. We can barely see the face of the man through the thick fur but we see his hands cupping the flames and adding twigs and then branches.

(We will learn that this man is JERLAMAREL).

Maghra is shivering but Jerlamarel gives her his fur coat and helps her come closer to the flames of the fire. Through fur and thick beard we see he is a handsome man in his late twenties.

From his sack of belongings he adds some pieces of glistening black coal and adds them to the fire.

MAGHRA (OOV)

His fire was warmer than normal fire.

Maghra settles beside the flame and the man puts his arm around her to warm her. He then produces a fur boot which he gently places onto her bare foot.

MAGHRA (OOV) (CONT'D)
He even went back into the snow and found a shoe I had lost. How could a normal man do that?

She reaches out to touch his face (to get a 'picture' of him).

MAGHRA (OOV) (CONT'D)
I asked this man his name.

We come around on his face....

MAGHRA (OOV) (CONT'D)
He said his name was Jerlamarel.

For just half a second we look into Jerlamarel's eyes. And see focus...

EXT. FIRESIDE - NIGHT

Maghra takes her hands from Baba Voss's head but his eyes remain closed.

MAGHRA
We stayed the whole winter. He told me his life. His heresy. His arrest for witchcraft in Payan and his escape...

Suddenly a voice. It is Paris.

PARIS (OOV)
But he did not tell you everything.

Baba Voss angles his head. Paris sits down beside the two of them and warms her hands on the flames. Baba Voss's eyes flicker.

BABA VOSS
Paris? What more do you know?

PARIS
I know you two sweet people must be prepared.

MAGHRA
For what?

PARIS
It may be that those babies in your arms will have the power to change the world.

Maghra holds her babies tightly against the cold. She looks troubled....

MAGHRA
They are just babies.

Baba Voss opens his eyes...

BABA VOSS
You think they will have the same
power he has?

Paris reaches out and touches Maghra's face...

MAGHRA
I think it is Maghra's job to
sustain them...

Paris touches Baba Voss's straggly bearded face.

PARIS
And it is Baba Voss's job to
protect them.

Maghra looks uneasy....

MAGHRA
And what is your job Paris?

A pause.

PARIS
My job will be to teach them to
dream out loud.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS

We see the sun rising beautifully over a mountain pass. In the near distance we hear rushing water.

...We see the Alkeny villagers walking around a bend in the path, walking in a line. First Maghra, then two other Ayuras, slow down then stop.

MAGHRA
Wait! Listen!

The column halts. A second Ayura calls out...

AYURA
Falling water!

MAGHRA
Ten thousand steps.

The people begin to chatter excitedly and reach out to each other. Baba Voss calls out.

BABA VOSS

Forward!

The column moves on with Baba Voss at the head sweeping his staff. We pull wider and see around a rocky bend there is a beautiful mountain waterfall cascading into a plunge pool. Around it a flat plain.

We walk with the column as the sound of the water gets louder. Then we are close to Maghra and the babies as they feel a cool spray on their faces.

The people break ranks and run toward the waterfall. Baba calls out....

BABA VOSS (CONT'D)

Take care! We don't know what's here!

Maghra speaks softly.

MAGHRA

Yes we do. Fate.

The villagers hesitate then begin to slowly fan out, some feeling the air with their hands. There are wild flowers growing and blackberry bushes. Above, on the steep cliff, goats are grazing.

It is a kind of paradise. Scentiers begin to sniff the air.

SCENTIER

Water, herbs, berries, nettles, goats.

AYURA

I hear wild turkeys!

SCENTIER 2

Wild garlic, rabbits,...

AYURA 2

Moose and calf close by!

SCENTIER 3

Mustard Cress, fruit trees....

Baba Voss takes the twins from Maghra and yells...

BABA VOSS

Here we build our new home!

There is a cheer and some of the villagers strip off their clothes and step into the waterfall. As the villagers dance and play all around, Maghra puts her head on Baba Voss's shoulder and stares directly at us with her sightless eyes.

Then we rise up a little and see something reflecting from the morning sun. On a high ledge beside the waterfall there is a steel box shining in sunlight. None of the villagers can see it, but it has been left there with a purpose.

We come close to the box as water and spray from the falls form a rainbow around it.

THE END

