

Mark of the Wizard:
The Rogue and the Bride

a screenplay by

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"Mark of the Wizard: The Rogue and the Bride"

FADE IN:

EXT. BLACK CASTLE - NIGHT

The sky is dark and stormy. On a hill there is an old castle. As LIGHTNING FLASHES, a DRAGON flies overhead and lands before the castle's closed drawbridge. The Dragon TRANSFORMS into a dark-haired, beautiful woman. A hooded man in black robes, the BLACK MAGE, is waiting for her at the castle entrance. ARROWS from the castle are falling around them, hitting an unseen SHIELD.

BLACK MAGE

You're late.

LIGHTNING FLASHES. We can't see into the Black Mage's hood, but we can see the hate in the RED, GLOWING EYES of the Dragon. She smiles a vicious grin.

DRAGON

I stopped for a quick bite.

A cauldron's worth of BOILING OIL falls from the castle and ineffectively hits the unseen SHIELD. The Dragon looks around, a bit disgusted.

DRAGON

Is this the place?

BLACK MAGE

It is. Our . . . associates should arrive here soon. Shall we get this over with?

DRAGON

I hope they put up a good fight.

The DRAGON TRANSFORMS again and attacks the castle with her FIERY breath. The BLACK MAGE unleashes arcs of LIGHTNING from his fingertips. SCREAMS are heard from the castle. A half-full MOON finds its way through the clouds.

EXT. SEASIDE HILL - DAY

A hill overlooks a beach and ocean with a lighthouse in the distance. The MOON, half-full, is as white as the clouds. RACHEL is standing with her eyes closed and her arms outstretched, enjoying the breeze. She is dressed in a casual white dress that catches the wind and flows with it.

A smile touches her lips. Rachel stretches out her arms and RISES until she FLOATS above the ground. She is enraptured and doesn't notice the OLD MAN coming up behind her.

The Old Man smiles to himself and walks up next to her. He closes his eyes and enjoys the air for a moment. He then opens them and looks at Rachel.

OLD MAN

I hope you don't let just anyone see
you do that. It could mean your death.

RACHEL

(smiling deeper)

No one is watching. There's nothing
wrong with enjoying the moment.

Rachel's smile suddenly vanishes, her arms slowly come to her sides, and she RETURNS to the ground. The Old Man allows a wave of concern to pass over his face before he turns a gentle smile on Rachel.

RACHEL

I wish . . .

The Old Man puts up a finger to stop her.

OLD MAN

Wishes are dangerous things. You would
miss out on many wonderful experiences
should you wish for things not to
change.

Rachel looks out over the ocean.

RACHEL

Some changes are more welcome than others.

OLD MAN

And your upcoming marriage, it is an unwelcome change?

RACHEL

Never in my dreams did it happen like this. To move away from the places and people I love. To be sold to a man I hardly know and certainly don't love. All for the price of an alliance.

OLD MAN

You must be cautious, dear Rachel. Like your magic, these feelings must be hidden. You are betrothed to a king.

He looks away as though he can see into the past.

OLD MAN

Love must sometimes be put aside for duty.

(smiling)

At least your parents are giving you time to get to know your groom before the wedding. Besides, who knows when or where love might strike. It always comes upon us when we least expect it.

RACHEL

(contemplative)

Love? This isn't love. It's a king's whim, a parents' command, and a daughter's duty. It has little to do with love.

Rachel looks into the Old Man's eyes.

RACHEL

I don't know if I'm ready.

(pause)

I don't know if I will ever be.

OLD MAN

I would hope that I have prepared you for this, but whether I have or not, you have always been ready for any challenge set before you.

He smiles at her and reaches out his hands. She returns the smile and holds his hand in hers. The two face the sea and RISE above the ground, linked but with their arms outstretched.

EXT. SAILING SHIP AT SEA - DAY

BEGIN OPENING CREDITS

The ship's sails fill with wind. RACHEL is standing at the rail watching her home disappear. ADRIANA, Rachel's maid and secret bodyguard, walks up to her and touches her arm. Rachel turns to her and smiles. Together, they walk to go below deck.

EXT. SAILING SHIP AT SEA - NIGHT

The ship passes its way on the ocean under the half moon.

EXT. ARISTAIN'S HARBOR - DAY

Rachel's ship is docked here. RACHEL comes on deck and looks over the fairy-tale city of Aristain. The three main buildings are a cathedral, an auditorium, and an impressive palace with massive towers.

QUINT stands by the dock where the ship is harboring. He is watching as the SAILORS put out the ramp for disembarking the ship. Quint is a little older than Rachel. His eyes look along the boat until he catches sight of Rachel. He stares and his jaw drops a little.

Rachel and ADRIANA are escorted down the ramp. Waiting for them at the dock is SIR GIDEON DRAKE with an escort of SOLDIERS. Drake is a large, muscular, imposing man. Even though he is at least twice Rachel's age, he is an image of restrained threat. He has a massive sword strapped to his back and is dressed in black leather, with the king's blue

being the only color he wears. The Soldiers are in the uniform of the king's guard.

Rachel and Adriana meet Drake at the bottom of the ramp and exchange pleasant words, then Rachel and Adriana follow Drake to a carriage.

Quint gives himself a mental shake and walks away, casually stealing something as he goes.

Rachel, having settled in the carriage, looks out one of the windows towards the palace. The carriage begins to move up a road that leads directly to the imposing palace.

EXT. PALACE GROUNDS - DAY

The carriage, surrounded by mounted SOLDIERS, makes its way into the courtyard, around the fountain in its center, and up to the palace's main entranceway. King THOMAS Aristain, the ARCHBISHOP, and a group of NOBLES are waiting on the stairs.

Thomas, the king, is an older man, not nearly as physically imposing as Drake. Thomas is dressed in an outfit befitting his station.

The Archbishop is an old, grandfatherly type figure dressed in the garments of his job.

Thomas watches intently as the carriage and its escort comes to a stop. DRAKE dismounts and moves to the side of the carriage. Drake bows to Thomas and then opens the door, lending his hand to help RACHEL and ADRIANA down from the riding compartment. Thomas and the two ladies acknowledge each other with slight nods of the head.

END OPENING CREDITS

DRAKE

(to Thomas)

Your Majesty, may I present the Lady Rachel, princess of the Isles.

(to Rachel)

Your highness, may I present to you the King of Aristenia, wielder of the

golden sword, son of the dragon-slayer,
King Thomas.

THOMAS
(to Rachel)
Your escort is rather light.

RACHEL
(indicating Adriana)
Adriana is more than capable of
attending to my needs. My parents
thought it wiser to use deception
rather than force to see me safely
here. They used my departure as an
opportunity to trap some of the pirates
in our area. A large fleet, with my
regular escort, took a separate route.

THOMAS
That is a sensible plan. Let us hope
that our houses' alliance will make any
future subterfuge unnecessary.

RACHEL
I suppose then that my care is in your
hands until my parents arrive.

THOMAS
I am grateful that you have come. I
hope that you will find Aristenia to
your liking. We have prepared a series
of celebrations to commemorate your
arrival. One month from now your
parents will arrive and we celebrate
our wedding. The Archbishop has
offered to perform the ceremony.

The Archbishop steps forward at this announcement.

ARCHBISHOP
I could hardly allow such a historic
union to be performed by just anyone.
ARCHBISHOP (continued)
The church looks forward anxiously to
the union of these two people and thus
the union of these two countries.

Rachel says nothing.

ADRIANA

We are all eager to see this wedding occur.

INT. RACHEL'S ROOM AT THE PALACE - DAY

A fantastic room with a massive canopy bed on one side of the room, a set of glass doors that look out to a balcony that overlooks the city on the other. In between sits an elegant table on which is placed a tea setting. ADRIANA is sitting at the table, sipping at her tea. RACHEL is pacing the floor angrily.

RACHEL

We are all eager to see this wedding occur?

ADRIANA

We were supposed to say something. You were just standing there like a mute. What did you want me to say?

RACHEL

I wanted you to say that this marriage is a sham, that the last thing I want is to get married to a man I don't know.

ADRIANA

I don't think that would have gone over too well.

Rachel walks over to the glass doors, opens them, walks onto her balcony and looks out over the city.

Adriana puts down her tea and follows. She stands at the door, observing her friend. Rachel can sense that she is being watched.

RACHEL

Shouldn't marriages be about love?

ADRIANA

In fairy tales, perhaps. Marriage is and always has been about duty. Love comes later.

RACHEL

It shouldn't be that way.

ADRIANA

Perhaps it should. If marriage only followed the fancy of the heart, it would be an impermanent union. The heart is a fickle thing; it must be taught patience and loyalty.

RACHEL

I thought I would see him and know that he was the one . . . or at least have some feelings.

Adriana walks out next to Rachel, but refrains from placing her arm on Rachel. Rachel looks at her friend.

RACHEL

He frightens me, Adriana.

Adriana looks at Rachel with great sympathy. She tries brightening.

ADRIANA

Maybe it's just nerves. What you need is some tea.

RACHEL

(absently)

I'll get it.

The TEA POT and TWO CUPS with SAUSERS come FLOATING to Rachel and Adriana. The floating pot POURS and fills both of the cups. Adriana gives a reproving look.

ADRIANA

You really should know better . . .

She is interrupted by DRAKE opening the door. Adriana quickly grabs the floating cup and tea pot. She composes herself quickly. Rachel smiles and sips at her cup.

DRAKE

I apologize for startling you. I knocked, but no one answered.

(a pause)

The king asks if the Lady Rachel would accompany him to some of the festivities being held in her honor.

Rachel walks into the room and puts her cup on the table.

RACHEL

I would be honored.

Drake extends his arm. Rachel takes it as Adriana looks on. Drake and Rachel leave. Adriana looks at the cup and pot, sets them down, sighs, and shakes her head.

EXT. STREET NEAR THE PALACE - DAY

We can see RACHEL'S BALCONY from here, though it is rather far away. ADRIANA, as a very tiny figure, is walking back into the room. QUINT is watching the balcony. He shakes his head as though chiding himself.

EXT. END OF A STREET IN ARISTAIN - DAY

The street is filled with PERFORMERS and ONLOOKERS. The ROYAL CARRIAGE stops, surrounded by GUARDS and followed by a few other carriages containing other NOBLES. DRAKE dismounts his horse near the front of the procession and walks to the Royal carriage. A FOOTMAN jumps down and opens the door. THOMAS and RACHEL are inside.

Thomas exits the royal carriage and then lends a hand for Rachel to use while exiting. As Rachel steps down, Drake signals and Guards move into positions all around them. The other carriages open. The Nobles exit their carriages and join Thomas and Rachel. Many of the Onlookers and Performers have stopped what they were doing to watch this procession. As the Guards begin to move forward, the crowd

makes way. Rachel's enthusiasm ebbs as she realizes that they can't mingle with the crowd.

RACHEL

Your Majesty. Where are we going?

THOMAS

There is an amphitheater up ahead. The Archbishop has promised us some well-rehearsed entertainment.

RACHEL

We are not planning on watching any of the street performances?

Thomas gives Rachel an odd look.

THOMAS

I suppose we could bring a few down to the amphitheater if you wish. Are there any that look interesting to you?

Rachel looks about the crowd that they are walking through. All the Performers and Bystanders have stopped to watch the procession. She puts on a smile.

RACHEL

I am certain the Archbishop's entertainment will be satisfactory. I suppose it was a foolish notion.

THOMAS

(looking straight ahead)

It was indeed.

EXT. AMPHITHEATER - DAY

A large cathedral stands opposite of the stage. A tarp covers the majority of the seats, keeping the king and company in the shade. A stately CHOIR SINGS a slow MELODY. Many of the NOBLES look bored. THOMAS has fallen asleep. RACHEL enjoys the music, but the mood of those around her depresses her. Rachel looks at the sleeping king and sighs.

EXT. BLACK CASTLE - EVENING

BRIGANDS can be seen moving around on the battlements.

INT. BLACK CASTLE MEETING ROOM - EVENING

There are several comfortable chairs around a large table. The DRAGON in human form paces behind the chair where the BLACK MAGE is sitting and eating a meal. We still can't see into his hood, even when he eats.

BLACK MAGE

Are you certain you don't want anything to eat?

The Dragon stops and smiles viciously at the mage.

DRAGON

Don't tempt me.

The door at the far end of the room opens and the SEBASTIAN enters the room. He is a dashing swordsman dressed in leather. The Dragon changes from hostile to seductive and walks to Sebastian. The Dragon lovingly wraps her arm around Sebastian.

DRAGON

I've missed you, Sebastian. What took you so long?

Sebastian looks lustfully at her for a moment, then decides to get to business.

SEBASTIAN

It was a trap. They must have sent her on another ship.

BLACK MAGE

I told you it would be so.

SEBASTIAN

You need to tell me where you get your information.

The Black Mage chuckles at this idea.

SEBASTIAN

We need that princess for our plan.

BLACK MAGE

You needn't worry. We will stop this alliance from forming.

INT. RACHEL'S ROOM AT THE PALACE - NIGHT

RACHEL is getting ready for bed. ADRIANA is helps her get ready.

RACHEL

(mid complaint)

. . . followed by a evening of bad speeches welcoming me to Aristenia.

Rachel stands, goes to the balcony and looks out over the city.

RACHEL

The city is celebrating while I feel like I'm being suffocated.

ADRIANA

Being married to a king is not just fun and games.

RACHEL

That's what worries me. If this is the king's . . . Thomas's . . . idea of celebrating my arrival, a normal day could kill me.

ADRIANA

It's just the first day and everyone is a little tense. Get some rest.

ADRIANA (continued)

Tomorrow will be better.

RACHEL

I hope so.

Rachel turns and smiles at her friend.

RACHEL

Thank you. Goodnight.

Adriana nods knowingly and leaves. Rachel turns back to the balcony and looks over the city streets. Her face softens as she comes to a decision. She leaves the balcony, closing the doors behind her. A small FLAME appears above her upraised palm. She walks to a closet, opens it, and looks at some of the different outfits.

INT. CORRIDOR IN THE PALACE - NIGHT

RACHEL, wearing a hooded cloak, sneaks down the hallway. As a GUARD approaches, she leans against a wall, her entire outfit CHANGING COLORS to blend in with the wall behind her. The Guard walks by and Rachel steps away from the wall.

Rachel's clothing RETURNS to normal. She leaves the palace.

EXT. STREET IN ARISTAIN - NIGHT

RACHEL enters a street filled with DANCERS, MUSICIANS, and ONLOOKERS. She smiles as she watches a particularly ENTHUSIASTIC COUPLE rush past her.

QUINT, who has been talking with FESTIVE MAN, sees Rachel by chance. He goes back to talking and then takes a second look at Rachel as recognition and surprise show on his face. He excuses himself from the Festive Man and begins to edge around the crowd, always keeping Rachel in view.

RACHEL moves around her end of the crowd, trying to take in all of the sights. She hears the SOUND of a LUTE down one of the alleys. She decides to investigate.

QUINT loses sight of her as she goes down the alley. He picks up his pace to try and catch up.

EXT. ALLEY IN ARISTAIN - NIGHT

RACHEL sees a SMALL GROUP gathered around a lute-playing BARD. The bard is very good. Rachel doesn't notice Quint as he enters the alley.

QUINT relaxes a bit seeing Rachel, but then gets a rather stern look on his face. Quint approaches Rachel while pulling out a DAGGER. The MUSIC comes to an end as Quint gets real close to Rachel, his dagger out. The small group APPLAUDS. Rachel, applauding, turns to see Quint bring up his dagger. Rachel gasps.

QUINT grabs the THIEF next to Rachel and puts the dagger up to the surprised Thief's throat.

QUINT

Return the lady's purse to her.

All eyes have moved from Quint to the Thief. The Thief looks trapped. The Thief pulls the PURSE out of his tunic and hands it back to the surprised Rachel, then looks expectantly at Quint. Quint sheathes his dagger.

QUINT

I think that you had better leave now.

The Thief takes off. The Bard shrugs and begins PLAYING MUSIC again. There is an awkward moment of silence between Quint and Rachel. Rachel remembers herself.

RACHEL

Thank you

QUINT

(smiling)

You're welcome.

There is another awkward pause. Rachel curtsies a bit nervously.

RACHEL

Well . . . thank you. I . . . Thank you.

Rachel backs up smiling and Quint grabs her before she bumps into an Onlooker. Quint lets go as soon as Rachel regains her balance.

QUINT

You don't have to leave so soon.
(holding out hand)
My name's Quint. Let me show you
around.

RACHEL

(hesitant)
I don't . . .

QUINT

(smiling broadly)
I'll even treat you to some of
Aristain's richest foods.

Quint takes a step back.

QUINT

I understand if you don't want to come.
After all, you hardly know me. I just
thought you could use a guide. You're
obviously alone, not to mention new to
the city.

RACHEL

What makes you think I'm new to the
city?

QUINT

(smiling)
Aside from the fact that you didn't
know to keep your purse hidden?

Quint steps closer to her. He makes certain that no one
else can overhear.

QUINT

I saw your boat arrive. A princess
should hardly go about the city
unescorted. If you want, I can see you
safely back to the palace. It would be
a shame, however. This is quite a
festival; it's drawing people from all
over. You wouldn't want to miss the

best parts just because you don't know
where to go.

Rachel thinks it over.

RACHEL
How can I trust you?

QUINT
(smiling)
You can't. I'm a thief. How do you
think I noticed what that man was
doing?

RACHEL
You aren't going to kidnap me for
ransom or anything?

QUINT
I'll think about it. But I think that
I'd rather have a princess indebted to
QUINT (continued)
me. Besides, shouldn't you have
thought about kidnapping before you
left the palace without an escort?

RACHEL
I should have. Will you be my guardian
then?

QUINT
I would be happy to.

RACHEL
Just how rich are those foods?

She smiles. Quint smiles and takes her hand, leading her
back to the main street.

EXT. STREET IN ARISTAIN NEAR A VENDOR - NIGHT

QUINT brings food that he just "purchased" to a seated
RACHEL. Rachel is watching a group of DANCERS nearby. She
smiles her thanks and tries a bite. Her smile deepens in

response to its taste. Rachel stands and walks to the vendor. Quint looks puzzled as she returns and smiles.

RACHEL
(explaining)
It was worth paying for.

QUINT
Are you trying to get me to reform?

RACHEL
It's only fair, since you're trying so hard to corrupt me.

The two take another bite. Quint hears a CHANGE in the MUSIC. He smiles, stands, and takes Rachel's hand. She gives a longing glance at the food, then accepts his hand. They join the Dancers in a fast dance.

EXT. PALACE GARDEN - DAY

The scene proceeds soundlessly. RACHEL is in a garden admiring different flowers. She has magically LIFTED a flower to FLOAT and ROTATE above her hand. A group of YOUNG NOBLEWOMEN approach, unaware that Rachel is there and talking excitedly amongst themselves. Rachel quickly snatches the flower from the air.

Rachel smiles and says a greeting to them. They start with surprise and curtsy awkwardly, the conversation has stopped. Rachel says something and they answer but fall silent again. Rachel keeps a cheerful countenance and bids them good day. They curtsy again and head off as a group, again talking and giggling. Rachel sadly watches as they walk away.

INT. CORRIDOR IN THE PALACE - NIGHT

RACHEL sneaks out again.

EXT. STREET IN ARISTAIN - NIGHT

QUINT soundlessly introduces RACHEL to some other YOUNG PEOPLE. They warmly accept her into their conversation. She says something and they respond good-naturedly.

INT. DINING HALL IN THE PALACE - DAY

The room is packed with NOBLES standing by their chairs as RACHEL and THOMAS enter and walk to their places. Thomas sits down and motions for Rachel to do so as well. Rachel sits and then the rest of the hall sits, still looking expectantly at the king's table.

Thomas motions a SERVANT forward. Thomas then serves himself and Rachel. He takes a bite. He then motions for Rachel to take a bite from her own plate.

RACHEL picks a morsel and puts it in her mouth, conscious that the Nobles are watching her. Once she swallows, the rest of the hall starts serving. The entire affair is very formal. No one speaks. Rachel takes another bite after taking a depressed look around.

EXT. STREET IN ARISTAIN NEAR A VENDOR - NIGHT

RACHEL'S mouth dribbles over with the juices of a greasy haunch of meat. QUINT looks at her, says something, and starts laughing. Rachel smiles broadly. Quint takes a drink.

Rachel says something, her mouth still full. Quint spit-takes and starts laughing.

EXT. AMPHITHEATER - DAY

King THOMAS is sleeping again. Beside him, RACHEL is quietly snoozing. DRAKE, who is standing behind them, looks at Rachel with a thoughtful expression.

EXT. CORRIDOR IN THE PALACE - NIGHT

RACHEL sneaks out, again. This time, after she has passed, DRAKE walks out from a shadow and watches her leave.

EXT. STREET IN ARISTAIN - NIGHT

ONLOOKERS applaud the MUSICIANS. QUINT and RACHEL have just finished dancing and are moving to sit at a café-like table. A WAITER they are obviously familiar with leaves a couple of drinks at the table. RACHEL smiles her thanks and takes a sip. She then looks off as another dance begins. QUINT studies her, then looks off.

QUINT

I have to leave soon.

RACHEL

How soon?

QUINT

Tomorrow. Maybe the day after.

RACHEL

Why?

QUINT

I'm become fairly popular among law enforcers. I've stayed as long as I dare. As is, I may have waited too long.

(pause)

I want you to come with me.

Rachel stands. She knew that this was coming, but she still isn't ready for it.

QUINT

I don't know what sort of life you live in the day, but I do know that you aren't happy with it. Why live it? Why not live the life I can show you? It might not be as rich or secure as what you have now, but it is Life.

RACHEL

I . . . can't.

QUINT

You can. It's your life.

Quint stops her from saying anything else.

QUINT

Don't be too quick to answer. Think about it. You can give me your answer tomorrow.

RACHEL

I have to go . . . I have to go.

Rachel quickly walks away. Quint slumps into his chair.

INT. CORRIDOR IN PALACE NEAR RACHEL'S ROOM - NIGHT

RACHEL is wiping her eyes, walking down the corridor. She doesn't see DRAKE step out.

DRAKE

Out for a walk, your highness?

Rachel comes up short, completely caught off-balance.

RACHEL

I wanted to see some of the city.

DRAKE

Your highness, I am responsible for your safety . . .

RACHEL

(snappish)

Who is responsible for my freedom?

DRAKE

Your highness, your life is no longer as it was. As queen you will be under the close observation of the entire kingdom. Any chance of normal activity would be impossible due to your celebrity.

RACHEL

The life you describe is more like that of a prisoner than of a queen.

DRAKE

Your highness, all people are prisoners to their titles. The peasant is a prisoner to poverty, just as the noble is a prisoner to wealth and duty. Each is given their choice of dissatisfaction

DRAKE (continued)

with or acceptance of the fact. It is easy to envy the freedom of another while turning a blind eye to their problems.

RACHEL

Are you satisfied with your freedom?

DRAKE

I have my duty, and I am proud to carry it out with honor. Now, your highness, I will have your promise that you will tell me where you will be or I will assign people to follow you everywhere.

RACHEL

Somehow, I believe that people will be following me, promise or no.

Drake smiles and bows to her.

DRAKE

As your highness commands. Good night, your highness.

Rachel walks to her door. She sees that Drake is still watching her. Rachel enters her room and shuts the door.

INT. PRIVATE DINING AREA IN PALACE - MORNING

THOMAS is seated at the head of the table with RACHEL sitting just to his right. Directly across from Rachel, where Drake usually sits, sits the ARCHBISHOP. DRAKE sits

in the next seat down. ADRIANA stands behind Rachel, waiting to serve. They have all begun to eat already.

ARCHBISHOP

I would like to thank you, Majesty, for allowing me to breakfast with you this morning.

THOMAS

The honor is all ours, your Eminence.

(to Rachel)

The Archbishop has arranged for another concert for us today.

DRAKE

(to Rachel)

That should please your highness, considering your deep interest in music.

Thomas looks at Drake with a puzzled expression. Rachel is caught off guard and reaches for her CUP of tea. Not thinking, she lets the cup FLOAT to her. Both the Archbishop and Adriana see the mistake. Adriana quickly grabs the cup and hands it to Rachel. The Archbishop has a look of shock, which he quickly hides. Rachel grabs the cup and comes to her senses.

RACHEL

Sir Drake is correct. I did so enjoy the last concert you arranged.

The Archbishop's mind is moving quickly.

ARCHBISHOP

I am happy to see to your pleasure. I hope today will be at least as entertaining.

Thomas and Drake can sense that they missed something.

THOMAS

I am certain it will be. We all look forward to it.

EXT. AMPHITHEATER - DAY

RACHEL, THOMAS, and various NOBLES are seated as the MUSIC BEGINS. The ARCHBISHOP enters and greets Rachel and Thomas. An ATTENDANT places the Archbishop's chair next to Thomas's seat. Thomas and the Archbishop converse with one another, as the DANCERS and MUSICIANS perform.

SILENCE falls over the assembly like a wave. A group of SOLDIERS escort a bound WITCH from the far corner of the square over to Thomas.

DRAKE quickly moves forward and speaks with the lead SOLDIER. Drake then leads the entire procession before the pavilion. Thomas and the Archbishop are now standing. The rest of the Nobles pay close attention.

DRAKE walks up to the Archbishop and Thomas. Drake says something to them in a hushed voice. Both of their faces cloud with fury. It is clear that Rachel could not hear what was said. Drake moves to stand behind Thomas.

ARCHBISHOP

Bring her forward.

The Guards bring the Witch forward.

THOMAS

You have been caught in the act of practicing witchcraft. Such an act is punishable with death. How do you answer?

The Witch gives looks of daggers to the Archbishop, then Thomas, and then Rachel. The Archbishop is watching Rachel closely.

WITCH

(to Thomas)

Death would be more welcome than living in your puppet kingdom, under the rule of your hypocritical church.

THOMAS

Your own words condemn you.

ARCHBISHOP
. . . and your soul.

Thomas signals and the Guards move forward. Rachel is stunned and terrified. The Witch looks to the Archbishop and then to Rachel. She looks at Rachel with knowing hatred. Rachel moves to stand and leave, but Thomas stops her with a hand on her arm. The Archbishop watches Rachel with suspicion. Drake steps forward.

DRAKE
Perhaps it would be best if I take Lady Rachel away from this.

Thomas puts up his hand, stopping Drake. He looks angry. He looks at Rachel while addressing Drake.

THOMAS
She will be queen soon. Any child-like squeamishness must end here. She needs to learn to bear the responsibility of her station.

Two Guards hold the Witch so she is bent down, a third Guard is ready to behead her.

THOMAS
Hold your sword.

The Guards stop and look at Thomas in confusion. Thomas looks to Drake.

THOMAS
Hand me your weapon.

DRAKE
Your majesty?

Thomas holds out his hand. Drake reluctantly draws his sword and hands it over. Thomas moves down and readies to behead the Witch.

THOMAS
Your act is unforgivable.

With pure hatred in his eyes, Thomas swings to behead.
Rachel flinches at the act.

Thomas wipes clean the blade and hands the sword back to
Drake.

INT. RACHEL'S ROOM IN THE PALACE - NIGHT

RACHEL is obviously very upset. ADRIANA tries to settle
her down

RACHEL
I can't live like this.

ADRIANA
You knew that magic was forbidden in
Aristenia. We all did. The alliance
is worth the risk.

RACHEL
What if I'm discovered? If they
execute me, there will be no alliance,
but a war instead. All of our hopes
that the king might have different
views on the idea were obviously
misplaced.

ADRIANA
So what do you plan to do?

RACHEL
I don't know.

ADRIANA
If you come up with something, don't do
it until after you have told it to me.
Good night, your highness.

RACHEL
Good night.

Adriana leaves. Rachel blows out the lights and starts for
her bed. Rachel climbs into bed and settles down to sleep.

One of the balcony doors opens and a shadow, QUINT, enters the room. He looks around and heads for her bed. A CREAKING SOUND makes Rachel sit straight up in her bed.

All of the CANDLES and LAMPS suddenly BURST WITH FLAME, flooding the room with light. Quint is caught blinking, trying to orient himself.

QUINT

How did you . . . ?

RACHEL

What are you doing here?

QUINT

(composes himself)

You didn't show. I came to get your answer.

RACHEL

How did you get up here?

QUINT

I climbed.

At this moment the door opens. DRAKE and two of DRAKE'S GUARDS enter.

DRAKE

Your highness, a sentry spotted . . .

Drake and the Guards suddenly see Quint. There is a quick scuffle and Quint is knocked unconscious before he can get away. Rachel tries to reason with them.

RACHEL

I know him.

DRAKE

For how long?

RACHEL

It shouldn't matter.

DRAKE

Your highness, there some who are willing to do anything to stop the alliance between our two countries.

THOMAS has entered now with two of his own KING'S GUARDS.
ADRIANA rushes in and to Rachel's side.

THOMAS
What's going on here?

DRAKE
Lady Rachel has an unexpected guest.
She apparently knows him.

Thomas's face clouds.

THOMAS
Does she? Take him down to the dungeon.

The two Drake's Guards leave, dragging out an unconscious Quint.

THOMAS
(to Drake)
I want some answers from him.

RACHEL
He has had other opportunities to kidnap or kill me if that was his plan.

THOMAS
We aren't certain of his plan. That is why Sir Drake is going to question him.

DRAKE
I'll report back to you right away.

THOMAS
(to Rachel)
You need to get some sleep.
(to King's Guards)
See to it that her highness's rest is uninterrupted. Don't let anyone in or out of her room.

The King's Guards salute and take up station outside Rachel's door. Thomas and Drake leave. Adriana sits Rachel on the bed.

RACHEL
We need to help Quint.

ADRIANA
That would be a really bad idea.

RACHEL
Adriana, he was only here because of me. I will not abandon him.

Adriana sees the determination in Rachel's eyes.

ADRIANA
I can get us some horses. The stable hand and myself have an understanding.

Rachel gives Adriana a questioning look. Adriana smiles.

ADRIANA
I had to do something while you were at those awful concerts.

RACHEL
What do you mean by "us"?

ADRIANA
Do you plan on staying here after you rescue your friend? Especially since you are probably going to have to use magic to do it? I'm certainly not going to stay here without you.

Rachel hugs Adriana then rushes to her wardrobe, quickly pulling and packing traveling clothes.

RACHEL
Grab what you think we'll need.

ADRIANA
What about the guards?

Rachel walks to the door, faces it, holds her hand out and blows across her palm. The SOUND of BODIES FALLING can be heard through the door.

RACHEL

They are taking a rest. Being a guard can be exhausting.

INT. PALACE DUNGEON - NIGHT

QUINT is chained to the wall of an open cell. He looks like he's been roughed up a bit. A DUNGEON GUARD remains in the room with him. DRAKE stands in the corridor outside the cell. The Dungeon Guard lifts Quint's head. Quint looks a little out of it.

DRAKE

That's enough. We'll let him stew for a little while. I need to talk with the king. Make certain the prisoner is secure.

Drake shakes his head and leaves the dungeon. The Dungeon Guard returns and checks Quint's restraints.

The Dungeon Guard leaves the cell, locks the door, and leaves the dungeon.

There is the SOUND of a BODY FALLING to the ground.

RACHEL sneaks her way into the corridor outside the cell. She has the Dungeon Guard's KEYS in her hands. She quickly runs to the cell door and unlocks it. She runs in and unlocks Quint's manacles. As she does, Quint looks up in surprise. He smiles when he sees who it is.

QUINT

You should get some sleep. You look terrible.

Rachel laughs and supports the bruised Quint. He winces in pain.

RACHEL

You big baby. You're not hurt that bad.

Rachel kisses Quint on his forehead and his BRUISES FADE. He looks at her curiously and straightens up.

QUINT
You know. I don't feel that bad. They must have gone easy on me.

Rachel stumbles and uses Quint as a support. She has worn herself out by using her magic.

QUINT
Are you okay?

Rachel smiles at him and straightens.

RACHEL
I'm fine. The excitement must be getting to me.

QUINT
Are you still planning on staying around here?

RACHEL
And miss all of the interesting things that happen around you?

The SOUND of FOOTSTEPS brings them back to the situation.

RACHEL
(whispering)
We need to get to the stables.

INT. THE KING'S STUDY - NIGHT

DRAKE is sitting in one of the comfortable chairs. THOMAS paces near his desk.

THOMAS
Going out into the city alone? Why didn't you catch her doing it earlier?

DRAKE

I don't know. It's almost as though she can become invisible.

THOMAS

Why isn't Vargoth here yet?

DRAKE

He told you he wouldn't get here until the wedding. I know better than to ask him why the delay.

A GUARD bursts into the room. DRAKE is immediately at his feet, a dagger in his hand. He tucks it away when he sees who it is.

GUARD

Your Majesty, the prisoner has escaped. Lady Rachel is also missing.

THOMAS

I don't think that this is a coincidence.

DRAKE

I will alert the barracks immediately.

THOMAS

Quietly. Make it look like we're looking for the escaped prisoner. The last thing I need is for the entire city to know that I lost my bride.

EXT. BLACK CASTLE - NIGHT

BRIGANDS carry TORCHES on the battlements.

INT. BLACK CASTLE MEETING ROOM - NIGHT

The BLACK MAGE is standing, looking out of one of the windows in the room. The DRAGON and SEBASTIAN enter the room. The Dragon is holding Sebastian's arm.

SEBASTIAN

You have some news?

The Black Mage turns and faces the two.

BLACK MAGE

It seems that the princess has run away.

SEBASTIAN

She's no longer in the castle?

BLACK MAGE

Or even the city by this time.

SEBASTIAN

This makes matters much more complex.

BLACK MAGE

Do you doubt my power? I know
precisely where she is going.

INT. THE KING'S STUDY - MORNING

THOMAS doesn't look like he has slept much. DRAKE walks in
looking a little tired himself.

THOMAS

Any luck?

DRAKE

She left the city.

THOMAS

What? How?

DRAKE

While we were busy combing the city,
one of my agents saw three riders on
palace horses leaving through one of
the eastern gates.

THOMAS

The eastern gates?

DRAKE

I've already sent notice to all of my agents, and I have some soldiers assembled to pursue.

THOMAS

Have them ready to leave within the hour. I will meet you at the east gate.

DRAKE

I don't think that's such a good idea.

THOMAS

(ignoring)

Make certain your soldiers are dressed as mercenaries. I don't want anyone getting wind of what has really happened. We'd not only lose the alliance, but we could possibly find ourselves at war if her parents were to discover that I lost their daughter.

DRAKE

You should not go. I'll take care of it.

THOMAS

She left me, Gideon. I'm going to get her back.

EXT. ON THE ROAD HEADING TO FERLAN - EVENING

RACHEL, QUINT, and ADRIANA are all riding HORSEBACK on the road. They move at a good pace, but they aren't pushing their horses. A small town lies up ahead.

RACHEL

Who is this friend of yours?

QUINT

His name is Angus.

ADRIANA

Are you sure he's here?

QUINT

He inherited a tavern here a few years back when his mother died. He doesn't like to run the place, but he loves to drink in it. He'll be here.

The three continue riding toward the town.

INT. FOXBOROUGH TAVERN - EVENING

A bar and bartender, JERRICK, stand along one wall with a door that enters the kitchen. On a small stage sits ANGUS, a tall, thin young man whose most distinguishing feature is the streak of white that runs through his hair. He is PLAYING some sort of GUITAR and SINGING a moderate TUNE. The PATRONS in the tavern are not entranced by the MUSIC, but they are respectful. RACHEL, QUINT, and ADRIANA enter the tavern. They stop for a moment by the door. Quint takes a sweep of the room and sees Angus. He points.

QUINT

That's him.

Angus starts to PLAY a BRIDGE with his guitar.

ADRIANA

I expected someone larger.

The three move to a table near where Angus is playing. Angus looks up and is surprised to see Quint. He smiles and goes back to playing. The SONG reaches its CONCLUSION and a few patrons CLAP. Rachel and Adriana politely clap. Quint moves forward and helps Angus with his instrument. Angus signals to the bartender.

ANGUS

Jerrick, could you bring a round for my friends here?

QUINT

I need your help, Angus.

ANGUS

When don't you?

Angus looks at the ladies. He tries to place their faces.

ANGUS

I'm Angus Foxborough. I'm a singer by trade. Might I have the pleasure of your names?

QUINT

(indicating the ladies in turn)
This is Rachel and her friend Adriana.

Angus's face turns pale. The Bartender comes and hands out drinks. Angus grabs Quint by the arm.

ANGUS

If you ladies don't mind, I need to have a word with my friend.

Angus pulls Quint aside before anyone can respond. Rachel sips at her drink and makes a face at the taste. Angus has pulled Quint out of earshot, but insists on whispering anyway.

ANGUS

(whisper)
Are you mad? Do you know who that is?

QUINT

How do you know who that is?

ANGUS

(whisper)
One of Sir Drake's men is a regular here. Word of what happened at the palace has already gone around. You're in some serious trouble. What were you thinking?

QUINT

I can't explain all of it, but the short of it is this . . .

Angus and Quint continue talking. Rachel and Adriana watch the conversation.

ADRIANA

Quint's friend doesn't look too happy.

A large, drunk brute named BILL staggers up behind the ladies and sits at their bench.

BILL

How much?

RACHEL

Excuse me?

BILL

How much for a romp?

Rachel can't get her mouth to work. Adriana takes charge.

ADRIANA

We're not selling.

BILL

(standing)

What? You saying you're too good for me?

Other members of the tavern begin to take interest. Quint and Angus are still deep in their conversation.

QUINT

. . . so I decided to come and find you.

ANGUS

My advise is this: you need to turn yourselves in, or at least return the . . . Rachel to Aristain.

QUINT

I can't do that. Besides she left on her own. Something back there has her pretty upset. Angus, you're my friend. I need your help.

ANGUS

You know that this is a very bad time for me.

QUINT

I know all about your problem, but the king isn't going to wait on that.

Angus starts to nod his head when he catches sight of the scene over at the ladies' table. Bill has grabbed Rachel by the arm and lifted her up to stand. His other hand has gone to grab her butt. Rachel looks paralyzed by fear. Another PATRON scoots up to Adriana and keeps her from interfering.

BILL

How about a dance, darlin'?

Angus walks over. Quint starts to move in, but Angus holds out his arm to stop him.

ANGUS

I see that you're at it again, Bill.

BILL

Hey, Angus. Why don't you play us a song so we can dance?

ANGUS

Bill, I've told you before, I don't let livestock dance in my place.

The gang around Bill suddenly gets quiet.

BILL

What did you say?

ANGUS

Give it a minute and you'll figure it out. Now, let the lady go. She's not interested in mating with animals.

Bill drops Rachel back into the bench. The patron holding Adriana has let go and moved away. Adriana pulls Rachel out of harm's way.

BILL

You're going to regret that.

ANGUS

Bill, you're big, you're dumb, and you're ugly. You see my friend here? He doesn't like you scaring his lady friends. If you don't leave, he'll have to teach you a lesson.

Bill looks at Quint. Quint looks over at Angus.

QUINT

I'll get you for this.

Bill charges Quint who quickly sidesteps and helps push Bill into one of the tables. One of BILL'S FRIENDS moves forward to get Quint from behind, but Angus flashes a DAGGER and stops him.

ANGUS

Let's let them handle this themselves. Anyone care to make a wager? Give your money to Jerrick. I'm paying five to one that my friend will have Bill knocked cold in five minutes.

The patrons move from silence to LOUDLY BETTING on the fight. Bill and Quint continue to fight. Angus walks over to the table where the ladies are sitting.

ANGUS

Quint will be joining us shortly. I have some rooms upstairs, if you ladies wouldn't mind.

Angus sweeps his arm to indicate a door. Adriana and Rachel dodge bodies and stand by it. Angus moves next to them.

Quint delivers a series of quick punches to Bill's face and chest, always dancing out of Bill's reach.

ANGUS

Say goodnight, Bill.

Quint smashes Bill in the face, knocking him out.

The regular Patrons CHEER and BOO a bit depending on where they bet their money.

Angus gets a cloth from the Bartender and hands it to Quint who wipes his face.

ANGUS

Will someone see Bill home? He doesn't look too well.

INT. ANGUS'S ROOM - EVENING

ANGUS leads QUINT, RACHEL, and ADRIANA into his room. He lives in sparse conditions. Angus motions for the ladies to take seats on the bed, and then picks up some clutter.

ANGUS

Sorry about the mess. I wasn't expecting company.

RACHEL

Quint said that you'd be able to help us.

Angus stops picking up the clutter.

ANGUS

I know who you are, your highness.

Rachel and Adriana both start with surprise. Quint tries to calm them down.

QUINT

One of the reasons that I wanted Angus's help is because of his contacts.

ANGUS

I have to tell you. You'd probably be better off just returning to the king right now and making your apologies. If Sir Drake is looking for us, we'll probably be found.

QUINT

Angus has idolized Drake for as long as I've known him.

ANGUS

I have good reason. He has contacts all over the country, and the means to communicate with them rather quickly. If any of his informants sees you, Drake will know where you are.

Quint tries to convince Rachel.

QUINT

Which is why we need Angus. He has studied Drake and his network for years. If there's anyone who can get us out of Aristenia, it's Angus.

Rachel stands and walks to a doubting Angus.

RACHEL

We need your help. Going back is not an option.

Angus sees the determination in Rachel's eyes and makes up his mind. He nods his head.

ANGUS

This is going to require that we take some drastic measures.

ADRIANA

Such as what?

Angus rubs his hands together.

ANGUS

I'm guessing that you probably used horses you stole from the palace to get here. We will need to sell them and get new mounts, ones that don't draw quite as much attention.

Angus starts to pace. He stops and looks at the ladies' clothes.

ANGUS

We're going to need to do something about your appearance. I should be able to get some worn clothes that fit you well enough.

He looks up at their hair.

ANGUS

For this to work, we're going to have to cut your hair.

Rachel and Adriana both reflexively reach for their heads. Rachel pulls down her hand and tries to smile.

RACHEL

I've always wondered what I'd look like with short hair.

ADRIANA

But I like my hair.

QUINT

We need to get a little bit of rest, but we need to head out as soon as possible.

ANGUS

I'll make the arrangements. Get some sleep. You can use one of the open rooms down the hall.

Angus leaves.

ADRIANA

He seems to know what he's doing.

RACHEL

I hope so.

INT. DARK CORRIDOR IN THE CATHEDRAL - NIGHT

The ARCHBISHOP walks down a corridor with an INQUISITOR. The Inquisitor is charged with keeping church law. He is a

ruthless, cunning man who has aspirations of becoming Archbishop himself some day. He is also in command of the Enforcers, a group of people whose job is to insure that those who use magic are brought to justice; they are allowed to carry out sentencing on the spot.

INQUISITOR

What you have said worries me greatly.
Are you certain you saw her use magic?

ARCHBISHOP

Yes. I'm worried for our king. His ideas sometimes stray from the strict teachings of the church.

INQUISITOR

A flaw many politicians share.

ARCHBISHOP

Should they marry, she will be in a position where she could place undo influence upon him. I worry that he might stray even further.

The Archbishop stops talking at the approach of a MESSENGER. The Messenger enters with a note for the Archbishop. He bows, hands over the note, and leaves. The Archbishop reads the note, his face showing a growing worry.

INQUISITOR

What does it say?

ARCHBISHOP

Apparently, the princess has run away. She helped a prisoner escape and was last seen heading east.

INQUISITOR

Then the marriage, the alliance, is off?

ARCHBISHOP

It appears not. The king himself is leading the pursuit. They left, in disguise, yesterday. It seems that the

king is more deeply infatuated with the princess than I believed.

INQUISITOR

She uses magic and thus is deserving death.

ARCHBISHOP

If you kill the king's bride, no matter the reason, it will cause a severe rift between the kingdom and the church.

The Inquisitor quickly thinks it over.

INQUISITOR

She has most likely disguised herself as well. The church could hardly be found at fault if it was simply killing a magician caught in the act.

The Archbishop does not completely approve of the idea, but he nods his consent.

INT. GUEST ROOM OF FOXBOROUGH TAVERN - NIGHT

This room is rather similar to Angus's, except there are two beds instead of one. RACHEL and ADRIANA are in the beds, but aren't able to sleep. Adriana caresses the length of her newly cut hair.

RACHEL

Are you awake?

ADRIANA

Are you kidding? I'm worn out, sore, and exhausted, of course I can't sleep.

RACHEL

I don't know if this was such a great idea.

ADRIANA

You decide this after we cut our hair?

RACHEL

I don't know what my parents are going to say . . . if we ever get home.

ADRIANA

Don't worry about that. I'm certain that they'll understand.

There is a KNOCK at the door.

QUINT (O.S.)

Angus is back. Can we come in?

Rachel and Adriana sit up.

RACHEL

Come in.

Quint and Angus enter the room.

ANGUS

I hope that you've had the chance to rest, if not actually caught some sleep.

RACHEL

Is everything arranged?

ANGUS

(nods)

I traded the horses with some travelers who are heading west to Farthorne. We'll use their horses and head south.

ADRIANA

Won't that be backtracking?

ANGUS

Maybe a little, but hopefully we can throw them off our trail for a while.

QUINT

We need to get going. The sooner we're out of town, the better. You'll need to get dressed in these.

Quint tosses them some clothes. The ladies get out of bed and the men leave the room.

EXT. THE ROAD SOUTH OF FERLAN - NIGHT

QUINT, ANGUS, RACHEL, and ADRIANA ride their HORSES away from the town.

EXT. STREET IN FERLAN - DAY

THOMAS is leading a HORSE, surrounded by SOLDIERS who are trying to disguise the fact that they are soldiers. Most of them are mounted on HORSES. A SOLDIER who was out in the town looking for information walks up to Thomas.

SOLDIER

Sir. A group of travelers was seen heading east this morning. It appears that they were riding palace horses.

THOMAS

Very good. Gather everyone and prepare to leave.

The Soldier leaves. DRAKE, who had also been out gathering information, walks up to Thomas while reading a scroll.

THOMAS

They were seen heading east this morning.

DRAKE

Their horses were.

THOMAS

What do you mean?

Drake indicates the scroll.

DRAKE

An agent of mine saw them enter a tavern near here. Apparently, Lady Rachel's companion is friends with the tavern's owner. They exchanged horses with some travelers heading east. They

then took on disguises and headed south. We're looking for a group of four now.

EXT. ROAD HEADING SOUTH - DAY

Mountains can be seen to the east. The ocean can be seen to the west. RACHEL, ADRIANA, QUINT and ANGUS ride their HORSES up a hill. Angus and Quint dismount.

ANGUS

That group of Enforcers was moving pretty fast.

QUINT

As long as they're not looking for us, I don't care.

Angus turns to the ladies.

ANGUS

I think we might want to stop for a bit of rest.

Rachel and Adriana dismount thankfully. Angus brings out some QUARTERSTAFFS that he had on his horse.

ADRIANA

What are those for?

Angus hands one to Rachel and one to Adriana.

QUINT

Your protection. Quarterstuffs aren't very threatening, but are an effective weapon that can be learned easily.

RACHEL

Are you concerned for our safety?

ANGUS

It might be handy for you to know how to defend yourselves.

RACHEL

I was hoping for a bit of rest.

QUINT

Angus will show you the basics, then
you can rest.

Angus holds his staff in a defensive position.

ANGUS

First off you need to learn . . .

Before he can finish his sentence, Rachel has attacked him. Angus quickly mounts a defense. Quint stands in mild shock. Adriana leans on her staff and laughs quietly.

Rachel attacks with a combination of sweeps and stabs. After an off-balanced parry from Angus, Rachel sweeps his legs, knocking him to the ground. She levels the end of her staff at him.

RACHEL

Since I already know the basics, is it
okay if I rest now?

Angus holds up his hands in surrender. Rachel helps him up.

ANGUS

Who taught you how to fight?

ADRIANA

I did, though I prefer to use these.

Adriana pulls out a long DAGGER which she looks at lovingly.

RACHEL

Adriana is my bodyguard. You didn't
think that I come to Aristenia alone,
did you?

QUINT

Where was she when you sneaked out of
the palace?

ADRIANA

I was there. I almost killed you when you pulled the knife on that thief.

QUINT

I didn't see you there.

ADRIANA

I'm very good.

RACHEL

Part of her role is to appear as a normal lady's maid. She can do her job much more effectively if no one suspects what she is capable of.

ADRIANA

I think Drake was on to me. It's hard to slip anything past him.

Rachel looks at Quint.

RACHEL

Why didn't you try to "instruct" us?

QUINT

I'm not a good teacher. I don't have a lot of patience for beginners.

Rachel holds her staff at ready and approaches Quint.

RACHEL

You can see that I'm not a beginner.

QUINT

I don't want you to get hurt.

Rachel moves in to stab him with the butt of the staff. Quint smoothly dodges and yanks the staff from her, tossing her to the ground.

ADRIANA

He's quick.

ANGUS

I think that it's time for a rest now,
before things get ugly.

Rachel stands up and reaches her hand out to Adriana.

RACHEL
Hand me a staff.

ADRIANA
I don't think this is a good idea.

RACHEL
Hand me a staff.

Adriana shrugs and hands over the staff. Rachel moves forward purposely toward Quint. Quint holds out a hand.

QUINT
Let's not do this.

Rachel attacks. In three strikes, Quint has her on the ground again.

Rachel picks herself up. Angus walks over to Adriana.

ANGUS
Should we do something?

ADRIANA
This is something that she has to learn.

Rachel attacks again. This time Quint has knocked her down in two strikes. Before she can get up, he sits on her.

QUINT
I've been wanting to get you on your back, but there has to be an easier way.

RACHEL
Get off of me.

QUINT
Not until you decide to stop trying to hurting me.

RACHEL

Get off or I'll knock you off.

QUINT

I'd like to see you try.

Rachel starts to concentrate. Adriana has quickly stepped up at this point.

ADRIANA

I think this needs to stop here.

(to Quint)

You, get off my lady before I knock you on your back.

(to Rachel)

You, stop crying about losing and learn something from it.

Quint stands up and offers a hand to Rachel. Rachel ignores the hand and stands up on her own, brushing off her clothes.

ANGUS

I don't know about you, but I'm hungry.
Quint, you want to give me a hand?

Quint and Angus walk off. Rachel looks at them and kind of smiles to herself. Adriana follows Rachel's gaze.

ADRIANA

He's good. I don't think I could beat him. He's also efficient. No wasted time showing off, he just knocked you on your butt.

Rachel grimaces and gives Adriana a dirty look.

EXT. ON THE ROAD SOUTH - DAY

The king's GROUP rides their HORSES at a reasonable pace. THOMAS pulls his horse closer to DRAKE's.

THOMAS

Can't we move any faster?

Drake shakes his head.

DRAKE

You're letting your impatience cloud your judgment. Our horses will do us no good if they are ridden to death.

THOMAS

Of course. You're right.

DRAKE

We have some extra mounts and our horses are better trained than theirs. Devonsford is another couple of days from here. We should be able to catch up to them by then.

EXT. A CAMPSITE OFF THE ROAD TO DEVONSFORD - NIGHT

The area is getting more heavily wooded. Though there is still a clearing for a good space away from the road, a forest sits to the east. The mountains are getting closer, but the ocean can't be seen. The HORSES are picketed somewhere on the side of the camp. The moon is full. ADRIANA is rolling out sleeping mats. RACHEL walks over to QUINT who is slowly stirring a fire.

RACHEL

Where's Angus?

QUINT

(evasive)

He's around . . . somewhere.

Rachel sits next to Quint.

RACHEL

We've hardly had a moment to ourselves.

QUINT

Running from a king will do that to a person's schedule.

Rachel chuckles and rests her head on Quint's shoulder.

They are quiet for a moment. Quint struggles with some thought. He doesn't notice that Rachel falls asleep.

QUINT

This hasn't gone at all like I planned.
I don't know what I was expecting . . .

Quint decides against saying what he was going to say.

QUINT

You should really get some sleep.

Quint turns to her and realizes that she is already sleeping. Adriana finishes what she was doing and walks over to them. She smiles when she sees Rachel

ADRIANA

I feel like that myself.

Adriana helps Quint move Rachel to one of the sleeping mats. Adriana settles into one herself.

ADRIANA

You're a good man, Quint. I appreciate the fact that you haven't tried to take advantage of our situation.

QUINT

Good night, Adriana. Sleep well.

ADRIANA

I will.

Quint returns to the fire. In the nearby woods, two shining yellow EYES watch the camp.

EXT. DARK CORRIDOR UNDER THE CATHEDRAL - NIGHT

The INQUISITOR is standing, reading from a small scroll. The ARCHBISHOP enters.

ARCHBISHOP

Did they find her?

INQUISITOR

The princess doubled back and is heading south. My Enforcers must have passed them on the road.

ARCHBISHOP

Did your Enforcers see the king?

INQUISITOR

Yes. He, too, was heading south. He must be fairly close to catching the princess.

The Archbishop thinks about this.

INQUISITOR

I've already notified those remaining in Devonsford. They are going to set up a

INQUISITOR (continued)

trap there, but the king may catch her by then.

ARCHBISHOP

Hopefully, the princess will make good time.

EXT. ON THE ROAD TO DEVONSFORD - DAY

ANGUS rides at the front of the group. RACHEL, ADRIANA, and QUINT ride a little ways behind.

ADRIANA

When we get to the town ahead, we should really think about getting new mounts. These are getting tired, not to mention that they never were as good as the king's horses.

RACHEL

Do you have any idea what's in the town ahead?

QUINT

Devonsford has some fishing boats, but nothing sturdy enough to take you to

the Isles. We'll have to go farther down the coast for that.

RACHEL

What's the plan from there?

QUINT

We'll head on to Brenwell. It's the next town with a large enough of a port to have a ship. I have a . . . business partner there that I should probably talk to. He should be able to help us.

EXT. DEVONSFORD - DAY

Devonsford is a clean-cut town that would have been just another fishing village if it wasn't for the massive tower standing on an overlooking hill. It is the headquarters of the Enforcers. A couple of large outbuildings are attached to it, giving it a look like an oversized lighthouse.

There are not many people on the streets. The party is standing in front of a tavern. ANGUS walks out of the tavern and talks with RACHEL and ADRIANA. QUINT looks around uneasily.

ANGUS

There's a horse trader just down the road.

ADRIANA

I'll handle this. Your sense for horses is questionable.

Adriana leaves with the horses.

RACHEL

(explaining)

Adriana's father is a horse trader.

ANGUS

The food here smells pretty good, as long as you don't mind fish.

RACHEL

That sounds wonderful.

Angus and Rachel head for the tavern.

RACHEL
Quint? Are you coming?

QUINT
(absently)
Give me a minute. I'll be right in.

Rachel and Angus enter the tavern. Quint looks around again, then shrugs off his feeling and walks into the tavern. A group of six men, the ENFORCER and FIVE ASSOCIATES, stop the various tasks they were performing and head to the tavern.

INT. DEVONSFORD TAVERN - DAY

ANGUS and RACHEL are sitting at a table where a SERVING GIRL walks away with their order. QUINT enters and sits by them.

ANGUS
We already ordered for you.

Rachel looks at Quint and puts her hand on his arm.

RACHEL
Are you all right?

QUINT
I feel like something's about to happen.

The Serving Girl brings some glasses to the table. Quint hands her a couple of coins.

QUINT
Could you wrap up our meal for us?
We're in a bit of a hurry.

The Serving Girl smiles, takes the coins, and enters the kitchen.

The ENFORCER and his ASSOCIATES from outside enter. Angus and Quint are on guard. Rachel looks a little worried.

ANGUS
Can we help you, friend?

ENFORCER
(to Rachel)
Lady Rachel?

RACHEL
Yes?

At her answer, all of the men draw weapons. One of the Associates pulls out a crossbow.

ANGUS
Look out.

Angus pushes Rachel out of the way. The Associate with the crossbow shoots and a BOLT hits in the wall behind where Rachel was sitting. The other men attack right away.

Quint has pulled out his swords and kills two of the men before they can react. Angus has pulled out and thrown a knife, killing the first man who came at him. Quint is now fighting the Enforcer and one Associate.

Angus finds himself wrestling with the last one.

Quint is getting a bit overrun; the Enforcer is good.

Rachel pulls herself up and concentrates. The other Associate on Quint is THROWN back by an unseen force.

Quint takes advantage of the hesitation and kills the Enforcer. The thrown Associate picks himself up and charges Rachel. Quint dispatches him easily.

Angus's wrestling match pulls him out the door and into the street. Quint and Rachel quickly follow.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE DEVONSFORD TAVERN - DAY

ANGUS bursts through the door with the Associate who attacked him. ANGUS wrestles away the Associate's knife and kills him with it. He stands up and sees EIGHT more ENFORCERS coming toward the tavern. They see Angus and draw their weapons.

RACHEL and QUINT come out of the tavern. Angus tosses and knife and kills one of the men with a crossbow, then pushes Rachel and Quint back into the tavern.

INT. DEVONSFORD TAVERN - DAY

As ANGUS shuts the door, a CROSSBOW BOLT thuds into it. QUINT and RACHEL help him bar the door. The SERVING GIRL stands by the kitchen door, looking a little terrified and holding the basket of food. Angus looks at Quint.

ANGUS

I think I could take two of them. Do you think you can handle five?

RACHEL

I'm here too.

Angus nods as he takes that into account. He looks at Quint.

ANGUS

Do you think you can handle five while protecting the princess?

Rachel huffs. Quint looks at the Serving Girl.

QUINT

Back door?

The Serving Girl points to the kitchen. Quint, Angus, and Rachel head for the back door. Rachel grabs the basket from the Serving Girl.

EXT. IN DEVONSFORD NEAR THE HORSE DEALER - DAY

The road is primarily empty. ADRIANA is leading four new HORSES out of the gate when two ENFORCERS attack her. She

quickly dodges the attacks and draws her dagger. In a whirl of motion, she has defeated both of her assailants.

QUINT, ANGUS, and RACHEL appear from around one of the buildings. They move cautiously, but quickly. They approach Adriana but are still a ways off.

THOMAS, DRAKE, and SOLDIERS enter the town from the far end.

QUINT

They made good time.

More ENFORCERS appear and start running toward the party.

Adriana quickly mounts her horse and brings the other horses up to the party. Angus's horse shies from him; he tries calming it down. Everyone else mounts.

THOMAS and DRAKE see the party and spur on their horses.

A few of the Enforcers with crossbows shoot some wild shots at the party.

Angus turns and faces the king's Soldiers and Enforcers. He starts weaving a spell by chanting and moving his arms. A wall of FOG quickly APPEARS between the party and everyone else, but it's still pretty weak.

Adriana and Rachel share a look. Rachel concentrates and the FOG THICKENS and GROWS in size.

Thomas and Drake, inside the fog, can see nothing.

Angus drops his arms and slumps against the horse. Rachel also looks pretty tired. Quint rides over to his friend and lends a hand. Angus limply gets on his horse.

ANGUS

I'm okay.

He looks back at the fog as it rolls quickly towards them.

ANGUS

That turned out better than I thought it would.

ADRIANA

We need to go before we get caught in it.

The party turns and leaves the town.

EXT. BLACK CASTLE - DAY

BRIGANDS on the battlements are still on lookout.

INT. BLACK CASTLE'S MEETING ROOM - DAY

The BLACK MAGE is looking out of the window again. The DRAGON enters the room.

DRAGON

Something's happened?

The Black Mage turns to face her.

BLACK MAGE

It seems that the princess managed to escape both the church and the state. She and her friends are proving to be very resourceful.

SEBASTIAN enters the room. The Dragon moves to his side.

SEBASTIAN

You sent for me?

BLACK MAGE

Send word to your people in Brenwell that the princess should be arriving there by tomorrow evening.

EXT. NEAR THE HORSE DEALER IN DEVONSFORD - DAY

Some of the king's SOLDIERS have the remaining ENFORCERS under guard. THOMAS looks over the two ENFORCERS that

Adriana had killed. DRAKE leaves the group of guarded ENFORCERS to talk with his king.

DRAKE

They're Enforcers. They were told that a magician traveled with someone who fit the princess's description.

THOMAS

It seems that their information was correct. That fog was not natural. I wish Vargoth was here. He knows more about magic than I, or any of us, do.

DRAKE

I sent word to him before we left Aristain. I don't know where he is.

THOMAS

Was there anything else?

DRAKE

Something about the Enforcers' story just doesn't feel right. Sixteen men means four teams. That seems a little excessive for one magician. I think that they're hiding something from me.

THOMAS

We don't have the time to figure it out. Have some of the local soldiers keep these Enforcers under guard. If they can find out anything else, have them send word. I want to be back on the road within half an hour.

EXT. CAMPSITE ON THE ROAD TO BRENWELL - SUNSET

The mountains are now a wall to the east. They continue on to the south. A forest sits between the road and the mountains. To the west lies the sea. RACHEL and ANGUS are setting up camp. QUINT brings wood to start a fire. ADRIANA sees to the HORSES.

QUINT

Everyone should get some rest. We'll need to leave early if we're to stay ahead of them.

Rachel moves over to Angus.

RACHEL

How long have you been able to use magic?

ANGUS

I was wondering when this would come up.

Angus sighs and looks at the sunset.

ANGUS

I was born with a little bit of this curse. I could always make small things happen. My mother apprenticed me to a drunken old man who the town tolerated because he was good at healing. He wasn't a good teacher, and I wasn't much of a student.

RACHEL

Where is your master now?

ANGUS

He was killed by a group of farmers who blamed him for a bad crop. Honestly, he might have been behind it, but burning is a bad way to go.

RACHEL

I'm sorry.

ANGUS

It's ironic. People fear me because of a "gift" that I don't even want.

RACHEL

I know what you . . .

Angus cuts her off by suddenly standing.

ANGUS

I'm sorry, Rachel. I shouldn't have gone on like that. If we're going to leave early tomorrow, I need to get some things done right now.

Angus walks off anxiously. Rachel gives him a puzzled look. Adriana walks up to her and sees the look.

ADRIANA

Something wrong?

RACHEL

I don't know. I think Angus is hiding something.

Quint overhears.

QUINT

Of course he is. You saw him use magic didn't you? He's not comfortable with people knowing. He's probably also feeling guilty about the attack.

RACHEL

Guilty?

QUINT

Those were Enforcers who attacked us in town. They hunt magic users and bring them to "God's judgment." They seemed pretty intent on killing him.

Rachel and Adriana share a look. Quint doesn't notice.

QUINT

Just leave him alone for a bit. He probably just needs time to settle his thoughts.

EXT. CAMPSITE ON THE ROAD TO BRENWELL - NIGHT

RACHEL and ADRIANA are sleeping. QUINT is sitting near the forest, talking. Rachel wakes up. She can't see Quint clearly, but he seems to be talking to ANGUS. Rachel can't see Angus, who is in FOX form, from where she's lying.

QUINT

You have been acting strangely.

ANGUS (voice)

I've had a lot on my mind.

QUINT

You still think that the Enforcers were after Rachel?

ANGUS (voice)

It was after she responded that they attacked. I just don't understand why.

QUINT

Maybe the king or Drake were able to get a message ahead of us.

ANGUS (voice)

The king and Drake want to capture Rachel, not kill her.

QUINT

If not them, someone pretty high up had to be behind the attack.

ANGUS (voice)

She's awake.

Rachel stands up and walks over, but Angus (as the Fox) is nowhere to be seen.

RACHEL

Where's Angus?

QUINT

What?

RACHEL

Angus? I just heard the two of you talking.

QUINT

Oh, Angus. He just left to take a look around.

RACHEL

What's going on?

QUINT

Uh, nothing.

Adriana is awake now.

RACHEL

Quint.

ANGUS (voice)

We might as well tell her. She took the magician thing pretty well.

RACHEL

Where are you?

ANGUS (voice)

I warned you that this was a bad time for me.

RACHEL

What's he talking about?

Adriana walks over.

QUINT

Angus had a run-in with something pretty bad back when we first knew each other. Have you heard of lycanthropy?

RACHEL

It's a disease from magic.

(realizes)

Is he a werewolf?

Adriana draws her dagger at the word.

QUINT

Uh, no. It's a bit more embarrassing.

The Fox walks out of the woods and sits next to Quint.

ANGUS (voice of the fox)

I'm a were-fox.

Adriana suppresses a giggle.

RACHEL

Aren't were-beings supposed to be dangerous? I read that they can't control their animal natures and attack people.

ANGUS (voice of the fox)

I can't speak for all of them, but I don't have a problem.

ADRIANA

He's so cute.

The Fox bares his teeth. Adriana steps back.

ADRIANA

It was a compliment.

ANGUS (voice of the fox)

Right. I'm smiling.

RACHEL

Where did your clothes go?

ANGUS (voice of the fox)

They change with the form. When I change back, I'm still wearing them.

RACHEL

Are there are other side effects?

ANGUS (voice of the fox)

Aside from being completely desirable to women?

(bares teeth)

If there's not a full moon, I can switch between forms at will. It tends to bother people, though.

QUINT

I think it's time for everyone to get some sleep. We can continue this talk on the road.

Rachel and Adriana head for bed.

ANGUS (voice of the fox)

(muttering)

Cute, my bushy tail . . . I'm adorable.

EXT. ENTRANCE TO BRENWELL - DAY

The mountains still loom to the east. This town has a sizable harbor with several ships. A large castle sits on a hill overlooking the town and the port. RACHEL, ADRIANA, QUINT and ANGUS have stopped their HORSES at the edge of town.

RACHEL

Where is this friend of yours?

Quint points to the castle.

QUINT

Up there.

ADRIANA

He works for a Baron?

QUINT

He is a Baron.

ANGUS

(puzzled)

How do you know a Baron?

QUINT

I was caught trying to steal something from him. Instead of setting up a place for me in the dungeon, he hired me for a while.

RACHEL

I already don't trust him.

QUINT

Me either, but he might be willing to get us on a ship out of here.

INT. AUDIENCE CHAMBER IN THE BARON'S CASTLE - DAY

The BARON sits in a throne-like chair. He is a fat, jovial man in his middle ages. He surrounds himself with any lavish comforts available to him. This is evident in both his clothes and his choice of furnishings. Two of the BARON'S GUARDS stands by the entrance. A female ADVISOR enters the room.

The Advisor bows, walks up to the Baron, and whispers something in his ear. The Baron smiles.

BARON

Send them in.

One of the Baron's Guard leaves the room for a moment. The Baron stands up. The Baron's Guard returns, followed by QUINT, ANGUS, RACHEL, and ADRIANA. All of them bow, or curtsy, to the Baron.

BARON

Quint, you devil, I didn't expect to see you for a while.

Quint bows again and smiles.

QUINT

My lord.

BARON

And who are your companions?

ANGUS

If it pleases you, we would prefer to remain anonymous.

The Baron smiles and winks. He addresses Quint.

BARON

Ah, those kind of friends. Well, I'm assuming you've come to ask a favor.

QUINT

I have, my lord. As you have already guessed, my companions are in a bit of trouble. I was wondering if you could quietly provide passage for us on one of your ships. Tonight if possible.

BARON

I have a ship leaving port in just a few hours. What is your destination?

QUINT

The Kingdom of the Isles, my lord.

BARON

The ship would have to make port there on its way to Ky anyway. I'll make arrangements with the captain.

The Baron looks at the Advisor who nods her head and leaves. The Baron looks slyly back at Quint.

BARON

You understand that this puts you in my debt, again?

QUINT

Of course, my lord.

The Baron notices their condition.

BARON

Naturally, we will speak of such things later. For now, you and your friends are looking a little travel sore. Guard, see our guests to appropriate

rooms and have some servants draw them
baths.

The ladies perk up at the sound of the word "baths".

QUINT

Thank you, my lord.

The party leaves, escorted by one of the Baron's Guards.
The Baron sits again and smiles. He addresses the other
Baron's Guard.

BARON

Send for Sebastian's friend.

INT. A GUEST ROOM IN THE BARON'S CASTLE - DAY

Everything about the Baron's castle is lavish and his guest
rooms are no exception. A huge marble bath fills one
corner. SERVANTS are already filling it with heated water.
RACHEL and ADRIANA enter the room. Adriana looks like she
is in heaven. Rachel is lost in her thoughts.

ADRIANA

A bath. That Baron at least
understands a woman's needs.

Adriana sees that Rachel is thinking.

ADRIANA

What's wrong?

RACHEL

It's all happening so fast. In another
couple of days, we'll be home. What
are my parents going to say?

ADRIANA

They'll understand.

RACHEL

What do I tell them about Quint? I'm
sorry, father, but I couldn't marry a

RACHEL (continued)

king. By the way, mother, I brought home a thief who I love instead.

ADRIANA

I don't think that I'd be that direct.

There is a KNOCK at the door.

RACHEL

Come in.

Quint enters the room.

RACHEL

You know, you really could use that bath.

QUINT

I'm giving Angus first shot at the tub. I was planning on looking around a bit. Is there anything you ladies need?

Adriana looks at Rachel then back to Quint.

ADRIANA

You might want to see about getting us some fresh clothes.

QUINT

I'm sure I can arrange something.

Rachel hands Quint some money.

RACHEL

Please don't steal them.

Quint winks and leaves. Rachel looks at the bath.

RACHEL

Do you want to go first?

ADRIANA

The bath's big enough for two.

INT. THE CORRIDOR OUTSIDE THE BARON'S AUDIENCE CHAMBER -
DAY

The two doors that lead to the audience chamber are here. The guards are absent. The BARON and a PIRATE are inside the audience chamber and can be seen and heard from the hall when the door is open. The ADVISOR hurries her way into the chamber, leaving the door partly open in her haste. QUINT walks down from another branching corridor unnoticed. Hearing VOICES in the room, he pauses at the door.

BARON

. . . that she has come all this way on her own is a massive stroke of luck. It seems Quint is more useful than I ever gave him credit for.

(to Advisor)

What is it?

Quint carefully looks into the room. He sees the Advisor hand something to the Baron. The Baron reads.

BARON

(smiling)

It seems that King Thomas has been kind enough to notify us of his arrival.

PIRATE

This gives us the perfect opportunity.

BARON

Indeed. We'll set a trap for his majesty. Do you think he's worth more to Sebastian alive, or dead?

PIRATE

Alive would certainly be preferable, but I'm certain Sebastian would understand if an accident occurred. Speaking of which, what should we do with the princess's companions?

BARON

They are too much of a liability. Once on the ship, kill them.

PIRATE
Even the thief?

BARON
(sighs)
As much as I hate to waste his kind of
potential, he would create too many
complications.

Quint pulls himself away from the door and quickly heads
back up the corridor.

INT. A GUEST ROOM IN THE BARON'S CASTLE - DAY

RACHEL and ADRIANA are sitting in the tub surrounded by
bubbles. Adriana has her eyes closed and looks completely
relaxed. Rachel rinses her hair.

RACHEL
At least it didn't take long to wash.

ADRIANA
You don't want to go there.

Rachel just finishes when QUINT bursts into the room; he
has two sets of folded clothes under his arm. ANGUS stands
behind him, looking wet, and trying to fasten his belt.

QUINT
We have to go. The Baron is planning
to betray us.

RACHEL
What?

QUINT
I'll explain later. We have to leave
now.

Quint places the clothes on one of the beds.

QUINT

I brought you both some fresh clothes.

He turns to go, stops, and returns to the bed. He places Rachel's money on the clothes.

QUINT

I didn't have time to pay for them.

Quint leaves. Adriana chuckles.

RACHEL

What?

ADRIANA

I know we're in a hurry, but he didn't even try to peek.

INT. THE BARON'S STABLES - DAY

Again, the Baron's wealth is evident. The party's HORSES are quartered here. QUINT, ANGUS, RACHEL, and ADRIANA enter and start to see to their horses. Everyone looks clean and wet except for Quint.

RACHEL

Who is the Baron working for?

QUINT

I'm not sure. They seem to have some interest in the king as well.

RACHEL

What do you mean?

QUINT

They're setting a trap for him. They made it sound like he was going to be here soon.

Rachel stops what she's doing and stares into space.

ANGUS

Rachel?

RACHEL
We have to warn him.

QUINT
Who?

RACHEL
The king.

QUINT
How? It's not like we can leave him a note.

RACHEL
I'll have to tell him myself.

She has everyone's attention.

RACHEL
You're right. We can't leave a note and there's no one we can trust to tell him.

ANGUS
The king's not going to let you go.

RACHEL
It's my fault that he's in this situation.

ADRIANA
I'll go.

Now she has their attention.

ADRIANA
We do have to warn him and he wouldn't let you go once he had you. If the message comes from me, he'll know it's the truth.

RACHEL
I can't ask you to do this.

ADRIANA

I'll get away and meet up with you somehow. He has no reason to hold me.

Rachel walks over and hugs Adriana.

RACHEL

Thank you.

ANGUS

There might be another way.

RACHEL

Adriana's right. This is the only way that they'll believe the message.

EXT. ON THE ROAD TO BRENWELL - DAY

THOMAS, DRAKE, and the king's escort are sitting on their HORSES. Thomas and Drake are having a discussion. A SOLDIER is mounted nearby.

THOMAS

The Baron's messenger seemed eager to get back.

DRAKE

I don't like this. All of my information on this Baron suggests that he's not trustworthy.

SOLDIER

A rider approaches, your Majesty.

ADRIANA rides up, escorted by SOLDIERS on either side.

DRAKE

Lady Rachel's maid.

THOMAS

Adriana, isn't it?

Adriana bows as much as the horse allows.

ADRIANA

Your Majesty, you're in grave danger.

EXT. ROAD LEADING SOUTH FROM BRENWELL - DAY

The town is barely in view. ANGUS rides ahead. RACHEL turns to look at the town. QUINT follows her gaze.

QUINT
She'll be all right.

Rachel nods and turns back to follow Angus. Quint looks out at the town for a moment and shakes his head. He then follows the other two.

INT. AUDIENCE CHAMBER IN THE BARON'S CASTLE - EVENING

The BARON paces the room. His ADVISOR is nearby.

BARON
They couldn't have gone far. Find them.

The ADVISOR turns to go when the doors are thrown open. DRAKE enters the room, sword drawn and bloody. A few SOLDIERS follow him in.

BARON
What is the meaning of this?

THOMAS enters. He is not amused. The Baron's eyes widen.

BARON
Your Majesty . . . I had thought . . .

THOMAS
(cold)
You had thought I would be dead by now.

BARON
No . . . no, I . . .

THOMAS
(to Drake)
Remind me. What's the penalty for treason to one's king?

Drake moves forward, his sword a reminder of the threat over the Baron. The Baron scrambles back against a wall.

BARON

Please . . . I was forced. I have information. I'm worth more . . .

The Baron stops as a GREEN MIST surrounds him. The Baron yells into the air, addressing someone unseen.

BARON

I wasn't going to tell them anything. Don't . . .

The Baron's eyes roll back into his head and he starts shaking uncontrollably. Drake stops his advance. The Baron falls to the floor, FROTH coming from his mouth. He jerks twice and lies dead. The GREEN MIST fades away. Drake quickly walks over to him and kneels.

DRAKE

He's dead.

THOMAS

Magic again. Where is Vargoth?

DRAKE

I'm concerned for your safety. This chase seems to be more dangerous than we realized.

THOMAS

Then we're going to have to catch her quickly.

Drake thinks about it for a moment. He's looking at a MAP on the Baron's wall.

DRAKE

We might be able to get ahead of her.

THOMAS

Explain.

Drake moves to the map, and points to it.

DRAKE

We know that they are heading south.
There are no more ports large enough to
hold a ship until you get to here.

Drake touches the map at a point.

DRAKE

Questra.

THOMAS

That's right on the border.

DRAKE

If we take a ship from here, we should
be able to reach Questra ahead of her.
Between the sea and the mountains, the
only way out is through the border
gate.

THOMAS

How do you know they won't double back?

DRAKE

My agent is certain that this is where
they are headed.

THOMAS

Who is this agent?

DRAKE

His name is Angus. He a friend of the
thief the princess ran away with.

THOMAS

Wouldn't that mean he was the one who
made that fog back in Devonsford?

DRAKE

He felt he had to. The Enforcers were
between us and the princess. He is
pretty certain they were after her.

He's also been concerned that there is more going on than is apparent, and that both the princess and your safety is at risk.

Drake points to the Baron's body.

DRAKE

I think his fears are justified.

EXT. BLACK CASTLE - SUNSET

RIDERS enter and leave the castle.

INT. BLACK CASTLE'S MEETING ROOM - SUNSET

The BLACK MAGE weakly tries to stand up as the DRAGON enters the room. She smiles wickedly.

DRAGON

Are you feeling a little weak?

BLACK MAGE

I'm still more than a match for you.

DRAGON

Why so exhausted?

BLACK MAGE

I had to tie up some loose ends.

SEBASTIAN enters.

SEBASTIAN

Any word?

The Black Mage straightens.

BLACK MAGE

The trap in Brenwell failed.

SEBASTIAN

My people?

BLACK MAGE

Killed to the man. It seems this king
is not to be underestimated.

SEBASTIAN

And the princess?

BLACK MAGE

She is still on her way here. The plan
is intact.

EXT. AT THE PORT IN BRENWELL - SUNSET

The king's SOLDIERS are loading the ship. THOMAS watches
the process. DRAKE appears with ADRIANA near him.

THOMAS

We set sail within the hour.

ADRIANA

We're taking a boat, your Majesty?

THOMAS

(absently)

Ship.

(to Adriana)

I wanted to thank you for saving our
lives. That couldn't have been an easy
decision, choosing between your lady or
this.

ADRIANA

Your Majesty, I made the choice for my
lady. She was going to warn you
herself.

This surprises Drake and Thomas.

DRAKE

And you came in her place? This
princess seems to inspire a good deal
of loyalty.

ADRIANA

It's love, not just loyalty, your Majesty. I would do anything for her.

THOMAS

I'm more and more intrigued as this journey continues. The princess and I were supposed to spend this month getting to know each other. I'm learning more with her away than I did when she was right beside me.

ADRIANA

With all due respect, your Majesty, you didn't try to get to know her before.

THOMAS

(agreeing)

I think we all have been a little hasty. We have a bit of a voyage ahead. If you would be willing, I would like to get to know Lady Rachel better.

EXT. A CAMPSITE ON THE ROAD FROM BRENWELL - NIGHT

A small FIRE is burning. QUINT is already sound asleep. ANGUS sits by the fire, PLAYING his GUITAR. RACHEL gets out of her bed roll and sits next to Angus.

ANGUS

Can't sleep?

RACHEL

No. I'm worried about Adriana.

ANGUS

Don't be. The king and Sir Drake are honorable men. She'll be safe with them.

Rachel looks quizzically at Angus, then the MOON, then Angus.

RACHEL

Shouldn't you be a fox right now?

ANGUS

Only for the couple of nights around
the full moon.

RACHEL

Isn't it full now?

ANGUS

No.

RACHEL

How can you tell?

ANGUS

Believe me; I know.

Rachel sits quietly for a moment.

RACHEL

What's the name of the next town?

ANGUS

Southfork, but there's not much of
interest there.

RACHEL

Where are we headed then?

ANGUS

Questra. It's a town on Aristenia's
southern border. It also has a good-
sized harbor. We can either get a boat
there, or leave the country.

RACHEL

Thank you, Angus.

ANGUS

For what?

RACHEL

You've been a good friend.

Rachel gets up, kisses Angus on the cheek and returns to her bed. Angus sits quietly for a moment, watching her, then he starts PLAYING again.

EXT. ON THE KING'S SHIP - DAY

This is a nice sized sailing vessel. The coast can still be seen to the east. SAILORS are all about, dealing with the rigging. DRAKE stands at the bow of the ship, watching the sea. ADRIANA walks over to Drake a bit unsteadily. He turns when he notices her approach.

DRAKE

I thought you were trying to sleep.

ADRIANA

I needed to get above deck.

DRAKE

Not much for sailing?

ADRIANA

No.

DRAKE

That's a little odd for a woman from the Isles.

ADRIANA

My parents were gypsies.

DRAKE

Ah.

ADRIANA

Would you mind if I asked you a question?

DRAKE

Go ahead.

ADRIANA

No matter how fast we traveled, it seemed that word always got ahead of us. How?

DRAKE

Some people use birds for sending messages.

ADRIANA

"Some people." What about you?

Drake pulls out a pair of scrolls from his tunic. He hands one to Adriana. She unrolls it.

ADRIANA

It's blank.

Drake smiles, pulls out a quill, opens his scroll, and writes on it. The sentence "THIS IS HOW." APPEARS on the scroll in Adriana's hand. She looks at him in amazement.

DRAKE

Read it again.

As Adriana reads it a second time, and the WORDS DISAPPEAR.

ADRIANA

That's amazing.

DRAKE

All of my agents carry one of these as well as an insignia to identify him, or her, as one of my agents.

Drake pulls out an insignia, a blue dragon curled around a black sword, to show her.

ADRIANA

Your symbol is legendary. I think anyone could recognize it.

(indicating the scroll)

Isn't this magic?

DRAKE

(smiling)

We live in a magical world, whether we wish to or not. We can't cut ourselves off from it completely. Even the church uses it in some degree.

(pause)
Was there something else?

ADRIANA
No. I just need some air.

Adriana fingers the scroll, thinking.

EXT. JUST OUTSIDE THE TOWN OF SOUTHFORK - EVENING

ANGUS, QUINT, and RACHEL are riding slowly. They stop at the edge of the town. Angus looks to the sea.

ANGUS
It's going to get dark soon. I think we'll be safe if we spend the night at an inn here.

QUINT
You thought the decoy would work too.

ANGUS
Trust me.

RACHEL
I would like to sleep in a bed.

INT. SOUTHFORK INN AND TAVERN LOWER LEVEL - EVENING

This tavern isn't in as good of a condition as the past ones have been. Several PATRONS are sitting at tables. ANGUS and QUINT enter first. RACHEL is just a little bit behind them. A large DRUNK who's a little too friendly grabs Rachel's butt.

Rachel sighs, pulls out a dagger, and sticks its tip into the table. The Drunk lets go at the sight of her knife.

RACHEL
Look, I'm rather tired right now, and it takes a lot of energy to cut off someone's manhood. Do you think you could just leave me alone tonight?

The Drunk gulps and nods. Rachel puts away her dagger and walks over to Quint and Angus. The DRUNK'S FRIENDS smile at her appreciatively and tease their rather scared friend. Quint turns and looks questioningly at Rachel.

QUINT

Trouble?

RACHEL

(smiling to herself)

Not tonight.

Angus turns to them.

ANGUS

They have some rooms available,
including one with a tub.

Rachel wrinkles her nose at Quint.

RACHEL

We better make certain you get in one
this time.

INT. SOUTHFORK INN AND TAVERN, ANGUS'S ROOM - SUNSET

The town's main street can be seen from the window. QUINT can be HEARD SLOSHING and SINGING in a tub in the next room.

ANGUS sits on his bed. He pulls a scroll out of his pack. Drake's insignia can be seen in the pack. Angus opens the scroll and reads it carefully. He seems to think something over. He reads it again, then puts it back into his pack. His mind is made up.

INT. SOUTHFORK INN AND TAVERN, HALLWAY - SUNSET

RACHEL enters the hall from her room. QUINT can still be HEARD SINGING and SLOSHING in the next room. Rachel grimaces. ANGUS enters from his room.

RACHEL

Does he have to make so much noise?

ANGUS

A yearly celebration should always have noise involved.

Rachel smiles.

RACHEL

Were you going somewhere?

ANGUS

I needed to check on some things. I think we might want to double back.

RACHEL

What?

ANGUS

I think that the king might be setting something up farther down this road. They won't expect us to turn around. If we turn back, we might be able to sneak past anyone he left behind us.

RACHEL

You said he was half a day behind. How could he set something up ahead of us?

ANGUS

He could if he went by ship.

RACHEL

You're not making a lot of sense.

ANGUS

Just trust me. I have to see what I can find.

Angus leaves the hall and heads downstairs. Rachel watches him go with a look of concern. Her gaze turns thoughtful. She looks around and enters Angus's room.

INT. SOUTHFORK INN AND TAVERN, ANGUS'S ROOM - SUNSET

RACHEL quietly enters Angus's room. QUINT is still SLOSHING and SINGING in the next room.

Rachel moves to the window and looks out.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE SOUTHFORK INN AND TAVERN - SUNSET

ANGUS can be seen on the street leaving the inn and walking to the pier.

INT. SOUTHFORK INN AND TAVERN, ANGUS'S ROOM - SUNSET

Rachel steps back from the window and looks around the room. She sees Angus's pack. Rachel looks around, walks over to the pack and opens it. She moves things around a bit, looking into it. She stops, reaches in, and pulls out Drake's insignia. She quickly leaves the room.

INT. SOUTHFORK INN AND TAVERN, QUINT'S ROOM - SUNSET

QUINT is sitting in the tub, happy as anything. RACHEL bursts into the room.

RACHEL

We have to go, now!

QUINT

(alarmed)

What's going on?

RACHEL

I found this in Angus's pack.

Rachel holds out the insignia. Quint looks betrayed.

QUINT

What were you doing in his pack?

RACHEL

Your bad habits must be rubbing off.
He was acting strangely. He wanted us
to double back.

QUINT

That's strange all right.

RACHEL

Get dressed. I'll meet you by the horses.

Rachel leaves. Quint hits the side of his tub, then he looks at the door where Rachel left with a quizzical expression.

QUINT

She didn't even try to peek.

INT. SOUTHFORK INN AND TAVERN, ANGUS'S ROOM - SUNSET

The insignia and Angus's scroll with the word "TRAITOR" written on it are sitting on the bed next to the pack. ANGUS quickly enters the room.

ANGUS

Quint? Rachel?

His eyes fall on the insignia. He picks up the note. The SOUND of HORSES brings him to the window.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE SOUTHFORK INN AND TAVERN - SUNSET

On the street, RACHEL and QUINT leave on horseback. Quint leads Angus's horse.

INT. SOUTHFORK INN AND TAVERN, ANGUS'S ROOM - SUNSET

ANGUS watches them go.

ANGUS

(quietly)

Oh, no.

EXT. ON THE DECK OF THE KING'S SHIP - SUNSET

DRAKE is reading a scroll. It has "TRAITOR" written on it in the same fashion as Angus's scroll.

DRAKE
That's not good.

EXT. ON THE ROAD SOUTH OF SOUTHFORK - SUNSET

RACHEL and QUINT ride with Quint leading Angus's horse.

QUINT
If Angus is working for the king, why didn't he do something sooner?

RACHEL
I don't know. Until now, it was probably good enough to have Angus just watch us. Maybe they are now getting desperate. If they didn't think they could catch up to us, they might try to use Angus to turn us around.

QUINT
Maybe. I'll still feel safer if we can put some distance between us
(pause)
I thought he was my friend.

Rachel lays a hand on his arm in sympathy.

EXT. BLACK CASTLE - EVENING

BRIGANDS patrol the castle's battlements.

INT. BLACK CASTLE'S MEETING ROOM - EVENING

The BLACK MAGE is sitting at the table. SEBASTIAN and the DRAGON enter with locked arms. The Black Mage stands.

BLACK MAGE
The time has come.

SEBASTIAN
She's here?

BLACK MAGE
Nearly. She's in Questra.

SEBASTIAN
I'll signal my men.

BLACK MAGE
There can't be any mistakes.

SEBASTIAN
There won't be.

Sebastian leaves. The Dragon looks at the Black Mage.

DRAGON
I'm going. I should be able to get there by nightfall and ensure that they don't fail.

BLACK MAGE
Are you certain that's wise? Now that the girl is closer, I can sense a great deal of power from her. Do you think you can handle a confrontation?

The Dragon's EYES GLOW and she steps towards the Black Mage.

DRAGON
I can handle a spoiled child.

The Dragon leaves. The Black Mage laughs to himself.

EXT. ROAD OVERLOOKING QUESTRA - EVENING

There is a clearing that shows Questra in the next valley. The town has two main attractions: a wall that runs from the ocean to the mountains on the southeast side of town, and a church with a fairly large bell tower.

QUINT and RACHEL ride down the road. Quint sees the town through the clearing and reigns in. Rachel brings her horse beside his.

QUINT

The border is only a few leagues beyond that pass.

RACHEL

Can we spend the night here?

QUINT

I don't know if it's safe. It might be better to just continue on through the night and camp beyond the border.

The church's bells RING MERRILY. RACHEL looks at the town.

RACHEL

Would it be all right if we stopped long enough for devotions? I haven't been to a church since we ran off.

QUINT

How often do you go to church anyway?

RACHEL

At home we went to daily observances. On a journey we would stop by every shrine to say a benediction. You?

QUINT

About the same, as long as you change "daily" to "yearly" and "every shrine" to "never."

RACHEL

Let's go then. It'll do you good.

She nudges her horse forward.

QUINT

I don't think so. The church and I have a deal: it doesn't try to convert me and I don't try to corrupt it.

The duo follows the road down to the town. ANGUS, in the form of a FOX, comes out of a bush on the side of the road and follows them.

The KING'S SHIP can be seen in Questra's harbor.

INT. MARINA'S CHURCH - EVENING

The church is very quiet. The only person in it is MARINA, the church's priestess. She is a half-elf who hides her telltale ears in her long, dark hair and the different head-coverings allowed by her station.

Marina is currently straightening and setting up the church. She looks up when she hears the doors open.

RACHEL enters timidly from the main entrance, closing the massive door behind her. She looks a little uncertain of herself. Marina walks up and greets her there.

MARINA

Welcome. I haven't seen you around before.

RACHEL

I'm just passing through.

MARINA

Is there something that you're seeking?

RACHEL

I suppose that I'm looking for sanctuary. My mind, my heart, they are

RACHEL (continued)

both a little confused.

MARINA

(smiling)

You've come to the right place. Would you like to talk?

RACHEL

I think I need some time to myself.

MARINA

As you wish. If you need anything,
just call for me.

Rachel walks up the main aisle, bows to the alter, and enters one of the pews. She kneels and bows her head in prayer.

Marina looks at her, obviously thinking something over in her mind, then leaves the temple area of the church.

EXT. STREET IN QUESTRA, NEAR A MERCHANT'S STAND - EVENING

QUINT approaches the merchant's stand, pulling some money out of a pouch.

The MERCHANT sees Quint coming and initially smiles. The smile fades as Quint comes closer and the merchant begins to look about nervously.

Quint notices the sudden change in the merchant's manner and takes a more alert survey of the area around him. He sees several of DRAKE'S SOLDIERS coming in his direction from down the street. He turns around casually and sees another set of DRAKE'S SOLDIERS coming down from the other end.

Drake's Soldiers draw their weapons.

Quint charges the first group while drawing one of his swords. Drake's Soldiers are taken aback.

Quint parries a weak thrust and spins with the blade, getting behind Drake's Soldiers. Quint then takes off running down the street.

INT. MARINA'S CHURCH - EVENING

RACHEL is kneeling at a pew. The large doors behind her open. THOMAS walks in and bows to the altar. Rachel opens her eyes. She can sense that something is not right.

EXT. A STREET THAT LEADS TO THE CHURCH - SUNSET

QUINT is running towards the church, which is still a good ways off. DRAKE'S SOLDIERS are in pursuit. DRAKE and several MORE DRAKE'S SOLDIERS come out from an alley and block Quint's route to the church.

Quint stops for a moment, looks around and runs to one of the houses on the side of the street. He jumps and climbs an outer balcony.

The group of Drake's Soldiers behind him stop for a moment. Two of them run into the house, another begins climbing up after Quint, the rest watch to see what he will do next.

Drake motions for a few men to enter another house.

Quint climbs up to the roof. He looks around and sees the Soldier following him and the other two Soldiers coming out of one of the upstairs windows. Quint takes a breath and jumps to the next roof.

INT. MARINA'S CHURCH - SUNSET

THOMAS walks up the aisle to the pew behind Rachel's. RACHEL can hear his approaching footsteps, but she doesn't turn her head. He bows again to the altar and enters the pew. He kneels and leans forward.

THOMAS

Hello, Rachel.

RACHEL

Good morrow, Thomas. Are you here for the sunset service?

THOMAS

(smiles)

I'm here for you.

RACHEL

That's very flattering. I hope that the trip hasn't been too difficult.

THOMAS

It has been very entertaining. I've discovered that I've been hiding in my castle for too long.

(pause)

Where is that thieving friend of yours?

RACHEL

Quint? He isn't much for churches. I think he prefers the open air.

EXT. QUESTRA'S ROOFTOPS NEAR THE CHURCH - SUNSET

QUINT jumps to another roof. DRAKE'S SOLDIERS are fairly close behind him. Ahead of him, the SOLDIERS who Drake sent earlier block Quint's way.

Quint draws his swords and advances towards them. The Soldier nearest him hesitantly draws his weapon and has to take a minute to regain his footing.

Quint makes a few quick thrusts. The Soldier clumsily parries, but loses his balance and slides down the roof.

The other two Soldiers are more surefooted when they draw their swords.

EXT. THE STREET BELOW QUESTRA'S ROOFTOPS - SUNSET

On the ground, the CROSSBOW SOLDIER next to DRAKE pulls out his crossbow and aims it at QUINT, who is still fighting up on the roof. Drake reaches out and grabs the weapon.

DRAKE

Let's see what the boy can do.

INT. MARINA'S CHURCH - SUNSET

THOMAS and RACHEL are in the same places.

THOMAS

What are you running from?

RACHEL

Why . . . you. Didn't I make that obvious?

THOMAS

I don't believe you.

RACHEL

Why? Are you so completely desirable that no woman can resist you?

THOMAS

This time away from the palace has certainly increased your spirit.

RACHEL

It's hard to have spirit when you're caged. A person needs freedom to breathe.

EXT. QUESTRA'S ROOFTOPS - SUNSET

QUINT has just dodged a blow from a SOLDIER'S sword. Quint steps back and takes a deep breath as one of the Soldiers presses the attack. Quint deftly parries, sidesteps, and gives the Soldier a shove. The Soldier loses his balance and slides down the roof.

EXT. THE STREET BELOW QUESTRA'S ROOFTOPS - SUNSET

DRAKE doesn't take his eyes off of the battle. Without looking away, he motions to one of his SOLDIERS.

DRAKE

See to that man.

EXT. QUESTRA'S ROOFTOPS - SUNSET

On the roof, the other SOLDIER moves forward, but QUINT slides down a section of roof and jumps to the balcony of a second building. As the other Soldier jumps after him, Quint climbs to the roof and begins running.

EXT. THE STREET BELOW QUESTRA'S ROOFTOPS - SUNSET

As the SOLDIER on the roof begins to run after QUINT, the CROSSBOW SOLDIER next to DRAKE looks questioningly at Drake.

CROSSBOW SOLDIER
Do you want us to pursue him?

DRAKE
Seal of all exits out of the town, just in case. I'll take care of our young friend.

EXT. QUESTRA'S ROOFTOPS - SUNSET

QUINT jumps to another building and runs.

INT. MARINA'S CHURCH - SUNSET

THOMAS and RACHEL are still holding their conversation.

THOMAS
I want you to come back with me, Rachel.

RACHEL
You can't always have something simply because you want it. Now, if you don't mind, I came here to pray, and you are interfering.

THOMAS
I'm beginning to lose my patience.

RACHEL
Then go look for it, I'm a little occupied right now.

Thomas is silently amused. He stands and comes around the pew to stand facing her side.

THOMAS

You do have quite a wit. I've misjudged you, Rachel, and for that, I apologize. I've seen some of the things that you've done, the daring that you've shown, and I cannot help but be amazed. You have a fiber in you that is stronger than I had imagined.

MARINA enters the temple section again. She sees Thomas and Rachel talking. She stops and watches them.

RACHEL

You, too, are full of surprises. I wish that things could be different between us.

THOMAS

They can be. Come back with me. Please.

RACHEL

I can't. You don't know me. Just let me go.

EXT. A STREET THAT LEADS TO THE CHURCH - SUNSET

QUINT has his swords out and is facing DRAKE. Drake is obviously blocking the path the church.

DRAKE

You're not going anywhere.

Drake pulls out his massive sword. Quint makes a quick plea to the heavens.

QUINT

All right, all right. I should have just gone to church.

DRAKE

You've fought the good fight, son. It's time to take a rest.

QUINT

And miss my chance to spar with a legend?

Quint attacks and they begin to fight. Unlike Quint's other fights, this does not end quickly, but instead becomes a complex dance of blows and counters, swipes and parries. Any advantage that Quint had because of his youth is lost due to the exhaustion from his rooftop escapade. Even in top form, however, Quint couldn't beat Drake. Even though Drake's weapon is massive, it seems flow with him, quickly stopping any attempt of Quint's to break through, and often putting Quint on the defensive. The wear is starting to show on Quint.

The SUN has set.

INT. MARINA'S CHURCH - TWILIGHT

RACHEL and THOMAS are still in their conversation. Thomas is still standing next to a kneeling Rachel. MARINA is still listening.

THOMAS

It's over, Rachel. Come with me.

Rachel stands and starts to walk down the pew, away from Thomas. Thomas follows her.

RACHEL

Thomas. Trust me, you are better off leaving me alone.

THOMAS

I'm taking you back if I have to carry you myself.

RACHEL

No, you're not.

THOMAS

Who's going to stop me?

They have exited the pew on the side aisle. Thomas reaches out and touches Rachel's arm. Marina walks up to them.

MARINA

I am.

THOMAS

This is not your concern.

MARINA

Anything that happens in my church is my concern. This woman has asked for sanctuary, and I will provide it for her.

THOMAS

I am Thomas Aristain, your king.

MARINA

King and peasant alike are subject to the law of God. I granted her sanctuary and you will abide by it.

Thomas thinks it over. He releases Rachel.

THOMAS

Very well.

(to Rachel)

I'll be outside when you change your mind.

Thomas turns to leave the church. When he's out of earshot, Marina turns to Rachel.

MARINA

Is he really King Thomas?

RACHEL

I'm afraid so.

Marina makes a plea to heaven, then looks at Rachel.

MARINA

I think you own me an explanation.

EXT. A STREET THAT LEADS TO THE CHURCH - TWILIGHT

QUINT and DRAKE are still fighting. Quint's attacks are starting to get sloppy. Drake is deliberately not going for the kill with his strikes. A few of DRAKE'S SOLDIERS have gathered around. They stand quietly watching the fight.

DRAKE

It's over.

Drake disarms Quint from both of his swords. Two Soldiers rush in and restrain Quint from moving. Another Soldier picks up Quint's swords. A SCOUT runs up to Drake.

SCOUT

A group of brigands have taken the south gate. One of our scouts reported more men coming from the north.

DRAKE

Order all men to regroup at the church. Alert any member of the town guard. We will defend the town, but our first priority is the king.

The Soldiers move at Drake's commands. Drake heads to the church. The two Soldiers bring Quint behind them. A FOX, ANGUS, watches the action from a sidestreet. After the Soldiers leave, the Fox heads to the church.

EXT. DIRECTLY OUTSIDE MARINA'S CHURCH - TWILIGHT

THOMAS exits the church. ADRIANA is waiting outside with a SOLDIER guarding her. SOLDIERS are moving all around. DRAKE enters from the street. Two SOLDIERS bring QUINT up from the same street. Adriana sees Quint, but rests her attention on Thomas.

ADRIANA

I'm surprised you didn't drag her out.

THOMAS

She's claimed sanctuary. Why don't you try to talk her?

ADRIANA

I'll go in, but if she decides to run again, I'm leaving with her..

THOMAS

Then at least you'll be there to protect her.

Adriana reevaluates Thomas, but she's not about to miss this opportunity. She enters the church.

Thomas looks at the Soldiers and then a Drake. SOUNDS of FIGHTING can be HEARD in the distance.

THOMAS

What's happening?

DRAKE

It appears that the town's being raided. We're mounting a defense.

THOMAS

This is too well timed to be a coincidence.

DRAKE

I agree.

THOMAS

(to Quint)

I don't know what part you have played in all of this, but if harm befalls the princess, you will answer for it.

(to Soldiers)

Secure him over there.

The Soldiers take Quint away. Other Soldiers form up and pass TORCHES due to Drake's earlier order.

THOMAS

Let's set up our defense.

INT. MARINA'S CHURCH - TWILIGHT

RACHEL is sitting in the front pew next to MARINA.

MARINA
Is this about your gift?

Rachel looks at Marina with surprise.

MARINA
Your magic. Is that what this is about?

RACHEL
How did you know?

MARINA
I'm sensitive to such things.

Marina pulls back her hair to show her POINTED EARS.

RACHEL
You're an elf?

Marina shakes her head and lets her hair back down.

MARINA
My mother was raped by a dark elf. Few people thought that I should have even been born. It was only because of this church's old pastor that I was accepted by my neighbors. You see, I have some idea as to what you might be going through.

RACHEL
My gift could mean my death.

MARINA
I assume that you haven't told the king.

ADRIANA enters the church and walks up to them. Rachel turns around, sees Adriana, stands, and runs to her friend. They hug. Adriana draws herself back.

ADRIANA
I was more than a little afraid for you.

RACHEL
I was afraid for you too. You look
like you've been treated well.

ADRIANA
I have.

RACHEL
Marina, this is my friend Adriana.
Adriana, this is Marina, High Cleric of
this church.

SOUNDS of FIGHTING can be heard from outside.

RACHEL
What's going on?

ADRIANA
I think the town is being raided.

MARINA
Please excuse me.

Marina runs to the entrance of one of her church's towers.
Rachel and Adriana follow.

RACHEL
Have you seen Quint?

ADRIANA
Yes. Drake has him. He looks
unharmd. Where's Angus?

RACHEL
We left him in Southfork. We thought
he had betrayed us.

EXT. BY A BUILDING NEAR THE CHURCH - TWILIGHT

QUINT is chained and under guard by the two SOLDIERS.
ANGUS, as a FOX, watches as SOLDIERS and BRIGANDS fight.
He waits for an opening, and then scurries to where Quint
is being held.

The church's WARNING BELL RINGS and some town CITIZENS flee to the church.

Angus TRANSFORMS from FOX to MAN behind the Soldiers guarding Quint. Angus then knocks the Soldiers out and unties Quint's bonds.

ANGUS

I tried to tell Rachel there was a trap here.

QUINT

I'm sorry I doubted you.

Angus has finished with Quint's bonds. He clasps Quint on the shoulder.

ANGUS

Let's get to the princess.

QUINT

She should be in the church.

Angus and Quint join the Citizens entering the church.

EXT. ON THE BALCONY OF ONE OF THE TALLER BUILDINGS - NIGHT

THOMAS and DRAKE watch the battle between the SOLDIERS and the BRIGANDS. The church's WARNING BELL still RINGS.

THOMAS

It looks like we're pushing them back.

Drake has gone rigid.

THOMAS

What is it?

DRAKE

Listen.

A DRAGON'S ROAR can be HEARD.

THOMAS

That's not good.

INT. MARINA'S CHURCH - NIGHT

A group of CITIZENS are entering the church for safety.
QUINT and ANGUS enter, trying to find RACHEL.

QUINT

Rachel!

ANGUS

Rachel!

RACHEL'S VOICE can be HEARD from the shaft of the tower.

RACHEL (O.S.)

I'm up here!

Quint and Angus make their way through the crowd. The
DRAGON'S ROAR can be HEARD, LOUDER this time.

INT. CHURCH'S LOOKOUT TOWER - NIGHT

The town of Questra can be seen from here. SOLDIERS are
fighting BRIGANDS. The king's forces have the upper hand
in the conflict in town. RACHEL, ADRIANA, and MARINA watch
events unfold. The DRAGON'S ROAR is HEARD.

RACHEL

What was that?

MARINA

A Dragon. It sounds massive.

The DRAGON in her true form, sweeps over the town and
BREATHES FIRE, consuming entire buildings. QUINT and ANGUS
enter from the stairs.

QUINT

Rachel, we need to get you out of here.
There's enough confusion right now that
we should be able to escape.

Rachel looks at the town in flames.

RACHEL
(whisper)
I'm tired of running.

The Dragon ROARS and destroys a few more buildings. She seems to be enjoying herself.

Rachel comes to a decision. She runs down the stairs past a surprised Quint and Angus.

EXT. ON THE BALCONY OF ONE OF THE TALLER BUILDINGS - NIGHT

THOMAS and DRAKE watch the DRAGON fly overhead. Drake has out his sword.

DRAKE
We need to get you to safety.

EXT. IN FRONT OF THE CHURCH - NIGHT

RACHEL enters the area in front of the church. Her voice carries above all other sounds.

RACHEL
Enough!

The word ECHOES in the air. The DRAGON wheels around and heads toward Rachel.

EXT. ON THE BALCONY OF ONE OF THE TALLER BUILDINGS - NIGHT

THOMAS and DRAKE are watching the confrontation.

THOMAS
What does she think she's doing?

EXT. IN FRONT OF THE CHURCH - NIGHT

RACHEL watches as the DRAGON heads her way. QUINT, ANGUS, and ADRIANA exit the church. Quint moves to get Rachel, but Adriana stops him.

ADRIANA

You can't help her.

Rachel's body begins to SHINE an intense WHITE.

The Dragon ROARS and unleashes her FIRE on Rachel. The FLAMES HIT an invisible BARRIER in front of Rachel.

Rachel reaches out her hand. A BEAM of brilliant ENERGY erupts from her hand and hits the Dragon. The Dragon recoils from the strike.

EXT. ON THE BALCONY OF ONE OF THE TALLER BUILDINGS - NIGHT

THOMAS and DRAKE are astounded at the display of power.

THOMAS

She can use magic.

DRAKE

That explains quite a bit.

EXT. IN FRONT OF THE CHURCH - NIGHT

The DRAGON attacks again, sending her FIRE against Rachel's SHIELD. ANGUS, QUINT, and ADRIANA watch helplessly from a safe distance.

RACHEL sends out several more BEAMS of ENERGY.

The Dragon strikes a third time, again sending her FIRE towards Rachel.

This time, Rachel seems to pull the FIRE toward her. The FIRE makes an ORBIT around Rachel. Rachel waves her hand and the FIRE SHOOTS back toward the Dragon.

The Dragon, apparently injured, flies away.

Angus turns to Quint.

ANGUS

Did you know she could do that?

Quint dumbly shakes his head. Rachel's LIGHT FADES and she begins to slump. Quint runs up and catches her. Rachel is unconscious from her effort.

QUINT
Get some horses!

Adriana runs off. Angus runs to Quint and looks at Rachel.

ANGUS
I think she's okay. Just exhausted.

Adriana has four HORSES.

DRAKE and THOMAS run onto the street from their building as Adriana and Quint mount up.

Angus helps Quint pull Rachel onto Quint's horse. They ride through town ahead of Thomas and Drake.

DRAKE
Stop them!

EXT. QUESTRA'S WALL - NIGHT

SOLDIERS try to get in the way of the fleeing party, but the party doesn't slow. QUINT, who is still riding with an unconscious RACHEL, and ADRIANA start to ride through the massive gate. ANGUS jumps off his horse at the gate and puts his reins in Adriana's hands.

ANGUS
Go. I'll catch up.

Adriana, now leading two horses, follows Quint through the gate.

Angus runs to the winch that controls the portcullis and releases it.

The portcullis drops.

Angus chants a spell at the winch. The winch CRUSTS over in RUST.

Angus dodges a SOLDIER'S attack, TRANSFORMS into a FOX, and squeezes between the bars of the portcullis.

ADRIANA is waiting for him on the other side of the gate. Angus RETURNS to HUMAN form and mounts his horse.

ANGUS

That should slow them down.

The party rides away.

DRAKE and THOMAS, mounted, have arrived at the gate. Thomas watches as the party leaves.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD SOUTH OF QUESTRA - NIGHT

ADRIANA and ANGUS are the first to arrive on their horses. Adriana is still leading Rachel's horse. QUINT, with RACHEL on his horse, rides behind them.

ADRIANA

We need to take a rest.

Adriana and Angus dismount. They help Quint get Rachel off the horse. Angus holds her as Adriana lays out a bed roll. Quint dismounts as Angus and Adriana lay Rachel on the roll.

QUINT

Will she be all right?

ADRIANA

I've never seen her drain herself like that before. I'm not sure.

ANGUS

I've never seen anyone use that kind of power before.

Quint looks down the road.

QUINT

She needs to be okay.

ANGUS

She'll be fine. Any thoughts about where we're going?

QUINT

There's a castle . . .

Quint breaks off. Angus and Adriana give each other a look. Adriana goes and checks on Rachel. Angus walks up to Quint and puts a hand on his friend's shoulder.

ANGUS

Quint?

QUINT

I think I love her, Angus.

ANGUS

(smiling)

It's hard not to.

QUINT

I think I've made a mistake. I don't know what I've been doing.

Adriana walks over to Quint.

ADRIANA

She's going to be fine.

ANGUS

Doesn't Sebastian live somewhere around here? Maybe he can help.

ADRIANA

Sebastian?

ANGUS

Quint's oldest brother.

QUINT

I don't think I want to see him.

SEBASTIAN and the BLACK MAGE step out of the shadows.

SEBASTIAN

What a terrible thing to say.

Angus and Adriana start with surprise. Quint draws his swords.

QUINT

No. Not now. You can't have her.

Angus and Adriana look at Quint. Rachel wakes up.

BLACK MAGE

We came because I was afraid that you might have a lapse in judgment.

SEBASTIAN

You've done so well thus far. I have to admit, you've done even better than I could have. I would have just dumped her in a sack and dragged her along. What you did is pure genius . . . getting her to follow you on her own accord.

QUINT

Stay away.

Adriana has drawn her dagger. She stands between Rachel and everyone else, not sure if she's defending Rachel from Sebastian, or Quint. Rachel sits up.

ANGUS

What's he talking about?

Quint doesn't say anything.

SEBASTIAN

(to Quint)

Didn't you even tell Angus?

(to Angus)

Quint was looking for work, so I hired him. Truthfully, I didn't have a lot of confidence in him. I thought kidnapping a princess might be out of his league.

BLACK MAGE

I told you he would be fine.

Rachel, stands, steadies herself on Adriana, and looks at Quint.

RACHEL

Tell me they're lying.

SEBASTIAN

Lying? Us? My dear princess, I would never dream of making such an accusation without proof.

(to Quint)

Show them your arm.

QUINT

(defeated)

They're telling the truth.

ANGUS

What's on your arm?

BLACK MAGE

My mark. You dabble in magic. You know the consequences of having the mark of a wizard. I can hear what he hears, see what he sees, and . . .

The Black Mage lifts a hand. Quint writhes in pain, dropping his swords.

At that moment, Sebastian attacks Adriana, knocking her cold.

Angus runs to the trees.

The pain of the mark causes Quint to fall to the ground.

Rachel weakly starts to concentrate, but the Black Mage casts a spell and Rachel falls back asleep.

Sebastian motions to someone unseen. A couple of BRIGANDS walk out of hiding; they are holding crossbows.

SEBASTIAN

Don't let Angus get away.

BLACK MAGE

Don't bother with him. The king might
be here soon. We have the princess,
there's no reason to get greedy.

EXT. BLACK CASTLE - DAY

The DRAGON is lying on the roof of the keep, in the middle
the castle. SEBASTIAN and the BLACK MAGE are leading the
group of BRIGANDS to the castle. QUINT, RACHEL, and
ADRIANA are each being led by a Brigand. Rachel and
Adriana are bound, gagged, and blindfolded. Quint is just
bound. Rachel still looks exhausted.

The Drawbridge of the castle opens and the riders go
inside.

ANGUS, in FOX form, follows the group at a distance. He
doesn't enter the drawbridge, but instead hides in some
bushes near the entrance as the drawbridge closes.

INT. BLACK CASTLE MEETING ROOM - DAY

SEBASTIAN is sitting at the table. The BLACK MAGE is
standing behind him. QUINT is standing across the table
from them. His hands are still bound. Two BRIGANDS are
standing behind Quint. Sebastian is counting out some gold
and placing it in a sack.

SEBASTIAN

This should be enough to retire on.
That was the agreement.

Sebastian ties the bag shut and tosses the bag to Quint.
Quint stares at the bag for a moment, then knocks it off
the table.

QUINT

Keep it.

Sebastian motions to one of his men. The Brigand picks up
the sack of gold and hands it back to Sebastian.

SEBASTIAN

Really, mother taught us to respect money better than that. I'll just have my men put it in your pack for you.

QUINT

Where are Rachel and Adriana?

SEBASTIAN

They are no longer your concern.

BLACK MAGE

Your brother seems upset.

SEBASTIAN

Perhaps it's because he's out of work again. Don't worry, Quint. As your brother, I'm bound to take care of you. There's one more job you can perform. Once you leave the castle, we need you to tell the king exactly how to get here and give him this message.

Sebastian pushes a piece of paper towards Quint. Quint looks at it, but makes no move to take it.

QUINT

Is your pet magician going to fry me if I don't?

SEBASTIAN

No. I was thinking that we could kill the woman that we discovered with you and the princess. Adriana, isn't it? She is no real use to us.

(pause)

Think on it. If I don't have some sort of proof that you delivered your message by sunset, she will die.

Quint picks up the paper and puts it in his tunic.

SEBASTIAN

Good. To show my appreciation, I will do something for you.

(to Black Mage)

Remove your mark.

BLACK MAGE

I would prefer to keep an eye on him.

SEBASTIAN

(standing, furious)

Not one of my family will be your slave, magician. Free him.

The Black Mage is thinking fast.

BLACK MAGE

As you wish. Though I would like to give your brother a reward of my own.

SEBASTIAN

So long as your mark is gone.

BLACK MAGE

(to one of the Brigands)

Pull up his sleeve.

The Brigand pulls up Quint's sleeve, exposing the MARK. The Black Mage CHANTS and waves his arms. As he does, the mark starts to SIZZLE as though it is being burned off.

It looks like Quint screams, but NO SOUND comes from him. The Black Mage stops.

Quint mouths the words "What have you done?" but NO SOUND comes out. He repeats himself with the same effect, this time slamming his bound hands on the table. When NO SOUND comes from hitting the table, he looks up.

SEBASTIAN

What did you do to him?

BLACK MAGE

I gave him his reward.

SEBASTIAN

Did you make him mute?

BLACK MAGE

You said yourself that his mouth tends to get him in trouble. But no, I did more than that. I made it so any action that your brother makes cannot make a sound. He's a thief, isn't he? Now he'll be one of the most extraordinary thieves in the world. Unfortunately, it should make taking a message to the king, and living through it, a bit of a challenge.

SEBASTIAN

(laughs)

Quint thrives on challenges.

(to Quint)

It's time for you to go, little brother. Some of my men will escort you to the road. Make certain you deliver my message to the King.

(threatening)

If you try to interfere with any of my plans I will have you killed, brother or no.

EXT. BLACK CASTLE - DAY

TWO BRIGANDS lead QUINT out of the castle. They walk him out of the castle and stop a little way down the road. They drop his possessions on the ground near a large bush, then walk off.

Quint kneels and reaches into his pack. He pulls out his dagger, but drops it.

ANGUS, as a FOX, comes out of the bush, grabs the dagger in his teeth, and gives it back to Quint. Quint smiles and takes the dagger. The Fox bares its teeth.

INT. BLACK CASTLE THRONE ROOM - DAY

On the far end of this massive room is a raised dais. On the dais sits a throne with manacles attached to it, making

it look like a chair of execution. On either side of the throne are two spherical golden cages FLOATING in the air. There is no apparent way to get up or into them.

RACHEL is sitting in the sphere on the left. Her bindings, gag and blindfold are still on. The BLACK MAGE enters.

BLACK MAGE

Hello, princess. Let me remove those.

The Black Mage makes a gesture and the bindings, gag, and blindfold DISAPPEAR. Rachel rubs at her wrists. She tries to stand, but is unsteady, so she sits back down.

BLACK MAGE

Careful, princess. I wouldn't want any harm to come to you.

RACHEL

Where am I?

BLACK MAGE

Do you like it? I crafted this myself. Granted, the throne is rather crude, but I wanted something to make the king feel at home. The cages, however, are quite special. They not only contain you, they allow me to siphon your abilities.

RACHEL

Where is Adriana?

BLACK MAGE

We weren't really expecting her as a guest, so we made no special arrangements for her. I'm afraid she has had to settle for a very ordinary dungeon cell.

RACHEL

Why two cages?

BLACK MAGE

I don't share the same goals as my allies. I'm not much for politics, so

I don't really care whether your alliance fails or not. I want power. Your power, certainly. In fact you may prove to be a greater prize than I had thought. But I'm more interested in the power of a man named Vargoth.

RACHEL

Who is he?

BLACK MAGE

He's a companion of your king. They are usually inseparable.

RACHEL

How do you plan on trapping him if he's so powerful?

BLACK MAGE

I plan on taking them both when they bargain for you. You see, I have an edge. Not only do I have someone important to the king, but it turns out that I have Vargoth's student: you.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD SOUTH OF QUESTRA - DAY

A SCOUT is acting as a sentry. THOMAS is on his horse, watching while DRAKE tries to make sense of the markings on the ground.

SCOUT

Your Majesty, two men are approaching from the southern road.

THOMAS

Have some men ride down and discover their intentions. Bring them straight to me if they have any word about the princess.

DRAKE

(points to bedroll)

It seems that Lady Rachel was still exhausted from her encounter with the Dragon.

(points to tracks)

As far as I can tell, three of them were abducted by a group of brigands similar

DRAKE (continued)
to those we fought in Questra.

THOMAS
What happened to the fourth?

DRAKE
I'm not certain. His tracks enter the forest, then vanish.

The Scout returns, leading QUINT and ANGUS.

SCOUT
Your Majesty, I think that these two know something about the princess.

THOMAS
Where is she?

Angus points back down the road.

ANGUS
About five hours walk that way, in a fortified castle . . . your Majesty.

Quint tries to hand Thomas the note. Drake takes it before Thomas can touch it. He looks it over and hands it to Thomas. Thomas reads.

THOMAS
They want Vargoth and myself to meet with them by sunset, or the princess's life is forfeit. That's going to be difficult since I don't even know where Vargoth is.

The OLD MAN, seen before as Rachel's teacher and referred to as Vargoth, suddenly steps up behind Thomas and Drake.

OLD MAN

I'm right here, Thomas. Though I would prefer if that fact did not become common knowledge.

THOMAS

Where have you been?

OLD MAN

Trying to catch up with you. What possessed you to take off just a few weeks before your own wedding?

THOMAS

I had to catch the bride.

OLD MAN

This is a fine time for you two to be playing games.

THOMAS

Did you know Lady Rachel could use magic?

OLD MAN

Of course, I've been training her for at least five years now.

DRAKE

So that's where you've been disappearing to.

OLD MAN

(smiling)

I do love giving your agents the slip.

THOMAS

Didn't you think it might have been wise to tell me she is a wizard?

OLD MAN

Lady Rachel is not just any wizard; she's a White Mage.

ANGUS and DRAKE look shocked. QUINT and THOMAS look confused.

THOMAS

I don't understand the reference.

OLD MAN

Most magicians require spells, incantations, or some sort of mumbling to use their magic. They are bound by rigid codes and perfect execution. Rachel is not. She can simply will things to happen.

DRAKE

This is starting to sound blasphemous.

OLD MAN

She is not God nor can she become one. She is still human, and bound by human limitations. Just as I am.

Thomas looks stricken as he finally realizes what this is all about.

THOMAS

She believes that I hate magic. She thinks that I will be forced to kill her because of her power.

OLD MAN

Why would she think that?

DRAKE

I think his beheading a witch might have been the push.

THOMAS

We didn't disclose the entire crime out of respect for people's . . . her . . . sensibilities. Using magic was enough to warrant death.

OLD MAN

This was the very thing this union was supposed to help mend. And now Rachel is in the hands of our enemies.

Thomas addresses Quint and Angus.

THOMAS

I don't trust you. But if either of you have any information that can help, I will listen.

ANGUS

Your Majesty, one of the abductors is a wizard of some power, another is the Dragon we saw last night. That meeting is most certainly a trap.

At the word "Dragon" the Old Man looks at Drake. Drake avoids the gaze.

THOMAS

(to Quint)

And you?

Quint shakes his head.

DRAKE

Are you still not answering questions?

ANGUS

Sir, this time, he can't.

DRAKE

Why not?

OLD MAN

Because he's been cursed. It's a powerful one too. You were already marked by this wizard, weren't you?

Quint nods.

OLD MAN

Thankfully, the mark is gone, or no plan of ours would be secret.

DRAKE

You have a plan?

OLD MAN

I know this castle. I can take a few people to a secret entrance undetected.

THOMAS

Can't you just pull Lady Rachel out?

OLD MAN

I told you I have limitations. This evil wizard's power is drawn from hatred, death, and betrayal. He has picked a place that can augment his powers. The castle, and the field around it, were once the place of a terrible massacre. My power is drawn from balance and nature. In that place, only tremendous evil or miraculous good can occur. Quite simply, the wizard is too powerful for me there.

ANGUS

Wouldn't that mean he is too powerful for any of us?

OLD MAN

Yes. "Any of us." However, Rachel might be able to overcome him.

DRAKE

Then why doesn't she just leave on her own?

The Old Man looks at Thomas, then at Quint.

OLD MAN

Because she feels betrayed. Alone. Her confidence, her spirit, are broken.

(to Thomas)

Only you can mend it. She needs love for her power to grow.

THOMAS

My respect for her has grown, but I don't know if I love her.

OLD MAN

Then the truth will have to do, but you must win her, or all will be lost.

THOMAS

How are we getting in?

OLD MAN

We? You are going in by invitation. You will meet with them before sunset and then you will offer yourself as a hostage as a safeguard for Rachel's life, since you do not know where I am.

THOMAS

Won't they be able to detect a lie?

OLD MAN

Probably, but you won't be lying. You won't know where I am. You won't know if I'm even coming. I didn't travel with you and you have been wondering where I am. All of it true, but not Truth. Creatures of evil do not know the difference.

DRAKE

I plan on being one of the few you take secretly.

OLD MAN

Of course, and these two will accompany you.

The Old Man indicates a surprised Quint and Angus.

THOMAS

I don't trust them.

OLD MAN

I do. They both have something to prove. Without them, all will fail.

INT. IN A STONE TUNNEL BENEATH THE BLACK CASTLE - EVENING

This is a very plain, stone tunnel. The OLD MAN is leads DRAKE, ANGUS, and QUINT down the tunnel. Drake and Angus carry TORCHES. The Old Man stops and turns to Drake.

OLD MAN

This is as far as I can take you. Any further, and I may alert the wizard to my presence.

DRAKE

We'll manage from here.

The Old Man smiles and walks back the way he came, a SMALL BALL OF LIGHT APPEARING above his hand. DRAKE turns to the other two.

DRAKE

Quietly now.

Quint gives Drake an evil look.

DRAKE

Right.

EXT. BLACK CASTLE - EVENING

Outside of the Castle, SEBASTIAN and several BRIGANDS are leading THOMAS to the drawbridge.

INT. BLACK CASTLE DUNGEONS - EVENING

Solid wooden doors with small metal grates line the corridor. What appears to be a solid wall smoothly opens. QUINT, ANGUS, and DRAKE enter from the secret tunnel. Quint walks down the corridor and checks the dungeon entrance. Angus and Drake look in each cell. At one, Angus stops and grabs Drake. ADRIANA is inside the cell.

DRAKE

(whisper)

Do you see any keys?

ANGUS

(whisper)

Who needs keys?

Angus wiggles a finger at the door's lock. The lock CLICKS. Angus opens the door. Adriana jumps him, but Drake grabs her before she can do any real damage.

ANGUS

(whisper)

Missed me that much?

ADRIANA

(whisper)

I thought you were a guard.

DRAKE

(whisper)

Where's the princess?

ADRIANA

(whisper)

I don't know. We were separated.

Adriana sees Quint.

ADRIANA

(whisper)

What's he doing here?

ANGUS

(whisper)

He's listening at the door.

ADRIANA

(whisper)

That's not what I meant.

ANGUS

(whisper)

I don't care.

They move up to the door. Drake starts to open it, but it has a LOUD, RUSTY SQUEAL. Angus brightens.

ANGUS

(whisper)

Quint, you try.

Quint shrugs and pushes the door. There is NO SOUND of its movement.

ANGUS
(whisper)
This has possibilities.

INT. BLACK CASTLE THRONE ROOM - EVENING

RACHEL is still in her cage. The BLACK MAGE is still there. SEBASTIAN and TWO BRIGANDS lead THOMAS into the throne room. Sebastian walks to the throne and turns to face Thomas.

SEBASTIAN
We have a throne prepared for you, your Majesty.

THOMAS
You're too kind.

Sebastian motions to the Brigands. They put Thomas in the chair and shackle him to it.

THOMAS
Nice fit.

BLACK MAGE
I'm glad you noticed.

SEBASTIAN
Only the best for our guests. You two have hardly had a moment together since you met. Why don't you get to know each other while we wait for Vargoth to arrive?

BLACK MAGE
(suddenly apprehensive)
Vargoth isn't here?

SEBASTIAN

We'll discuss it privately. Let's let the bride and groom get to know each other.

The Black Mage, Sebastian, and Brigands leave the room. Thomas looks up at Rachel.

RACHEL

What are you doing here? You know they're going to kill you.

THOMAS

I'm hoping someone will rescue me.

RACHEL

Who?

THOMAS

You.

INT. BLACK CASTLE MEETING ROOM - EVENING

SEBASTIAN enters the room, followed by the BLACK MAGE.

BLACK MAGE

Something is wrong. You were supposed to abduct the king, not have him walk in willingly.

SEBASTIAN

You didn't object to the princess being willingly abducted by my brother.

BLACK MAGE

You are an idiot.

SEBASTIAN

And you forget who you work for. Perhaps it is part of some plan, but even if it is, it's a desperate plan. We have all of the advantages. I have already doubled our patrols, inside and out.

BLACK MAGE

I hope your overconfidence doesn't
destroy us.

INT. BLACK CASTLE HALLWAY NEAR A STAIRWAY - EVENING

The hall is deserted. At the end, a set of stairs leads
up. QUINT peers around a corner leading into the hall.
Seeing no one, he walks out. One of his swords is drawn.

ADRIANA, ANGUS, and DRAKE enter the hall after him.
ADRIANA and ANGUS both have drawn daggers. Drake's sword
is still sheathed. DRAKE points to the stairs.

DRAKE

Those should lead to the roof. The
dragon should still be up there.

Drake starts to go to the stairs.

ADRIANA

You don't plan on going up there?

DRAKE

We can't have her interfering. Someone
has to keep her distracted. I've
fought dragons before.

ANGUS

I'm going with you.

DRAKE

I'm going alone. Find the king and
princess.

Drake walks up the stairs.

ADRIANA

Did he just call the dragon "her"?

Quint nods.

ANGUS

I don't even want to know how he knows
that.

EXT. ROOF OF BLACK CASTLE'S KEEP - EVENING

The DRAGON is stretched out watching the area around. DRAKE enters from one of the doors. The Dragon turns at the sound and rears up to her full size. Drake stands, unfazed.

DRAKE

Being that size just makes your heart
easier to hit.

The Dragon's form SHIMMERS and TRANSFORMS into the WOMAN.

DRAGON

Gideon, however did you get here?

DRAKE

Hello, Nerez.

INT. ANOTHER HALLWAY IN THE BLACK CASTLE - EVENING

ANGUS, QUINT, and ADRIANA are fighting a group of SEVEN BRIGANDS. Angus throws knives and stays out of close combat. Adriana swirls her way through the Brigands' defenses. Quint quickly dispatches the Brigands attacking him. His sword strikes make NO SOUND. In a quick moment, the hall is silent.

ANGUS

How many did we get?

ADRIANA

Seven.

ANGUS

How many were here when they attacked?

QUINT mouths the word "Eight," grimaces and holds up eight fingers.

ANGUS

That's not good.

A watchtower BELL RINGS its alarm.

EXT. ROOF OF BLACK CASTLE'S KEEP - EVENING

The DRAGON smiles at DRAKE in an appraising way.

DRAGON

I sensed you in Questra.

DRAKE

We didn't really have a chance to catch up.

DRAGON

Did you come to prove your undying love for me, Gideon?

DRAKE

Yes. By giving you the chance to escape.

DRAGON

(laughing)

I've missed your sense of humor.

The watchtower BELL RINGS. The Dragon sobers. She starts for the door, but Drake pulls out his sword.

DRAKE

I'm afraid that I can't let you interfere.

The Dragon pulls out two wicked-looking, black blades.

DRAGON

"You're afraid"? I'm afraid of nothing.

The Dragon attacks and Drake responds. The two are very evenly matched. The Dragon's style is more ferocious, but Drake's calm response has the look of elegance. They strike and meet face to face. The Dragon's EYES GLOW RED.

DRAGON

I've missed this.

Drake's EYES GLOW a vibrant BLUE.

DRAKE

It's just like old times.

INT. BLACK CASTLE THRONE ROOM - EVENING

THOMAS is still shackled to the throne. RACHEL is still in her cage. They are continuing a conversation.

RACHEL

You beheaded that woman.

THOMAS

I did. She was a witch, Rachel.

RACHEL

And what do you think I am? You've seen what I can do.

THOMAS

You use magic that is a part of you. You use it not to further yourself, but to help others. That woman . . . that witch was skinning children alive to steal their youth.

(pause)

What are you thinking?

RACHEL

I'm wishing that she was still alive, so I could kill her.

(pause)

I've been a fool.

THOMAS

How?

RACHEL

Everything that I've been thinking has been a lie.

THOMAS

Do you mean Quint? He still cares for you. Do you mean me? I would not have appreciated you until I saw what you are capable of.

RACHEL

What can I do?

THOMAS

You have power, Rachel. It practically flows out from you. Anyone near you becomes intoxicated with it.

The watchtower BELL RINGS.

THOMAS

We don't have much time, so I'm going to speak plainly with you, Rachel. Our marriage was a way of sealing our countries' alliance and providing my kingdom with an heir. When I met you, I was afraid that I was marrying a vain girl with foolish notions.

RACHEL

I think your other tactic was working better.

THOMAS

Now, though, I have seen the devotion you inspire in people, the love that they have for you, and the risks they are willing to take to protect you. Frankly, I haven't been in love for a long time, and I'm not certain what it feels like. I do feel something for you, and it is partially respect, partially awe, and certainly a need to protect you. It might not be love, but it is true. Right now I need you to be true to yourself. I need you to save us.

Rachel closes her eyes and begins to SHINE. The cage CRACKLES with ENERGY. Rachel opens her eyes and gasps.

RACHEL
I can't. He's too strong.

THOMAS
You can, because you're stronger.

The door bursts open. SEBASTIAN and the BLACK MAGE rush in. Sebastian pulls out his sword.

SEBASTIAN
I've promised the wizard that he can have Vargoth and the princess, but you, my king, will die for this treachery.

As Sebastian moves towards the king, Rachel stands and speaks with quiet determination.

RACHEL
You will do no such thing.

Rachel SHINES BRIGHTLY and the entire room BLURS.

INT. BLACK CASTLE THRONE ROOM - SLOWED TIME - EVENING

The BLACK MAGE and SEBASTIAN have SLOWED to HALF their normal speed. RACHEL still moves normally. She waves a hand and Sebastian is THROWN back, away from THOMAS.

INT. BLACK CASTLE THRONE ROOM - NORMAL TIME - EVENING

RACHEL moves at TWICE normal speed. SEBASTIAN FLIES backward from THOMAS and hits the far wall. The BLACK MAGE begins to cast a spell.

QUINT, ANGUS, and ADRIANA enter the room, followed by a group of BRIGANDS.

The cage BURSTS open, unable to contain Rachel's LIGHT. Rachel remains FLOATING in the air.

ANGUS
I think we picked the right room.

The Black Mage BLURS and moves at TWICE normal speed.

Sebastian begins to move toward Thomas again. Quint rushes in and places himself between Thomas and Sebastian. Angus and Adriana are busy with the other Brigands.

INT. BLACK CASTLE THRONE ROOM - SLOWED TIME - EVENING

ANGUS, ADRIANA, QUINT, SEBASTIAN, and the BRIGANDS move at HALF normal speed.

The BLACK MAGE BLURS and enters normal time. RACHEL LOWERS herself to the ground, her GLOW has DIMINISHED.

BLACK MAGE

You are more powerful than I had
thought possible.

RACHEL

Maybe it was just a poorly constructed
cage.

The Black Mage casts, and a BALL sparking LIGHTNING shoots from his hands towards Rachel. Rachel puts up her hand and the BALL SHRINKS to nothing before it can reach her. She then fires a BEAM of ENERGY at the Black Mage. The Black Mage casts a spell and the BEAM hits an invisible SHIELD.

INT. BLACK CASTLE THRONE ROOM - NORMAL TIME - EVENING

RACHEL and the BLACK MAGE are fighting at TWICE normal speed. BURSTS of LIGHTNING, FIRE, and LIGHT are tossed between them.

ANGUS casts a spell and a WEB APPEARS across the main doors, trapping some of the BRIGANDS on the other side.

ADRIANA is smoothly fighting two other BRIGANDS.

QUINT stands in front of THOMAS, both of his swords drawn. SEBASTIAN advances towards Quint.

SEBASTIAN

What? Nothing to say?

Sebastian attacks Quint. Quint parries and attacks. As before, each time their swords meet there is NO SOUND.

SEBASTIAN

You don't stand a chance, Quint. I taught you all you know.

EXT. ROOF OF THE BLACK CASTLE'S KEEP - EVENING

The DRAGON and DRAKE are fighting. The Dragon forces Drake to spin away from one of her attacks. Drake holds his sword with one hand and reaches the other out to her. The Dragon is PUSHED back by an unseen force.

DRAGON

(smiling)

I was beginning to think you had forgotten how.

The Dragon releases one of her swords, but it stays in the air, HOVERING. She points her now free hand at Drake. Drake stands his ground as a WAVE of FORCE passes over him.

DRAGON

You're stronger than the last time.

DRAKE

Perhaps. I was young and in love then. Maybe time has changed me, or maybe you've just lost your touch.

The Dragon's EYES GLOW a brighter RED. She moves her hand and a piece of the Castle BREAKS off and FLIES toward Drake. Drake dodges. The Dragon grabs her FLOATING SWORD and attacks while Drake is still off-balance.

INT. BLACK CASTLE THRONE ROOM - NORMAL TIME - EVENING

RACHEL is locked in a magical struggle with the BLACK MAGE at TWICE normal speed. ANGUS and ADRIANA are fighting the

BRIGANDS. THOMAS is still shackled to his throne, while QUINT and SEBASTIAN fight, soundlessly.

Quint defends against a flurry of blows from Sebastian. Each time the swords strike NO SOUND is emitted. It's starting to unnerve Sebastian. Sebastian scores a hit on Quint. Quint recoils from the blow. It looks like Quint has yelled something, but NO SOUND is heard.

SEBASTIAN

And mother always said I was the quiet one. Give it up, Quint.

Quint attacks again.

Adriana is fighting two Brigands at once. A third Brigand starts to attack her, but stops and falls just before he could reach her. Angus had thrown a dagger in the Brigand's back. Adriana dispatches both of the Brigands. More Brigands are cutting at the WEB across the door. Angus watches the battle between Rachel and the Black Mage.

ADRIANA

It looks like they are about to cut through.

ANGUS

Let's end this.

Angus throws a dagger at the Black Mage.

INT. BLACK CASTLE THRONE ROOM - SLOWED TIME - EVENING

EVERYONE except RACHEL and the BLACK MAGE are at HALF normal speed. The Black Mage has just unleashed a GREEN MIST that heads straight for Rachel.

Rachel VACUUMS the GREEN MIST into a small sphere.

Angus's DAGGER moves at HALF speed toward the Black Mage. The Black Mage sees it, spins, grabs it, and throws it back at Angus.

INT. BLACK CASTLE THRONE ROOM - NORMAL TIME - EVENING

RACHEL and the BLACK MAGE are at TWICE normal speed. ANGUS sees the Black Mage grab and throw the DAGGER. The DAGGER now moves at TWICE normal speed. Angus stops breathing as the DAGGER STOPS in MIDAIR just an inch from his face. Angus blinks and then smoothly steps to one side.

ANGUS
Dodged that one.

An unseen force PULLS the dagger towards Rachel's outstretched hand.

The BRIGANDS cut through the WEB and start to enter the room again. Angus turns to face them.

INT. BLACK CASTLE THRONE ROOM - SLOWED TIME - EVENING

EVERYONE except RACHEL and the BLACK MAGE are at HALF normal speed. Rachel is reaching out her arm. Angus's DAGGER is PULLED by an unseen force back toward her hand.

The Black Mage takes advantage of Rachel's distraction and casts another LIGHTNING BOLT at her.

Rachel can't block the LIGHTNING BOLT entirely. She falls to the ground. Angus's DAGGER drops.

EXT. ROOF OF THE BLACK CASTLE'S KEEP - EVENING

The DRAGON and DRAKE are still fighting. The Dragon parries with one blade and slices Drake's arm with the other. Drake recoils and has to defend against a fresh flurry of assaults. Drake dodges a blow and knocks one of the Dragon's swords from her hands.

The Dragon attacks with her remaining sword. Drake spins and cuts one of her legs. She falls to the ground.

Drake reaches his hand towards her other sword. The sword is PUSHED away by an unseen force. He holds up his sword ready to strike a killing blow.

The GLOW LEAVES his eyes. He then steps back and wipes his blade.

DRAKE

You've had your fun. I'm sparing you out of respect for the memory of a woman I once knew.

DRAGON

(regretfully)

That woman is dead.

DRAKE

You need to leave.

The DRAGON slowly stands.

DRAGON

Until next time, Gideon.

The Dragon SHIMMERS into DRAGON form and flies off. DRAKE watches her fly away.

DRAKE

Next time, Nerez.

INT. BLACK CASTLE THRONE ROOM - SLOWED TIME - EVENING

The BRIGANDS come through the web at HALF normal speed. ANGUS and ADRIANA meet the attack, also at HALF normal speed. QUINT and SEBASTIAN continue their fight at HALF normal speed. THOMAS is still just sitting there.

The BLACK MAGE steps closer to RACHEL. Rachel picks herself off the floor.

BLACK MAGE

You are no match for me.

A BLACK SHPERE flies from the Black Mage and moves toward Rachel. Rachel pushes it back with a SHIELD just in time, but she looks to be weakening.

INT. BLACK CASTLE THRONE ROOM - NORMAL TIME - EVENING

RACHEL and the BLACK MAGE are pushing the BLACK SPHERE at TWICE normal speed. ADRIANA and ANGUS are getting quickly overwhelmed by BRIGANDS. QUINT and SEBASTIAN continue to fight NO SOUND coming from each strike.

DRAKE enters the room and begins to even the odds.

Sebastian knocks away one of Quint's swords, but Quint uses the opportunity to thrust a killing blow into Sebastian's chest. Sebastian looks at Quint with shock.

SEBASTIAN

Quint . . . I'm your brother . . .

Quint looks at Sebastian with remorse. Sebastian dies. Quint then lowers Sebastian to the ground, picks up the sword that was knocked away, scans the room, and walks toward the Black Mage.

INT. BLACK CASTLE THRONE ROOM - SLOWED TIME - EVENING

EVERYONE except RACHEL and the BLACK MAGE are at HALF normal speed. Rachel sees QUINT walking towards the Black Mage. The BLACK SPHERE moves slowly towards Rachel.

BLACK MAGE

You're weakening, princess. You should have just surrendered to me. Even death would be better than what you now face.

The Black Mage suddenly stiffens as Quint stabs his sword through him.

BLACK MAGE

Overconfident . . . I didn't hear him coming.

The BLACK SPHERE vanishes to nothing. Rachel and the Black Mage both BLUR.

INT. BLACK CASTLE THRONE ROOM - NORMAL TIME - EVENING

DRAKE and ADRIANA are fighting back to back. ANGUS has stabbed another BRIGAND. The OLD MAN and the king's SOLDIERS suddenly appear in the room. The remaining BRIGANDS either try to flee or give up the fight. RACHEL and the BLACK MAGE BLUR and move at NORMAL speed. QUINT pulls his sword free of the Black Mage. The Black Mage falls to the ground.

Rachel walks over to THOMAS. She looks a little tired.

RACHEL

I hope that you don't always plan to just sit on your throne while I do everything.

THOMAS

I was supervising. You do good work.

Rachel makes a gesture and the restraints on Thomas throne POP OPEN. Thomas quickly moves to Rachel's side and keeps her from collapsing. She holds onto him gratefully. Adriana rushes over to them.

ADRIANA

Are you all right?

RACHEL

Thanks to Quint.

Quint has walked over to the body of SEBASTIAN. He kneels down beside him. Drake walks over to Quint.

DRAKE

You did what had to be done. There was no saving him. He was in the dragon's thrall and could not escape it. Believe me, I know something about this.

The OLD MAN is looking at the body of the BLACK MAGE. ANGUS walks over and takes a look.

ANGUS

What is that?

The body has human shape, but the features of a hooded cobra. The Old Man looks off.

OLD MAN

Trouble.

Rachel, exhausted, leans on Thomas.

RACHEL

You know those things that you said you felt for me?

THOMAS

I meant every word.

RACHEL

You were right: that isn't love . . . but love can grow from it.

THOMAS

Do you think it will?

RACHEL

I'd like to find out.

Drake walks over to Thomas and Rachel.

DRAKE

There is the matter of the Enforcers, your Majesty.

THOMAS

That's right. There's no possible way that many were sent without the Archbishop knowing.

RACHEL

Perhaps, but I don't think that he is willing to accuse me openly.

THOMAS

Still, there's no way he's blessing this wedding. Even if he would be willing, I wouldn't allow it. We might not be able to hold the service.

RACHEL

Nonsense. The Archbishop will still have to be there, of course, but we'll just have someone else officiate.

THOMAS

Who did you have in mind?

INT. MAIN CATHEDRAL IN ARISTAIN - DAY

This is the interior of the cathedral that sits near the amphitheater. The GUESTS are dressed in festive clothing. THOMAS and RACHEL, in wedding dress, are in front of the altar, holding hands, and looking deeply into each other's eyes. The presiding priest turns out to be MARINA. The ARCHBISHOP stands just to her left. He is trying to look happy. DRAKE stands as the best man while ADRIANA fills in as maid of honor. RACHEL'S PARENTS are standing next to the OLD MAN, who is beaming. QUINT and ANGUS are standing in the back.

Marina is concluding the ceremony.

MARINA

You may kiss the bride.

Thomas and Rachel kiss to the CHEERS of the audience.

Quint smoothly leaves the church. Angus watches him go.

EXT. PALACE GARDEN - DAY

The garden has been decorated in a manner that befits a wedding. A variety of GUESTS are milling around, chatting. RACHEL is talking with ADRIANA. Adriana looks around, nods her head, gives Rachel a kiss on the cheek, and leaves the garden. DRAKE, ANGUS, and the OLD MAN are having a conversation. THOMAS is talking with RACHEL'S PARENTS. QUINT enters from a side entrance and watches.

Thomas notices Quint and walks over to him. Quint straightens and bows as Thomas approaches. Rachel walks over to her Parents. She notices Quint and Thomas and keeps an eye on them.

THOMAS
I'm surprised to see you here.

Quint pulls out a slate and a piece of chalk. Thomas stops him from writing anything.

THOMAS
Vargoth wasn't able to help you?

Quint shakes his head.

THOMAS
This might seem petty of me, but I'm glad for that. You were trying to steal my wife from me, after all.

Quint shrugs and Thomas smiles and extends his hand.

THOMAS
I wish you the best of luck.

Quint and Thomas shake hands. THOMAS moves closer in a conspiratorial manner.

THOMAS
Just stay out of Aristain for a while.

Thomas pats Quint on the shoulder and walks back to where Rachel and her Parents are standing. Rachel and Thomas say something to each other. She smiles at Thomas and then walks to Quint.

RACHEL
Has Thomas asked you to leave the city, yet?

Quint shrugs.

RACHEL
Thank you for saving us.
(stepping forward)
I wish . . .
(pause)
Thank you. You saved me in more ways than you know. You helped me see who I

really am. You helped me find my strength.

(looking at Thomas)

You helped me find love.

Quint writes on his slate: "I'M HAPPY FOR YOU." Rachel smiles at him and kisses him on the cheek.

RACHEL

Stay out of trouble.

Rachel turns and walks back to Thomas. The two of them smile at each other greet a few more Guests.

Quint shyly looks up and, when he's certain no one can see him, mouths the words: "I LOVE YOU" to Rachel's retreating form.

Angus, quite happy, leaves his conversation with Drake and the Old Man and walks over to Quint. He seems about to say something, but stops himself when he sees the look on Quint's face. He follows Quint's gaze and looks at the wedding couple. He then turns and faces Quint.

ANGUS

So, what do you plan on doing now?

Quint wipes clear his slate and writes SOMETHING that we CAN'T SEE. Angus looks at the slate and laughs. Quint quickly wipes the slate again.

ANGUS

No kidding?

Adriana, having changed from the wedding outfit into traveling clothes, walks up to them.

ANGUS

What are you up to?

ADRIANA

The royal family has decided that you two are a little too dangerous to leave alone, so they sent me to take care of you.

ANGUS

What about your duties to our queen?

ADRIANA

She has more than enough attendants now, and with Drake around her, she certainly doesn't need a bodyguard. So, where are you off to?

ANGUS

Should we tell her?

Quint thinks about it and nods his head. Angus whispers it in her ear. Adriana smiles.

ADRIANA

Do you need a partner?

Quint shakes his head and writes: "A FRIEND." Adriana smiles and nods. Angus clasps Quint's shoulder and the three walk off.

CUT TO END CREDITS.