

1. EXT. STREETS OF ROKKINRU HORTURSTIG - LATE AFTERNOON

It is a calm and cool late afternoon. It is late autumn the trees around the village are mostly turned color. ABIGAIL HUNTER (F) 18, blood red hair green eyes tall and lanky, drives her horse and wagon down the street toward the bakery. The village is reminiscent of a Vermont settlement if founded during the dark ages.

As she passes the blacksmiths shop, RAHLAH SAGEET (F) 18, brown hair green eyes, short and stocky, they grew up friends but have since drifted apart, exits clearly having been working the forge, to antagonize.

RAHLAH

You're so dead set on going to cloister early, surprised you Aren't scribbling in the dark.

ABIGAIL

As most smithing is in the dark, I can see how you would think that. What happened to you, we were so close.

RAHLAH

What happened to me? You're the one that has gone all weird. Jumping at the Father's every whim...

ABIGAIL

I am an apprentice, in training to go into cloister, you just said that. What about you and the apothecary?

RAHLAH

You leave Miss Becky out of this! And, isn't it supposed to be the High Priestess that is in charge of the Priory, and all its endeavors? You used to be so adamant about following in her footsteps!

Abigail takes a few deep breaths and tries to calm the situation and salvage what little friendship there is between them.

ABIGAIL

Sister Emma is the head of the church and leader of the village. look, it's Harvestfest, the Priory, the council and the elders are out of session, the High Prior is doing his job, like all the other men of the village, helping with the harvest...

RAHLAH

He's at **your** farm, doesn't that seem weird at all?

ABIGAIL

What's weird about it? I'm apprenticed to the Priory, or is it that he chose to help us not the Flanders, or the Keeps? You know we have the biggest farm! Look, mother needs a few extra hands. I miss you, please, you can still come over, we can catch up...

RAHLAH

...And what? watch Bal hit on your oblivious ass? As if! You better run along, don't want to keep the Father waiting for his dinner!

With that Rahlah returns to the smithy in a huff. Moments later angry pounding on steel can be heard.

ABIGAIL

We were such good friends, she has changed so much. Why is she always so mean now?

Abigail urges her horse the last few meters to the front of the bakery.

She dismounts ties off her horse and enters with her bags.

2. INT. BAKERY - CONTINUOUS

Abigail enters, AeLOUF SHAW, M, 19, blonde hair, blue eyes, a bit scrawny, has his back to the door, stowing the bakery to close for the night.

AELOUF

We're closing, come back
tomorrow...

ABIGAIL

Sorry, I, got held up...

He turns and lights up.

AELOUF

Abbie! I didn't know it was you,
I was waiting, but had to start,
what do you need?

ABIGAIL

Buns and bolillos, a little more
than usual, Harvestfeast and
all...

AELOUF

Yeah I know, the heads of the
Priory and the elders. I have
just the thing, and now, they're
technically a day old...

ABIGAIL

Won't your mother be angry.

AELOUF

You don't need to worry about
her. Here, I made this,
especially for you.

He hands her a double chocolate cupcake, her face lights up.

ABIGAIL

Oh, it's so cute, I wish I could
afford it...

AELOUF

Just said I made it specially
for you, it's on the house.

ABIGAIL

Really?

She takes a bite and savors.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

Oh, it's so good, how did you...

AELOUF

Family secret, maybe someday,
you'll know.

ABIGAIL

I'm no baker, and the archives
are never ending...

AELOUF

That's not...

ABIGAIL

Oh, I have to go, Here's the
money. (beat) sure you don't
want to come for Harvestfeast?

AELOUF

We're feasting at the Bourne
house tonight, but thanks.

He turns to clear some more shelves, then turns back.

AELOUF (CONT'D)

The Yule is... (beat) And she is
gone, so book smart, I wish she
was more people smart. (sigh)
One day.

With a hopeful sigh he goes back to work.

3. INT. HUNTER HOUSE, DINING ROOM - EVENING

The dining room is full of the Hunter family, including mother DAGRUNE (F) 50's, father HAFDAN (M) 50's, GRETA (F) less than 10, and those that have volunteered to assist in the harvest, including the MASTER/FATHER HELGE RAGNUM (M) 50s, lean, bald dark eyes, and HIGH PRIESTESS/SISTER EMMA RAGNUS (F) 40s, long black hair light blue eyes tall wiry, DACEBOL EKHEART (M) 20, tall broad shoulders, dark hair dark eyes, PAUL EKHEART (M) 40s squat, and strong and others.

The meal is ending, and the younger boys start to clear the table.

EMMA

You have prepared a most
delightful meal, Mrs. Hunter.
Not surprising considering your
Daughter's skill in Skaldcraft.

DAGRUN

Thank you, Sister, It is high
praise from one such as
yourself.

EMMA

I am not so different...

HELGE

You are a Priestess for the
Gods, Your words have power,
don't supplant yourself...

ABIGAIL

Speaking of the gods and my
apprenticeship...

HAFDAN

You are far ahead, perhaps you
can slow down...

HELGE

You mustn't question the will of
the gods...

HAFDAN

That wasn't my intention,
Father.

EMMA

It is fine, he worries for his
family, it is a good thing.

Helge shrugs in apparent acquiesce,

HELGE

Perhaps, you, (beat) are, right.

EMMA

She is young, and the young
should enjoy their youth...

HELGE

Those that excel can never be
satisfied amongst the herd,
Sister.

Emma shifts uncomfortably

EMMA

I, I guess you are right. (beat)
Yet, children should engage in

fun, like decorating for Yule,
celebrating, slowing down...

HAFDAN

We are not that well off that we
can go overboard, and the time
she isn't apprenticing...

Father Helge watches with mild curiosity.

GRETA

Abby can still help us decorate,
(beat) right?

EMMA

And I can offer some of the
Priory's older and spares...

HELGE

Perhaps we should discontinue
this conversation, it is late,
the children should be off to
be, before the beast comes to
drag them into the darkness.

The kids freeze mild fear starting to bubble. Hafdan indicates the
youngest should be off to bed.

As the kids hurriedly say their good nights and rush off to bed
Dacebol speaks up.

DACEBOL

Speaking of Yule and
celebrations, (beat) Gale, do
you have any plans for the Yule?

ABIGAIL

Oh, the library is much more
expansive than let on, I found
some older tombs...

DACEBOL

I meant, the ball?

EMMA

You are already are well ahead,
too much focus on work can be a
problem, you are still a child,
and should enjoy your youth...

HELGE

Sister, it is not our place to
crush the hopes of children,
force them away from their
calling.

Emma is uncomfortable and fidgets under his gaze.

EMMA

That's, that's not my intention,
Father, but I will not send a
burnout to cloister.

HELGE

Ah, wise. Experience talking?
(beat) Never mind, we follow the
will of the priestesses, as
always.

Suddenly out from under his glare she is able to assume a more regal
and authoritative air.

EMMA

The will of the gods, we simply
interoperate...

HELGE

Ah, of course, of course, as
long as you remember who is in
charge.

She shifts uncomfortably again.

ABIGAIL

Uh, I think I'll check on my,
the others...

With that she darts off.

4. INT. HUNTER HOUSE, ATTIC - LATER THAT NIGHT

Abigail sits at her desk reading an old book, reading by faint
candlelight, her siblings struggle to sleep. Emma knocks and enters
quietly, away from the High Prior she is much more confident.

EMMA

You were a little upset when you
left the table. I wanted to
check up on you, make sure
you're ok before Me and the
Prior head back to the Priory.

ABIGAIL

It's just so confusing, being
pulled in so many different
directions.

EMMA

I know, we all feel it at one time or another, you want one thing, your father another, young girls should listen to their beat) fathers, parents... elders. You're also pulled by me and the rest of the priestesses, don't want to make a mistake...

ABIGAIL

But I don't even know what I want! How did you figure it out?

EMMA

I'm not sure I ever did, even Priestesses are pressured into roles... (beat) It's true, despite being the head of the state, we don't always get what we want, the needs of our parishioners, and others...

ABIGAIL

So you never figured out what you wanted?

EMMA

Some, most really, never do figure out what they want, too far removed from themselves with too much pressure, even if they do. (beat) For an ambitious girl, such as you...

ABIGAIL

I really don't think I am that ambitious, I mean, yes I like to learn, know things, but I am no leader.

EMMA

(under her breath) Won't be a problem. (aloud) As you live your life according to the doctrine, you learn what, how, and how to be what you need to. (under her breath) whether you like it or not...

ABIGAIL

I wish I could be as confident
and driven as you.

Emma kneels in front of her, trying to hide her horror with herself.

EMMA

No, no you don't. You should
strive to be more so than I.
(Beat, quietly) or less, they
like to break the strong ones.

She helps Abigail to her bed, then notices the book she tried to
close and hide.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Ah, raiding the cellar again, I
see.

Abigail struggles sheepishly.

ABIGAIL

Uh, yeah, I was cataloging some
old reports, I dropped a few,
and found the old section,
and...

EMMA

It's fine, I won't tell if you
won't. To be safe I'll take it
back to the archives.

ABIGAIL

But, I'm not done, it's got so
many old versions of the Songs,
and I found this one I've never
seen before.

With a kind smile Emma reads the title of the story.

EMMA

Ah the Song of Betrayal, it's a
bit obscure, (beat) come on, get
to bed, I'll recite the proper
version before I go.

FADE TO:

S1. EXT. FOGGY FOREST - DAY

A thick fog slowly drifts through the forest. The goddess ARTEMI (F), an older more confident version of Abigail, slowly tracks prey, an arrow nocked and ready.

From the fog ESKANDER, the god version of AIBEC, (M) 20s, tall SWOL black hair and brown eyes, strides confidently into view.

ESKANDER

Well, well, the Huntress does not disappoint.

ARTEMI

Your days of sowing disorder are over.

ESKANDER

Oh, darling, Disorder is not **my** thing.

Eskander's eyes grow dark and darkness creeps in from the horizon. Artemi shoots at Eskander, her arrow turning to lightning. The bolt is absorbed by darkness.

Others, the embodiments of death, disease, famine, and war/disorder, god versions of her friends, wander into the clearing.

Artemi fights valiantly, lightning bolts from her bow repeatedly the other gods throwing darkness bolts.

Soon she is subdued, and Eskander stands over her.

ARTEMI

The darkness has taken you, you should never have released it.

ESKANDER

I'm torn, Huntress, I wanted you to come, perhaps betray your husband, join us in the dark, hunting is better in the twilight. (beat) But it is clear your steadfast preference for the wrong side.

ARTEMI

There is still hope for you, I still love you, but the beast you have become...

ESKANDER

Enough of your simpering, now
you die, Love.

As he moves to strike he is blown back by a great flash of light.

As he comes to a stop and starts to stand the darkness and fog lifts.
Floubeti (M) a giant in shining armor, the god version of CADELL (M)
tall broad shoulders black hair, clean shaven and a few 'sexy' scars,
looms over Eskander.

FLOUBETI

You were like a brother to me,
let this beast go.

ESKANDER

The beast is a part of me! And
we were brothers, until your
betr...

Floubeti back hands him into a tree.

FLOUBETI

You are the one that opened the
cave, became the beast...

ESKANDER

We could have both had this
power...

FLOUBETI

Be gone.

The evil gods disperse.

FLOUBETI

I admire your tenacity, Artemi,
but I can't risk losing you,
letting you hunt alone, you, and
the other goddesses must be
escorted at all times out of our
lands.

ARTEMI

I agree, good husband, you are
wise and too good for me.

5. INT/EXT. PAVILION - NIGHT

The events pavilion, a covered area on the rear of the church, of the village, has been decorated for the Yuleball and it is well underway. Much dancing and partying and such, talk of the beast and how the village is proud of her, spread events around.

The pavilion has a raised stage near the sanctuary. There is a stand for a choir and possibly small group of instrument players.

Emma steps up to a lectern and the crowd quiets down expectantly.

EMMA

The gods have blessed us with another bountiful year. We have been spared of the beast's rampage, and have achieved great strides. (beat) We give thanks tonight, cast our worries to the wind, and celebrate what we have been gifted, we celebrate what was, and is still yet to be. On the morrow we will return to our everyday toils, and embark our tribute to the grand priory, via the way of the king. But tonight, forget fear, duty and worry, embrace with the grace of the gods.

The crowd starts to buzz again, and the party commences again in earnest. Amongst the crowd of villagers, Rahlah approaches Dacebol, who is hovering near the sanctuary entrance.

RAHLAH

So, you of all people are ignoring the wishes of the Priestess. (Beat) You just going to lurk here on the fringe and sulk?

DACEBOL

Gail is still working the archives...

RAHLAH

Just because her duties keep her working far harder and far later than is good for her, you can, and should have fun...

She stares expectantly at him and after a moment he groans and offers his hand in an invitation to dance. She smiles, accepts his hand, and they fade into the crowd.

Near the far end, AElouf organizes pastries and sweets. AIBEC approaches.

AIBEC

Didn't the Sister insist we toss responsibilities to the wind?

AElouf shrugs and continues to organize cupcakes.

AELOUF

Well, someone's got to keep these stocked, wouldn't want a cupcake war, or ravioli riot like last year.

AIBEC

I don't know, that was pretty fun to watch. (beat) You really go all out on the patisserie.

AELOUF

The priory is one of the few groups that can afford to pay royally for these parties. (beat) These parties keep us afloat nearly the entire year.

He glances over at the hot buffet table

AELOUF (CONT'D)

Looks like you went all out on the hunt as well.

AIBEC

Yeah, they let me lead it this time. (beat) You seen Abby?

AELOUF

Only reason you're here? (beat) Me too, if I had seen her, we'd be dancing.

AIBEC

Screw the cupcakes, hunh. (beat) You got a good point.

As they chat some more, Abigail emerges from the archives trying to be all sneaky.

EMMA

Ah, emerging from the shadows to
bask in the glow of Yule.

ABIGAIL

Sorry I'm late, lost track of
time...

EMMA

Couldn't figure a way past the
new lock?

ABIGAIL

Yeah, her uhm...

She smiles and leads her to the middle of the party.

EMMA

It's fine. (beat) There is
nothing wrong with seeking
enlightenment. But we mustn't
rush the process... One has to
be ready for each step. As much
as you want to know it all, I
want it for you more. (beat) In
doing so, However, your life
will change and there is no
going back. You must enjoy what
you have now. (beat) Now, no
more work tonight. It is
Mandatory fun, especially for
priestesses and acolytes.

With that she smiles and fades into the crowd, leaving Abigail to
drift for a few moments, and is soon spotted by Aibec.

AIBEC

Ah, look who the sisters let out
of her cage!

AELOUF

Can I offer the weary acolyte a
double chocolate cookie?

Her face lights up at the selection of goodies on the tables. She is
drawn to the tables like a moth to the flame.

ABIGAIL

Oh, it looks so good! Everything
does. (beat) I am a bit more
than famished, maybe something a
little more...

Aibec grabs a plate of kabobs and presents them to her.

AIBEC

Perhaps a Skewer of venison and
Hunter farm squash?

She accepts a kabob, and with a big smile she bites off a piece of venison. She chews and savors for a moment.

Dacebal, still dancing with Rahalah, gets distracted by the trio, and glares at Aibec.

DACEBOL

Look at them. Laughing, carrying on. Why doesn't she ever want to hang with me?

RAHLAH

First off, she 'hangs' with you more than me, and second, she's not really having fun, you know she only puts on a front to be proper and such. We could have so much more fun than you ever could with **her**.

DACEBOL

Uh, yeah, sure. You're right I guess.

With a heavy sigh, he puts on a happy face, and they dance back into the crowd.

Abigail finishes the Kabob

ABIGAIL

Oh, that was great!

AIBEC

You ready to join in the festivities?

He offers her a hand, after a moment she smiles and accepts.

They dance for a while, but Abigail is visibly distracted.

ABIGAIL

Uhg this is so frustrating...

AIBEC

Well, if you'd let me lead, it might go a little better.

ABIGAIL

That's not what I meant. The more I study the sagas the more, I guess plot holes I find.

AIBEC

Aren't the Sagas the words of the gods?

ABIGAIL

Recorded by the Priestesses, but yeah.

AIBEC

So the priestesses missed something...

ABIGAIL

Why, how, it's like they were deliberately changed...

Dacebal approaches and taps Aibec's shoulder so they would stop and he could cut in.

DACEBOL

Don't be blasphemous, It doesn't become you, or your profession.

AIBEC

Why should I let you dance with her when you disrespect her so...

ABIGAIL

It's fine, Bec, he has the best intent...

The new pair start to dance, but the music changes to a slower song.

ABIGAIL

No, I'm sorry, I'm not comfortable with this.

She hurries off as Dacebal and Aibec stare at each other.

AIBEC

She's too good for you, *miner*.

DACEBOL

And a simple hunter is any better?

6. EXT. STREETS OF ROKKINRU HORTURSTIG - MORNING

Wagons line the street and are being loaded with the various tributes and items to sell in the town surrounding the king's castle. The villagers are packing the wagons with the supplies from the Priory warehouse and supply depot of the village. It is slow going as many are still recovering from the Yuleball the night before. The mood is agreeable, people talk and say their goodbyes to the caravan volunteers.

Helge, Emma, and the rest of the Priors and priestesses oversee, the priestesses making notes.

HELGE

Looks like we are right on schedule.

EMMA

In fact, we may be a bit ahead of schedule, an early...

HELGE

No need to hurry, we will depart on schedule, no earlier, no later.

For just a fraction of a second Emma thought about trying to assert the control she was supposed to have, but a look from Helge stopped that cold.

EMMA

Yes, Father as you, (beat) as was decided.

They continue their rounds, Emma in the lead, but Helge clearly in charge.

We come to Abigail as she talks with her father as he hitches up the horses.

ABIGAIL

Do you really have to go, I have a bad feeling...

HAFDAN

It is my turn to direct, not to worry, the beast shall not feast this day.

ABIGAIL

Then, (beat) perhaps I should
come along, get a look at the
cloister where I will be...

HAFDAN

You still have a year, I know
you are destined for great
things in the church, but I wont
lose my daughter before her
time.

ABIGAIL

I am destined to be a priestess,
the gods...

HAFDAN

Master Helge, and Sister Janna
offer all the divine protection
we will need. Now go, help your
siblings finish loading us out.

With a heavy sigh, Abigail half heartedly shuffles off to help the
others.

For a time, we watch the villagers pack out and load bags and boxes.

Presently, Dacebol approaches and jumps in the wagon Abigail is
helping to load and starts shifting around the load.

ABIGAIL

Oh, hi, Dace, you know the
driver will just move everything
around again...

DACEBOL

No, I don't think I will, I
trust you and myself to balance
it correctly. (beat) The only
thing I might add is you, but
your father...

RAHLAH

Really, you're driving the lead
wagon this year?

DACEBOL

Don't sound so shocked, it is a
duty and a privilege to make the
offering, and this puts me in a
fine position...

Abigail lights up and hugs him.

ABIGAIL

Congratulations! couldn't be in better hands.

AIBEC

Even if I were to drive? (beat)
Kidding, I'm sure you'll do well.

DACEBOL

Yeah, well, to celebrate, I am going to get you a brand new copy of '*The Song of Artemi*'...

AIBEC

You're a man like me, we don't have the magic of reading. How will you find the right one?

DACEBOL

I know what the picture looks like...

AElouf, who had been going around offering scones and drinks to the workers stops to put his two cents in.

AELOUF

Yeah, because they never change the cover art...

DACEBOL

It's always the same theme...

RAH LAH

Bal, Dear, think about it. She is going to be a priestess, she will have more books than she could ever read, you don't have too...

DACEBOL

I want to.

AELOUF

Why?

Helge approaches and takes it all in.

HELGE

Well, children, looks like you
have put enough on this wagon,
Dace, make sure you tie
everything down, the rest of
you, see to the other wagons.

Obediently and quietly the others hurry off as Helge focuses on
Dacebol.

HELGE

Where she is destined, you
cannot follow. It may be best
you focus on that nice
apothecary apprentice, she is
obviously smitten.

DACEBOL

I, I could be a Prior, like you
and...

Helge nods sagely but returns sternly, without room for questions.

HELGE

Dreams are important to have.
But one, such as you, should be
more prepared for reality.

Dacebol is taken aback, he struggles for a moment.

DACEBOL

I can work hard, I've worked the
mine with my father, I've tapped
for syrup with my mother. I've
no problem with work, I can talk
to the High Priestess...

HELGE

MY word is final **here**, (beat,
then more fatherly) Or rather,
if I tell the priestesses you
are not cut for the cloth,
they've no choice but to agree.
I'm sorry son, the Priory is not
for you.

7. EXT. FORESTED MOUNTAIN PASS - DAY

The wagons slowly climb the mountain pass the drivers, guards, Helge and a Priestess, talking and carrying on.

Dacebol is driving the lead wagon, Hafdan right beside him directing the caravan, Helge and the Priestess in the third wagon back.

HAFDAN

...You mine coal and tap for syrup, Boy, you don't really have the funds to waste on books you can't read, for a girl that is far out of your league...

Dacebol holds the reins in one hand as he digs through his bag.

DACEBOL

Sir, I have been saving, and it's not just coal...

He pulls out and proudly displays an uncut diamond. Hafdan sees it and immediately closes Dacebol's hand around it, glancing back to make sure no one else saw it.

HAFDAN

You keep that out of sight, son. You know the church would commandeer your family's livelihood if they knew...

He puts the raw gem back in his bag.

DACEBOL

It's not enough for them to worry with.

HAFDAN

Don't be too sure. (beat) Hear this, Boy, I want you working your own mine for the pittance a church contract would be, less than I want you dating my daughter.

Presently CADEL BADUFF (M) 40s Tall broad shoulders, dirty but serviceable plate mail and an golden amulet of the god FLOUBETI. Several other King's guard step out of the woods beside the wagons.

CADEL

Off on a tribute run I see.

HAFDAN

Tis the season, Good Knight. Are there troubles along the route we should be concerned with?

CADEL

Well, what is along the road is of no consequence to you. You're going to take us back to your village.

The knights casually display their weapons at low ready.

DACEBOL

But, we are expected...

HAFDAN

Shush, boy. Good Knight...

CADEL

Please, I no longer am bound to that pretender on the throne.

The caravan guards gasp, Helge gets off his wagon and approaches Cadel, none move to stop him.

HAFDAN

Well, then, Sir, I would ask you step aside. The tribute must be paid...

CADEL

Hah, do you really believe they count every bushel from every village? They won't miss your pathetic offering. (beat) Us on the other hand, we could use it. First step in insurrection is to establish a base of operations. And your village has been selected for that honor.

HELGE

I've no idea why, nor do I care
why you have abandoned your
faith. Fate will find you,
perhaps it is even the beast
that will feast upon your bones.
(beat) I care not. This tribute
this land, is the king's by
divine rite.

CADEL

Perhaps it will be the beast,
perhaps not. **I** am ready to face
the torment for what I have been
called for. That is faith.
(beat) I can't tell if you are a
true believer, or putting on a
front for the benefit of your
sheep. Being so high up in 'The
Faith' as you are, the latter is
more likely as not. (Beat) As I
say, **I**, am a man of **real** faith, a
true believer. And I have been
called, to end this farce.

DACEBOL

Sir, good knight, we are simple
farmers we can't stand
against...

HAFDAN

Boy!

CADEL

Son, your apprehension is
understandable, but respect your
elders, this is not your
conversation.

Cadel looks around the wagons and sees the Priestess and smiles.

CADEL (CONT'D)

You, on the other hand, this
should be **your** conversation, not
his.

Cadel indicates Helge who glares daggers at Cadel, who smiles wider.

CADEL (CONT'D)

What have you to say, Good
Priestess?

For a good while the Priestess is quiet, trying to work the nerves to speak in place of Helge.

When she finally responds, she is quiet and hesitant.

PRIESTESS

Whatever the Beast has promised you, it is not too late to repent. (beat) Please, do not take our village down in your fall.

HELGE

I've had enough of this...

Cadel scoffs and looms over Helge with contempt.

CADEL

Have you now? (beat) Certainly you know, The priors were originally eunuchs, to preserve the purity of the Priestesses, So they could remain in charge, not subservient.

All but Helge, the Priestess, and the Knights gasp.

DACEBOL

They are not sub, whatever they...

HELGE

Boy! Times may have changed, and the priory with it, but our mandate is...

Cadel backhands Helge to the shock of all.

CADEL

The change, 'good brother' is rot. Brought about since the time of Dahrkal I, an invader establishing **HIS** order, a Dynasty against the true faith, warping the minds of the faithful to **his** ends and not the god's.

The Priestess is visibly sick, struggling to disagree, but knowing what he says is true, and not being able to deny it, subconsciously forced to deny it.

PRIESTESS

Blasphemer! Beast take you!
(quietly) And me too.

Cadel softly sighs and assumes a tone to reassure her.

CADEL

I know you mean well, and your
mind is not your own, by no
fault of your own. But please
let the men talk, I will free
you when I can.

he turns back to Helge and Hafdan and assumes an angrier stance.

CADEL (CONT'D)

Did you know, your village is
unusually well off. (beat)
Indeed it is, living there you
may not realize it, but you are
uniquely rich amongst the
villages, though the Crown does
much to over tax you and hide
your importance...

DACEBOL

What are you...

HAFDAN

Don't encourage him, Boy.

Cadel climbs into the wagon to intimidatingly sit beside Dacebol.

CADEL

Respect, should go both ways,
old man. (beat) Anyway, you all,
should know. Your village was
established to hide and control
the wealth of the valley, so
that no enemy of the king could
control it and mount an
insurrection. (beat) I just
happen to be in on it, and have
been pushed into pursuing this.

Helge finally gets up, wipes blood off his mouth and glares.

HELGE

Corrupt guards such as you only
understand one thing. (beat) I
am prepared...

CADEL

Hah, you really think things are that simple, don't you? (Beat) I would have thought a prior of your stature would have some inkling of the rot, but I guess being so far from the capitol, you have effectively buried your head in the sand. (beat) Now, I seldom repeat myself, as you are simple farm folk, I wish to emphasize the futility, and offer one final chance. (beat) Turn around, and take us to your village, and you may live to join us in this divine revolution.

Hafdan looks to Helge who nods forward, they are to move on. Before he can urge the horses on, he is shot by an arrow, and Cadel jumps off to personally knock out Helge.

The former soldiers make short work of all the men that tried to fight back, in the end only half a dozen remain, including Dacebol.

CADEL

Good, we still have enough to drive the wagons. (beat) Are you going to give us any more problems?

Dacebol quickly shakes his head.

CADEL (CONT'D)

Good. Now, if you would be so kind as to turn the wagons around.

DACEBOL

I, uh, well, this passage is narrow, if we proceed a few more hundred or so meters, we could turn much quicker...

CADEL

Lead the way.

Cadel picks up Helge, tosses him to the back, moves the body of Hafdan aside and sits beside Dacebol.

8. EXT. STREETS OF ROKKINRU HORTURSTIG - EVENING

The wagons slowly approach the village, Dacebol, having used the opportunity to get to know Cadel, casually converses with him, the rest of the caravan is silent.

DACEBOL

...So, you really think I have promise?

CADEL

With the gods on one's side, there are no limits to a man's means. If the girl will make you happy, make it happen...

The wagons pull back into the village. There is confusion at first, then, Abigail emerges from the library with Emma and the other religious leaders and immediately focuses on the bodies stacked neatly in the back wagon, and the lack of her father in the lead wagon.

ABIGAIL

Dad?!

Emma restrains her.

EMMA

What is the meaning of this?
Where are the others?

Cadel lifts the sheet covering the bodies

CADEL

All you have to do is follow directions and you wont end up like these wanna be heroes.

DACEBOL

But, wasn't that the point of this, to put the Priestesses back in their place?

CADEL

We all have a place, but it will take time to get things back in order enough for things to get back to normal. To restore the balance if you will. First things first, however. You all should take our supplies to the warehouse.

For a moment the villagers look at each other,

EMMA

We should do as he says,
Dacebol, you and the other,
(beat) drivers, please take the
bodies to the sepulcher. I, I
will prepare for the rights.

DACEBOL

Your father fought bravely...

ABIGAIL

But why, why fight at all, what
are these soldiers doing,
bringing the tribute back?

CADEL

All in good time. (beat) girl,
or should I say Sister? Ah,
interesting, Priestess, my men
need quarters for the night
until we can get things
situated.

9. INT. HUNTER HOUSE, ATTIC - NIGHT

Abby is distraught, curled up in her bed searching for answers to why her father was taken from her in '*The Book of Songs*', their religious book. Aibec comes in to comfort her.

ABIGAIL

It's not supposed to be like
this. We worship the gods, we
pay our tribute. and these men,
these, beasts...

AIBEC

Abby, it will be alright.
Flobouti will save us.

ABIGAIL

Should we really be waiting on
someone else to solve our
problems?

AIBEC

Well, when you can't, I mean
look at the guards, your
father...

ABIGAIL

Really?

She looks at him with profound hurt and hatred, he shrinks back knowing he has overstepped.

AIBEC

That's not, (beat) I didn't mean anything other than we don't have the skills to fend for ourselves. That's why we pay our taxes and offer tribute, so that those that can, do.

With a long and heavy sigh Abigail collapses back into the bed.

ABIGAIL

Perhaps that is by design...

Aibec moves to sit beside her and offer a squeeze of encouragement.

AIBEC

I don't know about design, but no one can do everything, that's why we work together, each doing what they can, cooperating...

ABIGAIL

But if we are cooperating with the people hurting us, are we really helping anyone, especially ourselves?

They are both quiet and pensive for a moment or two.

AIBEC

We might have to be ready to revolt...

ABIGAIL

In support of one that has already harmed us?

AIBEC

We have to have faith, in the god's plans...

ABIGAIL

Isn't that supposed to be my line? I am the one becoming a priestess.

AIBEC

I have faith that the gods will grant you what you need to lead us through the trials and tribulations of life.

ABIGAIL

My dad is dead. I'm not sure I want...

AIBEC

You, we have to continue, of his, everyone's sacrifice will have been in vain. (beat) You remember a while back, Sister Emma's sermon?

She thinks for a moment, then smiles.

ABIGAIL

The gods know more than we ever can, there is a reason we are placed on the path we are.

AIBEC

Yeah, there is a plan...

ABIGAIL

And we just have to be patient and figure it out...

AIBEC

Not too patient, I hope, we are at a dangerous crossroads. As I believe in the gods, and their plans, I too believe in you, and your destiny.

She smiles and hugs him.

ABIGAIL

And I promise, that faith will not be in vain. (beat) I just have to figure out how to have the strength...

AIBEC

Well, you are a 'hunter', like me. (beat, smile) Artemi will be there for you.

He pulls free from the hug and puts his pendant of Artemi around her neck.

10. INT/EXT. EVENTS PAVILION - EVENING

The temperature has dropped radically, everyone is bundled up more than normal.

The Yuleball decorations are still in place but starting to fall down. The pavilion is already relatively full of visitors, the former soldiers, now crusaders, patrolling but not aggressively as more arrive.

As the last of the village arrive they send a message to Cadel who then leads out the bound and gagged Priors, and the gagged but not bound Priestesses. A lieutenant, KESSNER (M) 30's, not quite a tank, and Dacebol, who has decided to follow the rebel leader in some armor he managed to throw together from some extras Rahalah's father had lying around.

Deathly quiet envelops the pavilion as he looks over the crowd, smile just barely not menacing.

CADEL

I'm glad you all could join us this evening. (beat) On this eve of profound transition, well as this is a turning point, we must record it for posterity. Kessner...

KESSNER

Sir? We are not magi, none of us can write, perhaps we should have one of the sisters...

CADEL

Their minds not being their own, they cannot be trusted with this.

DACEBOL

Gale...

The crowd turns dark as they focus on Dacebol. They separate from Abigail as if she was infected.

ABIGAIL

Dace!?

CADEL

Does my Acolyte speak true? Are you able to record this auspicious event?

Abigail quietly shakes her head as Rahlah approaches to whisper in her ear.

RAHLAH

We don't want to antagonize them, I don't want to see my oldest friend killed.

Cadel smiles eerily.

CADEL

Come, child. I've no wish to harm you, nor the Priestesses in fact. This is for the future.

Abigail glances over the crowd, finding no support, save the soft encouragement of Rahlah, she slowly approaches the stairs to the dais.

When she is near Cadel she looks around.

ABIGAIL

On, what should I, record the minutes?

CADEL

Oh? Minutes you say? Such a worldly young lady. What would you normally record 'minutes' on?

ABIGAIL

The uh, council chambers, in the Priory. There are blank pages and implements of writing...

Cadel looks at Kessner who takes Dacebol to get the supplies.

CADEL

Tell me, Gale, how does one gain the magic of writing and reading without being a Sister?

Abigail nearly hyperventilates as she tries to answer.

ABIGAIL

I, uh, have been apprenticed,
but have not yet been
cloistered...

Cadel brightens.

CADEL

Really? Rokkinru is quite the
gift of a village! More and more
perfect for our needs by the
moment. (beat) It's amazing how
the gods plan the start to their
new eras.

Aelouf calls from the crowd.

AELOUF

What would you know, or care of
the gods, Beast?

To the amazement of the crowd, Cadel does not react with anger, but
pride.

CADEL

When the elite own the
information, writes the history,
much is uncertain, I'll grant
you. Lies told all your life
feel like truth. Darkness is the
light, to those born in shadow.
(beat) Fear not, however. I will
release the true light. We will
all bask in the glory of a new
age!

He turns his head to note Kessner and Dacebol are returning with the
writing supplies.

CADEL (CONT'D)

Ah, here is the means of
history. Gail, would you be so
kind?

Quietly as she accepts the parcels and starts to organize them on the
lectern.

ABIGAIL

It's Abigail...

CADEL

And make sure to note that it is
you who is recording this
history, or Song, if you will.

The crowd gasps at his blasphemy of the word 'Song' but he proudly
orates louder.

CADEL (CONT'D)

A woman of the gods, but not yet
corrupted by the cloister!
(beat) Now, as I was saying: We
are on the verge of the future,
as such, I need loyalty.

As he finishes his micro-speech, he turns to stride to Helge who is
knocked to his knees and gag removed.

CADEL (CONT'D)

Now, 'Father', here, in view of
the gods and before your charge,
do you renounce the fowl crown,
and its lineage of corruption?

Helge silently and angrily glares at Cadel.

CADEL (CONT'D)

Come now. Speak up, will you
follow me into the light of a
new age?

HELGE

I hope you go right to...

With one swift movement Cadel slices the throat of Helge, the spray
covering the stage, the lower part of Cadel's pants and shoes and
part of the crowd.

The crowd gasps, some try to run, but are blocked by the soldiers,
Abigail almost collapses but is held up by Dacebol who whispers she
needs to keep writing.

With the crowd still in shock, he approaches the next prior who is
likewise knocked to his knees. Cadel glances at Dacebol who motions
that Abigail is ready again to record.

CADEL

Prior, what is your name, who
are you?

The prior does not speak, merely works his jaw in anger.

CADEL

Abigail, who is this?

ABIGAIL

It's uh, He, His name is Simon.

Cadel turns back to Simon menacingly smiling.

CADEL

And what does Simon say? (beat)
Do you acknowledge the
corruption of the church? Are
you in even the least way,
apologetic for your role in the
desecrations of the minds of
these good Priestesses?

SIMON

I have not brainwashed...

Cadel back hands him as the remaining clergy glare at him, and the priestesses cower and the crowd is silent.

CADEL

Ah, Simon says, without
prompting or a hint,
brainwashing. Well, 'brother'
the first step to solving a
problem is identifying it...

Simon tries to stand but is stopped by Kessner.

SIMON

I HAD NO PART!

Cadel scoffs.

CADEL

Of course not. A mere little
brother wouldn't be allowed such
a role. (beat) But at least now,
the truth is out. And in the
light, we will be purified!
(beat) Do you, Simon, now
condemn the actions of Big
Brother?

Simon is silent. Cadel continues menacingly quiet.

CADEL (CONT'D)

You know what I am willing to
do, Simon. Renounce or...

Simon tries for the knife once again, but is shot in the back by Kessner. The crowd is horrified, Abigail has to vomit as Simon groans in agony.

After an eternity, Cadel rolls him over with his foot, and finishes him off.

CADEL

Such a waste.

Kessner pushes the next to his knees.

ESCOBAR

You might as well finish us
off...

With a shrug, Cadel slits the man's throat.

CADEL

Make sure you note his name,
Sweet Abigail. (beat) Prior, do
you agree with them?

All the last Prior can do is shiver quietly in fear. Cadel finally
just stabs him.

CADEL (CONT'D)

Ah, such cowardice.

He strolls up to the Priestesses who step back and cower. Noting
this, he stops a few meters from them and starts apologetically.

CADEL

Your minds are, sadly, not your
own. It would be unfair of me to
have you answer for that.
Hopefully, soon, we can have
that rectified. But for now...

He motions to Kessner and Dacebol to lead the Priestesses back to the
priory.

He turns back to the stunned crowd.

CADEL

You are not a part of their
deception, I cannot expect you
to join us after such cruel
displays. You, of course can if
you wish. But, I understand you
are, apprehensive. Paradigm
shifts are scary, unknowable. I
assure you, you will adapt. Just
don't leave the village, I would
be forced to take actions we
would all regret.

As if to emphasize the importance of the words, it starts snowing, a
flurry at first but growing rapidly in intensity.

CADEL (CONT'D)

Ah, see, even the gods agree. I
will do what I have too.

M1.1. INT. SANCTUARY - MORNING

start montage:

The villagers sit in the pews, the front row empty except Cadel on the edge listening in rapture to Sister, now Mother Emma as she leads the worship service. Some of the other crusaders are also present and listening, others patrol the aisle or guarding the door board.

M1.2. EXT. STREETS OF ROKKINRU HORTURSTIG - NIGHT

The crusaders patrol the streets. An alarm sounds and they rush to see a villager who was trying to escape start running, he is shot.

M1.3. EXT. STREETS OF ROKKINRU HORTURSTIG - MORNING

Crusaders lead a bound villager back into the village.

M1.4. INT. COUNCIL CHAMBERS - DAY

Mother Emma is seated in the high back, the spot reserved for the religious leader, a few of the other priestesses are also at the desks to her side, Abigail sits right in front of Emma taking the council's minutes. Cadel and his retinue sit at the front desks that form a semi circle where the sun's light makes a shaft.

A crusader leads a villager to the sun shaft he speaks, Cadel listens to the group discuss, Emma tries to stand to make a statement, the guards prevent her from doing so, the villager sees this and sighs dejected and after a few more words from Cadel is led off.

INT. JAILHOUSE - AFTERNOON

There are three cells in the back, two are occupied, a crusader naps in a chair near the middle.

Mother Emma and Abigail enter, the crusader confronts them, eventually letting them see the prisoners.

M1.5. INT. SANCTUARY - DAY

The villagers sit in the pews, most with bowed heads, some watching the crusaders with suspicion. Cadel is once again in the front with Dacebol beside listening to a less enthusiastic Mother Emma.

M1.6. INT. COUNCIL CHAMBERS - DAY

The crusaders talk business while Mother Emma naps, Abigail takes meticulous notes.

end montage.

11. INT. PRIESTESS CHAMBERS - NIGHT

It has been a few weeks since the crusaders have taken over the village and barred anyone from leaving. It being winter and the passes basically impassable it was not difficult to enforce. In fact conditions have been so bad that travel even within the village was difficult. Most of the farming and mining families have unofficial rooms in the inns for survival in the depths of winter, and Abigail uses a room in the priory.

Abigail alternately packs and unpacks a travel bag mumbling about the weather and not being able to do anything about it, or the situation in general.

A knock sounds at the door and it slowly opens allowing AElouf to enter carrying some food.

AELOUF

I deliver the kitchen's bread
and am told you want to see me
privately in your rooms. (beat)
Didn't think you were the kind
of girl to entertain a gentleman
in her chambers...

ABIGAIL

It's not like we haven't been
alone before. I mean there was
that time we spent the night at
Raven's crest...

AELOUF

We were in separate tents, Abby,
and the rest of the gang was,
and I wasn't talking about
sleeping, or talking, I was

thinking, something more,
exciting...

ABIGAIL

Oh, you mean, that. (beat) I
don't get the appeal of that
either. (beat) You brought the
stuff, right?

AELOUF

Hard tack and sausage? Weird
asking for traveling rations
right now...

She grabs the bag, checks it, and drops some coins into his hand.

ABIGAIL

We need help, and I am the one
least...

AELOUF

He calls you his Unbound
Priestess, he will notice if
you're gone...

ABIGAIL

But he won't have me killed,
like...

AELOUF

Even if you do manage to get to
the next village, they won't be
able to help until the thaw.

ABIGAIL

If I get to the Capitol...

AELOUF

You've never been more than a
hundred Kilometers from
Rokkinru,

ABIGAIL

And Kasteil is more than ten
thousand seven hundred and forty
three, I know. It will be rough,
but I figure I can go for
seventeen, eighteen hours a
day...

AELOUF

Even in fair weather, not even
the elite guard could do that!
Let alone a kid in a blizzard!

ABIGAIL

The gods...

AELOUF

Not even they could help with
that!

ABIGAIL

Well, what should I do? Huhh, I
can't just sit around letting my
village suffer!

AELOUF

We're not suffering, not any
more than any other winter,
anyway. They only 'claim'
control, the snow's really in
charge, what's keeping us in,
right? They only killed...

ABIGAIL

ONLY! Only the Priors, Ael! How
can you even think that?

They silently glare at each other for a time.

AELOUF

You're right, this is a problem,
but we can do little at this
time. (beat) We will figure
something out, you always do.
But this is not your best plan.
(beat) Promise me you'll wait,
until, well before you do
something we'll all regret.

She hesitates for a moment, then drops her head and sighs, nodding.

12. EXT. SNOWY FOREST - NIGHT

Snow falls heavily as Abigail struggles through the woods, nowhere
near the road. Breath comes heavily, a beast howls in the not too
distant. Shivering she struggles on.

Silence falls as she suddenly looks around, and is attacked by a
small dog sized beast. She beats it off, but not before it takes a

chunk out of her leg. She manages to stop the bleeding as another closer howl sounds.

She breathes hard, looks around, the snow has covered her tracks, she can't remember which direction she needs to go. She grudgingly starts off in a random direction, leaving a trail of trickled blood.

After wondering a while more she finds a small cave and slips in, gathering some burnables to start a fire.

S2. EXT. FOGGY FOREST - DAY

Song of the Hunt: god's fall.

The Goddess Artemi, atop a golden stallion, makes her way through the woods tracking prey with the help of a few hunting dogs. Accompanied by Eskander on a gray horse, FARATESH (F) a deity version of Sister Emma on a zebra, HASAN (M), a deity version of Aibec on a red horse, RAHIME (F) a deity version of Rahlah on a pale horse and JAVIDE (M) a deity version of AElouf on a greenish brown horse.

RAHIME

Tis not my expertise, yet, I
know hunts to be sitting in a
freezing tree waiting for wary
beasts to wander close enough to
pierce with an arrow?

ARTEMI

You're telling **me** this, why?

ESKANDER

Perhaps our Lovely is keen on a
break, of fast perhaps?

RAHIME

A break of fast indeed, Smokie,
darling

ESKANDER

The fauna serves their master,
but our own beasts do tire as
well, milady.

Artemi chuckles, content.

ARTEMI

No need to fret, my companions,
a clearing is up ahead and tis
there we will make camp. Tis

this evening that starts our
events in the trees.

HASAN

And not to worry, friend, once
halted, I'll have the feast
prepared forthwith.

A hunting dog yelps and they all glance in its direction.

ESKANDER

Ah, Brownie has caught an early
trail. Who's up for some fresh
venison?

Without a word Artemi turns her mount and speeds off in the direction
of the dogs. The others look at each other, shrug and start off close
behind.

The group follow the trail for a moment before darkness envelops the
sky and lightning strikes right in front of them, knocking them off
their horses, who bolt off into the fog.

The hunting dog circles back and excitedly yelps and licks their
masters trying to rouse them to get to safety.

Eskander wakes with a start and rushes to tend to Artemi.

ESKANDER

Our queen is injured!

The others struggle over to look upon Artemi and try to help.

From the fog, FURIN (M) a deity version of Dacebol, part man and part
beast, strolls into the clearing, smiling evilly. Rahime is the first
to notice.

RAHIME

Beast! You dare attack the wife
of Floubeti, on our land!

HASAN

You'd best depart before your
meddling rouses our lord!

FURIN

Hunh, how little you know. Trust
me, I have more knowledge of
events than you ever shall. What
you **think**, well, it is not how it
is.

ESKANDER

LIES!!

FURIN

Oh... You should know, Lies are not **MY** weapon.

FARATESH

The storm is getting worse, and I don't think it's his, though it won't envelop him as it wants to feast on us. We have to...

Artemi stirs and groans trying to get up and lead.

ARTEMI

There is, a, cave, we must...

Lightning cracks and wind stirs. Furin looks around and smiles more broadly.

FURIN

Looks like you'd better hurry.
(beat) You don't know what's going to happen...

ESKANDER

And you do? (beat) You know something. Take the queen to her cave, I cover the retreat.

The group struggles to help Artemi out of the clearing as Eskander and Furin face off.

13. INT. VILLAGE INN - AIBEC'S ROOM - MORNING

Aibec dozes in his bed as the first light of the morning drifts in.

Without so much as a knock the door opens and Dacebol enters. His uniform has been fitted and now looks proper. He stands for a moment.

Groggily Aibec rolls over and glares at Dacebol.

AIBEC

It's a bit rude to just barge into someone's room unannounced and without permission.

DACEBOL

Just get up, Gail is missing, we have to find her.

AIBEC

Just because Rahlah got your armor to fit, you think you can just order the rest of us around?

DACEBOL

I have done what I have to do to save...

AIBEC

You helped them murder the whole priory!

DACEBOL

They have been lying to us our whole lives, at least I stopped them from going further!

AIBEC

You really chugged that juice quick, he has no proof of the lies he claims, and they haven't threatened...

DACEBOL

Look, none of that matters, only Gail matters, she is missing...

AIBEC

Check the library, you stalked her enough to know that's where she always hangs out.

DACEBOL

You think that wasn't the first place I checked? (beat) Yes I am, aware of her patterns, I checked all the places she would hang out, including the bakery. And you know what Wolf told me?

AIBEC

To fornicate with yourself?

DACEBOL

While he was telling me about her plan to get to Kasteil.

AIBEC

In the middle of winter? Only you'd be that stupid.

Dace punches Aibec, they struggle for a bit.

DACEBOL

I'm not stupid Bec, I know you care about her just as much as I do. You're the only one that can track her down. Help me keep her alive!

14. EXT. SNOWY FOREST - DAY

Aibec bundled up in furs, and Dacebol less bundled ride horses through the forest as Aibec's hunting dogs bound about looking for a sign of Abigail.

DACEBOL

At least it stopped snowing...

AIBEC

It's too cold to snow, which means Abby is seriously in danger...

DACEBOL

All she had to do was...

AIBEC

look you little turncoat, if she doesn't make it back, you don't...

DACEBOL

They won't let you back...

AIBEC

I don't need to get back, I know this valley better than you ever will. And I can survive regardless of the season.

Suddenly the dogs start barking excitedly

AIBEC

Sounds like Brownie found something, it's too thick for the horses, we proceed on foot.

DACEBOL

How do I know you won't..

AIBEC

What? Kill you? I'm not a
betrayer like you, you want to
find Abby? We walk.

He dismounts, followed begrudgingly soon by Dacebol

AIBEC

Why did you even join them
anyway?

DACEBOL

If you got offered a chance to
change your fate, wouldn't you
take it?

AIBEC

Not if it meant betraying
everyone close to me.

DACEBOL

I had a chance to prove to you,
to Gail, to everyone, that I am
worthy...

AIBEC

You would throw everything away
for an unavailable woman who, by
the way, isn't the coupling
type.

DACEBOL

I could have changed her...

AIBEC

You give men a bad name, (beat)
Look, Brownie has something.

They approach a large brown dog who is excitedly digging at the body
of the thing that attacked Abigail

DACEBOL

Is that a, what the hell is
that?

AIBEC

I've never seen one of those
things before, but looks like
someone used this branch as a
club, and look here, the way
these branches are broken, she
went this way.

They follow the dogs through a snow drift

AIBEC

Look there's smoke coming from
that crevasse, the snow blew
over, make yourself useful and
help dig this cave out.

15. INT. CAVE - CONTINUOUS

Slowly snow is dug out from the outside. Abigail's fire is only smokey embers, she is frostbitten, cut, battered, and bruised, she is only barely breathing.

As the noise gets louder, Abigail tries to move and can barely focus on her rescuers.

ABIGAIL

Eskander, Furin? Have you come
to finish me off? hehe Floubeti
might have something to say
about that...

DACEBOL

Gail, it's alright, we're here
to rescue you!

They rush to check on her.

AIBEC

She's froze nearly solid, her
pulse is weak, we have to get
her back to town now!

16. INT. PRIESTESS CHAMBERS - EVENING

Abigail is tucked into her bed, Emma is tending her wounds.

Cadel silently enters and waits for a moment, silent.

CADEL

How is she?

Emma does not look toward him, instead focuses on tending to Abigail.

EMMA

She is a little weak, but she is
a fighter.

CADEL

You are the High Priestess,
leader of the village, surely
you have aids or something to...

EMMA

I don't know how it is in
Kasteil, but in small
communities, we all do our part.
(under her breath) Can't all be
self righteous pricks.

CADEL

As with all governments, there
are issues, I can't fix them
all, but I'm doing my part, I
can have...

EMMA

No! Your 'people' won't touch
her.

He nods.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I don't trust 'your people',
it's not like you, they are
letting me do anything else. And
no, the services don't count.

CADEL

My dear High Priestess. I've no
wish to cause more harm than
needed. This dawn may be rough,
indeed. Yet, this will be rather
easy compared to what's to come.
You will have the information
you need to make an informed
decision, but until the time is
right. You really should enjoy
your, vacation.

Abigail stirs, and looks over to Cadell, still in delirium.

ABIGAIL

Lord Floubeti, you honor me...

CADEL

It is I that am honored, But I
am not the lord, I would never
try to claim such a mantel, and

when this is over I will deserve
much worse.

He hesitates but moves closer.

CADEL (CONT'D)

How is my Unbound Priestess?

She closes her eyes to inhale deeply and struggles to sit up
straighter before opening her eyes a little clearer.

ABIGAIL

I'm, uh, a little hungry...

Emma stands and skirts the edges of the room.

EMMA

I'll get you some broth, you're
too weak for anything more
substantial. (beat) excuse me.

Cadel takes a step closer, to stand respectfully in the middle of the
room, well lit.

CADEL

You gave us quite the scare.

ABIGAIL

So you send Eskander to find me?

CADEL

Eskander, hunh, must have been
some adventure.

Abigail shakes her head a little and is a bit more cogent

ABIGAIL

As if you care about me, or
Rokkinru..

CADEL

Oh, I do care, quite a bit. This
village is the key, I didn't
know quite how much until I met
you.

ABIGAIL

Why? What am I to you, what's
all this about?

CADEL

My answer will be the same, no matter how many times you ask. The world has been corrupted, and I have been chosen to fight the rot. I have been called to build a world I can't enter. I hope you can understand so you can lead your people to that world.

ABIGAIL

You have no proof, no...

CADEL

Truth has been hidden and proof is hard to come by. Here.

He steps forward to lay a book at the foot of her bed, still a respectful distance from her.

She manages to get it and struggles a moment to read the title.

ABIGAIL

The song of assertion? What a weird title. Wait, how old is this?

CADEL

Older than Rokkinru I'd wager...

A knock sounds on the door and Dacebol pokes his head in

DACEBOL

Mother, is...? Oh, Sir, I was just checking...

CADEL

I am done here, lieutenant. Abigail, are you fit to receive?

Abigail is silent.

CADEL

Well then, I will leave you to it.

He steps out and quietly shuts the door.

Dacebol approaches too close, Abigail scoots away, but remains silent.

DACEBOL

Are you alright?

ABIGAIL

I don't have much to say to you,
Dace.

DACEBOL

But, I saved you, you
wouldn't...

ABIGAIL

You joined *them*, over us!

DACEBOL

Not against you, I could never
be against you. We can be more
than friends...

ABIGAIL

More than, wha, no! I don't want
that, I never have, not with
your or anyone else!

He angrily approaches her and grabs her arm.

DACEBOL

I have done everything for your,
You will be...

Just before he would have pulled her to him Cadell throws open the
door. He glares angrily at Dacebol.

CADEL

She has made her choice,
Lieutenant, it is ours to
respect it.

Dacebol looks from Cadell to Abigail and back a few times, then
finally drops her arm and storms out.

CADEL

I apologize for eavesdropping
and subsequently barging in. I
wasn't entirely certain of his
intentions, and fairly certain
of yours.

She breathes heavily for a moment before responding.

ABIGAIL

I think, under the
circumstances, I can forgive
you.

Emma enters and absorbs the tension for a moment

EMMA

Am I interrupting?

ABIGAIL

No, thank you, everything is
fine...

CADEL

I will bar him from the Priory,
enjoy the rest of your evening.

17. EXT. STREETS OF ROKKINRU HORTURSTIG - LATE NIGHT

The night is quiet only the crusader guards roam, enforcing a curfew
and keeping wild animals away.

In first person we roam the streets avoiding light sources and
sticking to alleys.

We go up walls searching for prey.

From the rooftops we look down and see a lone guard halfheartedly
patrolling the same area dozens of others have patrolled through the
previous days.

We jump from the roof to land silently behind the guard and take him
down.

18. INT. PRIESTESS CHAMBERS - MORNING

The window is open, a cold breeze rustles sheets and papers and such.

Abigail stirs and wrapped in her blankets struggles to the window.

ABIGAIL

Uh, who left the window open?
Why are my hands and blankets so
sticky?

There is a nightstand near a stove whose coals are mere embers, but
the water in a jug nearby is still liquid.

She pours some water into a basin and begins to wash blood from her hands and face, and takes off a few bandages, only a few of the wounds are still open, some are fresh.

ABIGAIL

Ohh cold.

19. INT. PRIORY KITCHENS - LATER

Abby enters the kitchens, the staff has not yet begun breakfast, she goes to the larder and begins to rummage for something to snack on.

The head of the kitchen staff, SISTER POLIANA (F), middle aged, bundled in robes, enters, confused as to why the candles have been lit.

POLIANA

Abigail? You shouldn't be out of bed, you need to heal.

ABIGAIL

Poli, I'm fine, you don't need to fuss over me. Yes, I'm sore, but fine, somehow. But really hungry, that broth just wasn't...

POLIANA

Oh I know, you need something solid. Are you sure you are ready for something solid?

ABIGAIL

Oh, I could eat a horse...

POLIANA

Well, No horse today, but we do have some day-old biscuits and cheese...

ABIGAIL

Sounds delicious.

Poliana ushers Abigail to a chair.

POLIANA

Oh it certainly is, have a seat and I'll fetch it for you.

She goes into the larder and begins to rummage as a commotion is heard outside.

ABIGAIL

What's going on out there?

POLIANA (O.S.)

Oh, those horrible Crusaders causing another ruckus about someone leaving their quarters too early, no doubt.

Emma bursts in all flustered

EMMA

Sister Poli, we can't find...
Oh, Abby, you're up and... We found tracks outside your window...

ABIGAIL

My room is on the third floor?
I'm fine, probably Dace being all creepy again, ever since...

A crusader enters.

SOLDIER

Mother Emma, your presence is requested outside.

EMMA

Is it really a request?

SOLDIER

Now.

20. EXT. OUTSIDE PRIORY - LATER

Cadel is outside surrounded by his crusaders as they rush around talking about an investigation and a death. Emma and Abigail are bundled up

CADEL

Ah, Mother, and The Unbound, are you well enough to be out?

EMMA

What do you want?

CADEL

You are the leader of this village, and as such, you should be aware of all the goings on.

EMMA

Well, if you and your men would
learn to write...

CADEL

Unfortunately, some skills are
not for the masses.

ABIGAIL

You could always have someone
else record...

EMMA

Not helping, Abby.

CADEL

Well, come, there is much to
see.

He indicates they should follow as he makes his way into the priory
grounds; they are soon joined by Aibec.

ABIGAIL

Bec? what are you doing here?

AIBEC

Something about strange animal
tracks.

CADEL

His knowledge of local fauna is
renowned, as he agreed to search
for the Unbound, I thought he
would be willing to help out, as
it seems (the stop below
Abigail's window) something
clearly trying to get her.

Aibec, noticing where they are, starts studying the ground very
carefully.

AIBEC

It's something large, between
two and four legs, maybe two
hundred pounds? I've never seen
tracks like this, and I don't
think you people are capable of
jokes.

Cadel turns to Kessner, there is chatter from all around about a
beast. A soldier rushes up to Cadel.

SOLDIER

Sir, Richards been attacked!

CADEL

Show me.

The soldier leads the way with Cadel and the rest of the ensemble in
tow.

21. EXT. SNOW COVERED ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

The troupe joins a group of soldier and civilian onlookers.

The body is mangled and in pieces. Cadel takes it in and snarls.

CADEL

Double the watch, no one goes
anywhere alone, especially at
night. (turns to Emma) I suggest
you keep your people in line, I
can't protect them if they try
anything stupid.

22. INT. PRIORY LIBRARY - AFTERNOON

Abigail works the shelves of the library, organizing, pulling volumes that some of the sisters had requested, putting up the tomes that need it. There is a small shelf unit near the door that she pulls books to put on real shelves, and she places newly pulled books from shelves onto tables in the middle. Her new injuries have been tended to, and as she works she absently rubs/itches at them.

Rahlah enters and watches for a bit.

ABIGAIL

You just going to watch, or are
you going to offer a hand?

RAHLAH

Putting books away? I'd have to
be able to read to do that. You
know we're all trapped here
because of you.

ABIGAIL

How do you figure that? You know
I tried to get help. They
dragged even me back. (beat) I
would think you'd appreciate me
leaving Dace to your graces,
letting you dress him up like
your own toy soldier.

RAHLAH

He risked his life for you!

ABIGAIL

(under breath) wish he hadn't.
(aloud) I have never been in competition with you, I care too much about you to hold anything back from, or above you. I want what I have always wanted for you, to be happy. If he will make you happy... I wish he'd settle for...

RAHLAH

Settle? Is that really how you think of me? He's banished from the priory because of you! And you won't even thank him!

ABIGAIL

He should have even been, he's banished because of, (beat) you know what, forget it. Is that what this is about? Or do you really think they listen to me? To anything I have to say? They, Won't, Leave! (long beat, sigh) We used to be friends, best friends. Now you blame me for everything that you don't like. I just want my friend back.

They are silent for a moment then Rahlah slumps into a chair and absently looks through the pages of a book.

RAHLAH

You used to read us stories. That was fun, I liked that, I could listen to you for hours. Hey, why does this one show Artemi and the Beast shaking hands, or paws, like friends?

ABIGAIL

Apparently, our library is much more expensive than we knew. Cadel gave me that one.

RAHLAH

First name basis, really? (beat) at least your eyes are off Bal...

ABIGAIL

They were nev, yeah, they're off him, for good. And you've always been better for him than I could be, be happy with him if that's possible, take him with my blessing.

RAHLAH

And you're not even a priestess yet...

They chuckle happily.

ABIGAIL

I do miss this.

RAHLAH

Me too.

Abigail sits across from her friend.

RAHLAH (CONT'D)

So, what's this one about?

ABIGAIL

Don't know, was going to read it tonight...

RAHLAH

Why not now?

ABIGAIL

Uhg, fine, let me have it. 'The Song of Assertion.'

23. EXT. STREETS OF ROKKINRU HORTURSTIG - NIGHT

The moon is full, illuminating the streets to near foggy day level. There are only a few clouds in the sky. A few couples walk the well worn paths cleared of snow, as snow tries to fall.

In first person we tour the town from the rooftops, unobserved by the masses. A noise attracts the attention of a few of the villagers.

We dart away as the alarm is sounded. They give chase and we lead the way to a field near the priory. We get jumped by a pair of crusaders including Dacebol.

A fight occurs and we dart away, over the priory.

M2.1. EXT. STREETS OF ROKKINRU HORTURSTIG - MORNING

Montage start:

a crowd is gathered at the mouth of an alley, crusaders keep them back, but we see that another crusader is maimed, but alive, a villager sits off to the side, wounded but not grievously.

M2.2. EXT. STREETS OF ROKKINRU HORTURSTIG - NIGHT

First person tracks crusader around a corner. The crusader tries to fight off foe, a villager walks past the mouth of the alley, the beast sees him and bolts past knocking him down.

M2.3. INT. COUNCIL CHAMBERS - DAY

Mother Emma watches tiredly in mild curiosity as the crusaders argue about the attacks. Cadel is visibly angry, but holding it together.

M2.4. INT. ALCHEMISTS OFFICE - AFTERNOON

crusaders and villagers lie in beds, all injured. The priestesses, Abigail, Rahlah and the alchemist make rounds tending to the injured, giving preferential treatment to villagers, the crusader medic argues with a few about bandages and medications, but focuses on the crusaders.

M2.5. EXT. STREETS OF ROKKINRU HORTURSTIG - NIGHT

Crusaders search the streets, chasing after any shadow that could be the beast, villagers watch from widows amused.

End montage.

24. INT. PRIESTESS CHAMBERS - MORNING

Emma and Abigail wash wounds and change dressings.

EMMA

This would be a whole lot easier
if you would sit still and let
me treat you.

ABIGAIL

Sis, Mother...

EMMA

Please, I am your friend first,
Emma, please.

ABIGAIL

Si, Emma, you are the senior
Priestess, you..

EMMA

I am also a concerned friend and
healer, Abby. Let me help you, I
need to feel useful.

ABIGAIL

I know, it's wrong why have the
gods for...

EMMA

The gods would never forsake us.
This is merely a test, we will
pass.

ABIGAIL

I know, I hope. But why won't my
wounds heal? And I keep getting
new ones.

EMMA

There is a reason, we just have
to find it. And keep our faith.
(under her breath) it is a
little easier now that I'm
actually in charge... Sort of, I
guess.

ABIGAIL

What?

EMMA

Nothing. Now let's hurry, you
mustn't keep your friends
waiting...

ABIGAIL

What about the minutes...

EMMA

Let the sisters do our jobs.

25. INT. SMITHY - AFTERNOON

Rahlah pounds away at a project as Aelouf works the billows, Abigail is reading a book by candlelight, and Dacebol is in a corner complaining about being injured and no one caring.

Aibec enters with some sacks of sandwiches and luncheon supplies.

AIBEC

Crazy how it takes weeks of occupation to get the gang back together.

DACEBOL

Could be worse, could have been attacked by a monster, oh wait!

AELOUF

Speaking of, (to Abigail) How are you doing after all this?

DACEBOL

Oh, so we're only worried about Gail...

RAHLAH

Since when are you not?

ABIGAIL

Aren't soldiers supposed to be stoic or something? (Beat)
Thanks for your concern Wolfy, but I have actually never felt better.

AIBEC

See, Bal, There is hope for you yet. (hands him his sandwich)
You want yours, Rah?

RAHLAH

I got irons in the forge, can't just stop, or the steel'll burn.

ABIGAIL

Can metal really burn?

RAHLAH

Aren't you supposed to be the smart one?

AELOUF

Hey, hey, ladies, we're all
friends here, we just got back
in the groove, don't ruin this,
please.

For a tense moment they all look at each other, then continue as
friends. They all assume their seats, except Rahlah and AElouf who
continue to work the steel.

AELOUF (CONT'D)

Should we really be that worried
about the beast attacks? I mean
it's only targeted the Soldiers?

DACEBOL

Uh, hello?

AIBEC

Uh, you willingly joined them.
(beat) But some others have been
injured, and there have even
been animals in the surrounding
area that have been killed and
consumed...

ABIGAIL

What if we are looking at this
wrong...

AIBEC

Again with the dreams?

ABIGAIL

Not really, but yeah. (beat) I
mean, the beast has tried to
avoid killing, it might be
trying to help...

AELOUF

And I thought Dace was the
blasphemer.

DACEBOL

Hey!

AIBEC

Abs may have a point, I mean the
beast only appeared when Bal's
friends arrived.

RAHLAH

They could have brought it! I mean, where was it when the Priors were murdered in front of us?

DACEBOL

The priors have been lying to us all our lives, they are supposed to all be castrati...

AELOUF

Wow, the blaspheming continues. How can you even like him? Dace, You do realize, big daddy could be lying to you...

ABIGAIL

You think the priors are blameless?

AIBEC

You too? really? You're spending too much time in the library basement.

RAHLAH

That is where we found the...

ABIGAIL

We?

AELOUF

You're defending her? After all this time I never thought I see you two get along again.

DACEBOL

We are all friends, or used to be. (beat) I like it when the gals get along...

AIBEC

Gals?

AELOUF

Tell us about those books.

26. EXT. STREETS OF ROKKINRU HORTURSTIG - LATE NIGHT

It's a cloudy night, frozen breath lingers in the air. Two sets of crusaders finish a turnover, one pair begins their rounds the other heads back to the inn where they have taken it over as a barracks. One of the men informs the other he is going for a smoke and slips into the alley.

We follow the smoker to the far end of the alley, after a look around he pulls out a cigarette and starts to light it.

After a moment he glances to the camera and doubletakes. His eyes widen, but before he can sound the alarm we take out his throat.

ABIGAIL (V.O.)

Uhm, fresh meat. Oh the thrill of the kill. (beat) Wait, (beat) I'm enjoying human flesh!?

Soldiers pass by the head of the alley and notice the activity

SOLDIER

THE BEAST!

He fires his crossbow, the bolt rips through the beast's abdomen. The beast howls out in pain; we also hear a VO of Abigail crying in pain.

The beast bounds off, Abigail's VO panicking trying to think a way out of the situation, and wondering what was going on.

Other soldiers join the set that sounded the alarm and the hunt begins. As they follow the trail, a blizzard starts.

27. INT. AELOUF'S HUNTING LODGE - EARLY MORNING

Abigail lies in the one room shack's only bed as Aelouf tends to the fire and cooks some steak and eggs.

She stirs and bolts awake, the wound in her stomach protesting causing her to cry out in pain.

ABIGAIL

No, stop! I didn't mean... NO!
OW!

AELOUF

Abby, you're finally awake! I thought I lost you, the beast took quite a chunk out of your gut.

ABIGAIL

Wha, Why? This is your house?

AELOUF

Yeah, I guess you came out with the whole village trying to get the beast. He was feasting on that poor man... I got close, but the blizzard started, and I found you, and there wasn't time to get back to town...

ABIGAIL

I get it, nowhere else to go. Why am I...

AELOUF

I'm no doc, I patched you up as best I could, you really shouldn't have tried to take the beast alone, the Gods can't...

ABIGAIL

Who's blaspheming now? What do we do now?

AELOUF

The snow is letting up, we eat breakfast, then head back and hope Cadell doesn't have us shot on sight.

ABIGAIL

I'm his unbound priestess, he won't kill me, and I'll make sure you're safe too.

28. INT. CADEL'S QUARTERS - LATE AFTERNOON

Cadell and Kessner, along with Dace and another assistant are organizing and checking their gear in anticipation of hunting the beast.

A messenger knocks at the door.

CADEL

Enter!

SOLDIER

Sir, the hunter has finally reported in, he has returned and is helping Abigail to her rooms again.

DACEBOL

How is she?

KESSNER

Dace, you really have to learn discipline. Soldering is much more serious than being a mere minor.

DACEBOL

I apologize, Ke, Sir. But...

CADEL

No buts kid. Watch your mouth and mind your place. Messenger, report the status of the Unbound priestess.

SOLDIER

Sir, It appears that the beast has taken a chunk from her stomach. The hunter, it seems, has stabilized her, and the priestesses are tending to her, but with gut wounds...

CADEL

I know. Thank the Hunter, and ensure he is well compensated. Provide the priestesses with any help they may need. See to it our medic is on standby.

KESSNER

No doubt they will refuse. And speaking to that, this crusade of yours.

CADEL

You have doubts but still follow?

KESSNER

We were all denied our rightful promotions, reneged our oaths to the crown...

CADEL

An illegitimate crown.

KESSNER

So you claim.

CADEL

The head that bears it is not
the king.

DACEBOL

How can you speak such...

CADEL

I may be amused by your antics,
and you seem to have started
something with my second, but
such things can only take you so
far, things in his orbit don't
tend to last. Both of you, all
of you, listen up. This holy war
we have embarked on demands
complete devotion! If you are
not willing to go the distance,
I need to know now.

He draws his sword and points the tip at Kessner's neck who is silent
for a moment.

KESSNER

My 'devotion' is not, cannot be
blind. Your end goal draws
further away and harder to
justify. Yet I remain on your
side. However, as this beast
increases its violence, we may
need to abandon...

DACEBOL

It's a soldier's job to...

KESSNER

Mind your mouth, you have too
many other uses for it. Don't
make me explain things yet
again. Soldiers can only enjoy
the spoils if alive in victory.

CADEL

This village was always part of the plan, the only reason we have a chance against the old kingdom. The Unbound priestess is only a confirmation of that, a sign from the gods themselves. We will protect this village, and everyone in the village, understood?

29. EXT. STREETS OF ROKKINRU HORTURSTIG - NIGHT

Cadel, Kessner, and Dacebol methodically roam the streets, pausing and checking around corners before proceeding at all cross streets and alleys.

KESSNER

Sir, we have been out here all night, and we haven't even heard a whimper from the beast. How much longer...

CADEL

As long as it takes, we have a duty to keep our people safe.

DACEBOL

Uh, Sir, the beast doesn't strike every night, what if this is one of those nights?

CADEL

Then we patrol tomorrow night and the next if we have to, until the beast is dead!

From the shadows a flash of fur bolts out and takes down Dacebol, knocking him out. Cadel and Kessner get back to back as they slowly rotate and scan the darkness for a sign of the beast.

They too get knocked down. The beast has mounted Kessner furiously beating and biting. Cadel body slams the beast off his second, losing his sword in the process, He and the beast trade clumsy blows for a bit, when the beast finally manages to catch Cadel's forearm in its mouth.

The noise from the crowd that had suddenly appeared attracts the beast's attention and it bolts as the lynch mob follows. In an uncharacteristic move, Dacebol takes charge spies some of the other crusaders on patrol.

DACEBOL

Hey, you! Over here! Strategic withdrawal, you two, help the commanders, you over there, get the rest of the men from the med station and barracks, GO!

30. INT. PRIESTESS CHAMBERS - EVENING

Abigail is in her bed semi conscious, her wounds having been tended to. She slowly comes to full consciousness and looks around, relieved she is in her room and only Emma is with her.

ABIGAIL

How long have I been out?

EMMA

Mostly all of the day, you must have thrashed about in your slumber, your wounds opened up again. How are you feeling now?

ABIGAIL

Sore, and horrible, and pained... Where is my door troll?

EMMA

Gone, along with the rest of the blasphemers. Last night the beast took out Cadel and his second, and without that leadership, apparently Dacebol grew a pair and called a retreat.

ABIGAIL

Dace? Really.

EMMA

If I hadn't seen it myself, I'd be as skeptical as you.

ABIGAIL

Cadel, is he dead?

EMMA

Somehow, no. But he is in no position to lead.

ABIGAIL

(sighed under her breath) Thank
the gods, I didn't want his
blood on my...

EMMA

What? Never mind. Looks like the
worst is over. Whenever you are
ready, you can return home...

ABIGAIL

This is my home...

EMMA

I, understand. (beat) how about
a story to help you return to
the dreamworld so you can heal
up.

S3. EXT. FOGGY FOREST - DAY

Song of the banished:

Artemi jogs through the woods, carefully keeping her bow knocked.

She is soon joined by Floubeti

FLOUBETI

You certain this plan will work?

ARTEMI

Who's the goddess of the hunt.
(beat) are you sure this has...

FLOUBETI

the corruption must be
stopped...

ARTEMI

They're my friends...

FLOUBETI

Not any more.

They emerge into a small clearing and wait for a moment.

Eskander walks into the clearing.

ESKANDER

The time has come for you to
make a choice, Artemi...

FLOUBETI

Your lies...

ESKANDER

The lies told are not ours, they
come from an older world...

The three fight and one by one Faratesh, Hasan, Rahime, and Javide
and a new goddess LOONESTRA (F) deity version of Greta, who joins the
fight on Artemi's side.

ARTEMI

Sister, you have come?

LOONESTRA

How could I miss all this
disorder? Are you sure you know
what this fight is about?

FLOUBETI

We will preserve...

LOONESTRA

So, no.

The enemies are forced past a set of pillars at the far end of the
clearing. Color and light drain from that side of the gate.

FLOUBETI

Consider yourselves banished
from the kingdom.

they look upon the three remaining in light and color solemnly

FURIN

THIS isn't over, the truth...

FLOUBETI

Is not for your mouth.

Loonestra turns to Artemi to speak softly only to her.

LOONESTRA

They need you isolated to
control you, keep the faith, and
remember... [unintelligible
speech]

With that Loonestra crosses the boundary and the dark gods disappear.

31. EXT. STREETS OF ROKKINRU HORTURSTIG - MORNING

The sun is shining as villagers make their way up and down the street enjoying not being forced to remain inside by armed guards.

The residents are enjoying a relatively warm day, decorating the streets for the winter solstice festival.

Greetings of 'Artemi's Grace be upon you', 'And Floubeti's blessings on you', 'May the gods grant mercy', and more can be heard as people pass each other on the streets.

Abigail exits the priory and basks for a moment in the sun. villagers approach her.

VILLAGER

I know its a bit after the fact,
Mi lady, but with the crusaders,
I couldn't express my
condolences

ABIGAIL

I'm hardly a priestess yet...

VILLAGER

But you have shown your favor
far greater than I could have
thought possible. As far as I am
concerned, you are beyond the
cloister.

ABIGAIL

That's not how it works, but
thank you. Artemi's grace upon
you.

VILLAGER

And Floubeti's blessings upon
you. Happy solstice.

The villager walks off greeting others and Abigail starts down the street.

ABIGAIL

[sniff] yum, Aibec's baking,
[sniff] cake, brea, oh sweet
rolls...

She absently makes her way to the bakery, AElouf rides down the street his horse pulling a cart with a large deer. Abigail sees and smells the beast and she subtly licks her lips, her hunger surging.

AELOUF

Look who finally decided to join
the festivities!

ABIGAIL

A little late in the year for a
hunt, isn't it?

AELOUF

With all the crusader nonsense,
I figured the solstice needed
something better than salted
beef.

ABIGAIL

And I'm not the only one that
will thank you, I'm sure. You
seen Rara?

AELOUF

Last I heard, she locked herself
in the forge and isn't even
letting her father in. I don't
think you should go either.

Aibec emerges from the bakery with a tray of sweet rolls.

AIBEC

I thought I heard the talk of
the town...

ABIGAIL

And, why am **I** the talk of the
town?

AIBEC

When even the High priestess
lost her way, you stayed strong,
Your faith has reignited that of
Rokkinru...

AELOUF

And when you have to go to
cloister, well it will be a
sadder occasion than we thought.

ABIGAIL

And what if I don't go to
cloister, that is.

The boys look at each other agasp.

AIBEC

That's dangerously close to
blasphemy.

AELOUF

The priestesshood is the key to
all influence one could want,
but the only way...

ABIGAIL

After all that's happened, I'm
not sure I...

AIBEC

But you have to, we're all...

ABIGAIL

I still believe in the gods,
nothing can stop that, but I
have a lot to think about.

AIBEC

Well, while you're thinking,
have a roll, and we'll help
Wolfy get the game to the priory
kitchens and paint the town
red...

32. INT. ENTRANCE TO DACEBOL'S COAL MINE - MIDDAY

There are many men in makeshift beds, including a very battered and
bruised Cadel.

Dacebol, and a few others angrily discuss the turn of events as the
crusader medic tends to the wounded, including Cadel and Kessner.

SOLDIER

This has all gone to shit!

SOLDIER 2

Yeah, wasn't this supposed to be
a cake duty, get away from the
crown and set up where they
wouldn't care...

DACEBOL

Defecting from a lord was never
going to be easily, whether you
believe in his legitimacy or
not.

SOLDIER

The more illegitimate the more
spite.

SOLDIER 2

And what would you know about
it, Captain lets you play in
armor because it amused...

DACEBOL

Huhn that's what you think of
me, some kind of clown, or
jester hunh? When the Captain
and Kess are down, does that
make you in charge?

The crusaders look at each other and turn back, the first about to
say yes, but Dace punches him out.

DACEBOL

So much for elite. Pathetic.
Anyone else? (beat) Well, let's
get back to it. If you boys
wanted easy, you should have
stay in the barrack and kept
your heads down.

Cadel, Kessner, and others start to moan and groan in pain. The medic
and Dacebol rush over to check on Cadel

DACEBOL

What's going on!

MEDIC

Fever, inconsistent healing,
hair growing and disappearing...
(beat) I've never seen anything
like it! The Captain took the
worst of the beating, The
Commander didn't fare much
better...

DACEBOL

Ke... They will both live,
right?

MEDIC

It's beyond my abilities. The
gods have kept them alive thus
far, it's up to them to keep it
that way.

Kessner groans and weakly tries to get up, Dacebol and the medic stop him.

DACEBOL

Kess, it's alright, we're safe...

KESSNER

Those ungrateful bastards...

DACEBOL

I know, that beast really tried to take out your throat, you're lucky, Kess...

KESSNER

If I die...

DACEBOL

They die, I will burn it to the ground!

KESSNER

Good, I taught you well. The Captain?

DACEBOL

Still alive, but the situation has changed. He may not be fit to lead us anymore...

KESSNER

The plan, his plan, has gone to shit, to get what we want, what we deserve, we need a new plan.

One of the injured starts to change, Dacebol and Kessner look and watch, and smile

DACEBOL

It looks like the gods are smiling on us.

33. EXT. STREETS OF ROKKINRU HORTURSTIG - DUSK

In the calm of an unusually warm evening lamp lighters, helped out by Abigail and her friends, less Rahlah, go about lighting street lamps as others continue to decorate for the solstice celebration.

As they work, Rahlah emerges from the smithy and approaches slowly.

AIBEC

Ugh, hurry up, it's getting cold.

ABIGAIL

It's still warm for this time of year, Looks what the beast dragged...

RAH LAH

Abby, please I'm trying to be nice...

ABIGAIL

Sorry, Ra, but it is good to see you, Sorry about Dace...

AIBEC

Yes we're all sorry about the turnout. The sun is setting and it's getting a might chilly.

AELOUF

It's not like it's the middle of winter, or anything...

RAH LAH

Do you think Bal is alright?

ALL

[groan]

AIBEC

Rah, he made his choice, and it wasn't you. And he has to live with losing the sec... Well, the best person for him. What is it about that creepy Kessner guy?

ABIGAIL

Who knows, not even I saw that coming. Sorry, Rara...

RAH LAH

You scared him off... wish you hadn't...

ABIGAIL

Ra...

AELOUF

Ladies, can we enjoy the
solstice season in peace? I
mean, we just got rid of those
stupid crusaders, it's a season
of thanks, no need to muck it
all uh... this one's lit, you
can have the next, Bec.

AIBEC

Oh, yesir, right away, sir,
whatever you need, sir...

AELOUF

Hey, I lit the last dozen or so,
I don't even really live here...

ABIGAIL

No need to fight, I'll light...

RAH LAH

Oh, is the priestess going to
get her hands dirty?

ABIGAIL

Not a priestess yet, and how
many times do I have to say
sorry?

AELOUF

Shh, you hear that?

ABIGAIL

Did you really sush me?

AELOUF

Yes, shsh. Something's not
right.

At that moment the streets are overrun by beasts of a more beastly
nature than Abigail's version.

RAH LAH

RUN!!!

The friends scatter, trying to warn the other villagers, confusion
abounds.

Abigail ducks into an alley breathing hard, her skin already starting
to quiver wanting to change.

ABIGAIL

What the? I really am the beat,
and how is this happening while
I'm awake?

As the other beasts terrorize the town, the Abby-beast jumps to the middle of the streets and howls in hatred and rage. Some are stunned, some rush off in fear, others approach and roar in challenge.

The Abby-beast takes on all comers and soon the bad beasts are chased off.

34. NT. PRIESTESS CHAMBERS - EVENING

As the last of the sun's rays creep back to the window, Abigail methodically disrobes and folds her clothes, willing herself to stay calm.

A knock sounds at her door and before she can respond AElouf enters.

AELOUF

Looks like they are, in fact
coming again, we have to...
Wait, what, what are you doing?
Why are you getting naked, I
know you don't sleep like
that...

ABIGAIL

You're supposed to wait for
permission to enter a lady's
room. (sigh) it's not like you
haven't seen me nude before. If
you want to leave town, you need
to go soon, before the confusion
starts. It'll probably get crazy
and I haven't quite mastered it
yet.

AELOUF

Mastered? Mastered what? Why are
you kneeling, Mastering prayer
isn't that...

ABIGAIL

What would you know about
prayer? Never mind, the gods
have given me...

AELOUF

Given, you, Given you what...

ABIGAIL

A grand gift, and I intend to
protect my people with it.

AELOUF (CONT'D)

...Those beasts are not like...
What Gift!?

She slowly stands as her skin ripples, changes colors, and hair
appears.

AELOUF (CONT'D)

Abby? What's going on?

ABIGAIL

I'll explain tomorrow, please
don't tell anyone.

35. EXT. STREETS OF ROKKINRU HORTURSTIG - MORNING

Abigail and AElouf, along with other villagers, go through the
streets looking for crusader stragglers. Everyone is pensive, but
help wherever they can.

AELOUF

Are you just going to pretend
that last night didn't happen?

ABIGAIL

What do you want me to say?

AELOUF

You could have told me, us about
this 'gift' of yours.

ABIGAIL

I only recently figured it out.

AELOUF

How recent?

ABIGAIL

I suspected at your cabin, but
wasn't sure until the first
crusader beasts showed.

AELOUF

I see. Who else knows?

ABIGAIL

I wasn't even going to tell you,
or anyone.

They enter an alley and see Rahlah at the end.

AELOUF

Oh no, not Rah! RahRAH!

They both rush over, the commotion attracting the attention of the rest of the village.

36. INT. SMITHY - MIDDAY

Abigail is tending to Rahlah, who is uneasy in her unconsciousness.

ABIGAIL

I'm so sorry, Rahlah, I never
meant to. I know I didn't do
this to you, but, it's my fault,
I should have.

She leans over and kisses Rahlah.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

Whatever you need, I'll. I Don't
know how, but I will fix this.

She gets up to get some supplies, soon Rahlah is awake.

RAHLAH

Oh no! Get BACK!

ABIGAIL

Sh, It's okay, you're safe...

RAHLAH

Gods, the beasts! Why would they
do this to me?

ABIGAIL

Do what? You're safe...

RAHLAH

They put, put themselves, in, in
me!

ABIGAIL

By the gods!

Rahlah starts to cry into Abigail who comforts her, disgusted and upset about what the crusaders did to her friend.

37. INT. SMITHY - MORNING

Abigail, Rahlah, and Aibec gather in the smithy to discuss what is going on, and what they need to do to fix things.

RAHLAH

...They have to be stopped, no one else can suffer this.

ABIGAIL

You know Dace is a part...

RAHLAH

That bastard made his choice, and we have to live with it.

AIBEC

We all know that now that they are beasts too, they won't stop until we are dead, or they are.

RAHLAH

At least that first one is on our side.

ABIGAIL

I'm glad that...

AElouf enters and takes a seat in the circle.

AELOUF

I just confirmed it for myself, they are gathered in Dace's mine. Have you told them yet?

ABIGAIL

I was about too...

AIBEC

Tell us what?

RAHLAH

She's the beast, the nice one anyway.

They all gasp at Rahlah.

RAHLAH (CONT'D)

It's true, isn't it?

ABIGAIL

Yes, I was the first...

AIBEC

Wait, what, how...

ABIGAIL

When I first escaped, I was
bitten by something...

AELOUF

A whole group of somethings,
from what I've managed to learn,
there is a cave, they don't
emerge very often, and tend to
get killed, but...

ABIGAIL

Something happened when it or
they or whatever, bit me. I
started to change, slowly at
first, the change fighting my
body...

AELOUF

From what I've seen of the
crusaders, the process takes its
toll, few survive.

AIBEC

How many are there left?

AELOUF

A dozen or so...

ABIGAIL

I don't want to sound needy, but
this is about me and what we
have to do to stop them.

AIBEC

Sorry...

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

It's fine, a lot to take in I
know, but Rara, you're not
surprised.

RAHLAH

I can smell it on you, you're different, I think I am changing too.

AELOUF

This just got a lot more complicated...

ABIGAIL

Goal is still the same, we have to stop them...

The door opens, Emma, Dagrún, and a few other villagers enter.

EMMA

Are we too late?

ABIGAIL

...Uh, for what, we...

RAHLAH

I told Sister Emma when she came to help with my dressings. It looks like she spilled the beans...

DAGRÚN

Sweetie, I wish you told me, I could have...

ABIGAIL

No one could have helped Mom, but at least we have a means to fight back.

EMMA

Do you have a plan?

ABIGAIL

Why are you asking me?

VILLAGER

You are the most well read in the village...

ABIGAIL

Uh, Sister, Mother Emma...

EMMA

Cadel saw something in you, that we all did, but I couldn't say anything without Father...

ABIGAIL

Wait, what? Why...

As she speaks, Emma gets more and more visibly flustered and nauseated.

EMMA

In the cloister, they, do things, things to your mind. They. Break you, even now, without the father and the with the external revelation of Cadel...

ABIGAIL

It's okay, Sister, I think I understand. But still, why me?

DAGRUN

Sweetie, you have a gift, from the gods, Mother Emma has told us what she learned and observed as you recovered and the crusaders wreaked havoc, and you steadfastly held the faith even when the priestesses...

VILLAGER

You're the only one that has a hope of uniting and inspiring the rest. We believe in you, we will follow...

EMMA

And you have to believe in yourself as well, I can follow, but no longer lead, things are changing for Rokkinru.

ABIGAIL

Well, they are trained soldiers, we can't take them out, but if they are in a mine, mines collapse...

AIBEC

Certainly can't do that while
they are in it...

AELOUF

We draw them out...

EMMA

They'll come out on their own,
as we've seen these past few
nights. We have to keep them
busy while someone rigs it...

ABIGAIL

Beasts can be trapped, and this
early in the process, they won't
be able to think critically...

DAGRUN

Wolf, honey, you and a few
others can set the traps, we may
mostly be peasants, but we know
a little about fighting...

RAHLAH

The fire salts we use in the
forge, in the wrong proportions
can explode...

AIBEC

...And it is mostly a coal
mine...

ABIGAIL

Sounds like we have a plan, or a
start of one at least, Wolfy,
give a crash course in trapping
and figure the best places to
place them...

She starts to get up, but the others stop her.

DAGRUN

Sweetie, you're the only one
that can keep them distracted
enough, and you need to sleep to
get your energy up...

AELOUF

We'll set the traps, run
interface and when you are ready
for the night, we'll show you
where they are...

ABIGAIL

Cured meat. Yes, cured meat.
They won't be able to resist,
but I can, and I'll know. The
final...

RAHLAH

Me and Bec can get the mixes
going and we'll rig the mine.

M3.1. EXT. FORESTED MOUNTAIN - DAY

montage start:

The villagers set and bait traps led by AElouf.

M3.2. INT. SMITHY - DAY

Rahlah and Aibec carefully pack their explosive supplies.

M3.3. EXT. STREETS OF ROKKINRU HORTURSTIG - DAY

Some of the villagers train with weapons.

M3.4. INT. SANCTUARY - AFTERNOON

Mother Emma speaks from her lectern revving up the villagers.

M3.5. INT. DACEBOL'S MINE - AFTERNOON

Dacebol and Kessner whip the crusaders into a frenzy.

M3.6. EXT. FORESTED MOUNTAIN - NIGHT

The crusader beasts emerge from their mine and set about terrorizing.
Some get lured to traps, others are harassed by villagers, most race
toward Abby-beast and fight tooth and nail.

End montage.

38. INT. DACEBOL'S MINE - NIGHT

Aibec and Rahlah carefully go through the dark mine rigging the traps
that will collapse the mine when the crusaders return.

AIBEC

Are you sure this is going to work?

RAHLAH

The gods are on our side.

AIBEC

Not in dispute, Rara, but any number of things could go wrong.

RAHLAH

Look, these are smokers, mixed with the right amount of decelerates so the smoke starts before the fuse goes, these ones in the back are merely insurance, the ones at the mouth are the most important.

AIBEC

If we don't need to...

RAHLAH

You want to be out there trying to shoot a bow accurately?

AIBEC

We both know I can't even draw a bow, let alone shoot straight.

RAHLAH

then shut up and help me with this next one.

The pair continues to set smokers and low grade explosives every few meters or so.

They finally round a corner and Dacebol is waiting, in the midst of change.

DACEBOL

Kessner said you would betray us. I didn't want to believe him.

AIBEC

Why not? You already suck his...

Like lightning, Dacebol closes the gap and knocks Aibec down the passage.

RAHLAH

You betrayed us, **ME**, first!

DACEBOL

Why settle for the apothecary's apprentice when the next high priestess...

She hits him and scoffs.

RAHLAH

She was never interested in you, I hated her because I couldn't hate you, now that I know, I can accept you would never be mine. Besides, we both know she would never be assigned back here, she is the best of us and would have been kept in the capitol under close watch, or broken and left to die. We all know how it is now.

DACEBOL

Well, feisty, aren't you, you may have lost your purity...

Rahlah stabs him in the gut, up through the heart and as he falls to his knees she whispers in his ear.

RAHLAH

All you had to do was love me the way I loved you!

AIBEC

Was that what this was all about, the traps an excuse to...

She glares at him.

AIBEC (CONT'D)

I will never get on your bad side again.

RAHLAH

Com'on we need to make sure all this is buried as deep as the abyss.

39. EXT. OUTSIDE THE MINE - DAWN

Abigail, as a beast runs through the forest, harassing the crusader-beasts just enough that they keep running to the mine.

She runs into a clearing and AElouf is waiting, she stops and looks at him.

AELOUF

Abby?

She nods.

AELOUF

Can you speak?

She shakes her head.

AELOUF

Well, this is the last chance to let someone...

She shakes her head.

AELOUF

I know, we all have to finish what we started. I believe the gods are watching us, and will protect you, but...

She awkwardly hugs him

AELOUF

Good luck, Artemi.

40. INT. DEPTHS OF THE MINE - MORNING

The mine is dark, but Abigail's beast senses are strong and her adrenaline is coursing through her veins.

She goes through the passages and side cuts brutalizing the other beasts, ripping through their abdomens, biting into their throats, and setting off charges for the side cuts to make sure they stay.

From nowhere Kes-beast body slams her into the deepest parts. He growls in beast noises unintelligible to humans but to other beasts, quite understandable, translated by subtitles.

KES-BEAST

You have cost us quite enough tonight!

ABBY-BEAST

We can talk?

CAD-BEAST

Having run alone for so long, it must come as a shock, but we are more powerful than man, even apart, together. This is our destiny, to depose...

ABBY-BEAST

I am getting really tired of you, and you're preachy nonsense! You come to my village, kill our priests, steal...

CAD-BEAST

But look at what we accomplished, what you've learned! Does that mean nothing! To change the world, sometimes you have to destroy it!

ABBY-BEAST

You could have...

CAD-BEAST

What talked, told you over dinner your king, your religion, has lied to you your whole life? Would you have believed?

KES-BEAST

Enough of this, where is my Dace...

ABBY-BEAST

If I can smell is death, so too can you.

KES-BEAST

You will die and I will line my...

CAD-BEAST

This was never about lining your pockets, or gaining a sycophant or two, we have a chance to restore...

Kes-beast body slams Cad-beast

KES-BEAST

This was never about your quest
either, regardless of what you
think! And I will be out from
under your command! This is
my...

Abby-beast body slams him.

ABBY-BEAST

So, you're the problem. Your
idea to kill them?

She begins to rip at his face but he throws her off.

They begin to fight as Cad-beast gets up and picks up the charge that
was going to blow this chamber.

CAD-BEAST

This was never about my vanity,
but a return to the old ways,
the right ways. Yes I needed the
push of being overlooked for
promotion, but the god's plans
are far greater than mine!

He lights the charge and attacks Kes-beast.

To Abby-beast:

CAD-BEAST

RUN!

The fuse hits the main charge and lights the other fuses that should
have lit it, Abby-beast runs as charge after charge explodes,
lighting coal seams and collapsing walls.