

Zenith

written by

Matthew Saporito

Address  
Phone  
E-mail

FADE IN:

We open as the sun begins to set below the tree line of a massive forest. The camera slowly scales down the trees to reveal a narrow road at the bottom.

FILM TITLE: ZENITH

EXT: CRONIN PASS - EVENING

A HORSE AND CARRIAGE moves hastily down the road. It is surrounded by 20 REPRISAL SOLDIERS riding horses.

INT: CARRIAGE - CONTINUOUS

A BEAUTIFUL GIRL (18) sits inside the carriage alongside a REPRISAL SOLDIER. The SOLDIER is LEGATE EDWARDS (40), a handsome man donning pristine STEEL armor. The GIRL, named PRISCILLA, wears an elegant dress and has smooth, blonde hair.

EDWARDS

Are you excited to return home, my lady?

PRISCILLA smiles warmly at the SOLDIER.

PRISCILLA

Of course, sir. I must admit I am a bit nervous, though. It's been so long. I'm not quite sure if I can remember what home feels like.

EDWARDS smiles and puts a hand on her shoulder.

EDWARDS

Not to worry, Priscilla. You'll remember soon enough. Your family misses you.

PRISCILLA'S warm smile fades slightly as her eyes connect with EDWARDS.

EDWARDS (CONT'D)

We've all missed you.

PRISCILLA breaks her eye contact and pensively looks forward. BEAT. She looks back at EDWARDS, regaining a smile.

PRISCILLA

Thank you.

EXT: CRONIN PASS - EVENING

Further down the road, a DARK, HOODED FIGURE lurks in the trees... WAITING. The FIGURE intently watches the carriage as it navigates the NARROW road.

INT: CARRIAGE - CONTINUOUS

PRISCILLA anxiously twirls her thumbs. EDWARDS continues to stare at her.

EDWARDS

Do you have any memories of the city?

PRISCILLA remains deep in thought. She fails to respond.

EDWARDS (CONT'D)

My lady?

She snaps out of it and looks up.

PRISCILLA

Oh, my apologies. Um, yes. I believe I do have some.

EDWARDS

What do you remember?

PRISCILLA

Well, I guess the stream that flows through the city. My mother and I would always walk alongside it every morning. It was quite lovely.

EDWARDS

Indeed. Still is quite lovely. What else?

PRISCILLA

(hesitant)

I... I don't know, really. I was very young when I still lived there. I'm sure much has changed since then.

EXT: CRONIN PASS - CONTINUOUS

The DARK FIGURE in the trees raises a gloved hand... A SIGNAL. More SHADOWS begin to emerge. They begin to REPEL down the massive tree trunks. THE CARRIAGE gets closer. More SUNLIGHT begins to fade away.

INT: CARRIAGE - CONTINUOUS

EDWARDS shifts closer to PRISCILLA. He stares at her with a LUSTFUL gaze.

EDWARDS

It has been long. You've become quite the woman in the time you've been away, Priscilla.

PRISCILLA tightens her shoulders. She manages to fake a smile.

EDWARDS (CONT'D)

I've been meaning to tell you something. Your father and I... we've arranged quite the surprise for you when we return.

EXT: CRONIN PASS - CONTINUOUS

The SUN disappears below the tree line. The road is filled with DARKNESS.

The FIGURE amongst the trees slowly takes out his BOW. It begins to line up a shot... THWAK! An ARROW flies through the air. We follow it as it starts to descend. It plunges through the heart of the REPRISAL SOLDIER steering the CARRIAGE.

The SOLDIER's arms, holding the REINS, jerk to the left. The horses turn sharply into the surrounding SOLDIERS. HORSES COLLIDE.

INT: CARRIAGE - CONTINUOUS

PRISCILLA and EDWARDS slam into the right side of the CARRIAGE as it swerves out of control.

EXT: CRONIN PASS - CONTINUOUS

CHAOS ensues as the CARRIAGE crashes into a tree. It comes to a halt. Four SOLDIERS lie DEAD. Survivors quickly dismount and convene to the spot of the CRASH.

INT: CARRIAGE - CONTINUOUS

PRISCILLA and EDWARDS are on the floor of the CARRIAGE. PRISCILLA has loud, shallow BREATHS and is visibly frightened.

EDWARDS

Are you alright, my lady?

PRISCILLA frantically nods her head "yes."

EXT: CRONIN PASS - CONTINUOUS

The REPRISAL SOLDIERS get off their horses and gather around the crash.

SOLDIER 1

What the hell happened?

A SOLDIER gets closer discovers his fatally shot companion.

SOLDIER 2

He's been shot!

The Survivors frantically check their surroundings. A single TORCH LIGHT appears beyond the TREES.

The FIRE of more torches begin to be lit throughout the forest. The REPRISAL SOLDIERS become completely surrounded.

Slowly, MASKED FIGURES start to emerge from the shadows. They all hold a TORCH.

SOLDIER 1

What is your business here?

THE FIGURES move closer. The soldiers draw their SWORDS.

INT. CARRIAGE - CONTINUOUS

A FRIGHTENED PRISCILLA looks to EDWARDS for reassurance.

PRISCILLA

What's going on out there?

EDWARDS puts up one finger as if to shush her.

SOLDIER 1 (O.S.)

This is your last chance!

EXT: CRONIN PASS - CONTINUOUS

SOLDIER 1 (CONT'D)

Leave or we will be forced to kill every last one of you!

The FIGURES swiftly take out their weapons in unison.

SOLDIER 1 (CONT'D)  
Kill them all, men!

The REPRISAL SOLDIERS attack... SWORDS begin to CLASH.

INT: CARRIAGE - CONTINUOUS

PRISCILLA and EDWARDS hear the sounds of BATTLE from outside.

PRISCILLA  
(frightened)  
Legate, please. What is happening?

EDWARDS hesitates to answer. He continues to listen.

EDWARDS  
I'm not sure. You must not worry.  
The Reprisal has the greatest  
soldiers in all of Fellspeare.  
Whatever it is, my men can handle  
it.

PRISCILLA stares at EDWARDS, seeking reassurance. EDWARDS continues to fixate on the SOUNDS of battle. More SCREAMS start to resonate through the CARRIAGE.

EXT: CRONIN PASS - CONTINUOUS

A QUICK SERIES OF CUTS: REPRISAL SOLDIERS are being slain as the MASKED FIGURES viciously swing their blades... They continue to strike down the SOLDIERS with ease until none remain. There is SILENCE.

INT: CARRIAGE - CONTINUOUS

A frightened PRISCILLA remains sitting down, looking up at EDWARDS.

PRISCILLA  
(whispering)  
Is it over? Are we safe?

EDWARDS nods his head "yes." He slowly walks to the door. He hears nothing outside. He puts his ear to the door to hear outside.

A RAZOR SHARP BLADE pierces through the tiny opening separating the door to the carriage wall. The BLADE pierces through the head of EDWARDS, then pulls out as EDWARDS falls to the floor.

PRISCILLA lets out a SCREAM of terror as she watches EDWARDS fall.

BANGING... The carriage door begins to shake. The hard wood begins to split with each impending blow. PRISCILLA screams as tears flow down her cheek.

The DOOR flies OPEN. PRISCILLA falls silent. Only FOOTSTEPS are heard as one of the MASKED FIGURES slowly enters. PRISCILLA can only look on in fear.

He reaches up and removes his MASK. The man beneath has a rough face with a straggly beard. He has a SCAR going across his right eye. PRISCILLA looks at him, wide-eyed.

The man runs his fingers through his greasy, thinning hair. He gives her a chilling, menacing SMILE.

LANCE SCEPTER  
Hello, Princess.

INT. SHACK - MORNING

A loud BANGING resonates through a HOVEL in the CAPITAL CITY of FELLSPERE: TOWER CITY. A young man (20) with untidy, brown hair rises quickly in his bed. Bags sit under is bloodshot eyes, but he remains alert as the BANGING continues.

The man is ISAAC MALLOWBOURNE, a RECRUIT of the REPRISAL ARMY. He grabs a DAGGER off his bedside table and carefully slips it into his belt before approaching the door. He opens it.

ISAAC  
What do you want?

COMMANDER RAGNAN stands outside. The man (48) has jet black hair and hollow eyes. His very presence makes ISAAC uncomfortable.

RAGNAN  
Is she here?

ISAAC  
No.

ISAAC attempts to shut the door, but RAGNAN stops it.

RAGNAN  
Don't lie to me. I know you all too well.

ISAAC

I'm off duty. I can do as I please  
in my own home.

RAGNAN

You're never off duty, Isaac. Not  
when you're in my presence. Now  
either you let me in, or I let  
myself in.

ISAAC

She was out all night. She needs  
rest.

RAGNAN

As always.

ISAAC

She's only just got into bed.

RAGNAN

(smiling)

Perfect timing then.

RAGNAN attempts to push through, but ISAAC puts a hand to his  
chest. ISAAC grips the hilt of his DAGGER tightly in the back  
of his belt. RAGNAN'S smile disappears.

RAGNAN (CONT'D)

Take your fucking hand off me, boy.

RAGNAN looks upon ISAAC with a furious gaze... ISAAC doesn't  
falter.

A door springs open in the back of the hovel. ISAAC'S MOTHER  
(40), a bedraggled woman wearing a rough-spun tunic, comes  
out to see the commotion.

ARALDINE

Isaac, it's okay.

ISAAC turns his head towards his frail mother. Her voice is  
shallow... BROKEN.

ARALDINE (CONT'D)

It's okay, baby. Let him in.

ISAAC stares down RAGNAN... FURY in his eyes. RAGNAN  
smirks... He knows he's won.

RAGNAN

Listen to your mother.



ISAAC reluctantly takes his hand off the chain-mail chest of his SUPERIOR.

RAGNAN (CONT'D)  
 (whispering)  
 Don't worry, boy. I'll make it quick.

ARALDINE turns and goes back into her room. RAGNAN follows as ISAAC watches... POWERLESS.

ISAAC storms into his room. He puts on a clean shirt, then attaches a QUIVER to his belt. He grabs his BOW and straps it on his back. He then hastily leaves his home, SLAMMING the door behind him.

EXT. TOWER CITY STREET - MORNING

ISAAC walks out of his home and walks through a dingy street. The camera pans out as we see ISAAC disappear in a sea of merchants, beggars and other citizens of the CAPITAL CITY.

CUT TO:

EXT. CASTLE TRAINING GROUND - MORNING

An ARROW plunges into its target... BULLSEYE. ISAAC takes another out of his quiver and lines up the shot. He once again strikes his target.

Another young man walks into the COURTYARD, wearing his REPRISAL CHAINMAIL.

EWEN  
 You never miss, do you?

ISAAC turns back to see his friend and fellow RECRUIT. He then lines up another shot, smiling.

ISAAC  
 For once, I agree with you.

THWACK... another arrow hits the center of its target. EWEN stands alongside ISAAC.

EWEN  
 You're here early again.

ISAAC  
 Yeah.

ISAAC continues to focus on his training.

EWEN

What gives? I thought you hated this place.

ISAAC

Needed to take my mind off things.

EWEN

I can tell. You look like shit.

BREAK.

EWEN (CONT'D)

You sure your ready for today?

ISAAC lines up his final ARROW.

ISAAC

Always.

He FIRES.

CUT TO:

EXT. CASTLE TRAINING GROUND - DAY

The camera flies above the massive CASTLE of TOWER CITY. It scales downwards rapidly... The sounds of swords CLASHING get louder as we approach the TRAINING GROUND. It is now filled with REPRISAL SOLDIERS.

A SERIES OF CUTS: RECRUIT SOLDIERS aggressively duel each other with training swords... LEGATE ARTURIS walks through the crowd, yelling.

ARTURIS

Come on, men! Strike harder! I want to see you bleed!

COMMANDER RAGNAN sits atop a lofted portion of the TRAINING GROUND. He watches as his RECRUITS labor. He then stands up to adress his men.

RAGNAN

At Ease, Men!

The soldiers turn in unison to face their COMMANDER. Nothing is heard but the sound of RAGNAN'S steel boots as he walks down the stairs to the center of the COURTYARD.

RAGNAN (CONT'D)

In all my years as the Commander of this great army, I've never had soldiers as disgraceful as you. Legate Arturis!

ARTURIS

Yes, Sir!

RAGNAN

Tell me, have you ever seen a more pitiful display in your entire life?

ARTURIS

No, Sir!

RAGNAN

And why is that, Legate?

ARTURIS

They aren't true soldiers, sir!

RAGNAN

That is correct, Legate!

RAGNAN paces the COURTYARD, arms behind his back.

RAGNAN (CONT'D)

There are traitors amongst you, men, and I intend to expose them. Let me remind you, any man who I do not deem capable of contributing to our cause is personally betraying King Thranos, himself! And you all know what I do to the traitors of this country, don't you?

Nobody moves except RAGNAN, who continues to pace back and forth. RAGNAN approaches one soldier.

RAGNAN (CONT'D)

(pointing)

You, step forward.

The man obeys. He is STRONGLY built with long, blonde hair. He has a cocky demeanor... a confident smirk appears as he approaches his COMMANDER.

RAGNAN (CONT'D)

Do you believe in your country, soldier?

(MORE)

RAGNAN (CONT'D)  
 Are you worthy of representing the  
 great King Thranos, and defending  
 his title as the true leader of  
 Fellspeare.

FREDERICK  
 Yes Sir!

RAGNAN  
 Let's see it then.

RAGNAN scans the rest of his RECRUITS, until finding his  
 TARGET.

RAGNAN (CONT'D)  
 You, step forward, as well.

ISAAC steps forward.

RAGNAN (CONT'D)  
 Are you ready to prove your worth,  
 boy?

A short BREAK.

ISAAC  
 Yes, sir!

RAGNAN  
 Your sword?

ISAAC unsheathes his sword and hands it to RAGNAN. RAGNAN  
 takes his hand and gently slides it across the smooth blade.

RAGNAN (CONT'D)  
 Ah, what purpose would a dull blade  
 have in battle? Legate Arturis,  
 bring our recruits proper swords.

ARTURIS  
 Right away, sir!

ARTURIS turns away to fetch the sword.

SILENCE. RAGNAN continues to stand in front of ISAAC... He  
 SMILES down at him. ISAAC remains still... Unwavering.

ARTURIS returns with two razor-sharp, steel swords. He smiles  
 as well.

ARTURIS (CONT'D)  
 (to Isaac)  
 Here you are.

ISAAC takes the SWORD. He remains STEADY as ARTURIS goes to give the second one to FREDERICK.

FREDERICK takes the sword and swings it with CONFIDENCE. EWEN, further down the line, looks over at ISAAC... NERVOUS.

RAGNAN

(pacing)

Deception, trickery, or any wrongdoings of the sort will be met with severe consequences. You men have all made a sacred vow to defend our great kingdom. To preserve the name of our King. Now is the time to stay true to your word.

A short BREAK.

RAGNAN (CONT'D)

Soldiers, make room for your two brave brethren!

The other soldiers begin to back up in unison, creating a space in the CENTER of the COURTYARD. Only ISAAC and FREDERICK remain.

RAGNAN (CONT'D)

Now then, let's see which of these men will stay true to their sacred vow!

FREDERICK nonchalantly waves his sword through the air. He fakes LUNGES forward... TOYING with ISAAC.

ISAAC never FLINCHES. He stands READY.

FREDERICK finally CHARGES. Their swords CLASH.

QUICK SERIES OF CUTS: FREDERICK swiftly swings his SWORD... ISAAC PARRYS until he allows FREDERICK to get too close... ISAAC is disarmed, yet impressively escapes the impending fatal blow... EWEN watches intently from the crowd.

EWEN

(To himself)

Come on. Get up.

ISAAC frantically crawls toward his SWORD on the ground. He picks up his SWORD then stands back up. FREDERICK slowly walks toward him... LAUGHING.

FREDERICK  
 (sarcastically)  
 You aren't going to make this too  
 easy for me now, are you?

QUICK SERIES OF CUTS: FREDERICK attacks VIOLENTLY with an overhead STRIKE... ISAAC continues to PARRY each blow... ISAAC pushes the SWORD of FREDERICK to the side, making him UNBALANCED... ISAAC connects with a vicious stab into the shoulder of FREDERICK. He FALLS.

FREDERICK holds the wound, SCREAMING in PAIN. RAGNAN CLAPS his hands together, LAUGHING. He is thoroughly ENTERTAINED.

RAGNAN  
 It appears we have a victor, men!

The group of soldiers simultaneously stomp their boots and chant as an ode to their fallen soldier. RAGNAN kicks FREDERICK with his foot in a disrespectful manner.

RAGNAN (CONT'D)  
 Tell me your name.

FREDERICK  
 (struggling)  
 Frederick... Frederick Ellenson,  
 son of Legate Gerald.

RAGNAN  
 Ah, I see. So not only have you  
 tainted yourself, but also your  
 family name. I'm sure your father  
 will be disappointed to hear of his  
 son's lack of honor.

RAGNAN turns his attention to ISAAC, who continues to point his sword at FREDERICK.

RAGNAN (CONT'D)  
 Tell us all your name, boy.

Short BREAK.

ISAAC  
 Isaac Mallowbourne, sir.

RAGNAN  
 And your house?

ISAAC  
 I am the son of no man. I live to  
 serve King Thranos.

RAGNAN smiles and begins to laugh.

RAGNAN  
 Very good! You've surprised me  
 today, Isaac. The King will be  
 grateful to hear he still has loyal  
 men to protect his great empire.  
 Now, finish the deed.

ISAAC finally glances over at RAGNAN, then looks back at  
 FREDERICK, who is now visibly SCARED.

RAGNAN (CONT'D)  
 Kill him.

The courtyard is silent. FREDERICK begins to cry.

FREDERICK  
 (sobbing)  
 Please... no.

RAGNAN starts to lose his MIND... FURY encapsulates him.

RAGNAN  
 (screaming)  
 Do it now, boy! Kill this  
 whimpering fool!

The SOLDIERS can do nothing but watch. Time seemingly slows  
 down for ISAAC as he stares through the frightened eyes of  
 FREDERICK.

He raises his sword.

FREDERICK  
 No!

ISAAC stabs FREDERICK through his neck. BLOOD begins to erupt  
 outward into a pool under FREDERICK'S body. His eyes are  
 LIFELESS. He lies dead.

ISAAC throws the sword onto the ground, STARING into the  
 Hallow eyes of RAGNAN.

RAGNAN  
 That's all for today, men. Return  
 to your barracks.

RAGNAN walks up the stairs leading to the CASTLE. ARTURIS  
 follows. The RECRUITS begin to exit the TRAINING GROUND in  
 unison. ISAAC doesn't move. He stands in silence over the  
 body of FREDERICK.

CUT TO:

EXT. CRONIN PASS - NIGHT

The dead bodies of REPRISAL soldiers, stripped of their armor, are being carried into the darkness of the forest.

The CARRIAGE door swings open. LANCE SCEPTER slowly walks out, juggling a DAGGER in his hands. Another HOODED figure is standing outside.

LANCE SCEPTER  
She's all yours.

LANCE heads over to his companions. The FIGURE makes its way into the CARRIAGE.

INT. CARRIAGE - MOMENTS LATER

The carriage floor is covered with a mixture of BLOOD and CLUMPS of blonde HAIR. PRISCILLA sits against the wall. Her hands are BOUND. Her head is now completely BALD except for some thin, straggly hairs that remain.

FIGURE  
Wow.

THE HOODED FIGURE removes its dark hood. Underneath is a girl (19) with straight, blonde hair. Her name is MIRANDA HIGHTHORNE. She has remarkably smooth, rosy complexion when compared to her companion, LANCE. Her eyebrows slightly furrow as she looks at the shaking PRISCILLA.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)  
We really do look alike.  
(Short Break)

MIRANDA quickly unsheathes her DAGGER. PRISCILLA flinches. MIRANDA gives her a reassuring smile.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)  
Relax, kid.

MIRANDA leans her forward and cuts the rope binding her hands. PRISCILLA holds her hands together, nervously. She stares at MIRANDA, confused.

PRISCILLA then turns her attention towards the body of EDWARDS. MIRANDA notices.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)  
Yeah, sorry about him. Was he your friend?



PRISCILLA

No.

MIRANDA

My partner, he didn't hurt you at all, right?

PRISCILLA shakes her head "no." MIRANDA nods, but doesn't seem entirely convinced.

PRISCILLA

Whats going on?

MIRANDA crouches in front of PRISCILLA.

MIRANDA

Well, let's just say you won't be returning home for a long time.

PRISCILLA takes a few moments to process the information.

PRISCILLA

So you're saying I don't have to go back to Tower City?

MIRANDA

Uh, yeah. Sorry kid.

The faintest of smiles suddenly appears on PRISCILLA's face. MIRANDA notices. She raises her brow in confusion.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

We also don't plan on killing you, just in case you were wondering about that, too.

PRISCILLA

Thank you.

MIRANDA stands back up.

MIRANDA

Yeah. Now, take off your dress.

PRISCILLA

Why?

MIRANDA

I'm gonna need it.

EXT: CRONIN PASS - MOMENTS LATER

LANCE SCEPTER stands at the edge of the winding road, staring outwards into darkness. ROBERT IRON-FIST (34, athletic build) walks towards him wearing his DISGUISE as a REPRISAL SOLDIER.

ROBERT

We're ready to depart.

LANCE SCEPTER

About time.

ROBERT

Are you sure this kid is going to be worth it?

LANCE SCEPTER

It's not a matter of what I think. It's what Crane thinks. And if Crane wants something, we take it. It's that simple.

ROBERT

Waltzing right into the city with the highest concentration of Reprisal soldiers and parading a fake Princess around is not what I would call simple.

LANCE SCEPTER

We're masters of deception, Robert. The girl's been away for 15 years they won't be able to tell the difference. And Thranos is a fool.

ROBERT

A powerful fool.

LANCE SCEPTER

But a fool, nonetheless. We'll take the boy out from under them before they even know it. Then Crane can do with him as he pleases.

ROBERT sighs, deeply. He looks up at the unwavering eyes of LANCE as he continues to stare forward... FOCUSED.

ROBERT

He better be worth it.

LANCE SCEPTER

He will be.

EXT. CRONIN PASS - NIGHT

The camera flies overhead the winding, dirt road of CRONIN PASS. It continues until finally revealing what lies at the end: the MASSIVE WALLS that encompass TOWER CITY.

EXT. TOWER CITY STREET - CONTINUOUS

The camera flies over the walls and into the city streets. Groups of Guards patrol the streets. It makes its way into the hovel filled residential district.

ISAAC sits atop one of the hovels. His BOW sits next to him. He stares down towards the hovel across from him... the house in which he resides. He sees nothing but a faint candlelight flame, sitting in the window.

ISAAC reaches into his back pocket, pulling out a small TOKEN. It is a silver coin, intricately carved with strange symbols. He holds the coin into the air. The bright Moon shines down on it. Tiny crystals begin to illuminate.

A quiet THUD is heard from across the street. ISAAC immediately puts the coin away... His eyes lock onto his home.

INT. SHACK - CONTINUOUS

A SCREAM is heard within the home. There is another large THUD. The walls SHAKE. The candle falls of the window sill and onto the floor. The flame catches onto a rug.

EXT. TOWER CITY STREET - CONTINUOUS

ISAAC jumps of the roof of the HOVEL, rolling to break his fall. He breaks through the front door, BOW in hand. He sees the rug becoming ENGULFED in flame, yet his attention turns to his MOTHER as she explodes through her bedroom door and into the wall.

ISAAC

Mother!

There is a large gash across her forehead. She looks up desperately at her son. She tries to open her mouth when the irate RAGNAN comes stumbling out behind her.

ISAAC draws his BOW.

His mother uses all her strength to get up and make a dash towards ISAAC. RAGNAN quickly grabs ARALDINE by her hair, YANKING it back towards him.

As ISAAC has an arrow in his QUIVER, RAGNAN rests his DAGGER on the neck of his mother.

RAGNAN begins to laugh.

RAGNAN

You know you can't touch me, boy.

The FLAMES EXPAND. ISAAC's face is illuminated. Sweat pours down his face, but his focus doesn't waver.

RAGNAN (CONT'D)

Now you put down that bow or I  
spill your whore mother's blood  
onto the floor.

ISAAC's grip is tight. He grimaces at the twisted SMILE of RAGNAN... he knows he can't win.

ISAAC drops the BOW.

RAGNAN (CONT'D)

Beautiful, isn't it? The  
unrelenting love between a mother  
her child.

The FLAMES become huge as the walls begin to catch the fire. ISAAC can't help but take a step back, covering his face. RAGNAN takes the knife away, but still has a vice-like grip on her hair.

RAGNAN (CONT'D)

I've exhausted all my time with  
her, anyway. So here, take her.

RAGNAN throws ARALDINE forward. Her arm falls into the FLAME... FIRE flows through the sleeve of her rough-spun tunic and expands throughout her body. She SCREAMS as RAGNAN quickly escapes through the back of the shack.

ISAAC jumps onto the wall and launches himself outward over the FLAME. He grabs his mother and drags her away from the flame, ripping off her burning garment. He then picks her up and runs out of the SHACK as it quickly becomes ENGULFED with FLAMES.

EXT. TOWER CITY STREET - CONTINUOUS

ISAAC carries his injured mother through the alley into the main street. The surrounding neighbors come out of their homes to witness the massive FIRE. REPRISAL SOLDIERS swarm towards the crowd.

ISAAC  
Help! Someone help her!

SOLDIERS run towards ISAAC and attend to his mother.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
(to his mother)  
Mother, are you alright? Can you hear me?

ARALDINE slowly nods her head "yes."

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
I need to go, mother. I promise I'll return. You'll be fine, I promise I won't leave you.

ARALDINE extends her arm. ISAAC holds it, but his fingers slip as he quickly backs away. He looks at his mother one last time before turning away into a full SPRINT.

ISAAC runs back through the alley, then climbs up onto the rooftops when nobody can see him. He runs across the HOVEL's, jumping from roof to roof. He climbs onto the tallest building he could find, then looks outward into the small backstreets.

He sees a figure in the distance... RUNNING.

EXT. BACKSTREETS - CONTINUOUS

RAGNAN stops running. He is winded. He leans back into a wall. A slight smile appears on his face as he begins to chuckle.

EXT. ROOFTOPS - CONTINUOUS

ISSAC sprints across the rooftops... his face encapsulated with ANGER.

EXT. BACKSTREETS - CONTINUOUS

It is QUIET. RAGNAN walks through the streets... not a care in the world. He turns the corner into another alley.

His gleeful smile turns to stone as he sees the moon-lit figure of ISAAC.

ISAAC walks towards with haste towards RAGNAN, DUEL DAGGERS in both hands. RAGNAN nonchalantly takes a PIPE out from his pocket. He lights it, then takes a puff.

RAGNAN

You could have been a fine Soldier one day, Isaac. You've got a lot of fight in you. I can respect that.

ISAAC

Draw your weapon, RAGNAN.

RAGNAN takes another puff.

RAGNAN

You still could be, you know. I can help you. I can take you there.

ISAAC

(furious)

Draw it!

ISAAC closes in on RAGNAN. RAGNAN takes one last puff.

RAGNAN

Very well, then.

RAGNAN drops his pipe on the ground. He draws an elegant steel longsword.

RAGNAN (CONT'D)

You've still got a thing or two to learn.

ISAAC charges. His daggers CLASH with the sword of RAGNAN.

ISAAC aggressively swings his blades towards RAGNAN. RAGNAN effortlessly parries... his left arm behind his back.

In one swift motion, RAGNAN disarms him of his left blade. ISAAC dodges a quick THRUST, then delivers an overhead STRIKE.

RAGNAN barely blocks the impending strike... The two blades connected for a moment.

ISAAC delivers a heavy KNEE into the stomach of RAGNAN. He then grabs him by the neck and slams his face against the wall.

RAGNAN loses the grip on his SWORD. He is DEFENSELESS. ISAAC picks him back up, slamming him to the opposite wall of the alley.

EXT. TOWER CITY STREET - CONTINUOUS

In the main street, two GUARDS here the commotion of a fight in the alley. They run towards the sound.

EXT. BACKSTREETS - CONTINUOUS

ISAAC unleashes a flurry of punches to the face of RAGNAN, then throws him to the ground. ISAAC catches his breath.

ISAAC  
Get up, RAGNAN! Get up!

RAGNAN reaches for his SWORD. The moment his fingers curl around the hilt, ISAAC's dagger plunges into his HAND. RAGNAN screams in PAIN.

ISAAC grabs him from his shirt, throwing him against the wall. RAGNAN's face is badly beaten... Bloody.

RAGNAN struggles to speak.

RAGNAN  
You... you can't kill me, boy.

ISAAC sees the light from a LANTERN start to appear in the distance. GUARDS are coming. ISAAC looks back at the beaten face of RAGNAN.

RAGNAN (CONT'D)  
You can never escape your fate,  
Isaac. Nor can your mother escape  
hers.

BLOOD pours out of RAGNAN's mouth as he lets out a chuckle.

RAGNAN (CONT'D)  
Your mother will always be a whore.  
And you, Isaac. You will always be  
a Reprisal Soldier.

The GUARDS arrive at the alley, but ISAAC pays no notice. He throws RAGNAN to the ground, raises his DAGGER, and stabs him continuously through his chest.

The GUARDS close in on ISAAC. One tackles ISAAC to the ground, while the other tends to RAGNAN.

RAGNAN is motionless.

ISAAC gets one last look at RAGNAN before his head is covered by a black bag.

EXT. TOWER CITY GATE - NIGHT

A HORSE and CARRIAGE slowly teeters towards the massive GATE of TOWER CITY. A GUARD, half-asleep on the gate, perks up at the sound of screech of a broken wheel. He looks down at the CARRIAGE and surrounding SOLDIERS. His eyes open WIDE.

GUARD 1  
Hey, she's here!

Another guard looks down the wall in disbelief.

GUARD 1 (CONT'D)  
The Princess, she's here!

INT. CARRIAGE - MOMENTS LATER

LANCE, ROBERT, and MIRANDA all sit within the carriage. MIRANDA, now wearing the elegant dress of PRINCESS PRISCILLA, exhales deeply as the carriage continues to move forward.

ROBERT  
You don't usually get nervous.

MIRANDA  
I'm not.

LANCE SCEPTER  
Don't tell her she looks nervous.  
That'll actually make her nervous.

MIRANDA  
I'm fine.

MIRANDA rubs her right arm. Tension fills the carriage.

ROBERT  
I'm sorry, Miranda. I was only  
trying to help.

MIRANDA  
It's Priscilla. Call me Priscilla.  
We need to stay in character.

LANCE SCEPTER  
Yeah, Robert. Don't fuck this up!



ROBERT  
Shut your mouth, Lance!

The carriage comes to a sudden HALT. It is silent... the three disguised assassins exchange glances.

MIRANDA  
We can't be there yet, can we?

There's a KNOCK on the carriage door.

LANCE SCEPTER  
Yeah?

The door opens. In walks BALGRAD THE SENTINEL, a large man with a large battle-axe strapped to his back. He is holding a map, and looks flustered.

BALGRAD  
Sirs, Madam, we've reached our destination.

ROBERT  
Already?

BALGRAD  
Yeah. Look alive.

BALGRAD exits the CARRIAGE. The three remain stare at each other in silence.

EXT. TOWER CITY GATE - CONTINUOUS

The guards atop the gate frantically get into motion.

GUARD 1  
Awaken our soldiers! Get our troops to the main gate! The Princess is here!

INT. BELL TOWER - MOMENTS LATER

A soldier runs up the stairs of the bell tower, then makes it RING. The bell RESONATES through the city.

INT. BARRACKS - MOMENTS LATER

REPRISAL SOLDIERS begin to spring out of bed.

COMMANDER  
Move, men! To the main gate!

The SOLDIERS frantically get into their uniforms and pile out into the streets.

EXT. TOWER CITY STREET - MOMENTS LATER

REPRISAL SOLDIERS march through the streets towards the main gate.

INT. CARRIAGE - MOMENTS LATER

The silence within the carriage is broken by the massive SCREECHING of the GATES beginning to open.

The carriage slowly goes back into motion.

MIRANDA

This is it.

ROBERT

We'll be fine. They