

THE FEMPIROR CHRONICLES

THE HUNT FOR THE RAZERS

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. HAUGINSTOWN - NIGHT

SUPER: March 1795

The moon stands high over the quiet little town. A statue of the town founder stands proudly in the center of a grassy square around which sit the town's businesses and houses.

On one side of the square, the WIT'S END BAR still stays open late into the evening. WESLEY FARMER, a man of about 32, walks out of the bar, waving to the guys within. He walks across the square.

Suddenly, he stops, peering off into the darkness. A sound rustles in the darkness beyond the row of buildings. A low hum grows. Wesley's eyes grow wide.

A dozen LEVI-CARTS, vehicles of the FEMPIROR that float about a foot and a half off the ground, rush into the town, knocking Wesley to the ground. WARRIORS leap out of the carts, swords drawn. They are dressed in RED AND BLACK ARMOR.

Other FOOT SOLDIERS run into the town behind the Levi-Carts. Wesley looks around wildly as they break into houses and businesses. Screams issue across the square. Wesley cowers where he is.

The Tepish in charge of this raid walks across the square and stands next to Wesley. Wesley looks up at him.

UNKNOWN TEPISH, a male appearing about 37 with brown hair and wild, blue eyes, looks down at him and smiles. (This Tepish will continue to be called Unknown until his identity is revealed.)

UNKNOWN

Are you scared?

Wesley nods.

UNKNOWN

Good. We will show you courage.

(calling out)

Have you found them?

In the distance, another Tepish responds.

TEPISH

Yes, sir!

UNKNOWN

Bring them before me!

Two Tepish bring out a man and woman and push them along until they drop before Unknown. The man and woman are JONATHON and MRS. TAYLOR. They look up at Unknown. Their eyes grow wide.

JONATHON

Why are you doing this?

UNKNOWN

Because you rejected me.

JONATHON

We didn't!

UNKNOWN

You allowed it!

Unknown draws his sword over them.

All around them, the buildings are being set on fire. Tepish are using NILROF, two-pronged syringes, to inject the SERUM into people. They scream in agony as they collapse to the ground. Others who do not cooperate are simply killed.

UNKNOWN

This town will die for its betrayal.
And now you will pay for your sins.

JONATHON

Please...

UNKNOWN

It's too late for that.

In a flash, Unknown brings his sword down on Jonathon's neck.

INT. RASTEM HEADQUARTERS - ERIM - DAY

DAVID TAYLOR, who now appears to be 22, sits up in bed with a gasp.

DAVID

Father!

Hyperventilating, David looks around. He slowly regains his composure. His eyes still shine a bright blue, and his brown hair remains cropped short. He is dressed in respectful pajamas. A movement stirs in the bed next to him.

YORI, now appearing 31, sits next to him. Her blonde hair falls around her shoulders as she looks at him concerned through her hazel eyes. She, like David, is wearing pajamas.

YORI

Are you okay?

DAVID

Yes, I'm fine. I just-

He lies back down. She cuddles up next to him.

YORI

Was it another nightmare?

DAVID

Yeah. Hauginstown again. My parents. The Tepish. I wonder if they're really ok.

YORI

How old would they be now?

David smiles.

DAVID

In their 80's, I think.

David looks at the ceiling, distantly.

DAVID

It's been a long time.

YORI

I know. When I met you, you were just a young pup.

DAVID

Compared to others, I'm still not that old. I'm only-

He looks at his fingers, as if adding it all up.

DAVID

61. I know that's not old for a Fempiror. I mean, how old are you now, Yori?

Yori feigns shock.

YORI

A lady does NOT discuss her age!

David laughs.

DAVID

Ok, fine. I'll figure it out myself.

YORI

Really?

DAVID

Yeah, I know when you were born.

YORI

Do you?

DAVID

Yes. You are-

David looks at his fingers again.

YORI

Don't hurt yourself now.

David looks at her, amused.

DAVID

137!

YORI

And I don't look a day over 30.

DAVID

That's right.

He grabs her and holds her close to him. She gazes at him, lovingly. She strokes his face.

YORI

But through all my years, the last 23 have been the best.

DAVID

Have they?

YORI

Yeah.

They kiss and roll over in bed.

EXT. ERIM - NIGHT

SUPER: February 1819

Erim remains a shadow of its former glory. Half the shops are closed during the nighttime hours.

The place where once the Council Body Hall resided is now filled with the RASTEM HEADQUARTERS, a relatively unassuming building blending into the rest of the cityscape of modern Erim.

INT. RASTEM HEADQUARTERS - PRIMARY ROOM - NIGHT

The Primary Room of the Rastem Headquarters is a large open area with a meeting table and plenty of chairs along with a communications type area.

The communication area may look somewhat futuristic for an early 19th century person, but it resembles more of a mix-and-match array of wood and metal. Several tubes go up through the ceiling and large, clunky looking switches dominate the board.

Sitting at the console resting his eyes is HAROLD PITTMAN, who appears to be around 32.

David and Yori enter the room, now dressed in their respective RASTEM GARB. David's consists of black shirt and trousers with a dark riding coat which goes down to his knees.

Yori's is similar, but with feminine lines. They both have wrist and ankle gauntlets and their swords rest in scabbards on their backs.

DAVID

Evening, Harold.

Harold opens his eyes and turns to them.

HAROLD

David. Yori. Good evening.

YORI

Any word from Tiberius tonight?

HAROLD

He only just reached the City last night. I figure he'll work on some things, and let us know what he needs of us.

DAVID

Why are we even staying here? We haven't heard anything out of the Tepish in how long?

YORI

Years.

DAVID

Exactly. Years. That city was finished almost 30 years ago and moved out into the ocean in oh-three or so. Why are we staying here still trapped by day and night?

YORI

Because Tiberius believes a presence this far inland is still necessary just in case.

DAVID

But-

YORI

No one is disagreeing with you.

HAROLD

At least we can talk to them without sending messengers back and forth. It's just like being there.

DAVID

Not really.

YORI

Be nice.

A crackle comes over a speaker on the panel. Harold sits up attentively. He adjusts some of the switches. The voice of Tiberius comes over the speaker. It sounds like it has poor reception.

TIBERIUS (V.O.)

Erim. Are you there? Respond please. Harold?

Harold presses a button on his console.

HAROLD

We hear you Tiberius.

TIBERIUS (V.O.)

Good. Are David and Yori there?

HAROLD

Yes, sir.

DAVID

We're here.

YORI

What do you have for us?

TIBERIUS (V.O.)

We need to do our yearly surveillance of the Urufdiam Plateau to ensure that the Tepish are not using it for anything.

DAVID

Is it that time of year already?

YORI

Apparently.

DAVID

I guess it's our turn to go. Even though I've never done it before.

YORI

There's no one else here this year.

DAVID

That's exactly my point-

Yori puts her finger over his mouth.

YORI

Sh!

TIBERIUS (V.O.)

I know it's a long way there and back so you need to leave as soon as possible. I'll contact you the morning after tomorrow for a report.

DAVID

Ok, Tiberius.

HAROLD

Are you happy to be back over there?

TIBERIUS (V.O.)

I am. It's refreshing to not have to worry about the sun.

DAVID

Any word on when we can shut down here and join you?

TIBERIUS (V.O.)

Sorry, David, not yet. Ulrich and some of the others believe keeping a presence over there is still a good idea. It's just useful to have a base further inland than the underwater city allows.

DAVID

Can we talk reassignment?

TIBERIUS (V.O.)

I don't see a problem with that. Find out about Urufdiam, and we'll talk.

YORI

Thank you, Tiberius.

TIBERIUS (V.O.)

Good luck.

Harold flips a couple of switches. Yori looks at David.

YORI

Are you happy?

DAVID

Quite. We might get reassigned.

YORI

What if they just reassign you because you're being difficult, and leave me here.

DAVID

They wouldn't do that.

YORI

Probably not, but what if they did? Would you go?

David looks at her and sighs. He takes her in his arms.

DAVID

No. No, I wouldn't leave you here.

(smiling evilly)

I'd steal you away and take you with me.

Yori pushes him away, laughing.

YORI

Please. Now go get that bucket of bolts you call a Levi-Cart ready so we can get going.

DAVID

Hey! That cart has a lot of sentimental attachment to it. It was Zechariah's, you know.

YORI

And if you replace one more part on it, it'll be almost new anyway. You should get rid of it and ask Tiberius for a new one.

DAVID

Not till it falls apart.

David proudly marches out. Yori shakes her head. Harold leans over to her.

HAROLD

You know, I could get a new one here in a week, and we could switch it out without him knowing.

YORI

Oh, he'd know.

She shakes her head and walks the opposite direction.

YORI

If he asks, I'm getting provisions.

HAROLD

Ok. Have a safe trip.

YORI

We will. We'll contact you when we get there.

HAROLD

I'll be here.

Yori leaves the room.

EXT. ERIM - NIGHT

David and Yori blast out of Erim in Zechariah's old Levi-Cart. It looks very old, or perhaps worn-out, for something so advanced for the day. They fly beyond the city limits into the open fields of the landscape.

EXT. CARPATHIAN MOUNTAINS - NIGHT

Nestled in a valley within the mountain range, the TEPISH FORTRESS is impressive to behold. It looks like a small city cut into the sides of the mountains. On one side is LARGE DOMED STRUCTURE.

INT. TEPISH FORTRESS - HALLWAY - NIGHT

ABRAHAM BARBER, now appearing 22 with his chiseled face, piercing hazel eyes, and long brown hair tied behind his head, walks down the hallway of the fortress.

He is dressed in red and black garb, but not the armor, featuring the image of a bat. Abraham always wears a DAY TRAVEL CLOAK, regardless of the time of day or night.

He walks through a doorway into what appears to be a primitive elevator. It is open on both sides, and beyond the back side of the elevator appears to be a very large, dark room.

He pulls a lever down and the elevator travels down. He turns around to face the room.

IN THE THRONE ROOM

The elevator reaches the floor. Abraham steps out into an enormous room colored in obsidian black and blue. The far end of the room has stairs leading up to a raised platform, upon which sets a throne.

Behind the throne is a large window, beyond which one can see the moon and stars and landscape of the mountainside.

Watching Abraham walk across the floor, VLADIMIR sits upon the throne. He now appears to be 66, and his cruel, slim features have grown colder with age.

To his left stands the Unknown Tepish, now appearing 39 with his wild blue eyes, but his brown hair is now well trimmed.

Abraham walks to the base of the steps and kneels.

ABRAHAM
Greetings, Elrod Malnak.

VLADIMIR

Abraham, my friend. Such formalities are not needed between us. You come with a report on our progress?

ABRAHAM

Yes, my lord Vladimir. We have continued to capture those who wander through these mountains and add them to our stock. We have added another eight Mutations to our hold in the last week.

VLADIMIR

The numbers are few. When do you believe we will be ready at this rate?

ABRAHAM

The problem is not the numbers, for we have plenty.

VLADIMIR

Then why do we not use our force against the humans or even the Rastem?

ABRAHAM

Control, my lord. The Mutations are mindless beasts. No one here can control them, and if we send them out, nothing will stop them from turning against us.

VLADIMIR

They are your creations, what do you recommend?

ABRAHAM

We need someone to control them.

UNKNOWN

I have heard tale of an intelligent Mutation.

ABRAHAM

As have I, but he is far too dangerous.

VLADIMIR

Dangerous? Is this-

UNKNOWN

It is as you suspect. He is rumored to be in these very mountains desiring revenge upon us...

(to Vladimir)

...or rather, you, my lord Elrod Malnak.

VLADIMIR

Could he be of use to us?

UNKNOWN

He is a Mutation. Mutations do not attack each other. He may be able to rally them.

VLADIMIR

Very well. We must bring him here and convince him to help us.

UNKNOWN

Well said, Elrod Malnak.

VLADIMIR

Abraham, use what information we have and take a detachment into the Carpathians to find this Mutation.

ABRAHAM

He will not agree. His hatred for you is ... notorious.

VLADIMIR

We will make him agree. You are dismissed.

ABRAHAM

Thank you, Vladimir.

Abraham turns and leaves the throne room. Unknown leans into Vladimir.

UNKNOWN

Vladimir, I do not think
Abraham's heart is in this task.

VLADIMIR

He has doubted himself for many
years, but his intelligence is
valuable to me and his loyalty
continues to be unwavering.

UNKNOWN

Yes, my lord. For now.

VLADIMIR

Do not concern yourself with
Abraham, my friend. If ever his
usefulness comes to an end, he
will be dealt with.

Unknown smiles.

EXT. URUFDIAM PLATEAU - TWILIGHT

Morning threatens as David and Yori rush to the Plateau.

YORI

It's a good thing we decided to
do this check in winter when the
nights are long enough to make it
all the way.

DAVID

I know. Ever since Cerebdim went
away, we've been without a safe
house between here and Erim.

Yori presses a button on the controls of the Levi-Cart.

YORI

Harold, can you hear me?

HAROLD (V.O.)

I hear you.

YORI

We're approaching Urufdiam now.
We'll contact you tomorrow
evening.

HAROLD (V.O.)

Will do. Have fun.

YORI

(laughing)

Thanks.

They approach a CAVE, which they used back in 1775 to park their Levi-Carts.

DAVID

There's the cave.

YORI

Let's hope that passage is still
behind it.

David steers the Cart into the cave.

INT. URUFDIAM CAVE - TWILIGHT

David pulls the cart into the cave and stops. Yori leaps out and searches along the back wall for the opening.

DAVID

Do you remember where it is?

YORI

I will. Give me a moment.

She feels along the wall carefully.

YORI

Here it is.

She presses a release and the back side of the cave opens up.

YORI

See there?

DAVID

I was a fool to doubt you.

YORI

Yes, you were.

David drives the cart into the hidden backside of the cave.

INT. DARK WEST VEHICLE HOLD - NIGHT

The back of the cave is very dark. It is lit only by light drifting in from the main cave area through its door. David stops the cart in the dim light.

DAVID

I guess the generator is shut down.
That's a good sign.

YORI

Either shut down or whoever is
here just doesn't know about this
area to turn the lights on.

David reaches into the back of the Cart and pulls out a SELF-LIGHTING TORCH - a torch-shaped device with a sliding switch on one side. He pulls the switch downwards opening the top and sparking it, lighting the torch.

The cave is completely empty.

INT. DARK WEST CRYSTAL CAVE - DAY

David and Yori walk through the doorway into the cave lit by the sunlight shining through crystals in the ceiling of the cave. Alone as they are, the cave looks enormous.

YORI

Wow. The last time I was here,
there were Elewo everywhere. I
never realized how big it was.

DAVID

I know.

They walk reverently through the cave to one of the passageways connecting it to the rest of the Plateau.

INT. DARK WEST HALLWAY - DAY

David and Yori walk down the hallway, lit only by the torch carried by David. A low rumble sounds. Yori stops.

YORI

What was that?

DAVID

I heard it too. I don't know if
I want to find out.

Yori draws her sword. They continue onward. As they walk, they pass by smashed open doorways leading into darkened rooms. David looks around.

DAVID

Hey, I think I know where we are.

Yori stops and looks at the doorways. She smiles.

YORI

Oh yes. Right around this corner
and down a bit is where we had
to come rescue you.

David looks at her, his face reading that she really didn't have to bring that up.

DAVID

I guess I asked for that.

YORI

(smiling)

You did.

They walk around the corner and through a pillared entry way to the Gathering Hall.

INT. DARK WEST GATHERING HALL - DAY

They walk to the center of the huge room. The light of the torch does not quite extend to the edges of the room, leaving them in utter darkness. The two look around in wonder at its immensity.

YORI

Wow.

DAVID

I know. Ulrich and his team did an impressive job on the whole place.

YORI

How long did you stay here after we pushed the Tepish out the first time?

DAVID

Due to the situation at the time, Tiberius took me back to Erim almost immediately. I followed him as he relocated over and over as the Tepish routed us. Little by little, he trained me.

YORI

I was here until the Tepish army finally overwhelmed us two years later. We barely got out alive. Goodness, that was 42 years ago.

DAVID

Time flies.

A low rumble issues again from somewhere in the dark.

YORI

There it is again.

David swings the torch around, looking for anything. Several rumbles sound from all around them.

DAVID

I don't think the Tepish are here, but I don't think Urufdiam is unoccupied.

YORI

I agree.

The rumbles grow closer. They begin to materialize into growls.

YORI

We should go.

DAVID

Yes.

They turn to run out the way they came in, but one of the rumbles now has a form. A LARGE, WOLF-LIKE ANIMAL walks out of the hallway into the gathering hall.

It has large eyes and enormous ears, used for finding its way in the dark passages. Its teeth look very sharp, but its body is gaunt, likely explaining why it looks so hungry. This is a CAVE WOLF.

David and Yori back away from it. David draws his sword into his free hand, still retaining a firm grip on the torch. All around them, more Cave Wolves appear both on the second floor and the first from the various recesses. Yori sheathes her sword.

YORI

Give me the light.

David gives it to her.

DAVID

What are we doing?

YORI

I know these tunnels better than you do. I know exactly where we need to go.

DAVID

All right.

YORI

I'll get the doors open as fast as possible. Let's hope they can't open them behind us. You may have to fight them off for a moment.

DAVID

I'll be ready.

David stands ready before the Cave Wolf. The Cave Wolf saunters down, ready to strike.

YORI

Let's get out of here. Now!

David slices the head off of the Cave Wolf blocking their path. Yori runs past it as it falls. David takes off behind her. The Cave Wolves leap onto the floor behind them and give chase.

INT. DARK WEST HALLWAYS - DAY

Yori leads David through the hallways, torch forward. Behind them, the Cave Wolves leap over each other, giving chase through the tight halls, growing ever closer.

Yori expertly speeds through the halls with the torch until she finds what she is looking for. In a hall that stretches on in both directions, she stops and starts feeling of the wall.

YORI

Keep them busy for just a second.

DAVID

I'm ready.

David stands ready. They throng reaches him. They try to bite and maul him, but he blocks them with his sword, killing more than just a few. Some manage to bite him, but he deals with them before any severe damage can be done.

DAVID

Please hurry!

Yori's hand finds a small indentation that gives under her hand.

YORI

Found it!

The wall opens to admit them. They both rush in and struggle to push it shut against the weight of the rushing animals. David stabs at the offenders with his sword.

With yelps and cries, they back away and Yori pushes the door shut.

The Cave Wolves continue pounding against the wall. David and Yori slump against the wall for a moment to rest.

DAVID

I'm glad you remembered that.

YORI

Ulrich showed me how to find it a long time ago. I just had to remember.

David points the door they are sitting against.

DAVID

Do you think it will hold?

YORI

I hope it will.

They get up and run down the hallway opposite them.

INT. DARK WEST CRYSTAL CAVE - DAY

They re-enter the cave where they started, closing a door behind them. They look around, warily.

YORI

There are many ways into this cave and we don't know how many are open. We need to find a place of safety.

DAVID

You packed day-travel cloaks, right?

YORI

Of course.

They walk across the cave to the vehicle hold. As they reach it, a growl issues from behind them. The Cave Wolves are pouring into the cave.

DAVID

Quickly!

INT. DARK WEST VEHICLE HOLD - DAY

David jumps into the cart. Yori pulls open the door to the outside. The light from the sun stops just shy of where the threshold is.

David puts on a DAY-TRAVEL CLOCK, a thick, dark clock with a hood designed to prevent the sun's light from reaching the wearer, and he has another ready for Yori. She puts hers on as she jumps in.

The Cave Wolves have found them.

YORI

Go!

A Cave Wolf leaps onto the back on the cart just as David hits the accelerator. He blasts into the sunlight.

EXT. URUFDIAM PLATEAU - DAY

The Cave Wolf begins making its way to David and Yori, but when the full light of the sun comes on him, he cringes, blinded. Yori delivers a quick kick to him, throwing him from the cart.

He rolls on the ground in a heap. Soon, he limps up and blindly makes his way back to the cave.

In the Levi-Cart, David and Yori travel away from them. David has the sleeves covering his hands as does Yori. One of their hands holds the hood in place to stop it from falling down.

Yori points.

YORI

There's an outcropping.

David turns into the shaded area and stops.

DAVID

Are you ok?

YORI

Yes, you?

DAVID

Yes.

YORI

I would say there are no Tepish
in Urufdiam.

DAVID

I agree.

They look out across the expanse of the plains.

DAVID

Now what?

YORI

Well, I had planned to stay the
day in the caves, but that's not
going to happen. How well do you
know this area?

DAVID

I was born in this area. I haven't
been to Hauginstown in over 30
years, but we can stay the day
there.

YORI

Stay in town?

DAVID

No, we have a couple of other options. There's a cave that was actually used by a Tepish before I was transmuted. It could serve us for a day, and we can even put the Levi-Cart in the cave with us.

YORI

Or?

DAVID

Or we could see if Zechariah's house still stands. It was still there in 1785, but who knows what the last 34 years have done?

YORI

Let's check the house first. I'll take a dusty bed over a cave floor.

DAVID

Agreed.

EXT. OPEN PLAINS - DAY

David and Yori fly over the ground, this time their cloaks are better secured so no sunlight will touch them. David looks out over the plains.

His eyebrows furrow. His expression worries. He turns the cart off its original course. Yori turns to him, surprised.

YORI

What are you doing?

DAVID

Something's wrong.

YORI

What?

DAVID

(pointing ahead)

Look.

Ahead of them, the plains are still wide open except for a lone stone near a grove of trees.

YORI

What am I looking at?

David stops the cart near the stone, which is surrounded by several smaller stones of varying sizes. He gets out, still careful to prevent losing his cloak. He walks to the stone. Yori follows him.

YORI

David, talk to me. What's wrong?

David looks at the stone. Looks all around him. Then at Yori.

DAVID

(cracked voice)

This...was Hauginstown.

YORI

What?

David points to the stone.

Yori studies it more carefully. It is not just a stone at all, but the base of a statue. The plate still affixed reads:

DEDICATED TO GERALD HAUGINS
FIRST MAYOR OF HAUGINSTOWN

The stones around the statue are not stones at all, but pieces of the base and the statue itself. Around the statue, remnants of a road square off the area where the statue is.

A little further off, on the other side of the road, foundations and leftovers of houses and businesses dot what is left of the city.

She looks at David. Tears run down his face.

YORI

Oh, David...

DAVID

It's all gone, Yori. Everything.
Look at this place! How long ago
did it happen? Who did this?

She hugs him. He accepts her embrace.

EXT. ZECHARIAH'S HOUSE - DAY

David drives the cart to just outside a mound that was ZECHARIAH'S HOUSE. Next to the large mound, there is a smaller mound. He stops next to the opening in the big mounds where the door is.

They get out of the Levi-Cart. David searches the smaller mound for something. Finding a lever, the side of the smaller mound opens. He pushes the Levi-Cart in, and they go inside the large mound.

INT. ZECHARIAH'S HOUSE - DAY

Yori flips the covers of a bed throwing dust everywhere. She waves her hand in front of her face, sputtering. She replaces the top cover on the bed and leaves the bedroom.

David sits in a dust covered chair in the great room of Zechariah's home. Everything is covered under a thick layer of dust, but it is lit by the Fempiror Lighting System. He stares off into the distance.

She touches him gently on the shoulder. He doesn't respond.

YORI

You should rest.

DAVID

I'm not tired.

YORI

We've had a long night and a
long day already. We need to
rest so we can head back as
soon as the sun goes down.

DAVID

I'm not going back yet.

YORI

What?

DAVID

I can't let this go, Yori. I must find out what happened to Hauginstown.

YORI

The town may have just died out. It happened to my home town. I went back after 50 years and it was gone. Little towns don't last forever.

DAVID

It didn't just fade away. When I last saw it 34 years ago, it was fine. If the town died, someone would still be here, or some of the buildings would be standing, but there's nothing. It's dead! Someone came in and razed it to the ground. I will find these razers, and-

YORI

And do what? Are you going to take revenge on something that happened who knows how long ago? David, we have a long life ahead of us. To hold such a weight will destroy you ... it would destroy us.

DAVID

I just want to find out what happened.

YORI

No, you said you wanted to find them.

DAVID

It's just- I- Well...I don't know.

YORI

I'm sorry. You're upset. Come to bed. Get some rest. We'll sort it out tomorrow.

She gets up and starts toward the bedroom.

DAVID

Can we at least ask someone in a neighboring town if they know anything? I promise, I'll try to be good.

Yori stops and looks at him, concerned. She sighs.

YORI

Sure. We can do that. We'll just have to contact Harold in Erim and let him know we'll be a day late.

DAVID

Thank you.

She holds her hand out to him.

YORI

Please?

He smiles wearily. He stands and takes her hand, allowing her to lead him into the room. The door closes behind them.

EXT. CARPATHIAN MOUNTAINS - NIGHT

Abraham walks at the head of a detachment of Tepish Warriors, clad in the traditional Red and Black Armor emblazoned with a Bat Insignia. Most of them wear their swords are on their backs, and each has a self-lighting torch on his belt.

They are pulling a reinforced cage on levi-coils behind them. Several TANK TEPISH wear their swords on their belts and have some kind of water tank on their backs. They stop at the top of a small hill leading down into a cave.

Abraham gestures to a nearby Warrior. HARKAM BAUST, who appears to be around 37, runs to him.

ABRAHAM

According to our reports, he is likely in there.

HARKAM

He will not come willingly.

ABRAHAM

No, he won't. Expect the worst. We will need everyone to detain him. No one is to draw a sword against him.

HARKAM

Do you believe he will have protection?

ABRAHAM

I don't know. As I said, expect the worst.

Abraham walks down the hill. Harkam gestures the troops to follow.

HARKAM

Abraham, do you believe this mission will last the night?

ABRAHAM

No, why do you ask?

HARKAM

You wear a Day Travel Cloak.

ABRAHAM

I always do. You never know when you'll find yourself outside as the sun is coming up. It is a personal precaution. We should be back to the Fortress before daybreak.

HARKAM

Yes, sir.

They walk down the hill to the cave opening. Inside the cave, it is pitch black. No sound. No movement. Abraham brings out his torch and lights it. The light of the torch does little to fight the darkness of the cave.

ABRAHAM

Torches out. Be very, very quiet.

He enters the cave. Harkam follows with the troops.

INT. CARPATHIAN CAVE - NIGHT

All torches lit, they creep through the cave. The cave opens up into a very wide cavern. The torches provide considerable light, but no where near enough to light the uttermost corners of the cave.

As they walk through the cavern, something moves on a wall. Abraham jerks his head to see, but nothing is there. Scurrying echoes. One of the warriors is jerked out of the formation with a yelp.

HARKAM

Swords!

Abraham and the troops draw their weapons with their non-torch hand. They stand back to back to back in a circle, waiting. Screams from the taken Warrior echo and then stop.

Silence. Scurrying sounds around them again.

ABRAHAM

Karian! Where are you?

A voice echoes out of the darkness.

KARIAN (O.S.)

What do you want?

ABRAHAM

We want to talk to you.

KARIAN (O.S.)

Why?

ABRAHAM

Show yourself!

Karian laughs. It is a sinister, chilling laugh.

KARIAN (O.S.)

As you wish.

Torches light all around the room. The cavern is immense in size. Surrounding them are at least a hundred Mutations who had been waiting just outside the visible light of the torches. On one wall, Karian sits smiling.

Abraham's mouth drops open along with the other members of his group.

KARIAN

Now, what would you like to talk about?

Abraham recovers with a deep breath.

ABRAHAM

We want you to lead our army of Mutations. We believe you are the only one they would listen to.

KARIAN

And what do I owe the Tepish that I would do this for them? Vladimir took the army and left me to die when the Mutations overran the Fortress in Erim. If there is a debt, it is owed to me.

ABRAHAM

Either you come willingly, or
we will have to take you by
force.

Karian laughs.

KARIAN

By force? How would your meager
army stand against my children?

ABRAHAM

I know your weakness. I will use
it.

KARIAN

Ha! You know nothing.

ABRAHAM

Don't I?

KARIAN

I have nothing more to say to
you. Enjoy your deaths.
(to his Mutations)
Destroy them!

The Mutations around the room charge them. Abraham turns to the
Tank Tepish.

ABRAHAM

Now!

The Tank Tepish take a hose from the side of the tank and press
a button. They spray the onslaught with water.

The Mutations hit stop in their tracks, their skin melting off
their bodies as they scream. Karian's face drops in horror.

The Mutations leap over their falling comrades and keep rushing
the Tepish, but the Tank Tepish continues to fire water,
destroying them. Karian leaps to the ground.

KARIAN

Stop! Get away from them!

The Mutations stop advancing and back away from the warriors. All around the warriors lie dead Mutations, their skin melted away from their bones. Karian walks to them.

KARIAN

What do you want?

ABRAHAM

You will come with us.

Karian looks around at the Tank Tepish.

KARIAN

I could kill you where you stand.

ABRAHAM

And you would not live to see tomorrow. Do you choose to come with us or death?

KARIAN

Leave my children here.

ABRAHAM

We will not take them from this place.

Karian takes a deep breath and lets out an angry sigh.

KARIAN

Then I will come.

Karian turns to the remaining Mutations.

KARIAN

My children, I am going away for awhile. You will need to care for yourselves, but remember to return here to live.

The Mutations show no sign that they understand him. Karian turns to Abraham.

KARIAN

You have won this battle. Let's go.

Abraham leads Karian outside. The troops follow.

EXT. CARPATHIAN MOUNTAINS - NIGHT

Abraham leads Karian up the hill to the waiting cage. Abraham looks at Karian as a warrior runs past them to open the door.

The Tank Tepish walk up behind him. Karian looks at them. He scowls and gets in the cage. The warrior who held the door locks it behind him.

KARIAN

This is humiliating.

Abraham looks at the Tank Tepish.

ABRAHAM

Return to the cave and destroy them.

KARIAN

What?

The Tank Tepish walk back to the cave. Abraham turns to Karian.

ABRAHAM

No guarantee of their safety was made. You call them your children, but I created the serum that made you. The Mutations are an abomination and should be wiped out.

Karian tries to break out of the cage. It holds against his strength. Screams of the Mutations from within the cave ring out.

KARIAN

No! NOOO!

EXT. FRINTON - NIGHT

David and Yori stop the Levi-Cart in a grove of trees just outside of town. They get out of the cart and walk towards the torch lit town.

DAVID

This is the closest town to Hauginstown. I'm hoping that someone was able to escape and come here.

YORI

And what if you can't find anyone who knows something?

DAVID

Then I'll check somewhere else.

YORI

Until when?

DAVID

Let me do this, Yori. Please.

Yori sighs and nods.

YORI

I'm with you.

They pass into the city itself, walking past the closed up stores. The only open places are the WIT'S END BAR and the hotel.

DAVID

(pointing to the bar)

There. We'll find someone there.

YORI

How do you know?

DAVID

Because Hauginstown had a Wit's End Bar in it. It's either the same guy or his sons or something.

YORI

Good.

They enter The Wit's End bar.

INT. THE WIT'S END BAR - NIGHT

David and Yori enter. Everyone turns and stares at them. The WIT'S END BARKEEP, who appears to be about 35, addresses them.

BARKEEP

Good evening. Can I help you?

David walks to the bar.

DAVID

Yes, sir. I was wondering if you knew anything about a little town that was near here: Hauginstown?

The place grows quiet. The Barkeep looks at him with distrust.

BARKEEP

Most people around here don't speak of such things. Why would you?

DAVID

My family was from there. I didn't know anything had happened.

Laughing ensues from all around him. David looks around.

DAVID

I wasn't trying to be funny.

BARKEEP

You tell me that you had family there, and you only just found out about the razing of Hauginstown?

DAVID

I don't understand.

BARKEEP

Whoever you are, you could never
have come from Hauginstown.

DAVID

What?

BARKEEP

Hauginstown was destroyed by
raiders twenty-four years ago.

David's mouth drops.

BARKEEP

You don't even look twenty-four
yourself, so I don't know how
you'd know anything about it.

DAVID

My...um...family was from there.

BARKEEP

And who is your family?

DAVID

The Taylors.

The Barkeep hangs his head in sadness, shaking it.

BARKEEP

Son, if you're related to the
Taylors, I hate to be the bearer
of bad news.

DAVID

No...

BARKEEP

One of the most tragic families
in Hauginstown.

Yori puts her hands on David's shoulders.

BARKEEP

The Taylors were all killed. They were the first ones to go when the attackers came.

David sits there in utter shock.

YORI

Oh, David, I'm sorry.

David gets up and trudges heavily to the door. Yori keeps her arm around him. A table of THREE MEN sits just off of David's path to the door. They appear to be aged 64, 47, and 36. They look at each other. The eldest stands up.

MAN

Excuse me, son. How did you know the Taylors?

DAVID

They were my...

David thinks for a moment.

DAVID

Jonathan's brother was my grandfather.

MAN

Jonathan was a good man. He and his wife had some tragedy, that's for sure.

DAVID

How did you know them?

The man puts out his hand.

JOHN

John Carpenter.

David's face indicates recognition.

DAVID

Good to meet you. I'm David Taylor.

JOHN

David Tay-?

John peers at his face. He looks confused and then shakes it off. David smiles.

DAVID

Are you ok?

JOHN

I'm fine. It's just- I knew a David Taylor in Hauginstown.

DAVID

Did you?

JOHN

He was a good friend of my sister along with-

John looks away, sadly.

JOHN

A spitting image, anyway. I believe you're related to the Taylors. Have a seat.

David and Yori sit at the table with the men.

JOHN

This is my son-in-law, Michael Daily, and my son, Samuel Carpenter.

The two men nod in greeting. MICHAEL is the older and SAMUEL is the younger.

JOHN

Michael, there, married my daughter Elizabeth.

DAVID

(surprised)

Your daughter's name was Elizabeth Carpenter?

JOHN

Until she became Elizabeth Daily, that is. Yup, we have a tradition in my family that the firstborn daughter of the firstborn son of each generation will be called Elizabeth.

SAMUEL

Dad, the tradition is only one generation old.

JOHN

You're number two.

MICHAEL

I got the first one.

JOHN

Second one. My sister was the first one.

MICHAEL

I meant the first name sake.

YORI

Why the name sakes?

JOHN

Well, it's a sad tale.

MICHAEL

Now you've done it.

YORI

Done what?

SAMUEL

He's going to tell the story.

DAVID

Story?

JOHN

You see, many, many years ago
before any of you were born...

David and Yori smile at each other.

JOHN

I had a sister named Elizabeth.
We had rumors of night time
attacks and the other David
Taylor, the one I knew,
disappeared.

YORI

Hm, wonder what happened to him.

JOHN

No one knows, but a few nights
later, his best friends Beth
Carpenter and Abraham Barber
disappeared too. That was the
night the vampire hunter came
to town and killed the evil one.

YORI

Hunter?

DAVID

Later.

JOHN

Course, we never knew what
happened to the hunter, cause
we thought he might be one of
them beasts, too.

SAMUEL

He goes on like that, too. The
point is that in honor of his
sister, the firstborn sons will
hopefully continue to call
their firstborn daughters
Elizabeth. My daughter is also
Elizabeth. She's 7.

JOHN

Now there's more, and this is odd part. My parents swear they saw Beth come back to them 10 years later. I kept telling them it had to be a dream, but they said, "If it was a dream, how did we both dream it?" But it had to be because Beth looked just like she did when she disappeared. Maybe she was an angel. She said she was ok.

DAVID

I hate to interrupt, but what about the attackers?

The three men look at each other.

JOHN

It was a long time ago. I spend my time trying to forget it.

WESLEY (O.S.)

I remember.

Wesley steps from the shadows and stands next to the table.

WESLEY

I remember everything.

JOHN

Good evening, Wesley. Didn't see you there.

(to David and Yori)

This is Wesley Farmer. He's one of us refugees too. Of course, he's aged better than any of us too. How do you do it, Wesley?

David and Yori look at each other briefly, concerned.

WESLEY

Plenty of rest, good food, and good work.

John laughs.

JOHN

Good man.

John pats his back. Wesley grimaces. John, Michael, and Samuel stand.

JOHN

Well, it was nice meeting you.
If you're all talking about the
raid in detail, I'd rather sit
it out. Don't be stranger, David.
Come by and meet the Mrs. before
you leave town, if you're not
staying long.

DAVID

Thank you.

They all wave good-bye. David and Yori look at Wesley.

DAVID

Yes, dear Wesley, tell us your
aging secrets.

Wesley smiles.

WESLEY

Of course, but first, David
Taylor, tell me yours. Grandson
of Jonathan Taylor's brother?
I'm afraid not. I was twelve
when the old mill burned, but
I know your face from my
childhood. You and Beth and
Abraham Barber.

DAVID

When did they take you?

WESLEY

During the raid. Not all of us were killed as John believes. Our attackers wore red and black armor. They came in floating vehicles.

David stands in furious rage.

DAVID

Tepish!

The bar goes quiet, and everyone looks at him.

WESLEY

Perhaps we should go outside.

YORI

Agreed.

EXT. FRINTON - NIGHT

The three settle beside a tree in a grassy knoll. Wesley sits opposite them to talk.

DAVID

Tell us everything.

WESLEY

I was scared to death.

EXT. OPEN TERRAIN - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Wesley is inside a wooden cage with other townspeople which rides on levi-coils pulled behind a train of cages attached to a Levi-Cart. He looks frightened. Around them are other trains of cages full of people, all pulled by Levi-Carts and all moving very fast.

WESLEY (V.O.)

They took over a long distance.
We traveled very fast, but it
took two or three nights. I
thought it would never end.
Until finally...

EXT. CARPATHIAN MOUNTAINS - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

The caravan crosses over a hill to find the Tepish Fortress under construction. The dome is built, but most of the rest are individual buildings with the main complex portion being built.

WESLEY (V.O.)

We arrived at a place in the mountains. They were building it at the time. They're probably finished by now.

INT. TEPISH FORTRESS - TRANSMUTATION ROOMS - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Wesley stands in a line of frightened townspeople. A Tepish stands at the head of the line pointing the people where they needed to go.

WESLEY (V.O.)

Our fate was ahead of us. We were being randomly chosen for something. Two went left for every one that went right.

The two ahead of Wesley go left. Wesley is pointed to the right. Wesley walks down a hallway alone. Off to one side, people sleep unconscious in beds. Wesley looks ahead of him to an open door.

WESLEY (V.O.)

As I walked, I saw people looking like they were in the throes of death. I knew my fate lay behind the door before me.

Wesley walks into the room. A Tepish is drawing blood from another Tepish using a NILROF, a two-pronged syringe. Wesley stops shy of standing before the one with the syringe.

WESLEY (V.O.)

But my fate...

He is pulled before the Tepish with the Nilrof and forced to his knees.

WESLEY (V.O.)

...was the more pleasant of the two.

Wesley is injected. A silent scream washes the screen out to white.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. FRINTON - NIGHT

Wesley stands calmly against a tree with his arms folded before him.

WESLEY

I became like you.

YORI

What happened to the other line?

Wesley shakes his head.

WESLEY

When I found out, I counted my blessings.

INT. TEPISH FORTRESS - MUTATION CHANGE ROOM (FLASHBACK)

A woman is placed before a Tepish drawing blood into a Nilrof from a Mutation who is heavily restrained. The Mutation tries to snap at the Tepish.

WESLEY (V.O.)
Some were changed into those
Mutations.

The woman is injected. A silent scream leads to the row of beds
with the unconscious people.

WESLEY (V.O.)
They were the reason for the beds.
For the 10 day changing time,
and then the 3 day sleep.

DAVID (V.O.)
And the others?

WESLEY (V.O.)
The others...

INT. TEPISH FORTRESS - BLANK ROOM (FLASHBACK)

A man is thrown into a room with bare walls and only one other
person in it. The person stands. It is a Mutation!

WESLEY (V.O.)
...were given to those changed...

The Mutation leaps at the man and bites into his neck. The man
screams in vain.

WESLEY (V.O.)
...as food.

The Mutation hungrily drinks from the man's neck. He stops
struggling as the Mutation looks up, blood dribbling down its
chin.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. FRINTON - NIGHT

Yori looks disgusted. David looks angry. Wesley looks sad.

YORI
That's horrible.

DAVID

I want to know where they are.

YORI

David, we should report in.

DAVID

But I want to know.

YORI

We're not going to pursue this.

DAVID

Wait, how did you get out?

Wesley looks at him.

EXT. TEPISH FORTRESS - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Wesley rests during the construction along with several others.

WESLEY (V.O.)

We were set to work on finishing
the Fortress.

Wesley looks around.

WESLEY (V.O.)

One night, I saw the lead
Tepish not paying attention to
us.

Wesley slips away into the woods.

WESLEY (V.O.)

And I slipped off.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. FRINTON - NIGHT

WESLEY

I went back to Hauginstown, but found it much like you did. I discovered this town was close by, had some people I knew, so I stayed here.

DAVID

How have you been dealing with living with day dwellers?

WESLEY

By not drawing attention to myself.

LATER

Wesley walks through the town with a lantern. David and Yori follow him.

WESLEY

I work as a night watchman every evening. No one has a problem letting me do it, so my sleeping during the day is well justified from their point of view.

YORI

Smart.

DAVID

Could you find the Tepish Fortress again if you had to?

Wesley appears to think for a moment. Yori looks at David.

YORI

We need to call for help if you want to take on this new fortress.

DAVID

We don't even know if he can find it again. What's to report if we can't get there?

WESLEY

I think I can still find it.

YORI

Really? After twenty years?

WESLEY

This experience is forever in my memory. I can find it.

Yori looks at David.

YORI

We need to report in.

DAVID

Nothing to report. We haven't even seen it yet.

YORI

As far as Tiberius is concerned, we are on our way back.

DAVID

I know that. But we were sent to check on the Tepish and even you would agree that we found something.

YORI

Yes, but we have a procedure for taking care of that.

DAVID

This is different!

YORI

I know, which is why we should stick to the original agenda, go back to Erim, and tell Tiberius. Your emotional involvement will do nothing but impair your judgment.

David glares at Yori. His eyes dart around, as if searching for a response to bolster his position. Finally, he nods.

DAVID

You're right. Of course, you're right. Pardon me.

YORI

Of course.

David turns to Wesley.

DAVID

Wesley, would you mind returning with us to Erim to tell our leader where this fortress is?

WESLEY

I won't go with you to this Erim. I recognize you, but I don't know you.

DAVID

Would you have shown us the way to this fortress?

WESLEY

Yes, I would. I wouldn't enter it again, but I would show you the way. But follow you to somewhere else? No, I won't do that.

YORI

David, we can send someone else to speak to him.

WESLEY

They won't find me. I won't talk to anyone else. I only said something to David because I recognized him. I was only twelve when he disappeared, but I never forget a face.

Yori looks at him suspiciously.

YORI

So, you won't tell our superiors about this, nor will you speak with anyone else who comes here. But, you will accompany us to show us this place?

WESLEY

Yes.

Yori turns to David.

YORI

I don't know. This feels odd.

DAVID

Look at what he has been through. Captured by strangers. His life and home were stolen. He has to live a secret life to avoid persecution. He knows the Tepish don't just let people go free. No wonder he would be leery of strangers wanting to know about his experience.

Yori looks very worried about this.

YORI

David-

DAVID

Look, we can follow him to see this fortress, and then contact the nearest city.

(to Wesley)

Which direction is it from here?

Wesley looks around, as if trying to get his bearing on direction.

WESLEY

I know it's east of here in the province of Transylvania in the Carpathian Mountains.

YORI

You were only there once, and you remember all of that?

WESLEY

I overheard it when we were traveling.

DAVID

(to Yori)

That's not too far from the Black Sea city.

YORI

The Black Sea City has a minimal contingency to take in new Fempiror and transport them to the Atlantic City.

DAVID

But we're not looking to fight. Just get a message to Tiberius.

Yori looks at him for a moment, and then nods.

YORI

Very well. We'll check it out. But only if you promise me that you're not going to try and take them all on or some such nonsense. Reconnaissance only.

DAVID

Of course.

YORI

And we inform Erim.

DAVID

Works for me.

(to Wesley)

When shall we leave?

WESLEY

It's a long way. How about as soon
as the sun goes down tomorrow night?

YORI

Very well.

EXT. TEPISH FORTRESS - DAY

The sun shines down on the outside of the fortress. The grounds
are completely vacant.

INT. TEPISH FORTRESS - THRONE ROOM - DAY

Daylight streams through the large window beyond the throne.
Vladimir stands at the window with Unknown.

VLADIMIR

The Mutations may be mindless,
but they have an important
advantage over us.

UNKNOWN

Daylight?

VLADIMIR

This window was treated to block
whatever part of the sun hurts us.
But even so, we remain prisoners.

UNKNOWN

Even after so many years, you
have not accepted your fate?

VLADIMIR

I will never accept it. If I ever find Voivode, I will kill him.

UNKNOWN

Understood.

The Elevator whirs. Vladimir and Unknown turn to it. It reaches the floor and Abraham walks out.

VLADIMIR

Abraham. I hear your mission was a success.

ABRAHAM

Indeed. Most of Karian's Mutations were wiped out, though my troops reported some escaped deeper into the cave. I am on my way to speak with Karian. Do you wish to attend?

Vladimir glances to Unknown for a moment. He smiles.

VLADIMIR

I believe I shall.

INT. TEPISH FORTRESS - HALLWAY - DAY

Abraham leads Vladimir and Unknown through the halls of the fortress. They are accompanied by a Tank Tepish.

ABRAHAM

Some have argued that I should have spared the Mutations under Karian's control to use as tools to bargain with. I disagree as they could not be trusted, and he could easily turn them against us as a single force.

VLADIMIR

Well said. How will you do it?

ABRAHAM

Offer him freedom once the mission is complete.

VLADIMIR

But will you give it?

ABRAHAM

I have sworn to destroy the Mutations as the Rastem would destroy us. When the mission is over, he will die.

Vladimir laughs. He enters a room with Unknown. Abraham and the Tepish walk to the next door and enter.

INT. TEPISH FORTRESS - SIDE ROOM - DAY

Vladimir and Unknown walk up a short stairway in a dark room to some chairs in front of a window. They sit and look out the window.

Through the window is a room below them. Karian has his feet on the wall sitting on them inside a cage. Abraham stands in the room with the Tepish, only the bars separating them and Karian.

ABRAHAM

Karian, I trust your stay has been comfortable.

KARIAN

Dispense with your pleasantries, Abraham. I will not accept your false hospitality.

INT. TEPISH FORTRESS - KARIAN'S HOLDING CELL - DAY

Abraham sits in a chair just outside the reach of the cage.

ABRAHAM

Karian, as you know, we have a large supply of Mutations. They are all mindless, following no order and having no structure.

Karian scoffs.

KARIAN

You deserve such anarchy.

ABRAHAM

You are the only intelligent
Mutation in existence. There are
no others.

KARIAN

The answer is no.

ABRAHAM

Then you will remain a prisoner.

KARIAN

So be it.

ABRAHAM

What we ask of you will give you
your freedom back. When the
mission for us is complete, you
will be released.

KARIAN

Like your promise to spare my
children, I believe this is
an empty offer.

ABRAHAM

I never promised to spare them.
You came of your own volition.

KARIAN

Lies!

Karian leaps to the bars of the cage without touching the floor.
The Tank Tepish jumps back, and raises his hose. Karian
continues hanging with his hands and feet on the bars of the
cage.

KARIAN

Your promise was implied.

ABRAHAM

I implied nothing. You assume too much.

KARIAN

As do you. You think you will entice me by bringing me here and dangling freedom as a reward?

ABRAHAM

Then what of your life?

Abraham signals the Tank Tepish. He comes up to the tank holding the hose. Karian laughs.

KARIAN

Like the projectile weapons of the human world, this "show of power" enhances your cowardice. You can't kill me if you need me. This is an empty threat.

VLADIMIR (O.S.)

Perhaps the threat of torture will change your mind.

Karian looks around wildly.

KARIAN

What is that?

He frowns. His eyes narrow.

KARIAN

I know that voice. Vladimir!

Vladimir laughs.

KARIAN

If every there was one to exemplify the word "traitor" it is you. You betrayed the Rastem. And you betrayed your Elrod Malnak to this!

VLADIMIR (O.S.)

It's all about survival. I am now
the Elrod Malnak, and unlike my
predecessor, I am strong enough
to keep it.

Vladimir laughs again. Karian lunges at the bars. They do not
bend under his strength. He glares at Abraham.

KARIAN

Mark my words, boy. You will bring
that traitor to me, or there will
be no deal!

Abraham's face turns extremely angry. He stands and leaves,
followed by the Tank Tepish.

KARIAN

The next Tepish I want to see is
Vladimir!

Abraham closes the door behind him.

EXT. GROVE OF TREES - NIGHT

Yori sits in the Levi-Cart. She presses the communication
switches. Only static comes over the speaker.

YORI

Harold? Harold, can you hear me?

She flips the switch again.

YORI

Harold?

David enters the grove.

DAVID

What's wrong?

YORI

This worked when we reached Urufdiam.
Now, I'm not getting anything.

DAVID

Are we out of range?

YORI

No, I don't think so. Where's Wesley?

DAVID

He's coming. When we told him where this was last night, he said he knew where we were talking about.

YORI

We should leave soon.

INT. WESLEY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Wesley stands near his front door. His house is a modest dwelling and sparsely furnished. He looks at the door and takes a deep breath. He picks up some paper and a small writing implement from a table. Slips them into his pocket.

A sound emanates from within his house, like a thump or footfall. Wesley whips his head around. Sweat balls up on his forehead.

WESLEY

(to himself)

It's nothing. Nothing. No one is here. I can do this. I can find it again. They will protect me.

With another deep breath, Wesley exits.

EXT. GROVE OF TREES - NIGHT

David sits in the control seat of the Levi-Cart. Yori waits on the passenger side. Wesley enters the grove.

DAVID

Get in.

Wesley gives the Levi-Cart a once over.

WESLEY

Wow, I forgot just how much the Fempiror had done.

Yori gives Wesley an odd look.

DAVID

We can explain as we go. Come on.
There's a long way to go.

Wesley climbs into the back seat of the Cart. David spins the cart around and blasts into the night.

EXT. OPEN COUNTRY - NIGHT

The levi-cart moves across the landscape at an amazing speed. Wesley leans forward in the seat.

WESLEY

So, how long will it take to get there?

YORI

This is an older model of Levi-Cart. Some of the newer ones could get there in a day.

DAVID

Be nice to my Levi-Cart.

YORI

He's attached to this one. To get to Transylvania will take two or three days, I think. It's at least five to the Black Sea City from Erim.

WESLEY

Oh.

Wesley sits back and watches the landscape fly by.

INT. TEPISH FORTRESS - THRONE ROOM - NIGHT

A Tepish Warrior runs across the massive throne room and kneels before Vladimir and Unknown.

WARRIOR

My lord, Elrod Malnak. I only come before you as you ordered.

VLADIMIR

Explain.

WARRIOR

We have heard from our agent in Frinton.

Vladimir and Unknown look at each other, excited.

UNKNOWN

Really?

VLADIMIR

How many are coming?

WARRIOR

Three, my lord.

VLADIMIR

Very good. Prepare the ambush we have planned. Ensure they find their way here.

WARRIOR

Right away.

The warrior runs out. Vladimir turns to Unknown.

VLADIMIR

The time is finally come.

UNKNOWN

I've been waiting a long time...

EXT. TEPISH FORTRESS - NIGHT

Three Levi-Carts shoot out of the fortress. Their design looks far newer than David's Levi-Cart.

EXT. OPEN COUNTRY - NIGHT

Wesley sleeps in the back seat. Yori relaxes. David adjusts the controls as needed. Yori looks to Wesley in the back seat.

YORI

Do you trust him?

DAVID

No. But if he leads no where, we've lost nothing.

YORI

What if it's a trap? What if he is working for them?

DAVID

It's nothing we haven't gotten out of before.

YORI

Maybe so, but ... it concerns me.

DAVID

I know.

David looks off to the horizon. A glimmer of light shows. Sunrise threatens.

DAVID

We need to find a place to rest day.

YORI

Where are we?

DAVID

The Carpathian Basin. No caves for some distance yet. We'll need to hole up in a town somewhere.

YORI

A town? We need a place for this.

She taps the Levi-Cart. David nods.

DAVID

I know.

David scans the horizon. He points.

DAVID

There. A town.

YORI

There are going to be a lot of people there.

DAVID

The bigger the town, the less you're noticed.

YORI

What about the Levi-Cart?

DAVID

I'll take care of it. You watch him.

He steers the Cart toward the town.

EXT. TOWN - TWILIGHT

David walks into town wearing a day-travel cloak. He looks around and sees a hotel. He enters.

INT. HOTEL - TWILIGHT

David walks in and finds a plain lobby with a counter. No one is present.

DAVID

Hello? Is anyone here?

A shuffle sounds from a room beyond the counter. A YOUNG MAN runs up to the counter. He looks at David, wide-eyed.

YOUNG MAN

Who are you?

DAVID

My name is David. I've been traveling all night with two companions, and we need a place to stay for the day.

YOUNG MAN

Why would you travel at night?

DAVID

I didn't come here to answer questions; I came to get a room. Do you have one?

YOUNG MAN

Yes, of course. Forgive me, sir. You said you have three?

DAVID

Yes.

YOUNG MAN

How many beds do you need?

DAVID

Two is enough.

YOUNG MAN

Yes, sir.

The Young Man shuffles off and returns immediately with a key.

YOUNG MAN

Room 7.

DAVID

And which side of the building is the room on?

The Young Man is momentarily confused.

YOUNG MAN

The East side, sir.

DAVID

That is perfect. Thank you.

David turns and leaves. The Young Man follows him to the door. He watches David walks down then street and disappear into the darkness.

EXT. TOWN - TWILIGHT

Yori stands next to the Levi-Cart. Wesley sits inside it. David approaches and holds up the key.

DAVID

We have a room.

YORI

And the cart?

DAVID

I didn't trust this kid enough to ask where I could put my valuable wagon this time.

YORI

We're taking watches on it, aren't we?

DAVID

Four hours each.

WESLEY

You want me to guard it?

DAVID

We've got to sleep sometime, and we could use another shift.

YORI

How do you want to do it?

DAVID

We'll put it behind the hotel.
There's an alley back there that
looks like it has minimal use.
Wesley is first, then you, then
me.

WESLEY

Why would I watch it first?

DAVID

Because it's early, most people
will be concerned with their
routines. Yori and I will have
the shifts most likely to be
stumbled on. That alley is also
next to our room, so if you have
any trouble, you can knock on the
window.

WESLEY

Very well. Which side of the
building is the alleyway on?

DAVID

The East side. So you'll need to
be very careful. The sun will
bear down on you from the
beginning.

WESLEY

I see.

They pull out a large cloth and drape it over the Levi-cart.
David attaches a rope to a small hole in the front of the cart.
He pulls the Cart behind him like it is a wagon.

DAVID

Come on.

They walk into town. David hands the key to Yori.

DAVID

Go to the room and look out
the window. I'll put the Cart
down next to you.

Yori takes the key. She walks to the hotel and enters.

David pulls the Levi-Cart around to the back of the building. Wesley follows. He walks along the building until he sees Yori at the window. He pushes the Cart next to the wall.

He pulls up the cloth enough to turn off the Levi-Coils. The cart sinks to the ground and sits on its short legs. David puts the cloth right.

The sun comes over the horizon. David and Wesley quickly turn their backs to it.

David takes a short stick from a nearby tree and stabs it into the ground. He marks two lines in the dirt. He turns to Wesley.

DAVID

When the shadow reaches this
this first line, knock on the
window. Yori will relieve you.
Understand?

WESLEY

Yes.

DAVID

I'm going to sleep. If you
need anything, knock on the
window.

WESLEY

Understood.

David leaves Wesley alone. Wesley sits beside the Levi-Cart, scooting out of the sun as much as possible.

INT. HOTEL - DAY

David walks through the hotel to Room 7. He knocks. Yori answers and lets him in. They close the door.

INT. ROOM 7 - DAY

David lies on the bed, fully clothed. Yori lies next to him.

YORI

You think he'll be all right?

DAVID

Yes. He'll be fine.

EXT. TOWN - DAY

With his back to the sun, Wesley scribbles out a note on a small piece of paper.

INT. RASTEM HEADQUARTERS - PRIMARY ROOM - DAY

Harold sit at his communication panel. He presses a switch.

HAROLD

Yori, David, can you hear me?
Answer, please. Yori, David
are you there?

A beep sounds on his panel. He presses another switch.

TIBERIUS

(over speaker)

Harold, are you there?

HAROLD

Tiberius, good to hear from you.

TIBERIUS

What is the report from David
and Yori on Urufdiam? I was
expecting to hear something
yesterday.

HAROLD

I haven't heard from them since
they got there two days ago.
They haven't gotten back yet.
I'm concerned.

TIBERIUS

I am as well. It is not like David or Yori to go so long without checking in.

HAROLD

What are we going to do?

TIBERIUS

I'm sending a detachment tonight to Urufdiam to determine what is there. It's a long way from the City, but the new Levi-Carts should get them there by sunrise.

HAROLD

Understood, Tiberius. I'll contact you if I hear anything.

TIBERIUS

Thank you, Harold. Good-bye.

HAROLD

Good-bye.

Harold switches the communication off. He sits silently for a brief moment. He flips the first switch again.

HAROLD

David or Yori, are you out there?
Can you hear me?

INT. ROOM 7 - DAY

Yori and Wesley rest in the room. The window appears to be shadowed. There is a sharp knock on the window. Yori springs out of bed and looks out.

Outside the window, David stands with his sword drawn. She opens the window and looks out.

DAVID

It's time to go!

In the alley stand several men with clubs. Yori runs across the room and awakens Wesley.

YORI

Time to go!

Wesley sits up. As Yori shuffles about the room, he makes a final note on his piece of paper.

EXT. TOWN - DAY

The men approach David.

MAN 1

Give us what we want and we'll
let you go.

DAVID

My wagon and my business are my
own. I don't want to hurt you.

The men laugh.

MAN 1

You hear that? He doesn't want
to hurt me. I'll show you pain.

The man rushes David. David slices with his sword, chopping his club in half. The man freezes, surprised. David grabs the stunned man by the shirt and lifts him off the ground.

He tosses the man into the group of men standing around.

DAVID

Again, I don't want to hurt you.

Yori and Wesley pile out of the window. Yori throws the cover off of the Levi-Cart. Wesley slips the paper out of his pocket and drops it next to the wall.

WESLEY

Won't they say something?

YORI

Who's going to believe them?

Yori leaps into the Levi-Cart. Wesley climbs into the back.

Yori starts the Levi-Cart. It hovers off the ground. The men stagger back with surprise. David backs into the driver seat and leaps in. Day Travel cloaks held tightly in place, they blast into the declining daylight.

The men watch them go for a moment. One of them walks over to the wall and picks up the piece of paper. He reads it and walks away, taking it with him.

EXT. OPEN COUNTRY - NIGHT

Mountains loom in the dark distance under the moonlight. David speeds towards them in the Levi-Cart.

DAVID

There's the Carpathians. We are probably in the Grand Principality of Transylvania.

YORI

Finally.

DAVID

Do you know where to go from here, Wesley?

Wesley looks around. He points.

WESLEY

If you head towards those two peaks, we should find a path up the mountains.

YORI

At this speed, we should get there in about an hour.

David nods and they fly onwards.

About 50 feet above them, two Tepish travel in a newer looking Levi-Cart. One of them looks over the edge of the cart at David and his passengers.

TEPISH 1

When?

TEPISH 2

Let them get a little closer.
We can't have them caught out
in the sunlight without any
place to go.

TEPISH 1

The cave?

Tepish 2 smiles and nods. Tepish 1 smiles as well.

INT. TEPISH FORTRESS - COMMUNICATION ROOM - NIGHT

Unknown walks into a room of large consoles and mismatched wiring. Two Tepish sit at the controls.

UNKNOWN

Well? We were told they were
supposed to be getting close.

COMM TEPISH

We're ready.

UNKNOWN

They will be forced into the
cave?

COMM TEPISH

Yes, sir.

UNKNOWN

We'll see just how skilled David
has become. If he survives the
cave, he may well be worth the
effort. Are they using the Körva?

COMM TEPISH

They are.

Unknown smiles.

UNKNOWN

Excellent choice.

EXT. OPEN COUNTRY - NIGHT

In the Levi-Cart flying above David, Tepish 2 looks at Tepish 1. He nods. Tepish 1 pulls out a KÖRVA: a spherical device with part of the sphere flattened and extended away from the rest of the device by a rod.

TEPISH 1

How's your aim?

TEPISH 2

I never miss.

Tepish 1 dives the Levi-Cart at a hard angle.

David, Yori, and Wesley hear an incoming hum. They all look up to find the Tepish cart bearing down on them.

DAVID

What the-?

The Körva lands on the front of the Levi-Cart and sticks. The extended end is pushed quickly into the spherical body as the Tepish make a very hasty escape.

Before the three can comprehend what just happened, the Körva explodes, taking out the front of the Levi-Cart and throwing the three travelers out onto the ground. What is left of the cart skids to a halt.

David looks up to see the Tepish disappearing into the night. He jumps to his feet.

DAVID

Is everyone all right?

Yori stands. Her legs are shaky.

YORI

I'm well.

DAVID

Wesley? Where are you?

David walks around for a moment before running across Wesley. David kneels beside him. He rolls Wesley to his back. Wesley is breathing heavily. He opens his eyes and looks at David.

DAVID

Are you well?

WESLEY

I think so. It just winded me.
I'll be all right.

DAVID

Good.

David walks to Yori.

DAVID

What was that thing?

YORI

I think it was a Körva. I've never seen one in use. The Tepish use it for destroying equipment or buildings. The flat end sticks to metal.

DAVID

If it's a Tepish device, then we must be getting close. He's as good as his word.

YORI

David, I don't trust him.

DAVID

Me either. To remember where a place is after 20 years when you were taken there the only time in chains? I don't think so.

YORI

You think they were expecting us?

DAVID

I don't think it was coincidence that they found our Levi-Cart in the dark.

Yori nods. They look over to Wesley, who stands up.

INT. TEPISH FORTRESS - THRONE ROOM - NIGHT

Abraham stands before Vladimir.

ABRAHAM

You heard what he said.

VLADIMIR

Of course I did. It is neither my place to do it, nor is it your place to demand it of me.

ABRAHAM

But without him to lead the Mutations, they cannot be controlled. If we release them, they could turn on us.

VLADIMIR

But you don't want to release them, do you?

Abraham only looks at Vladimir.

VLADIMIR

No, you want to destroy them. I know you. When you wiped out Karian's Mutations, you enjoyed it.

ABRAHAM

It was necessary. They were too dangerous to leave alive.

VLADIMIR

Oh, I agree. But you've made the destruction of the Mutation your life mission. It must be killing you to keep so many alive and continue to transmutate into them.

ABRAHAM

We could do better with normal Fempiror.

VLADIMIR

No, we couldn't.

Abraham glares at Vladimir for a moment. He relaxes and nods.

ABRAHAM

Yes, Elrod Malnak.

VLADIMIR

Good. Now, what recourse do we have on our problem?

ABRAHAM

We can release or destroy the Mutations...

VLADIMIR

Unacceptable.

ABRAHAM

...or we can use harsher methods to convince Karian.

VLADIMIR

So be it. I will speak to Karian and use any methods I deem necessary to convince him.

ABRAHAM

Very good, Elrod Malnak.

VLADIMIR

We may have been friends for a long time, Abraham, but you will respect my place, or I will have no further use for you.

Vladimir walks away. Abraham watches him go for a moment, and finally follows.

EXT. BASE OF CARPATHIANS - TWILIGHT

David, Yori, and Wesley walk towards the mountains wearing Day-Travel Cloaks. They carry several items with them from the Levi-Cart. They stop at the mountain's base.

DAVID

We should find shelter. Daybreak will come before we get very far over those mountains.

YORI

Maybe there is an outcropping or something we can hide in until tonight.

WESLEY

Look.

Wesley points to a cave off to one side. David and Yori look at each other.

YORI

I don't see that we have much of a choice.

DAVID

I agree.

They all walk towards the cave in the side of the mountain.

The sun threatens on the horizon. They enter the cave.

Hiding behind a rock and watching them are the two Tepish who destroyed the Levi-Cart. They wear Day Travel Cloaks. Tepish 2 holds another Körva. He creeps towards the cave.

INT. CARPATHIAN CAVE - TWILIGHT

David, Yori and Wesley move a short distance inside the cave. David pulls a self-lighting torch from the Levi-Cart equipment he is carrying. He lights it.

DAVID

This cave goes back quite a distance.

WESLEY

I heard it's supposed to go all the way through.

YORI

I'm not comfortable going blindly through a cave.

David smiles.

DAVID

Had trouble with caves before?

YORI

A little.

DAVID

Not afraid of getting lost, are you?

YORI

I never get lost. It's getting found that worries me.

EXT. CARPATHIAN CAVE - TWILIGHT

The Tepish gets close to the cave. He throws the Körva which lands squarely on the roof of the entrance. It explodes causing the cave entrance to collapse.

INT. CARPATHIAN CAVE - TWILIGHT

David, Yori, and Wesley dive away from the explosion and collapse. The torch hits the floor and rolls against a wall. The fire goes out.

Darkness.

A self-lighting torch comes on. It is Yori's. She looks at the entrance.

YORI

Well, I didn't want to go through the mountain.

David retrieves his fallen torch.

DAVID

I don't suppose we have a choice now. I wonder why they let us live through the Levi-Cart destruction only to trap us in here.

YORI

I don't know.

She looks at Wesley. He cringes.

WESLEY

What?

She gets in his face.

YORI

Would you like to tell me what's going on?

WESLEY

How would I know?

YORI

Don't play games with me!

WESLEY

I don't know what you're talking about. I'm trying to help.

YORI

Really? After 20 years, you can find this place? You just happen to know that this cave goes through? The Tepish just happen to find us in the middle of nowhere during the night? I don't believe you.

WESLEY

I'm just as trapped as you are.

DAVID

He's right. Whatever he is guilty of, we're stuck in here and have to pray that there is a way out wherever this goes.

David and Yori start walking into the cave.

WESLEY

Just a minute! I offered to leave my current life behind to help you find this place. I haven't done anything to you to show that I am helping these Tepish. It is completely unjust to accuse me of this.

DAVID

How do you care to explain what has happened?

WESLEY

How should I know? I was captured, escaped, and lived in a human town for the last 20 years. You two know how these people operate. If anyone should be able to explain away my involvement, you should.

YORI

But I can't. There's the problem.

WESLEY

But it's your problem. You are making it into mine.

Yori opens her mouth, but says nothing. She shakes her head.

YORI

You're right, Wesley. I have no proof. Forgive me.

WESLEY

Of course. We are in this together. I have a good memory for places. That's what got me here.

Yori nods.

YORI

Let's go.

Wesley pulls out his own self-lighting torch. Lights it.

WESLEY

I'm ready.

David leads as they travel into the depths of the cave passing into a large expansive cavern. Little pathways lead through the middle, dropping off into nothingness on their sides.

DAVID

Stay close. This could be a long trip.

They become little pinpricks of lights in the engulfing darkness of the underground.

INT. TEPISH FORTRESS - KARIAN'S CELL - DAY

Karian waits patiently, sitting on the wall of his prison chamber. Bars still keep him away from the entrance.

The door opens. He looks up. Vladimir enters. On his belt is a small tank and hose. Karian leaps from the wall to the bars.

KARIAN

Traitor!

VLADIMIR

Nonsense. You could fight. You chose not to.

KARIAN

It was your responsibility-

VLADIMIR

You chose a sniveling Cortz Sufu who was not worth the skin he was given. Your change is on your head.

KARIAN

I will not agree to your mission.

VLADIMIR

Oh, I think you will.

KARIAN

You can't kill me.

VLADIMIR

I'm not going to.

KARIAN

You would trust me with a battalion of Mutations?

VLADIMIR

No. You control the Mutations. I control you.

KARIAN

You can't control me. You won't even face me.

Vladimir walks over to the prison door and unlocks it.

VLADIMIR

Now. What will you do?

Karian looks at the unlocked door. He looks at Vladimir and smiles.

KARIAN

I am no fool.

VLADIMIR

Nor did I accuse you of being one.
You will lead my Mutations.

KARIAN

Or what?

VLADIMIR

Or I torture you.

KARIAN

You need me intact.

VLADIMIR

You can feel pain.

Vladimir reaches to his small tank. He pumps a handle on its top. He produces the hose. There is a small switch on its top. Karian looks at it and sneers.

KARIAN

You are a coward.

VLADIMIR

And you'd best find something to
dry with.

Vladimir shoots water at Karian's arm. Karian moves out of its way. Vladimir fires again, but this time, he lets out a stream and moves across the width of cell.

Karian is swiped across mid-chest with the water. He screams in agony and falls to his knees.

He glares at Vladimir. He leaps through the door of his cell, slamming it open. Vladimir calmly fires again swiping across the room.

Karian takes another hit. He goes down. Blood seeps through his clothing. Vladimir steps back.

VLADIMIR

Interesting weakness you Mutations have.

KARIAN

Damn you, Vladimir.

VLADIMIR

We are already damned. If you refuse to agree, then we will have this conversation over and over and over until you do agree. Am I being clear?

Karian spits in Vladimir's face. Vladimir kicks Karian in the face, flipping Karian to his back. He writhes in pain.

VLADIMIR

Get back in your cage.

Karian doesn't get up. Vladimir sprays his arm. Karian screams in pain. The skin melts off onto the ground. Blood flows from the wound.

VLADIMIR

We can do this all day.

Karian rolls to his feet. Shuffles into the cage. Vladimir locks the door behind him.

VLADIMIR

We'll speak soon. I'm sure you'll make the right decision.

Vladimir exits.

INT. CARPATHIAN CAVE - DAY

The three pinpricks of light cross into a tunnel and then the cave opens into another large cavern. The path does not drop off, but opens onto a large irregular floor.

WESLEY

Do you think this just goes straight through?

DAVID

You seem to know about it. You
tell-

David stops with a gasp.

YORI

What is it?

David shushes her. She looks over his shoulder. Her eyes grow wide. Directly in their path is a Cave Wolf. The species is similar to the variety they encountered in Urufdiam.

David swings his torch around. Yori does the same.

WESLEY

What is-

Yori shushes him. All around them are sleeping Cave Wolves ... hundreds of them!

WESLEY

(whispers)

What do we do?

DAVID

Yori, which way?

YORI

This way.

Yori leads them through a narrow path between the sleeping wolves. They step lightly.

The snoring of the wolves echoes all around them. They reach the wall.

Yori looks around. She points to the left.

YORI

Come on.

WESLEY

How do you know?

DAVID

Just follow her.

Wesley nods. They weave among the sleeping wolves.

After a short walk, the light glints off the walls revealing an opening ahead of them.

YORI

There!

Yori leads them to the opening. Yori and David both conspicuously step over the outstretched foot of a sleeping wolf. Wesley trips over it.

He lands on the back of another wolf. Both wolves awaken. Wesley jumps to his feet and catches up to David and Yori.

YORI

Let's go!

The wolves roar in anger. The roars quickly awaken the hoard around them. Yori leads David and Wesley into the tunnel. The wolves give chase.

DAVID

Wesley, get in front of me!

David drops back behind Wesley. He draws his sword, occasionally glancing back.

Yori stares ahead of her. Suddenly, she stops.

YORI

Stop!

David and Wesley screech to a halt. Before Yori is a wide gaping chasm.

DAVID

To one side.

The trio sidles along a wall of the chasm on a narrow walkway. The wolves charge behind them. Several fly over the edge of the chasm wailing to their deaths below.

The wolf charge halts. They look around. See the torch light. Howl. Make their way slowly behind the trio single file.

The light glints off a narrow bridge.

YORI

There! I hope it goes all the way across.

DAVID

Me too. They're gaining.

Behind them, the wolves close the space between them and the trio.

The trio reaches the open platform of the rock bridge. The sides drop revealing it to be not a bridge inasmuch as a wall with a walkable top.

They charge across. The bridge is not solid all the way over. There are uneven gaps and drop offs.

The wolves charge after them, still single file. Some miss the unevenness of the bridge and fall to their dooms.

The leading wolves reach David. He draws his sword and slashes at them. The leaders fall and the others drop back for a moment.

The trio reaches the far side leading into another tunnel.

YORI

So far, so good.

WESLEY

We should keep going.

The trio charges into the tunnel. The wolves reach the tunnel and take off after them.

YORI

I sure hope this goes somewhere.

DAVID

You're supposed to be the great tracker. What do you mean, you hope it goes somewhere?

YORI

I'll get us out. I just hope
this leads to a path I can follow!

The tunnel turns.

A very dim light beckons ahead of them.

YORI

Look!

The tunnel opens into another large cavern. The light on the far side illuminates several sleeping forms. Yori stops again, almost losing her balance.

YORI

Stop!

Too late. Wesley barrels into her, knocking her to the floor. David trips over both of them. When they look up, they stare into the face of a Mutation.

Slowly the Mutations awaken. The trio climbs to their feet.

DAVID

This is bad. Real bad.

YORI

Yes.

The Mutation closest to them prepares to jump. The trio leaps to one side as the throng of Cave Wolves leap into the Mutations.

Chaos ensues as the Mutations try to fend off the Cave Wolves.

DAVID

Let's go.

David and Yori draw their swords. They make their way through the Mutations to the far side of the room away from the incoming wolves.

Mutations spot them and try to attack, but they are stopped by David and Yori.

YORI

Those lights are near another tunnel.

DAVID

Then that's where we're going.

They fight to the far side tunnel. Behind them, many Mutations are climbing the walls to escape the onslaught on the wolves.

The trio escapes through the tunnel. They run through this tunnel which opens into another large hall. As they run through, they notice something on the floor.

YORI

David, look.

David stops and looks where Yori is pointing. The Mutations that were killed by Abraham's Tank Tepish several days ago lie on the floor.

DAVID

They're dead.

WESLEY

What is it?

DAVID

This is what happens to Mutations when they get wet. This wouldn't have happen accidentally. Someone came in here and killed them.

YORI

So the Mutations back there likely escaped from whatever got them in here.

DAVID

I would say yes.

They look behind them. Nothing follows.

DAVID

I think we're safe for now. Let's see where this leads.

The trio follows the tunnel out of the chamber. Light shows ahead of them.

They stop at the threshold of light. The sun is outside.

DAVID

Well, it looks like you're right, Wesley. This cave did come all the way through.

WESLEY

What about those things that were following us?

DAVID

We can stay in that chamber until nightfall. If we keep the torches off, we should stay undiscovered.

WESLEY

What if we're discovered?

YORI

Then we fight. There's daylight this way. If we're found now, we have no where to go.

EXT. CARPATHIAN MOUNTAINS - NIGHT

The trio exits the cave and walks across the mountainous landscape under the moonlight.

Elsewhere on the mountains, two Tepish stand beside a modern Levi-Cart, watching the mountains. They appear very bored.

TEPISH GUARD 1

Why are we here?

TEPISH GUARD 2

To watch for incoming Fempiror.

TEPISH GUARD 1

In all the years I've been here, we've never had incoming Fempiror.

TEPISH GUARD 2

The Cortz Sufru seems to think
we'll run into some.

TEPISH GUARD 1

Sure. Be careful, he says. Don't
underestimate them, he says.
This is ridiculous.

TEPISH GUARD 2

I agree. I'd sleep, but I'm not
even tired.

Suddenly, their faces register shock. They look at each others' guts and see each has a sword poking out. They look at themselves and find the same thing. The swords are withdrawn. The Tepish drop to the ground.

David and Yori sheath their swords.

YORI

I think they underestimated us.

DAVID

I agree.

WESLEY

The Fortress should be just over-

YORI

This is what we need.

Yori jumps into the Levi-Cart. She looks over the controls.

YORI

This is a newer altitude Levi-Cart.
High speed. It should take us to
the Black Sea city in a matter of
hours.

DAVID

I'd rather reconnoiter the fortress.

Yori looks up. Just over the next rise, the dome of the Tepish Fortress is visible.

YORI

David, it would be safer to go for help rather than try to engage them alone.

DAVID

I'm not going to engage them. I'm going to check out the city. I'll wait for you to return with back up.

YORI

What if you're captured?

DAVID

Then I'll wait inside.

Yori gets out of the Levi-Cart. Wesley stands back.

YORI

We agreed.

DAVID

And I haven't broken that agreement.

YORI

Don't play word games with me. You won't get your revenge this way.

DAVID

I want to know what their plans are.

YORI

And I know what you're going to do to find out. This is not wise.

DAVID

I've never been known for my wisdom, but I have to do this.

Yori embraces him. He holds her.

YORI

I don't want to let you.

DAVID

I have to.

YORI

I know.

DAVID

Please understand.

YORI

I can't. But I also can. Please
be careful. I don't want to lose
you.

DAVID

I don't want to lose me either.
Hurry back.

Yori nods. She gets back in the Levi-Cart. She glares at Wesley.

YORI

What you're going to do, do
quickly.

David stands next to the cart. They kiss.

DAVID

I love you.

YORI

And I love you. Prove it to me
by coming back alive.

DAVID

I will.

Yori lifts off. She hits the accelerator and blasts across the
mountain landscape at an unreal speed.

David watches her go for a moment. He doesn't turn to Wesley.

DAVID

Why me?

WESLEY

The Elrod Malnak will explain when we arrive. Give me your sword.

DAVID

Try to take it, and I will kill you.

Wesley withdraws his hand. He looks at David.

DAVID

I go willingly. Just take me to him.

WESLEY

Then let's go.

Wesley walks behind David as they head across the mountains to the Tepish Fortress.

EXT. TEPISH FORTRESS - NIGHT

Wesley and David approach the fortress. Several Tepish warriors run to meet them. Wesley holds up his hand to them.

WESLEY

He is my prisoner and under control. Do not lay a hand on him. Inform the Elrod Malnak that we have David Taylor. His companion left.

One Tepish runs back to the fortress ahead of them. The remainder walk with them, but do not touch David, who continues to walk with his head held high.

They enter the fortress.

INT. TEPISH FORTRESS - THRONE ROOM - NIGHT

Vladimir sits upon his throne, waiting. Abraham walks across the floor and kneels before him.

ABRAHAM

You sent for me, Vladimir?

VLADIMIR

Yes, my friend. This is a momentous occasion. Here, stand by me.

ABRAHAM

Where is your Cortz Sufru?

VLADIMIR

He is here, but awaiting his time to enter.

Abraham ascends the stairs and stands beside Vladimir.

The elevator ascends and then descends. David walks across the floor, followed by Wesley. Abraham's eyes grow wide. Vladimir smiles.

Wesley and David reach the stairs. Wesley kneels.

WESLEY

My lord Elrod Malnak. For many years I have awaited the coming of David Taylor to Frinton. I brought him as quickly as I could.

VLADIMIR

You have done well, Wesley Farmer.

WESLEY

Thank you, my lord.

VLADIMIR

However, I understand that David's companion escaped you.

WESLEY

I dared not prevent it, my lord. She desired to leave.

VLADIMIR

Yet our location revealed to her. Was it not?

WESLEY

Yes, my lord.

VLADIMIR

Then you have succeeded while violating our laws of secrecy.

WESLEY

Forgive me! I have only lived to serve.

VLADIMIR

Then you should have brought her with you or killed her.

WESLEY

Then I could not have brought him.

VLADIMIR

He could have come the remainder of the way without your assistance. You did not capture him. He retains his sword. He came willingly.

WESLEY

Have mercy, my lord!

VLADIMIR

Guards!

Two Tepish emerge from the shadows of the room.

VLADIMIR

We shall give you to the Mutations later. They are hungry. It would make for a nice diversion.

Wesley tries to run. The Tepish grab him.

WESLEY

No, my lord! No! Please! Spare me!

VLADIMIR

You made your choices. You failed.

WESLEY

No!

He is removed from the chamber. Vladimir turns to David.

DAVID

Far be it from me to do your bidding.

VLADIMIR

I see you still refuse to bow to the lord of the Tepish.

DAVID

You are no lord to me.

VLADIMIR

So you saw our work on Hauginstown.

DAVID

And you will suffer for what you've done.

VLADIMIR

What I've done? I did nothing.

DAVID

The Tepish did not raze Hauginstown?

VLADIMIR

Oh, the Tepish did, yes. But it was the plan of another.

DAVID

I see Abraham Barber is still your humble servant.

(to Abraham)

Tell me, Abraham. Did you betray your friends and family to this trash?

ABRAHAM

I assure you I did not. I had no knowledge of what happened until it was over.

VLADIMIR

Abraham has proven too spineless for such a matter.

Abraham turns his head in frustration.

VLADIMIR

No, it was another. It was the plan of my Cortz Sufu. It was also his desire to bring you before me so that he could thank you personally for what you did to him.

DAVID

What I did?

VLADIMIR

Yes. I believe you'll find this very interesting. As much as I did when I first heard his tale.

Vladimir turns to one end of his throne platform.

VLADIMIR

I believe you've met him before?

From the darkness on the far side of the throne platform, Unknown strides down the steps and into the light. David looks at him carefully. His eyes grow wide. His mouth drops open. Shock registers on his face.

DAVID

Mark?

MARK TAYLOR stands next to his brother, smiling.

MARK

Yes, David. Your little stunt thirty four years ago made quite an impression on me.

DAVID

I don't understand. We didn't do anything to you. We didn't even acknowledge you.

MARK

No, but I recognized you. You and your late love, Beth Carpenter.

DAVID

But you were fine.

MARK

I didn't get changed then, David.
But it made an impression on me.
I never forgot that I saw you.
Of course, I told everyone about
you, but no one believed me. Why
would they? You were dead. I had
thought I'd seen someone else and
was mistaken, but when I heard
about Beth's parents saying she
had come to them in a dream, I
began to think maybe you were real,
as impossible as it was.

EXT. HAUGINSTOWN - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Mark walks through the town as the night watchman.

MARK (V.O.)

I took the watchman position every
opportunity I got just to see if
I would see you again.

Mark stops as movement catches his attention. Trees rustle in
the dark. He creeps up on it.

MARK (V.O.)

Until my reward for seeing you came
six years later in 1791.

As Mark looks, a Tepish leaps out of the tress, knocking Mark to
the ground.

MARK (V.O.)

His strength was more than anything
I had ever known.

Mark struggles against the Tepish, but the Tepish easily holds
him still. He stares at the Tepish in fear.

TEPISH

You'll be a good little addition.

He pulls out a Nilrof. Withdraws blood from his arm. Holds it before him.

MARK (V.O.)

I was easy prey.

The Tepish smiles.

TEPISH

Welcome to the family.

He stabs the Nilrof into Mark's neck, emptying it. He withdraws the empty Nilrof. Mark hyperventilates ... and then screams.

END FLASHBACK

INT. TEPISH FORTRESS - THRONE ROOM - NIGHT

DAVID

But why betray your family to them? Do you know what Hauginstown looks like now?

MARK

Of course I know! I led the attack!

David's mouth drops open in surprise.

EXT. HAUGINSTOWN - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Mark stumbles to the Taylor House.

MARK (V.O.)

The Tepish always allow their prey to return home.

He enters.

INT. TAYLOR HOUSE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

He sits at the kitchen table as Mrs. Taylor gets him something to drink. Jonathon Taylor looks at him. Upon touching Mark's skin, Jonathon shrinks back.

MARK (V.O.)

They send us home to be rejected.

Jonathon looks at his wife.

INT. TAYLOR HOUSE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Mark walks to the front door. He steps outside. As the sun hits him, he leaps back inside in pain. His skin is reddened. Jonathon looks at his son. He stands and walks outside.

MARK (V.O.)

Consider yourself lucky to be removed by the Rastem and not allowed to experience what I did.

Mark watches him go. Jonathon casts back a frightened glance.

EXT. TAYLOR HOUSE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

A mob stands outside the house with torches. Jonathon looks at Mark sadly. Several of the mob raid the house and drag him outside. The door closes behind him.

MARK (V.O.)

Not allowed to experience the betrayal of your own family.

The crowd jostles Mark. They drag him to the center of the square where a stake awaits. Mark overpowers those holding him.

The mob tries to fight him, but Mark pummels anyone in his way. He runs out of town as fast as possible. The mob chases him for a short while. They stop on the edge of town, letting him go.

END FLASHBACK

INT. TEPISH FORTRESS - THRONE ROOM - NIGHT

MARK

Four years later, I had my revenge. I led the raid on Hauginstown. I killed some and transmuted many.

DAVID

What about our family?

MARK

They died ... by my own hand.

David drops his head, eyes closed. He looks back to Mark, tears and hate in his eyes. He looks over to Abraham.

DAVID

What about his?

(to Abraham)

Abraham, what did they do to your family?

ABRAHAM

I don't want to talk about it.

DAVID

No! This is your big chance.

We're on the subject. There is no better time to talk about it!

Abraham descends the steps and stands before David. He hits David, knocking him to the ground.

ABRAHAM

You want to know? I didn't find out about this until they were already here and transmuted.

DAVID

Fempiror?

ABRAHAM

Mutations!

Abraham fights back tears.

ABRAHAM

Why can't you do what you're supposed to? Your own Rastem code forbids you to return home!

DAVID

What happened to them?

Abraham turns his back on David. He closes his eyes. Tears roll down his face.

ABRAHAM

I did the most humane thing I could do.

He turns to David.

ABRAHAM

I killed them.

Abraham lowers his eyes and looks away.

ABRAHAM

I brought them into an isolated chamber, shut the door, and flooded it with water.

DAVID

My condolences to you.

ABRAHAM

You have no idea what you're talking about.

Abraham turns to Vladimir.

ABRAHAM

Good evening, Elrod Malnak. I take my leave of you.

VLADIMIR

Very well.

Abraham leaves. Mark looks to Vladimir.

MARK

With your permission, my lord, I wish to dispose of David, personally.

VLADIMIR

As so you shall. But not this night. We have other business to attend to. Take his sword and detain him.

MARK

Yes, my lord.

Mark takes David's sword. David allows himself to be led away by two Tepish guards. Vladimir descends the platform to stand by Mark.

VLADIMIR

You finally have your wish. Where do you wish to kill him?

MARK

I wish for some good sport. Let us take him to the training area. I will return his sword to him. We fight to the death. It will be fitting.

VLADIMIR

Excellent! I haven't seen such sport in a long time. He has been a Fempiror longer, though.

MARK

But I'm sure I have worked harder. The Rastem are at peace. I train without ceasing.

VLADIMIR

You will best him.

EXT. OTTOMAN EMPIRE - EYALET OF SILISTRIA - NIGHT

Yori steers the Levi-Cart out of the sky towards the Black Sea. She flies along the coast, staring intently at the coastline.

She passes something sticking out of the water. She steers the Levi-Cart around and stops next to it. She presses a switch on it.

YORI

This is Yori of Erim working under
Tiberius. I have an emergency.

COMMUNICATOR (V.O.)

Confirmed, Yori. You may enter.

A large tube emerges out of the water. Yori steers the Levi-Cart into the tube. It closes behind her and descends back into the water.

INT. TEPISH FORTRESS - NIGHT

Vladimir and Mark walk into a MUTATION OVERLOOK CHAMBER with a striped glass bubble overlooking the floor of the Mutation chamber, which takes up most of the domed area.

IN THE MUTATION CHAMBER

All around the wall of the dome are other similar striped glass bubbles behind which Tepish stand to watch.

The Mutations scramble along the floor and the walls and the ceiling.

IN THE MUTATION OVERLOOK

VLADIMIR

I enjoy this, my friend. It's
very Roman.

MARK

He has been given a sword, then?

VLADIMIR

Let it not be said we are
completely unfair in our ways.

A Mutation scrambles up the wall and clings to the outside of the glass. It bares its teeth. Mark touches a button on the wall. The stripes spark, throwing the Mutation off. It falls to the floor.

IN THE MUTATION CHAMBER

Several Mutations see it fall. They scramble over to the dead Mutation and begin biting it.

IN THE MUTATION OVERLOOK

Vladimir grimaces and turns his head upwards.

VLADIMIR

Disgusting creatures. But
perfection has its price.

IN THE MUTATION CHAMBER

Overhead, a tube lowers. Within, Wesley looks around at the Mutations. Some of the Mutations scramble up the wall to the tube and down it as it lowers.

A man's height from the floor, the tube stops.

IN THE MUTATION OVERLOOK

Vladimir nods to Mark who presses another button.

IN THE MUTATION CHAMBER

Vladimir's voice echoes through the chamber.

VLADIMIR (V.O.)

For allowing the escape of an
enemy to the Tepish order,
Tepish Wesley, you are sentenced
to death.

Wesley screams pointlessly from the tube.

WESLEY

My lord Elrod Malnak, please!

A Tepish at the top of the tube throws a lever. The bottom of the tube opens dropping Wesley to the floor. The tube withdraws into the ceiling.

Wesley stands, sword in front of him. Mutations scramble from all sides and converge on him. He is able to swing the sword twice before he is overwhelmed.

IN ABRAHAM'S MUTATION OVERLOOK

Abraham watches the carnage with sadness in his eyes. He turns away from the window.

EXT. OPEN COUNTRY - DAY

A group of Levi-Carts with cockpits covered in a dark glass speed about 50 feet above the ground.

INT. LEAD LEVI-CART - DAY

TIBERIUS, now appearing about 73, sits as a passenger. He speaks into the communicator.

TIBERIUS

We're just entering the Austrian Monarchy. We should be there just after nightfall.

YORI (V.O.)

I'll leave here just after dark. We should get there at about the same time.

TIBERIUS

Where do you think he'll be?

YORI (V.O.)

My only prayer is that he isn't dead yet. We both knew that Wesley was going to turn him in.

TIBERIUS

It was foolhardy of him to do this.

YORI (V.O.)

He knew. I just hope he knew what he was getting into.

EXT. CARPATHIAN MOUNTAINS - TEPISH TRAINING AREA - NIGHT

Vladimir, Mark, Abraham, and David walk in the center of a line of Tepish walking up the mountainside to a large clearing. The Tepish form a circle around the clearing, which appears to have been beaten down over time.

Mark releases David's bonds. Vladimir sits in a seat prepared at the far end. Abraham stands beside him.

VLADIMIR

David, this is our training area where new Tepish warriors come to prove themselves. Your brother wished to come against you here. For a Tepish, this is a great honor.

DAVID

It is no honor.

He looks at Mark.

DAVID

Mark, we are the only family we have left. I'm not going to kill you.

MARK

You over-estimate your chances, dear brother. I won't hesitate to kill you.

VLADIMIR

This competition will continue until there is a victor. Victory will only be gained through the death of the opposing combatant. Give the Rastem his weapon.

Mark pulls out David's sword. He tosses it on the ground before David. David kneels down and takes it into his hand.

EXT. CARPATHIAN MOUNTAINS - LEVI-CART CONVOY - NIGHT

The Levi-Carts cross over the rise to the Tepish Fortress. Another Levi-Cart, one without a cockpit cover, settles in beside them.

INT. LEAD LEVI-CART - NIGHT

Tiberius speaks into the communicator.

TIBERIUS

All right, Rastem. Get ready.

He looks out the window. Yori waves.

TIBERIUS

It looks like she made it.

EXT. CARPATHIAN MOUNTAINS - TEPISH TRAINING AREA - NIGHT

Mark and David take up a stance at opposite ends of the arena.

VLADIMIR

Combatants, are you ready?

EXT. TEPISH FORTRESS - NIGHT

A Tepish Guard spots the incoming Levi-Carts.

TEPISH GUARD

Raise the alarm! Go inform the
Elrod Malnak.

EXT. CARPATHIAN MOUNTAINS - TEPISH TRAINING AREA - NIGHT

Mark raises his sword before his face in a salute. David does the same, but with less enthusiasm.

VLADIMIR

Fight!

EXT. TEPISH FORTRESS - NIGHT

The Levi-Carts reach the Fortress. The cockpits open and 6 Rastem per cart leap out, swords flashing.

Tiberius leaps out with his crew. He turns to them.

TIBERIUS

Let's see if we can get inside.

EXT. CARPATHIAN MOUNTAINS - TEPISH TRAINING AREA - NIGHT

Mark and David circle the perimeter of the training area.

DAVID

I don't want to fight you.

MARK

You don't have a choice.

Mark rushes David. Mark swings. David blocks and parries. David makes no attempt to strike at Mark, but hold him off.

A Tepish Guard runs up to Vladimir. Vladimir's face darkens as the Guard speaks. Vladimir looks down to the Fortress.

VLADIMIR

Tepish! We are under attack! Mark,
you must save this for another day.

David pushes Mark away. Mark never takes his eyes off of David.

MARK

No, my lord, this ends tonight.

VLADIMIR

We must defend our home.

MARK

When I've finished with this swine,
I will join you.

VLADIMIR

Very well. Come, Abraham.

Abraham casts a final look to Mark and David. He follows Vladimir off with the rest of the Tepish.

MARK

Now, it ends.

He strikes again.

EXT. TEPISH FORTRESS - NIGHT

The Rastem fight off the Tepish Guards present and reach the outer door to the side of the dome.

KALTESH

Tiberius, more are coming down
the hill.

Tiberius looks to the hill where the training area is. A line of Tepish rush toward them.

TIBERIUS

Rastem! Slow them down!

He turns to Kaltesh, Yori and a few others close to him.

TIBERIUS

Come on. Let's see if we can
find David.

INT. TEPISH FORTRESS - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Vladimir enters with Abraham.

VLADIMIR

It's time to use our weapon.

ABRAHAM

Vladimir, Karian is too unstable.

VLADIMIR

We will assign someone to keep
him in line.

He stops and looks at Abraham.

ABRAHAM

Who would agree to such an appointment?

Vladimir looks at Abraham and smiles. Abraham looks at him, nervous.

ABRAHAM

While I would be honored at such a task, I am no warrior.

VLADIMIR

No, but your loyalty has been in question for some time now.

ABRAHAM

My lord, I am ever faithful.

VLADIMIR

You were once more, but your fear of the Mutations has softened you. If your spine remains, then you will succeed. If you are as yellow as I have come to suspect, then you are the expendable Tepish I need for this task.

ABRAHAM

Expendable?

VLADIMIR

We both know well that the Mutations have limited potential for control. If they turn, then consider it divine knowledge that you are no longer useful to me.

Vladimir walks on. Abraham's face reflects nothing but worry and anger. He catches up to Vladimir.

INT. TEPISH FORTRESS - HALLWAYS - NIGHT

Tiberius leads the Rastem into a hall of doors. He opens one of them. It leads into a Mutation Overlook Chamber. This one is almost on the ground level.

They walk to the bubble window and look out. The Mutations scramble as they always do. The Rastems' mouths drop open in horror.

TIBERIUS

Dear Lord, what have they done?

YORI

This is bad, Tiberius.

KALTESH

We cannot stand against this
if they let them loose.

TIBERIUS

The Mutation cannot be controlled.
Unless they have a way to bend
them to their will, the Tepish
would not dare.

INT. TEPISH FORTRESS - KARIAN'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

Vladimir bursts in with two Tank Tepish in tow along with Abraham. Vladimir holds what appears to be a collar and leash.

VLADIMIR

Well, Karian, the time has come.

He opens the cell door.

VLADIMIR

Don't try anything.

He signals the Tank Tepish to come closer. They draw near, their nozzles raised against Karian.

KARIAN

What are you doing?

Vladimir shows the collar to Karian.

VLADIMIR

This is how we control you. You
disobey or try anything, we press
this switch.

Vladimir presses a switch at the end of the cord. Water drips from the inside of the collar. Hatred wells in Karian's eyes. He raises his head. Vladimir attaches the collar to him.

KARIAN

I will kill you.

VLADIMIR

You will try.

Vladimir hands the end to Abraham.

VLADIMIR

Take him to the chamber.

Abraham takes it and looks at Vladimir.

ABRAHAM

Yes, my lord.

Vladimir leaves. Karian smiles at Abraham.

ABRAHAM

Let's go.

EXT. CARPATHIAN MOUNTAINS - TEPISH TRAINING AREA - NIGHT

The battle between David and Mark continues. David continues to block and parry Mark's swings.

David backs out of the arena proper and crosses the forestal areas of the mountains as Mark tries to hit him. Mark takes a swing. As it makes contact with David's sword, David holds Mark's hands.

DAVID

You don't have to do this. You can join the Rastem. You have a lot of skill that we could use.

MARK

Never!

Mark pulls away and strikes again.

INT. TEPISH FORTRESS - HALLWAYS - NIGHT

Tiberius and the Rastem fight off a crew of Tepish Warriors. Ahead of them, Vladimir approaches from the opposite direction. He sees Tiberius, and then turns down another hallway.

TIBERIUS

You keep looking for David. I'm going after Vladimir.

KALTESH

Tiberius. Are you looking for revenge?

TIBERIUS

Vladimir is a traitor. He must be dealt with. I can handle him.

YORI

We'll find David. Good luck.

TIBERIUS

Thank you.

Tiberius follows after Vladimir.

EXT. TEPISH FORTRESS - NIGHT

The Rastem fight against the Tepish.

INT. TEPISH FORTRESS - MUTATION CHAMBER - NIGHT

A door opens into the Mutation area. They scramble for it. Karian enters, followed by Abraham and the two Tank Tepish.

The Mutations back away, confused. One of them gets too close. Karian turns to it.

KARIAN

Stop!

The Mutation looks at him, head cocked to one side like a confused animal.

KARIAN

Do not fight them.

The group travels down the outside wall of the chamber. The Mutations keep a firm distance from them, closing the gap behind them and forming a semi-circle.

They reach the outside door, which is blocked by a caged door on the inside. Abraham and the Tank Tepish have fear etched on their faces looking at the throng of Mutations.

ABRAHAM

Can you explain anything to them?

KARIAN

Certainly.

Karian takes a few steps toward the Mutations.

KARIAN

My fellow captives. We have little hope here. But if we are to have hope, we must help these Fempiror who have enslaved us. Follow me.

ABRAHAM

Will that work?

Karian stands next to him.

KARIAN

What do you think?

Abraham does not look reassured. He opens the cage door. He leads Karian through the outside door. The Tank Tepish follow. The Mutations follow them.

EXT. TEPISH FORTRESS - NIGHT

The Mutation army pours out of the dome behind the fighting Rastem and Tepish.

A Rastem turns.

RASTEM 1

Look!

The Mutations gather behind the Tank Tepish.

RASTEM 2

Another army?

RASTEM 3

That's no normal army.

Abraham looks at Karian.

ABRAHAM

Very well. Make them attack our enemies.

KARIAN

As you wish.

Karian turns to the Mutations still pouring out of the dome.

KARIAN

Attack them!

The Mutations leap into action, traveling the open course like a wave. They attack the Rastem and the Tepish equally.

ABRAHAM

Hey! They are only supposed to attack the Rastem.

KARIAN

You can't say that you're surprised.

Abraham looks at Karian.

ABRAHAM

No.

Karian glances at Abraham's hands. They are gripping the handle of the leash so tightly that his knuckles are white. He looks back to the battle.

ABRAHAM

Make them stop! Now!

KARIAN

They are starved for blood! No one will stop them when there is prey to be had. Now, let me set you free...

ABRAHAM

What?

Karian grabs the leash end, Abraham and all. He swings Abraham around, knocking down the two Tank Tepish. He gives the leash a hard swing, breaking it loose and flinging Abraham off to the side of the mountain, out of the battle entirely.

The Tank Tepish try to recover. Karian kills one, and bites the neck of the other. With a bloodied mouth, he rises, content.

KARIAN

Vladimir...

Karian rushes off.

INT. TEPISH FORTRESS - THRONE ROOM - NIGHT

Tiberius exits the elevator. Vladimir stands on the platform by the window. Tiberius walks toward him as they talk.

VLADIMIR

Welcome, Tiberius. I thought you would want to come alone.

TIBERIUS

Vladimir, you are guilty of the death of a fellow Rastem. You have violated the Rastem code multiple times. You betrayed the Rastem Order to become a Tepish. In accordance with the Rastem code, you are hereby sentenced to death.

VLADIMIR

And who will carry out such a sentence? You?

TIBERIUS

Such is the reason I am here.

Tiberius stands before Vladimir.

VLADIMIR

You would attack an unarmed
man?

TIBERIUS

This is not a battle, Vladimir.
This is justice.

Tiberius brings his sword around. Vladimir feigns to one side. He pulls his sword from a sheath on the side of the throne. He swings at Tiberius.

A fierce battle ensues next to the large panoramic window.

EXT. CARPATHIAN MOUNTAINS - NIGHT

David and Mark continue their fight. David does what he can to escape Mark, but Mark will not allow it. David puts some distance between he and Mark.

DAVID

Mark, you have to let this go.
It's not worth it.

MARK

Not worth it? I was betrayed
and turned over to a mob by our
own father! All because of you!

DAVID

We choose our own paths, Mark.
You can still choose a different
one. I admit my own mistakes.
Don't make one yourself by killing
me.

MARK

Silence! Be silent!

Mark attacks again. He drives David to the edge of a steep hill. David tries to push back. He gives in and pulls Mark over the edge with him. They both tumble down the steep hill.

INT. TEPISH FORTRESS - THRONE ROOM - NIGHT

Tiberius and Vladimir continue their battle next to the window.

EXT. TEPISH FORTRESS - NIGHT

The chaos between the Mutations, Rastem, and Tepish continues. The Mutations are lightning fast and take down several Fempiror on both sides.

Karian runs around the outside of the Fortress. He avoids the Rastem and Tepish. He looks at the window on the side of the Fortress - the one that Tiberius and Vladimir are fighting behind.

He smiles.

INT. TEPISH FORTRESS - NIGHT

Yori, Kaltesh, and a few other Rastem run across a group of Tepish. After taking down most of them, Yori grabs one by the armor.

YORI

Where is David Taylor?

TEPISH

Who?

YORI

The Rastem captured yesternight.

TEPISH

He was taken to the training area to fight the Cortz Sufru...on the eastern hill.

She throws him down. Turns to Kaltesh.

YORI

Let's get up there.

EXT. TEPISH FORTRESS - NIGHT

Karian runs to the position where he was a moment ago. This time, he holds a Körva. A Mutation stands next to him.

KARIAN

I need you to climb to that window and hit it hard with this side of this device.

The Mutation nods and takes the Körva. He climbs up the Fortress and centers himself on the window.

INT. TEPISH FORTRESS - THRONE ROOM - NIGHT

Vladimir and Tiberius pause to see the Mutation scrambling on the window. He brings the Körva down against the window. It explodes.

EXT. TEPISH FORTRESS - NIGHT

The battle pauses as the window is ripped out. Karian smiles.

INT. TEPISH FORTRESS - THRONE ROOM - NIGHT

The throne is no longer on its platform. Vladimir rises to his feet. He looks around. Tiberius is buried under glass and rubble.

He makes a swift escape by climbing out the elevator shaft.

EXT. TEPISH FORTRESS - NIGHT

Thunder rumbles. Karian frowns at the sky. He runs away from the Fortress. Some of the Mutations see him going and follow. Other who don't are cut down.

Soon, the Rastem and Tepish are left alone. Tiberius drops out of the window. He walks past the combatants.

TIBERIUS

To any Tepish who wants to know,
your leader has abandoned you,
your Fortress is destroyed,
your numbers are diminished. If
you should choose to change your
ways and turn to the Rastem
order, your lives will be spared.
If you wish to take this offer,
please indicate as such by
placing your weapon on the ground
and your hands on your head.

Almost as one, the remaining Tepish place their weapons down and surrender to the Rastem. Tiberius smiles.

EXT. CARPATHIAN MOUNTAINSIDE - NIGHT

Abraham rises to his hands and knees. He shakes his head. He turns and looks below him. The Tepish are surrendering. He climbs to his feet.

After watching them for a moment, he turns and walks away.

EXT. TEPISH FORTRESS - NIGHT

Tiberius walks past the Tepish prisoners in a line. He turns to a nearby Rastem.

TIBERIUS

Where are Yori and Kaltesh? And
have you seen David?

RASTEM

She and Kaltesh went up there.
We were told he might be there.

Tiberius looks up to the training area. Thunder rolls again.

EXT. CARPATHIAN MOUNTAINS - BOTTOM OF HILL - NIGHT

Mark stumbles to his feet. He takes his sword from the ground. He looks around. David lies near him.

Mark walks over to David. He holds his sword over David's head.

MARK

Now, it ends.

Mark raises his blade. As he brings it down, David rolls over. Blocks the blade with his own sword. Kicks Mark away from him.

Mark loses his grip on the sword, sending it flying. David leaps to his feet. Stands near Mark, sword at the ready.

Mark laughs.

MARK

Do what you must.

DAVID

No.

David sheathes his sword. He offers his hand to Mark. Mark sits up and pushes it away.

MARK

What's wrong with you? I have tried to kill you, and you would spare my life?

DAVID

You are my brother. You have done no harm to me.

MARK

Our family rejected me.

DAVID

Our town rejected us. They tried to kill me in 1775.

MARK

That was you?

DAVID

Yes. I was there. But I would never have killed them, or worse turn them over to the Tepish.

Mark shakes his head.

MARK

No, they tried to kill me.

DAVID

They didn't understand you.

MARK

Our father threw me out.

DAVID

What would the town have done if he didn't. We had one more brother. Father lost two sons. He chose between you and Simon. There was one more chance to carry one our family name. They didn't understand you. He had no choice.

MARK

He did.

DAVID

Think about it, Mark!

Mark backs away from David, shaking his head.

MARK

No. He did have a choice. He could've saved me. He should've. I- I- I was-

DAVID

You were his son. But if your roles were reversed, what would you have done?

Mark looks at David. His mouth quivers. His eyes tear up.

MARK

My God! What have I done!

He falls on his face, sobbing. He raises his head slowly, a horrible realization. Tears streak down his face creating a frightening visage.

MARK

Everything. I had it destroyed. I led them there. I killed them myself.

DAVID

We can get past this.

Mark shakes his head.

MARK

No. I cannot be forgiven. I don't deserve to live.

EXT. CARPATHIAN MOUNTAINS - TOP OF HILL - NIGHT

Yori investigates the mountainside. She looks at the ground. Kaltesh follows her.

KALTESH

Anything?

YORI

He was fighting someone. They got to here where-

She comes to the edge of the hill. The bottom is obscured in the morning mist. She stands, mouth open.

YORI

The tracks stop here.

KALTESH

Oh no.

YORI

They went over the edge.

KALTESH

I'm so sorry.

Tears well up in her eyes. She turns to Kaltesh, who takes her in his arms and holds her.

YORI

We need to get down there.

KALTESH

Yori...

YORI

He might still be alive. He could be hurt.

KALTESH

If he's alive, he will find his way back.

YORI

We should still get down there.

KALTESH

We could never reach him in time.

YORI

What?

Kaltesh points to the horizon. Sunrise is threatening.

YORI

What if he is hurt and doesn't have a cloak?

Kaltesh looks at her sadly. She looks at him. Then down the hill. She nods sadly.

YORI

(whispers)

Let's go.

Kaltesh puts his arms around her shoulders and leads her away. Thunder rolls again. Clouds move in from the west.

EXT. CARPATHIAN MOUNTAINS - BOTTOM OF HILL - TWILIGHT

Mark sits on the edge of a cliff looking east. David walks up behind him.

DAVID

Mark, we've got to hide. The sun is coming up. It isn't safe here.

MARK

I don't care.

DAVID

There's an outcropping of rock over there. We can hide until we can figure out what we're going to do.

MARK

David, I'm not going.

DAVID

You'll die when it comes over the horizon.

MARK

I don't deserve to live.

DAVID

Mark-

MARK

David, I killed my family, my friends, and razed the town I grew up in. Such a sin is beyond forgiveness.

DAVID

Mark, I don't-

MARK

That's very noble of you, but I'm talking about myself. I can't forgive me for what I've done. I can't live with it.

DAVID

Mark, please...

MARK

Go on, David. It's dangerous.

DAVID

Mark-

MARK

Go!

The sun passes over the horizon. David runs behind a rock.

The sun hits Mark full in the face.

MARK

It's so beautiful!

As it hits him, his skin burns. He catches fire and burns. The sunlight surrounds him as he is enveloped in flames.

Behind the rock, David cries.

EXT. SMALL TOWN - TWILIGHT

Several bags are loaded onto a wagon by a SHOPKEEPER. A VERY OLD MAN in a DARK CLOAK climbs onto the front of the wagon behind the horses. He speaks in a very heavy accent of the region.

SHOPKEEPER

There you go, sir.

OLD MAN

Thank you. I'll see you next month.

SHOPKEEPER

Just send me a message and let me know the day, and I'll be here nice and early.

The Old Man slaps the reins on his horse. They trot off towards the mountains in the West where the clouds continue to gather.

EXT. CARPATHIAN MOUNTAINS - DAY

David still sits with his back to the rock. His arms are wrapped around his knees and his head is buried in them. The sound of rain slaps down in the trees.

David looks up. The sun moves behind the rain clouds and is gone.

David stands and walks to where his brother was. He kneels for a moment.

DAVID

Good-bye, Mark

He stands and walks away. The rain begins to beat down on him.

EXT. CARPATHIAN MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY

The rain is now coming down in torrents. The Old Man squints to see the road ahead of him.

David approaches the road and sees the wagon coming towards him. He hides out of its way.

Thunder sounds loudly, scaring the horse. The horse rears up and starts running tearing the wagon along behind him.

David breaks from hiding and runs behind it.

The horse reaches a sharp corner and tears around it breaking the wagon away, throwing the wagon, its owner, and its cargo off the path into the woods.

David runs to the Old Man.

DAVID

Are you hurt?

OLD MAN

Thank you, young man. I believe I will be fine. I fear, though, that my goods will need to wait until I can return with another horse.

DAVID
Where do you live?

OLD MAN
My home is at the end of this pass.

DAVID
I will see that you get there
safely.

OLD MAN
I thank you again.

They walk along the path in the rain. The rain lets up to a
light sprinkle.

DAVID
Forgive me, my name is David
Taylor.

OLD MAN
I am Draculya.

DAVID
Voivode Draculya?

VOIVODE turns to him, surprised.

VOIVODE
I am familiar to you?

Voivode looks David over. He places his hand on the side of
David's face. He casts his face down.

VOIVODE
You are a Fempiror.

DAVID
I am, sir.

VOIVODE
It grieves me to know the
transmutations of the Tepish
order continue.

DAVID

I did much of it to myself.

VOIVODE

So the Fempiror still call me
Voivode...

DAVID

Is that not your name?

VOIVODE

No. I only have one name, like
many of my time. It is Draculya.
A Voï, in the language of
Moldavia, is a warrior, just
as Piror was in Felletterusk.
They called me Voivode, or leader
of warriors, as a joke. I can't
believe it remains.

DAVID

May I call you Voivode? Or would
you prefer Draculya?

VOIVODE

Voivode is fine. Transylvania
used to be called a Voivodship,
because during the century after
the Felletterusk fell, it was
the title of its ruler. It makes
me feel important.

DAVID

I am honored to finally meet you.

VOIVODE

Tell me, David, what brings you
into Transylvania?

DAVID

That is a very long story.

VOIVODE

We have a very long walk ahead of
us.

Voivode and David walk along the road in the rain. Far ahead of them in the distance, a LARGE, ANCIENT CASTLE awaits.

THE END