

THE FEMPIROR CHRONICLES
THE INITIATION OF DAVID

by

George Willson

Revision January 21, 2006
WGA Reg #1124419

Pronunciation of the Felletterusk Language

Felletterusk was the common language of the Fempiror. Use this guide to assist in pronouncing the language as it appears in the screenplay.

A = father
B = baby
C = cat, but never sit
D = dog
E = felt, unless at the end of a word, then = the ay in may
F = felt
G = grand
H = hi
I = police
J = Jacques like the French j (zh sound)
K = kit
L = land
M = maybe
N = never
O = hope
P = person
R = a cross between r & d, such as the British pronunciation of very (veddy), or the Spanish pronunciation of r in cara (face). It has a very slight trill to it.
S = simple
T = type
U = boo
V = visual
W = window
Y = yankee
Z = zebra

Ä = date

Ö = person, but with the lips brought in to a sort of oo shape.

Ü = like u, but with the lips tightened considerably.

Unless otherwise indicated, words are accented on the second syllable. Accent usually only differs with the placement of the accent mark (á, é, í, ó, ú) placed on a separate syllable.

Diphthongs

sh = sh as ship
ch = k as in kit

gh = g as in goat
tch = ch as in church

FADE IN:

EXT. HAUGINSTOWN - NIGHT

SUPER: June 1775

A stereotypical small town is laid out in the moonlight. Shops and houses square off a clearing in the center of town at the center of which stands a large statue of a man. A plate affixed to the base of the statue reads:

DEDICATED TO GERALD HAUGINS
FIRST MAYOR OF HAUGINSTOWN

The shops and houses are dark, except one. THE WIT'S END BAR has candles burning within.

SUDDENLY, BEN THURMAN, an old, gruff man in a drunken stupor, stumbles out. The Wit's End BARKEEP, a time-hardened purveyor of alcohol, steps out after him.

BARKEEP

Hey, Ben, will you be all right?

BEN

I'm fine.

Ben stumbles to the ground in a heap. The Barkeep helps him back up.

BARKEEP

Maybe I should walk you home, Ben.
You're drunker than a toad.

Ben shakes off the Barkeep.

BEN

I said I'm fine. I been worse, you know. You just go on and leave me alone. So what if I sleep outside?

It don't matter none.

BARKEEP

You'd best get inside. Some people tell of a stranger around here lately - roaming the town at night.

BEN

Leave me alone!

The Barkeep shakes his head and walks back inside. Ben stumbles into the town square.

SOMEONE watches him from a distance.

Ben makes it to the statue and leans against it. He squints his eyes, looking across the square. He takes a few steps and stumbles to the ground again.

The person watching Ben moves closer.

Ben pulls himself back to his feet. He walks across the square again.

BEN
(slurred)
Walk me home... What does he think
I am? Drunk?

Ben stumbles to the ground again. The person watches Ben. Ben comes back to his feet and continues walking. The person moves at an unfathomable speed, catching up to the stumbling drunk.

Ben reaches the far side of the square. A twig SNAPS behind him.

He turns around to see a scruffy, wild-eyed young man behind him holding two halves of a twig, which he tosses behind him. This is RUFUS. Rufus looks like a vagrant around 24.

Ben stands frozen. His eyes are wide-open in fear. Through Ben's eyes, Rufus is a blurry mess of two people.

BEN
(slurred)
Are you the strangers?

Rufus reaches into his belt and pulls out an ODD-LOOKING, CHROME DEVICE THAT RESEMBLES A MODERN SYRINGE, BUT HAS TWO LARGE NEEDLES AT ITS END RESEMBLING FANGS. This is called a NILROF. The nilrof is full of a DARK RED LIQUID.

Ben stares at the device. His vision focuses until he sees the device. His eyes grow wide.

Ben sobers and breaks into a run. Rufus chases and is much faster than Ben, tackling him almost at once. They come to a sudden stop, and Rufus loses his grip. Ben recovers and runs back to the bar.

BEN
(slurred)
Help!

Rufus recovers and chases Ben. As Ben passes the statue, Rufus leaps through the air and tackles him to the ground. Ben tries to get up again, but Rufus lifts him off the ground and tosses him in a heap next to the statue.

Rufus approaches the tired Ben, nilrof in hand, and kneels next to him.

INT. WIT'S END BAR - NIGHT

The Barkeep looks out the window. He sees Rufus kneel next to Ben. One of the patrons looks at the Barkeep.

PATRON
What's happening out there? What do you see?

BARKEEP
Whatever happens, don't go outside.

EXT. HAUGINSTOWN - NIGHT

Rufus gets very close to Ben's frightened face, looks into his eyes, and smiles. He raises the nilrof for Ben to see.

RUFUS
Welcome to the family.

He stabs the nilrof into Ben's neck. The dark red liquid flows out of the nilrof. Ben convulses, and then lets out a blood-curdling scream.

EXT. HAUGINSTOWN - DAY

ABRAHAM BARBER - a 17 year old with short, dark brown hair, sharp hazel eyes and a chiseled face - walks with a purpose through the bustling town square toward the Taylor Shop.

He passes the window in front of the shop and sees JONATHAN TAYLOR, a large, middle-aged man with a kind, nurturing face, and trimmed mustache and beard, working inside the shop with MARK TAYLOR, a 21 year old younger version of Jonathan.

ABRAHAM
Good afternoon, Mr. Taylor.

JONATHAN
Good afternoon, Abraham.

Abraham continues past the shop to a gate on one side. He pushes it open.

EXT. TAYLOR SHOP ALLEY - DAY

DAVID TAYLOR, also 17, a handsome, well-built young man with short, light brown hair, blue eyes, and distant look about him is in the alley churning something in a large barrel. He looks up and sees Abraham. His face lights up.

DAVID
Good afternoon, Abraham.

ABRAHAM
Did you hear about last night?

DAVID
Which version?

ABRAHAM
What have you heard?

DAVID
I know he didn't come home. They find him yet?

ABRAHAM
They're not going to. I heard he was attacked.

DAVID
Says who?

ABRAHAM
Says the barkeep at the Wit's End Bar. He says that old Ben had had too much to drink last night and was stumbling home when-

DAVID
I hear that happens every night. You know, one time we found him all the way out by the old windmill east of town half dead of thirst after two days.

ABRAHAM
Let me finish, David. This is different.

(MORE)

ABRAHAM (cont'd)
The barkeep said he was attacked by
a creature with glowing red eyes
and wings and...

DAVID
A what?

ABRAHAM
It chased him around the town
square, picked him up and threw him
like a rag doll before this thing
leaned over him at the end. The
barkeep thinks it was drinking his
blood.

DAVID
You can't be serious.

ABRAHAM
The mayor's declared no one should
be out after dark just in case.

David shakes his head.

DAVID
I think all of you are drunk on the
barkeep's wares to believe in that
nonsense.

ABRAHAM
But after last night?

DAVID
Last night, Ben probably upset
someone, and they took out their
rage on him.

ABRAHAM
What about this thing throwing him
around the square?

DAVID
Who knows? Only the barkeep saw it,
and Lord knows what he'd been
drinking.

ABRAHAM
The barkeep is not known for making
up stories, you know.

Abraham looks at the barrel and David churning.

ABRAHAM
What are you doing?

David raises his churning stick. A very wet, blue shirt hangs at the end.

ABRAHAM

What is that?

DAVID

It's Mr. Franklin's. All the menial work falls to me, so I am out here dying the shirt. Been out here all morning.

He lowers the shirt back into the barrel and continues churning. A door on the side of the Taylor Shop opens. David's father, Jonathan, steps into the alley.

JONATHAN

How's that shirt coming along, David?

David raises the shirt from the barrel again. Jonathan inspects it.

JONATHAN

Excellent. Looks like it needs some more time-

DAVID

More time?

JONATHAN

Mr. Franklin likes his shirts a deep blue.

DAVID

How much more time?

JONATHAN

David, the life of a Taylor is not always easy. Sometimes, the simplest jobs are the longest and the most important.

DAVID

But how long?

JONATHAN

At least two or three more hours.

David opens his mouth as if to say something more, but he closes his mouth before anything comes out. He nods, as if defeated.

DAVID

Yes, sir.

JONATHAN

Go ahead and take a break. Five minutes should be plenty.

DAVID

Yes, sir.

David dumps the shirt back in the barrel.

JONATHAN

It'll be fine in there for the five minutes, but you'll need to churn it as soon as you get back.

DAVID

Yes, sir.

Mark sticks his head out the door.

MARK

Father, Mr. Diddle gained weight since we measured him and now his pants don't fit.

JONATHAN

I'll be right there.
(to David)
Five minutes.

DAVID

Yes, sir.

Jonathan walks inside the shop. David looks at Abraham, who is smirking. David holds the churning stick somewhat like a sword.

DAVID

There are days when I'd just like to-

He swings the stick around in wide circles, almost impossibly missing the barrel, clothes line, both walls, and Abraham before dumping the stick in the barrel with the shirt.

DAVID

Let's go.

They exit the alley.

EXT. HAUGINSTOWN - DAY

Abraham and David walk along the grassy area making a circuit around the statue in the center of town.

ABRAHAM

If you don't stop brooding, I'll put you out of your misery.

DAVID

You know I hate this.

ABRAHAM

Is this about the tailor thing again?

DAVID

What do you think?

ABRAHAM

Do you even know what you want anymore? One day, you want nothing to do with it, and the next you're wishing that your father would focus some energy on you instead of Mark and James.

DAVID

I just- I don't know. You ever feel like you're just not made for something?

ABRAHAM

No. My profession is a combination of old alchemy and modern hair styling. Cut their hair and keep them alive, my father says. Hardly boring.

DAVID

So you're satisfied?

ABRAHAM

I would say so. It's not as if we're going to see the world or anything?

DAVID

We might.

ABRAHAM

Sure. If you're not a tailor here, you'll be a tailor somewhere else. You'll settle down with your little wife, and stay in the same little town your whole little life. Just like-

DAVID

Just like everyone else in this town, I know. I need to swallow my pride or something.

ABRAHAM

Well, at least you know who you're going to end up with.

DAVID

What?

BETH CARPENTER runs up behind them, holding the hem of her dress off the ground and carrying a ball of yarn under her arm. The older women huff at her as she passes.

Beth is 17 with a bright, energetic face, long brown hair, deep brown eyes, and a smile to die for.

BETH

Hey, you two.

ABRAHAM

Good afternoon, Beth.

DAVID

Hey, Beth.

BETH

David. Abraham. What are you two doing?

ABRAHAM

Oh, you know, the usual. Brooding over a dull future.

BETH

Dull? Come on, life is out there. What could possibly be so dull about it?

ABRAHAM

Well, this isn't me so much as your intended here.

BETH

Abraham, hush.

ABRAHAM

David's got you, and I have the prospect of Mary Dillinger, the singular biggest eyesore in this god-forsaken town. If I ever had one reason to get out of here...

BETH

Abraham, you know better than to-

ABRAHAM

I know you're trying to avoid unwanted scrutiny, but don't you think people will figure it out?

DAVID

Not as long as certain people keep their mouths closed about it. This gossip-laden town does not need to know about us yet.

ABRAHAM

They'll figure it out.

DAVID

How? We've been friends forever, and you'd be as big a suspect as I would. Besides, we're known well enough as a threesome right now.

BETH

And that's the way it will stay until we're ready, too.

ABRAHAM

Ready? I know life will go on, but we don't need to break up the threesome, do we?

BETH

Be realistic Abraham. We're friends forever, but life will make a twosome someday.

Abraham stops in his tracks. His mouth hangs open. His eyes betray the shot Beth just fired.

ABRAHAM

Right.

He recovers and catches up.

DAVID
Well, I need to be getting back.

ABRAHAM
Me too.

DAVID
See you later, Abraham.

Abraham stops following, wounded again. He waves as he backs off.

ABRAHAM
Right. I'll see you later.

BETH
Bye.

DAVID and BETH walk back over to the Taylor Shop. Abraham casts a glance behind him at the pair. He shakes his head in sadness.

EXT. TAYLOR SHOP ALLEY - DAY

David and Beth enter the alley through the gate. David closes the gate behind him. They wrap their arms around each other and kiss.

BETH
I've been waiting all day for that.

DAVID
Me too.
(re: the yarn)
What's this for?

BETH
I've been working on a blanket for us whenever we get married. When that day finally comes, it should be done.

DAVID
Sounds good.

BETH
I can't wait until we're able to tell the world about us. Just to be able to show them how we feel about each other.

DAVID
We will, but now is not the time.

BETH
So can you come out tonight?

DAVID
There's a ban on going out after dark. Besides, it isn't entirely proper.

BETH
Never stopped us before.

David smiles and nods.

DAVID
That's true.

BETH
I'll see you tonight.

They kiss again. Their eyes lock.

DAVID
Me and you, right?

BETH
For all eternity.

DAVID
No matter what.

Beth backs away from his glance, and exits the alley. David looks after her for a moment. He returns to his churning.

INT. TAYLOR SHOP - DAY

David puts away a plethora of bolts of fabric in the back of the store. Jonathan enters from the front of the store.

JONATHAN
Mr. Franklin was pleased with your work today, son.

DAVID
Thank you, father.

JONATHAN
However, I found the dye to be rather uneven. You need to pay attention to what you're doing.

DAVID
I'll be more careful.

JONATHAN
Good. People's clothes are their
first impressions. It's important
they be done right.

Mark comes out of the back and walks to Jonathan.

MARK
Where did I go wrong on that
waistline, father?

JONATHAN
It was two inches. Anyone can make
a mistake.

DAVID
Isn't this the third alteration
he's done wrong?

JONATHAN
David, this is not your concern.

DAVID
Yes, sir.

JONATHAN
Now, put away the bolts.

David picks up the large rolls of fabric and places them on
the shelves for storage.

INT. TAYLOR HOME - DUSK

Jonathan sits in a comfy chair in his living room with a
piece of paper and a charcoal pencil. He has drawn a picture
of a man in pants and a shirt.

David's brother, JAMES (24), along with Mark sit in the room.
James reads while Mark carves a wooden needle.

JONATHAN
James, come here.

James puts his book down and walks to Jonathan.

JAMES
Yes, sir?

JONATHAN

This design needs something, and I can't place it. Thoughts?

James stares at the drawing for a moment. He points at the page as he speaks.

JAMES

Perhaps something extra in through here.

Jonathan looks at the page and smiles.

JONATHAN

That's it! You're really starting to surpass me.

David walks up to Jonathan. Jonathan goes back to sketching, hardly glancing at David.

DAVID

Father?

JONATHAN

What is it, David?

DAVID

I was wondering. Would it be permissible for me to see Abraham and Beth this evening?

Jonathan, Mark, and James all stop what they're doing to look at him. Jonathan lowers his sketch.

JONATHAN

David, the mayor has banned all activity after dark until this business with Ben Thurman has cleared up.

DAVID

Surely you don't believe the unholy demon story.

JONATHAN

Nonsense as far as I'm concerned, but the mayor doesn't want to take any chances. The law is the law, and we follow it. Are we clear?

David looks into his father's face. James and Mark watch them. Jonathan's face betrays no humor. David nods, dejected.

DAVID

Yes, sir.

David walks towards the stairs. MRS. TAYLOR walks past him, dressed like she just came out of the kitchen. She is an average homely woman with loving, but dark-circled, eyes.

MRS. TAYLOR

Where are you going, David?

DAVID

I think I'll turn in.

MRS. TAYLOR

Are you feeling well, honey?

DAVID

I'm feeling a little tired. I'll be all right tomorrow.

MRS. TAYLOR

Very well. Good night, David.

DAVID

Good night, mother.

Jonathan watches David as he approaches the stairs.

JONATHAN

If you are going to bed, I'd best find you in bed when I come up later. Are we clear?

DAVID

Yes, father. Good night.

JONATHAN

Good night, son.

David walks upstairs to his room and closes the door. Mrs. Taylor looks at Jonathan.

MRS. TAYLOR

What was that all about?

JONATHAN

Don't worry about it.

EXT. TAYLOR HOUSE - DUSK

On the second story of the house, a window opens and David peeps out.

There is a sheer drop from his window to the ground below. He looks back at the closed bedroom door, and then leaps out of the window.

THUD. David lands. He looks around and runs off.

EXT. FOREST GROVE - DUSK

A grove of trees overgrows an area about the size of a small garage. The trunks and branches interlock so well that only someone who knew it was there would be able to find it. David enters.

DAVID
Beth? Beth, are you here yet?

Beth emerges from the brush.

BETH
David, you made it.

They embrace at length.

DAVID
Shall we go?

BETH
Please.

They run through the trees and out of town.

EXT. OLD MILL - DUSK

This old windmill has seen better days. The props still spin in the breeze, but it is used for little but hiding anymore. David and Beth run through the grass and open the door.

INT. OLD MILL - DUSK

David and Beth enter. Dust covers everything. Old ropes and wooden parts hang from every facet of the walls and ceiling.

BETH
Hello?

DAVID
Anyone here?

They listen for a moment, and then look at each other.

DAVID
Our secret is still safe.

BETH
Good, because we need to talk.

DAVID
This is about us, isn't it?

Beth nods.

BETH
At first, the secret was fun, and then necessary, so we could see each other without being trailed by family. But David...

DAVID
It's getting old.

BETH
We're both old enough to be married, and no one would object. What are we waiting for?

DAVID
Well, before now, it was the fear of being watched all the time like young couples tend to be. Of course, if anyone learned of this rendezvous, we'd get lashed either way.

BETH
If we get married, we'll be free to be together whenever, and the only thing we'll be watched for is grandchildren.

David laughs and holds Beth in his arms as he sits on an old stool.

DAVID
Whenever you want to tell I'm with you.

BETH
Really?

She hugs him.

BETH
Oh, I'm so excited.

She paces around the mill.

BETH

Well, I think I'd want the wedding next spring, so I think probably in a couple weeks we could reveal ourselves, allow a natural public courting period. Then we could-

CRASH! The floor near a boarded doorway collapses and Beth goes down with it. She screams.

DAVID

Beth!

David looks around the mill. He pulls on some rope, but it is attached far above. He runs over to the hole. Darkness. He closes his eyes and jumps.

INT. UNDERGROUND CAVERN - DUSK

Beth hits the ground and rolls a little. She heavily gets to her hands and knees huffing and puffing.

David hits the ground and rolls to a stop. He scrambles to his feet and runs to Beth.

DAVID

Are you hurt?

Beth shakes her head and looks around.

BETH

Where are we?

In one direction, the waning sunlight shines just inside the cave entrance. Artificial light issues from deeper within.

DAVID

Well, we can either go out, or we can check out where that light is coming from.

BETH

I'm not sure I want to check out a strange light.

DAVID

It might help us figure out what happened to Ben. People are going crazy over it.

Beth shrugs and nods. They creep toward the artificial light source.

INT. CAVERN ROOM

The room is round and carved out of the dirt. A crude table sits in the center with a lamp on it. The lamp light appears to be lit with a filament like a modern light bulb.

Two long curtains hang on the walls. A chair with a scabbard hanging on it sits beside the closed curtain. The other curtain is open enough to show that behind it is a bed, and someone is sleeping in that bed.

BETH

It looks like someone's house.

DAVID

Beth, look at that lamp.

They both stoop down to look at it.

BETH

There's no fire, but it glows.

David looks to the cracked-open curtain.

DAVID

There's someone over there.

They both creep over to the curtain with the sleeper.

BETH

David, let's get out of here...
please?

DAVID

I just want to know if that's Ben
behind the curtain. Maybe we can
stumble across him tomorrow and be
heroes.

Beth cowers behind David as he continues creeping to the curtain.

He pulls back the curtain just enough to see the sleeper.
It's Ben Thurman.

DAVID

Found you.

Beth tugs at David's shirt.

BETH

David, look at his neck.

On Ben's neck are two side-by-side puncture wounds about the width of canine teeth.

Beth covers her mouth in fear.

The other curtain stirs. A booted foot touches the ground and goes unnoticed.

BETH

They were right. He was bitten by something. I'll bet it lives here. What if it finds us here?

DAVID

Don't worry, no one will find-

David looks at the other curtain and notices Rufus looking at them. The color drains from David's face. Beth glances over and her eyes open wide.

RUFUS

I found you.

The pair screams and darts out of that hole faster than their legs were meant to carry them.

Rufus chuckles. Ben stupors up and looks around.

BEN

What's going on?

Rufus hits Ben's chest, lying him back down.

RUFUS

Oh, shut up, you old fool.

He looks after the young lovers and smiles.

EXT. BETH'S PARENTS' HOUSE - NIGHT

They reach the doorstep, panting.

BETH

Did he follow us?

The door slams open. The pair screams. PATRICK, PATRICK, a large man with a no nonsense face and build to back it up glares at them.

PATRICK

Outside at night alone with a young man? Young lady, you'd better have a good explanation.

DAVID

Sir, we found Ben Thurman. He had marks on his neck.

David signs the marks on his own neck. Patrick is unsympathetic.

PATRICK

(cynical)

David, while this discovery is a commendable feat, there is currently a law against being outside at night!

BETH

But-

PATRICK

Not another word! This situation is highly improper, and I've half a mind to-

DAVID

Sir, I'd like to marry your daughter.

Patrick opens his eyes wide at David. Beth's mouth drops open - half shocked and half smiling. Patrick nods.

PATRICK

Beth, go inside the house. We'll discuss your part in this in a moment.

Beth's head droops. She goes inside. Patrick glares at David.

PATRICK

Your declaration changes little. I will be discussing all of this with your father tomorrow, and I would recommend he find out from you before he finds out from me.

DAVID

Yes, sir.

PATRICK

And if you expect me to allow you to marry my daughter, Mr. Taylor, I expect you to follow the rules. I will not have a son-in-law who breaks the law. Now go home. It sounds like you've already learned how dangerous it can be.

DAVID

Yes, sir.

David leaves the porch.

EXT. HAUGINSTOWN - NIGHT

David crosses the town square. He looks at the stars and smiles. He lowers his head to look ahead of him. He freezes.

Rufus blocks David's path.

DAVID

Who... who are you?

RUFUS

You are a curious little chap, aren't you? First, you invade my home, then I get questions. Who are you?

DAVID

David...Taylor.

RUFUS

Well, David Taylor, I'm Rufus. A special emissary to Hauginstown from the Order of Tepish.

David only stares, his eyes wide open. Rufus approaches to within striking distance.

RUFUS

I'm here to reward your curiosity with eternal servitude to the Elrod Malnak of the Order of Tepish in his army to combat the Rastem insurrectionists.

David looks at Rufus, confused. Rufus knocks him to the ground and holds his head still. David struggles to no effect. Rufus pulls out another chrome, two-pronged nilrof and injects David's neck. David gasps.

RUFUS
Welcome to the family.

David hyperventilates for a moment and then screams the scream of a man being torn apart from the inside out. Rufus laughs. David faints.

Suddenly, Rufus is kicked off of David and thrown against the nearby statue. Rufus jumps to his feet, shaking this attack off.

He looks over to his attacker. Standing over David now is ZECHARIAH, a formidable presence appearing to be in his 60's, but extremely fit for this age.

He is dressed in dark clothing: a single piece shirt tucked into his dark trousers. He wears a long riding coat that goes to his ankles. His wrists and ankles are bound in metal gauntlets, and he has a sheath lashed on his back.

His face is etched with confidence. He has a long beard, unshaven in decades with hair to match, all a stark shade of grey-white.

He speaks in a gruff, firm voice.

ZECHARIAH
I don't know who you are, but
transmutating humans into Fempiror
is a blatant violation of the
Rastem code.

RUFUS
The code is dead, old man, and your
Rastem Order will soon be dead,
too.

ZECHARIAH
Leave this town, malklek.

RUFUS
Or what?

ZECHARIAH
Or you don't leave at all.

RUFUS
Fine.

Rufus moves towards David. Zechariah blocks his path.

ZECHARIAH
He stays.

RUFUS

You have no claim to him.

ZECHARIAH

Nor do you.

Rufus draws a two handed longsword. Its design is very plain, almost assembly-line, in appearance.

Zechariah does the same. His sword is similar to a katana, but his hilt is very ornate, as if much time went into its design. His blade is also etched with a word in a strange form of symbolic writing.

A mighty duel ensues between them. Zechariah is very deliberate, yet quick, in his style, while Rufus is cocky. Their swords clash as each combatant makes moves upon the other.

The clash is impossibly fast. Rufus makes a swing for Zechariah. Zechariah ducks and swings for Rufus' feet. Rufus leaps up against the side of the statue and then down behind Zechariah.

Zechariah anticipates and makes a backward swing for Rufus. Rufus ducks the blow and the duel proceeds. The swords clang together over and over until Zechariah backs Rufus up against the statue.

ZECHARIAH

Who are you?

RUFUS

A Fälskrüz of the Order of Tepish.

ZECHARIAH

Who is the Elrod Malnak?

RUFUS

You'll never find out.

Rufus pushes Zechariah off him, and the battle continues. Zechariah makes a swing slicing Rufus belly. Rufus lunges for Zechariah, each swing faster than the one before it.

Zechariah goes on the defensive as Rufus takes swing after swing, but each one is skillfully blocked by Zechariah. In one deft move, Zechariah knocks the sword from Rufus' hand, and runs him through. Rufus has a shocked look on his face.

ZECHARIAH

Again, who is the Elrod Malnak?

Rufus spits blood in Zechariah's face.

ZECHARIAH

Who is your Redäl Kötz?

RUFUS

The Tepish will rule forever.

Rufus dies. Zechariah pulls his sword out, wipes it with a cloth from his pocket, and re-sheaths it. He also removes Rufus' sword and sheath from his body, and ties it to his waist.

He looks over at David. Sadly, he shakes his head. He lifts David over his shoulders and carries him away, leaving the corpse of Rufus in the town square.

INT. ZECHARIAH'S HOUSE - DAY

A non-descript room with no windows, a bed, and a nightstand with a lamp lit, once again, by a filament. David lies unconscious on the bed.

Then, David starts up with a slight scream. He looks around the room, confused. A look of dread crosses his face.

Slowly, he reaches up to his neck to find out if last night was real or just a nightmare. On his neck, his fingers run across two scabbed marks. He gasps.

The door opens. David looks up in fear to see Zechariah standing in the doorway. He gasps again, and backs away from the door into a corner of the room.

DAVID

Who are you? Where am I? What do you want with me?

ZECHARIAH

My name is Zechariah. Just relax, I'm here to help you.

DAVID

What did you do to me?

ZECHARIAH

Last night, you were injected with a serum that altered your physiology. You are now a Fempiror.

DAVID

A what?

ZECHARIAH

A Fempiror. This serum gives you some characteristics similar to the vampire of mythology, but there is a wide gulf between the myth and who the Fempiror are.

DAVID

I'll die before I drink anyone's blood.

ZECHARIAH

And no one expects you to drink anyone's blood.

DAVID

Oh.

ZECHARIAH

I think you'll find a lot of mythology is simply that. As of now, you are no longer human, so you will need to adjust to a new style of life.

DAVID

When can I go home?

ZECHARIAH

You can't.

DAVID

Why not?

ZECHARIAH

It's a violation of the Rastem code. Also, the human world lives in the sunlight, and that will kill you.

David looks at Zechariah, speechless.

DAVID

I don't...

He sighs and looks away from Zechariah.

ZECHARIAH

I know this is hard. You won't like me for this part, but I am a Rastem, and the Code commands that I protect you.

(MORE)

ZECHARIAH (cont'd)
I will not allow you to hurt
yourself or anyone else, so don't
try to leave. Trust me on this.

David shrugs.

ZECHARIAH
Get some rest. We have a long night
ahead of us.

David doesn't respond. Zechariah exits, closing the door behind him. David looks after him, anger and pain etched on his visage. A tear runs down his face.

INT. ZECHARIAH'S HOUSE - DAY

The living area is expansive. It is decently furnished, and the kitchen area is all in the same room. There are other doors in the dwelling as well as a hall stretching off another direction. Sconces on the walls light the room.

A door opens. David peeps out of his room and looks around. Finding the living area empty, he steps out of his room.

He looks around the room at the various doors. He locates a door alone on a wall that is locked from his side.

He looks around again, and tiptoes to the door. He slowly unlatches the door lock.

He reaches for the door handle. Zechariah's hand darts out of nowhere and grabs his hand.

ZECHARIAH
What are you doing?

DAVID
I'm going home. You can't hold me
here.

ZECHARIAH
If you go out there right now,
you'll die.

DAVID
I don't believe you.

ZECHARIAH
Really?

Zechariah pulls David behind the door and opens it, allowing sunlight to stream into the room. Zechariah grabs David's wrist.

ZECHARIAH

This will sting.

David looks up at him a little fearful. Zechariah thrusts his hand into the light. David howls in pain and the flesh on his hand begins to burn.

Zechariah releases him and slams the door. David falls to the floor nursing his hand. He looks at Zechariah with hatred.

ZECHARIAH

Hate me if you want, but remember:
I could have let you leave.

David looks away. He closes his eyes to recover himself.

DAVID

Why?

ZECHARIAH

I've seen men burst into flames running out into the sunlight when they couldn't take the darkness anymore. I don't know why it harms us; it just does. Your hand will heal.

DAVID

What else will hurt me?

ZECHARIAH

Garlic, white oak, and I hope you're not fond of orange juice.

DAVID

Does that mean I'm immortal too?

ZECHARIAH

No. We can be killed. We seem immortal because we live much longer than humans.

DAVID

Why?

ZECHARIAH

Something about having a low body temperature. I've never been clear on what that has to do with aging, but when I was changed, I was your age.

DAVID
How old are you?

ZECHARIAH
(matter-of-fact)
Four hundred ten.

David stares at Zechariah, his mouth hanging open. He averts his eyes.

ZECHARIAH
Get some rest. We have to go to Erim, the central Fempiror city. I need to talk to the Council, and it's a long trip.

DAVID
I don't understand.

ZECHARIAH
I don't expect you to. We leave just after sunset.

David climbs to his feet and trudges to his room. He closes the door. Zechariah walks down his hallway.

He enters a small cavern in which is placed a small pedestal with a cross. A small hole has been cut in the ceiling, and fashioned so the sunlight is directed only on the cross.

Zechariah kneels.

ZECHARIAH
Father in heaven, please be with this child through this difficult time in his new life. And Lord, please help us all if the Tepish have returned...

INT. HAUGINSTOWN TOWN HALL - DAY

The mayor of Hauginstown, GERALD HAUGINS, a large man who is probably too well-pampered by the townsfolk, stands at a lectern before an assembly of townsfolk.

Beth sits in the front row along with Abraham and David's family. His mother sobs quietly, her face tear-stained, while his father only appears stunned.

MAYOR HAUGINS
Friends and neighbors, two days ago, Ben Thurman disappeared.
(MORE)

MAYOR HAUGINS (cont'd)
 Most people attributed the disappearance to Ben's demeanor. We all know he has disappeared before. However, last night a greater tragedy occurred. David Taylor, the son of Jonathan Taylor, never returned home.

David's mother turns her face into Jonathan's shirt. He holds her.

MAYOR HAUGINS
 This morning, next to the statue of my great-grandfather, we found the-

He pauses to collect the words.

MAYOR HAUGINS
 (with difficulty)
 -charred ... remains of a person. Based upon the size of what was left, we can only surmise these are the remains of David Taylor.

David's mother wails. Beth wipes her eyes on a handkerchief. Abraham looks at Beth, concerned. Jonathan holds his wife.

MAYOR HAUGINS
 The last person to see David was Miss Elizabeth Carpenter. Her parents indicated that she and David had discovered Ben Thurman. Mr. Tibbets, would you relay the results of that discovery?

MR. TIBBETS, a skinny man in his 40's, steps forward from the back of the room. His manner is rather aloof, and he doesn't appear pleased with his recent job.

TIBBETS
 Yes, Mayor Haugins. We went out to the area described by Miss Carpenter and found a cave where we discovered more charred remains we believe may be Ben Thurman.

MAYOR HAUGINS
 Anything in the cave?

TIBBETS
 We found a room with two beds. No one was in either one. There was a broken lamp on the floor.

(MORE)

TIBBETS (cont'd)
 Thurman probably knocked it over
 during a struggle, perhaps.

Mayor Haugins looks at the lectern, sad. He faces the
 assembly again.

MAYOR HAUGINS
 Friends and neighbors, while some
 rumors of vampires may be about, we
 can be certain that there is danger
 in Hauginstown. I must reiterate,
 do not go out after dark until this
 matter is resolved. During the day,
 travel in pairs. Funerals for our
 departed brethren will be tomorrow
 afternoon. God be with you all
 through this difficult time.

EXT. ZECHARIAH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Zechariah's house, from the outside, looks like an oversized
 mound of dirt with an opening in the side. Off to one side of
 the dwelling is a second, smaller mound.

INT. ZECHARIAH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Zechariah places a large bag next to the entrance. He goes to
 David's door and opens it.

ZECHARIAH
 Are you ready?

DAVID
 No.

ZECHARIAH
 What do you need?

DAVID
 I need for you to let me go home.

ZECHARIAH
 We've covered this.

DAVID
 They would understand.

ZECHARIAH
 David, I became a Fempiror by
 choice almost four hundred years
 ago for a country that no longer
 exists.

(MORE)

ZECHARIAH (cont'd)
When I came home, I was rejected by
my family and clan, and they knew
what I was. I know how regular
people react to our condition.

DAVID
Then why didn't you stop it?

ZECHARIAH
I was too late.

Zechariah presses a button on the wall, and the light
extinguishes.

David looks around, confused. He runs out after Zechariah.

DAVID
How did you do that?

ZECHARIAH
The light button.

DAVID
Light button?

ZECHARIAH
One of the first things you'll
notice about Fempiror society is
that centuries of peace and a long
life span has allowed some of our
people to create things the humans
don't have.

DAVID
Like the lights?

ZECHARIAH
Since we are night dwellers, the
first thing created was some kind
of light that did not require fire.

DAVID
How does it work?

ZECHARIAH
You'll find out. Come on.

EXT. ZECHARIAH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Zechariah exits his house and approaches a dirt mound off to
the side of his house. David follows him. Zechariah signals
David to stand off to one side.

DAVID
What are you-?

Zechariah halts him with a forefinger.

ZECHARIAH
Patience. Watch.

Zechariah reaches into a small depression in the mound and pulls a handle. As if on hydraulics, the side of the mound opens. An odd-looking cart without wheels sits inside.

DAVID
What's that?

ZECHARIAH
That is how we're going to get to Erim.

David looks at the cart, and then raises an eyebrow to Zechariah.

DAVID
Um... how is this going to get us there?

Zechariah smiles and touches a switch inside the cart. The cart lifts off of the ground a few feet and hovers. David's mouth drops open, speechless. Zechariah smiles.

He pulls the cart out of the mound.

DAVID
How? What?

ZECHARIAH
Instead of weapons of war, we create efficiency. We have to. Since functioning in the daylight isn't possible, we need to get where we're going quickly.

DAVID
What is it?

ZECHARIAH
Well, it's a levitating cart. We just call it a Levi-Cart.

DAVID
How does it work?

ZECHARIAH

Save your questions. We have to reach Cerebdim by sunset.

DAVID

I thought we were going to Erim.

ZECHARIAH

We are, but Erim is too far to reach in a single night - especially a summer night. Cerebdim has a Rastem Safe House that will accommodate us on our journey.

DAVID

Safe house?

ZECHARIAH

Again, will explain later.

EXT. OPEN FIELDS - NIGHT

The Levi-Cart bolts across the surface at high speed.

ZECHARIAH

Where to begin... Fempiror means "new warrior" in an old language called Felletterusk that the Fempiror still use and you will have to learn.

David scowls. Zechariah ignores him.

EXT. FELLETERUSK BATTLEFIELD - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Vista of an enormous battle between two great forces. Armies clash together, locked in a seemingly eternal struggle.

ZECHARIAH (V.O.)

In 1385, there was a war between the Felletterusk and our enemies, the Corelnesh. We were losing.

The Felletterusk Army retreats. The Corelnesh army cheers.

EXT. FELLETERUSK TRAINING GROUND - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

A man of about 40 with a dark well-cut beard, sharp eyes, and a nervous demeanor, VOIVODE DRACULYA, walks past a line of troops, handing them cups full of a dark, red liquid.

ZECHARIAH (V.O.)
 Volunteers took a serum created by
 an alchemist - Voivode Draculya -
 and became new warriors - Fempiror.

The troops drink the liquid in unison. Variously, they all
 scream and collapse to the ground.

EXT. FELLETERUSK BATTLEFIELD - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

This time, the Felletterusk troops run through Corelnesh
 encampments, destroying everything and everyone in their
 path.

ZECHARIAH (V.O.)
 With our enhanced speed and
 strength, we were easily able to
 defeat the Corelnesh.

EXT. FELLETERUSK FIELDS - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

The troops turn away from Voivode and walk home.

ZECHARIAH (V.O.)
 After the war, Voivode had not yet
 perfected a cure to revert us to
 our former state, so we went home
 as Fempiror to rejoin our families
 and wait....

EXT. OPEN FIELDS - NIGHT

Zechariah looks into the distance, difficult memories etched
 on his face.

ZECHARIAH
 ...or that was the plan.

DAVID
 What went wrong?

ZECHARIAH
 Our family and friends didn't
 understand our condition.

EXT. FELLETERUSK VILLAGE - SUNRISE (FLASHBACK)

A Fempiror is dragged out of his house in a throng of blood-
 thirsty villagers.

He is strapped to a pole - witch-hunt style. The sun rises over the horizon. He burns, screaming in pain.

ZECHARIAH (V.O.)

We frightened them. Some Fempiror were killed by people of their village who thought they were of Satanic origin. Some were tied to a post to wait for the sun to rise on them.

EXT. FELLETERUSK CAVE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

The sun shines bright outside a cave where several Fempiror are huddled. One of them gazes out into the sun drenched countryside. He charges out of the cave. Another Fempiror tries to stop him, but is too late.

His flesh burns as he runs across the countryside.

ZECHARIAH (V.O.)

Others couldn't handle the darkness anymore, and chose to gaze at the sun one last time...

EXT. OPEN FIELDS - NIGHT

Zechariah continues driving over the landscape, gazing out over his memories.

ZECHARIAH

...as it destroyed them.

Zechariah looks off to one side. He steers the Levi-Cart toward a small town.

DAVID

Is that Cerebdim?

ZECHARIAH

Yes. I'll tell you more as we continue our journey. Four hundred years of history takes time to tell.

David nods. The Levi-Cart continues to barrel onward.

EXT. CEREBDIM - NIGHT

The Levi-cart flies into town. Zechariah concentrates his gaze at each building.

DAVID

Are you looking for something?

ZECHARIAH

The Rastem Safe House is marked in the Felletterusk language and writing. It looks like nonsense to most humans.

DAVID

What is this safe house anyway?

ZECHARIAH

Just a place to stay the day without odd looks, and so I can get some information about the current state of Erim. Here we are.

Zechariah points to a building with a sign written in an odd language of symbols. The sign says: "Rastem Feca Usrasa." Zechariah steers the cart towards a garage door type of opening that opens automatically.

INT. SAFE HOUSE GARAGE - NIGHT

Upon entering, David looks about. A Fempiror sits off to one side of the door, controlling it. Zechariah parks the Levi-cart. They exit the vehicle and cross to a door leading into the safe house.

INT. SAFE HOUSE COMMON ROOM - NIGHT

Zechariah and David enter. The place is sparsely decorated with only large wooden tables adorning its wooden floor. The same sort of lighting system that lit Zechariah's home is in use here.

Zechariah walks over to a bar-like counter. The Fempiror behind the counter, ILDRITCH, a man looking to be in his 50's with a grey horseshoe of hair around his bald head with a friendly face and strong arms, looks up at them and smiles.

ILDRITCH

Well, I'll be... Zechariah, what brings you out of Hauginstown?

ZECHARIAH

Heading to Erim. Same as always, Ildritch. I have more proof of the Tepish threat.

The place grows quiet. Eyes turn to Zechariah. Ildritch draws close to Zechariah.

ILDRITCH

Now listen here, Zechariah... They didn't believe you fifteen years ago, and twenty-five years ago, your theories got you removed. They won't believe you.

ZECHARIAH

They have to listen, Ildritch, they must.

The whole place has silenced. Eyes remain on Zechariah and Ildritch. David looks concerned and curious. Ildritch motions Zechariah to a far end of the counter.

ILDRITCH

(low, in Felletterusk;
subtitled)

Ti sil atef esprültärsh runvajav,
kaki anlandi. Erim silnil hav ti
sik.

(translation)

It is a hopeless venture, my
friend. Erim is not what it was.

ZECHARIAH

(in Felletterusk;
subtitled)

Ka stüra tidä tod. Lew stüra
Tepishel pesti anjo yeh crira
vertes.

(translation)

I have to do it. The Tepish must be
exposed before they are allowed to
take over.

They look at David; then at the room. Conversation has resumed. David has followed them and waits. Ildritch looks back to Zechariah and nods.

ILDRITCH

(in Felletterusk;
subtitled)

Ravin gus. Yawlan ka resa
retidamnil lidä. Erim sil jyc kaki
jafdentib. Stom Rastem velada tidä.
Liki nar iostef jatara rüft bato,
tül ti jatara dyatep re yelta bato.

(translation)

So be it.

(MORE)

ILDRITCH (cont'd)
 Whatever I say will not deter you.
 Erim is beyond my reach now. Most
 Rastem avoid it. Your suspicions
 may be true, but it may be too late
 already.

Zechariah looks at Ildritch, worried.

ZECHARIAH
 Discouraging.

ILDRITCH
 (suddenly cheerful)
 A room?

ZECHARIAH
 (following Ildritch's
 lead)
 Please.

Ildritch pulls a key from the cabinet behind him, and hands it to Zechariah. Zechariah takes hold of it, but Ildritch doesn't release it just yet. Zechariah looks at him, curious. Ildritch is suddenly serious again.

ILDRITCH
 (in Felletterusk;
 subtitled)
 Gras nilenh.
 (translation)
 Trust no one.

Zechariah takes the key, and walks past David. David follows.

DAVID
 What was he telling you?

INT. SAFE HOUSE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Zechariah walks down to their room.

DAVID
 Zechariah-

Zechariah turns to David, holding up a finger to quiet him. David stops. Zechariah turns the key in the lock and steps into the room. David follows.

INT. SAFE HOUSE, ZECHARIAH'S ROOM - NIGHT

Zechariah locks the door behind them.

ZECHARIAH

Things may be worse than I feared.
Nevertheless, we must go to the
council, and pray to God that they
still work for the people.

DAVID

Who are these Tepish?

ZECHARIAH

They are an offshoot of the Rastem
order that fought the war against
the Corelnesh. In the beginning,
they weren't evil; they were just
angry.

EXT. FELLETTERRUSK TRAINING GROUNDS - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Two mighty regiments stand ready to fight. One stands behind
a banner depicting a wolf. The other stands behind a banner
depicting an owl.

ZECHARIAH (V.O.)

The Fempiror of the war had two
divisions: Rastem, which means
wolf; and Elewo, which means owl.

IMAGE: The Rastem army fights dressed in wrist and ankle
gauntlets, using swords against swords.

ZECHARIAH (V.O.)

The Rastem were the fighting
soldiers, specializing in swordplay
and offense.

IMAGE: An Elewo, garbed like a ninja, sneaks around a corner
and gazes on two Corelnesh soldiers. Unarmed except for the
gauntlets on wrists and ankles, he moves up behind the
Corelnesh, and after a very short battle, he takes them both
down by snapping their necks.

ZECHARIAH (V.O.)

The Elewo specialized in unarmed
combat and handled espionage and
covert operations.

INT. SAFE HOUSE, ZECHARIAH'S ROOM - NIGHT

DAVID

Where did the Tepish come from?

ZECHARIAH

Out of the chaos that followed.

INT. FEMPIROR MEETING CHAMBER - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Around a large round table, twelve Fempiror sit in discussion. They are all flanked by members of their units of Rastem and Elewo.

ZECHARIAH (V.O.)

Our leaders talked for days on end.
The Elewo decided to wait out a
cure in peace, away from the people
who rejected them.

The Elewo all leave the room. The remaining Rastem erupt into a fierce debate.

ZECHARIAH (V.O.)

The Rastem were divided. Some of us
felt we should continue serving as
we served before: protect the
people from future threats. The
others felt we should take our
revenge on these people and do to
them as we did to the Corelnesh. To
these, their own families became
their enemy. The Rastem divided
into two orders from that day
forward.

The Rastem leave the table. Half go one way, and half go the other way.

INT. SAFE HOUSE, ZECHARIAH'S ROOM - NIGHT

ZECHARIAH

Those who wished to continue in
their duties to protect the people
retained the Rastem name. The
others who desired revenge became
the order of Tepish, which means
bat.

DAVID

What happened?

ZECHARIAH

They moved faster than we could
have dreamed.

EXT. FELLETERUSK VILLAGE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

A group of Tepish, armored in red and black with a bat on their chest, tear through a little village, killing everyone in sight, and torching everything.

ZECHARIAH (V.O.)

Like a swarm of locusts, they swept across the Empire, destroying everything in their paths - men, women, children - everyone who rejected them.

EXT. FELLETERUSK CAPITAL - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Buildings smolder. A group of Rastem stands in awe at the destruction.

ZECHARIAH (V.O.)

By the time we realized what was happening, we were too late. The Tepish had destroyed our country. We watched our capital city go up in flames before our eyes, and we were powerless to stop it. We had failed...

INT. SAFE HOUSE, ZECHARIAH'S ROOM - NIGHT

Zechariah stops and looks at the floor, tears welling in his eyes. David sits quietly.

ZECHARIAH

We have a long road ahead of us tonight. Get some rest.

David nods.

EXT. HAUGINSTOWN CEMETERY - DAY

The cemetery holds two fresh graves. Beth and Abraham stand together at one of them. The simple grave marker shows "David Taylor."

Near them are the parents of David, Beth, and Abraham. Beth's eyes are red and puffy. Tears continue to roll down her cheeks.

Beth looks back at David's parents. His mother shoots her an angry look. Beth turns back. Abraham turns to her.

ABRAHAM

How are you doing?

BETH

David's mother blames me for his death. Maybe it was my fault.

ABRAHAM

Don't think that way.

BETH

No, if I hadn't suggested ... if we only had come home earlier ... he'd still-

Abraham places a finger on her lips. He withdraws his hand quickly and looks around.

ABRAHAM

The mayor has half the town staying up nights to try and catch the killer. By the grace of God, he will be brought to justice.

BETH

Maybe he isn't dead. I still feel like he's with me. In here.

She points to her heart.

BETH

This might not be him. It could be anyone, couldn't it? I mean, he was charred beyond-

Beth looks back and Mrs. Taylor stands directly in front of her. Jonathan takes her arm and tugs in a vain attempt to bring her away from Beth. The pair lock eyes for a moment.

MRS. TAYLOR

It should have been you.

PATRICK

That's enough.

JONATHAN

He's right. Let's go.

Mrs. Taylor allows her husband to escort her away.

PATRICK
Come on, Beth.

Beth nods. Abraham stops her before she leaves.

ABRAHAM
Is there anything I can do?

Beth shakes her head.

BETH
I just need to be alone for awhile.

Abraham watches her go. He sees his parents standing off to one side, ready to leave as well. He watches Beth walk away for a moment, and then nods and follows his parents.

INT. BETH'S ROOM - DUSK

Beth enters. Her room is a hodge-podge of domestic heaven, as if her life has been in the preparation of becoming a homemaker. Clothes in a variety of sizes from baby to adult hang on a rack on her wall.

A half-completed cross-stitch picture of a house and yard lies on a small table. A painting of David and part of her head sits on an easel next to an assortment of colors. A mirror sits beyond her easel.

The ball of yarn sits on her bed wrapped up in knitting needles. She walks into her room and sits on her bed. She looks around her, tears streaming down her face.

She picks up her incomplete knitting and holds it to her face, sobbing. She tosses it on the floor and buries her face in her lap, sniffing. Finally, she looks outside at the sunset.

BETH
What happened to you, my love?
Where did you go? I can feel in my
heart we did not bury you today.
But if it was not you, then where
are you now? As long as the hope of
your life lives within me, I can
never marry another. Come back to
me, my love, come back to me...

She lays her head down on her pillow and closes her eyes.

BETH
Come back to me...

Outside the sun sets, and night falls.

INT. SAFE HOUSE, ZECHARIAH'S ROOM - NIGHT

In bed, David's eyes snap open.

DAVID
(whispered)
Beth...

His eyes show a restless sleep. He does not move.

ZECHARIAH (O.S.)
Get up, David.

David blinks. He looks over to see Zechariah, once again adorned in full Rastem gear, ready to go.

ZECHARIAH
Summer nights are painfully short.
We must hurry.

EXT. OPEN FIELDS - NIGHT

Zechariah and David speed across the fields in the Levi-Cart.

DAVID
So when we get to this "Erim," then what?

ZECHARIAH
We petition the council for an immediate meeting, and then speak with a Rastem named Tiberius to find out the true state of Erim. If he's still there. I've been away for far too long. I've been a fool.

DAVID
Why have you been away so long?

ZECHARIAH
I came to Hauginstown to try and find evidence of an occurrence twenty-five years ago. I feel this attack is related.

EXT. ERIM - NIGHT

The city of Erim is modestly lit as Zechariah and David cruise into it. The city is busy with people.

Zechariah drives his Levi-Cart up to a building labeled "Cunlisk Ydöj Lakär."

They stop the vehicle. Zechariah shuts it off, and it lands onto the short legs that keep the levitation hubs just off the ground.

They get out of the cart and go up the stairs.

INT. COUNCIL BODY HALL - NIGHT

Zechariah and David enter. "Council Body Hall" is a beautiful, ornate structure with exemplary architecture.

JARVIS AORI, a skinny, sniveling, butler type of man with neatly trimmed white hair and distrustful eyes, looks up from his desk near the entrance.

He stands and walks over to them. He has a tone that drips with perfect customer service.

JARVIS

Good evening, gentlemen. Welcome to Body Hall. My name is Jarvis Aori. How can I direct you this evening?

ZECHARIAH

Hello Jarvis. I'm Zechariah and this is David. I need to speak to the Head; is it still Karian?

JARVIS

It is...and may I inquire, sir, as to the subject of your meeting?

ZECHARIAH

The Tepish.

A look of disbelief crosses Jarvis's face. His tone drops from friendly to sarcastic.

JARVIS

Yes, sir. Head Karian is in. I'll see if he's available.

ZECHARIAH

Thank you.

They follow Jarvis down the hall to a beautiful double door.

JARVIS

Please wait here.

Jarvis enters the office. David looks at Zechariah, who stands stoic.

DAVID

So what are we doing here?

ZECHARIAH

Patience.

Jarvis exits Karian's office, a smug look adorning his face.

JARVIS

Head Karian is too busy to speak to you at this time.

ZECHARIAH

Did you tell him about the Tepish?

JARVIS

Yes.

ZECHARIAH

And he doesn't want to know about it?

JARVIS

He is very busy.

ZECHARIAH

When does he want us to come back?

JARVIS

He didn't say.

ZECHARIAH

Then we'll see him now.

JARVIS

What?

Zechariah pushes Jarvis out of the way and slams open the door to Karian's office.

INT. KARIAN'S OFFICE, COUNCIL BODY HALL - NIGHT

KARIAN, a man who appears to be in his 60's, dressed in fine clothes, very fit with trimmed white hair and deep, blue, penetrating eyes, looks up from his desk. Zechariah enters followed closely by Jarvis, and then David.

JARVIS

Mr. Zechariah, you cannot storm in here like this.

ZECHARIAH

And what are you going to do, Jarvis? You were never the fighter you claimed to be, and you haven't changed.

Jarvis backs down as Zechariah continues to Karian's desk. Karian does not look surprised and sits quietly waiting for Zechariah to speak.

ZECHARIAH

I need a meeting of the Council Body tonight.

KARIAN

You can't be serious.

ZECHARIAH

The only way this will get out is to call a meeting.

KARIAN

Jarvis briefed me, and this is not a matter for the Council.

ZECHARIAH

It's the return of the dark side of our race. How is this not a Council matter?

KARIAN

While we appreciate your concern in this matter, the Tepish will not and cannot return.

ZECHARIAH

How can you be so sure?

KARIAN

They were dealt their punishment three hundred sixty-eight years ago. You were there. I was there. There are no Tepish anymore.

ZECHARIAH

There was never confirmation that the Tepish were wiped out; many known leaders were never found. How do you explain the new Fempiror if there are no Tepish?

KARIAN

The confirmation was the cessation of the uprising, and new Fempiror can be created by accident - you know this. Besides, the Tepish ideology was revenge. We all feel this at times.

ZECHARIAH

I killed a rogue who referenced the Order of Tepish; he said he was a Fälskrüz. A non-Tepish would not do this.

KARIAN

You are to believe a rogue Fempiror who willingly disobeyed the law?

ZECHARIAH

I'm willing to take action at the mention of the Tepish return. Call the Council.

KARIAN

It's not within my power to-

ZECHARIAH

Don't treat me like I was transmuted yesterday. I was on the council from the beginning, and I know what you can do.

KARIAN

And you were removed.

ZECHARIAH

For acknowledging a situation. Because you felt I was too dangerous allowing the people to know there may be a problem.

(MORE)

ZECHARIAH (cont'd)
You want them ignorant; I want them informed. Under Council Procedure fifty-seven, any Fempiror may request a meeting of the Council if it concerns a possible threat to our race.

Karian stares Zechariah down for a moment, angry.

KARIAN
Very well. The council will convene in four girafs. Choose your words carefully. We don't want false rumors, and we don't want to incite panic.

ZECHARIAH
Thank you.

KARIAN
Until then, Zechariah.

ZECHARIAH
Head Karian.

Zechariah exits. David follows closely behind.

EXT. COUNCIL BODY HALL - NIGHT

Zechariah storms out with David attempting to keep up.

DAVID
What is going on?

ZECHARIAH
The Tepish will not do anything until they are certain they can win. The ability to act with patience is the biggest advantage to having a long life. I believe the Tepish are building their forces, and their time is near.

DAVID
And the council doesn't agree?

ZECHARIAH
No. You heard his opinion of me. They don't believe a word of it.

DAVID
Oh.

ZECHARIAH

Now, I need to talk to an old friend of mine before the meeting. There, we will discuss your future.

DAVID

My future? My future is with Beth.

ZECHARIAH

That's not possible.

DAVID

How can you say that? You think I can just accept this fate of darkness like you have?

ZECHARIAH

You listen to me, child. I know exactly what you're going through. We were soldiers used in an experiment, and when the war was over, we were outcast and forced to live on our own. I watched friends kill themselves because they couldn't take it. I have gone through more years of soul-searching than that little town of yours has existed. Don't you tell me what you're going through. You know nothing!

Zechariah turns away, angry. David waits for a moment before following Zechariah through the streets.

They walk in silence for some time through the winding streets of Erim. Fempiror around them go about routines in the night as if it were day.

David catches up to Zechariah.

DAVID

Forgive me.

ZECHARIAH

I understand.

DAVID

So why isn't there a cure?

Zechariah looks at him, then sighs.

ZECHARIAH

There was one once.

DAVID
What happened to it?

ZECHARIAH
It was lost. The Tepish destroyed Voivode's lab and used some of their own blood to change him into a Fempiror as an act of vengeance for "ruining their lives." The cure went with his lab.

DAVID
Couldn't he just recreate the cure?

ZECHARIAH
For over a hundred years he tried, but some piece was lost. Finally, he accepted his fate and lives in his ancestral home in the Carpathian Mountains.

David nods. They walk on a little further.

DAVID
So the Fempiror serum runs through our blood?

ZECHARIAH
Yes.

DAVID
How does it change people?

ZECHARIAH
Why?

DAVID
Curious.

ZECHARIAH
No one's curious about that. Explain yourself.

DAVID
Well, if I can't return to Hauginstown, maybe Beth would want to be changed so we could still be together.

Zechariah turns, grabs David by the shirt, and holds him up against a wall without effort. David appears to have had the fear of God put into him.

ZECHARIAH

Don't you ever think of doing that. One of the highest crimes you can commit is willful transmutation. It is the first rule of the Rastem Code. Not only is it morally corrupt, it is a sin against the person you change. You have no idea what you're getting into.

DAVID

But-

ZECHARIAH

I'm serious, boy. I don't want to ever hear of this again. Do you understand me?

Wide-eyed, David nods. Zechariah lowers David to the ground, and turns away. David catches up to him.

DAVID

But I love her.

ZECHARIAH

If you love her, you'll let her go.

DAVID

I can't.

ZECHARIAH

(calm)

If you go back to Hauginstown and deliberately change Beth into a Fempiror, I will kill you.

David pauses momentarily, watching Zechariah walk onward. He catches up to him. They both continue on in awkward silence.

EXT. URUFDIAM PLATEAU - NIGHT

A sheer mountainside looms in the distance. Something shoots out of a small cave in the mountain, rushing away from it. It's a LEVI-CART, similar in design to Zechariah's but appearing to be newer in design and condition.

Driving the cart is FERTID, a man in his 30's with medium length blonde hair, a serious face, and clothed in black drab with gauntlets on his wrists and ankles. His outfit is sliced in several places and he is bleeding from his wounds.

Behind him, another Levi-cart of the same model with four Fempiror flies out of the cave.

These four are dressed in black armor with a bat etched in red on its breastplate and red borders on the connecting armor plates. Their helmets protect their heads but are open in the front, much like samurai headgear.

The Four Fempiror approach Fertid's Levi-Cart. As they draw near, three of them prepare to leap onto Fertid's vehicle.

Fertid locks the controls to keep the cart moving in a straight line. He climbs onto the rear bed of the cart and secures his foot in a strap fixed to the rear of the cart.

Fempiror 1 draws his sword and leaps across the gap. He lands squarely on the cart.

Fertid fights unarmed with remarkable strength, speed, and skill. He blocks the sword blows with his gauntlets and knocks Fempiror 1 off the Cart. He crunches to the ground.

Fempiror 2 and 3 jump over together. Using his wrists and free ankle, he blocks their hits and makes a few on them. He knocks Fempiror 2 off the cart, and continues taking on Fempiror 3.

He glances up and sees the cart heading straight for a grove of trees. He hits Fempiror 3 who falls off the back, but grabs the side of the trailing cart.

Fertid releases his foot and jumps to the other cart that veers off just as his cart smashes into the trees.

Fertid attacks the driver and tosses him overboard. He takes the controls, but Fempiror 3 climbs back onto the cart.

Fertid blocks the sword blow, as if sensing its approach. He locks the controls again and battles Fempiror 3.

The cart nears another grove of trees. Fertid knocks Fempiror 3 off the cart. He takes the controls, but can't avoid the trees. He swerves between the trees at breakneck speed.

The trees are too close together and they clip off the sides of the cart.

Fertid brakes the cart as it wedges between two trees and stops. He grabs a day-travel cloak and leaps to the forest floor. He breaks into a very fast run across the nighttime landscape.

EXT. ERIM BUSINESS DISTRICT - NIGHT

Zechariah and David enter a congested business center of Erim. The streets are lined with permanent shops selling all manner of items.

DAVID

So if transmutation is illegal, why are there so many Fempiror?

ZECHARIAH

Willing transmutation is illegal. You heard Karian. It's possible to be changed accidentally.

DAVID

Oh.

ZECHARIAH

For another thing, not everyone here is a Fempiror.

DAVID

They aren't?

ZECHARIAH

No. Humans who know of us frequently visit and even live in our town. Some of the shops are open all day and all night. The Fempiror owners hire humans to work during the day while the sun is out and vice versa.

DAVID

How can you tell them apart?

ZECHARIAH

Why would you need to?

Zechariah gestures to a particular shop.

ZECHARIAH

Here we are.

They approach a shop called THE LOST ART OF JIJUNGA.

DAVID

What's Jijunga?

ZECHARIAH

I really have no idea. Tiberius made it up. I think it's some kind of meditation.

Zechariah and David enter the shop.

INT. LOST ART OF JIJUNGA - NIGHT

They enter a large room that takes up the front half of the building with a very high ceiling. A mat takes up a considerable portion of the floor.

As the pair enters, an old Fempiror, TIBERIUS, comes out of the rear. He appears to be older than Zechariah, but more at ease. His hair is trimmed and white with a trimmed beard. He smiles upon seeing Zechariah.

TIBERIUS

Zechariah!

ZECHARIAH

How are you doing, Tiberius?

TIBERIUS

Great.

The pair hugs like old friends. Zechariah pulls David forward.

ZECHARIAH

David, this is Tiberius. He trained the Rastem for their original battles in Thirteen Eighty Five. He has also served to train or support almost every Rastem since.

DAVID

What does this have to do with my future?

ZECHARIAH

David, there are dark times ahead. You must have some knowledge of how to defend yourself, or you cannot survive.

DAVID

But I don't belong here.

TIBERIUS

Many have come who don't belong.
Over time, willingly or
unwillingly, they learn.

ZECHARIAH

This is not just for the battles to
come, but if the Tepish are out
there, there are humans who need
defense from their desires.

DAVID

It didn't help me.

ZECHARIAH

While I was too late for you, I was
able to neutralize the problem in
your town. There is more to the
code than preventing transmutation.

DAVID

But my life is still ruined.

ZECHARIAH

Whether you like it or not, you are
here. You must make the most of it.

David folds his arms again and looks away. Zechariah looks at
Tiberius and shrugs.

TIBERIUS

So tell me, what are you doing
here, Zechariah? You haven't
returned with more Tepish reports,
have you?

ZECHARIAH

I have spoken to Head Karian and
will meet with the council tonight.

TIBERIUS

You called an emergency meeting?

ZECHARIAH

Tiberius, the Tepish have returned.
The encounter is proof.

TIBERIUS

The encounter will be dismissed as
an isolated incident.

ZECHARIAH

They need to know.

TIBERIUS

They don't care.

Zechariah clenches his fists and looks at Tiberius.

TIBERIUS

Zechariah, bare mentions of the Tepish Order were outlawed years ago.

ZECHARIAH

We have to face this. If we don't, the Tepish way will be law, and our lives won't be the only ones ended.

TIBERIUS

Despite our apparent relationship with the humans of Erim, a lot of Fempiror resent them, like the Tepish do.

Zechariah stares him, resolute. Tiberius shakes his head.

TIBERIUS

It's too late to stop this, but we might be able to use it to our advantage.

ZECHARIAH

What do you have in mind?

TIBERIUS

They will make it well-known that you were removed from the council for the same presentation as today.

ZECHARIAH

That was not a vain mission. We knew the Tepish emerged and massed at that location.

TIBERIUS

The location had no evidence of habitation. In twenty-five years, no one's found anything, including you.

ZECHARIAH

Nothing anyone has lived to tell about.

TIBERIUS

Speak the truth, Zechariah. If this goes as badly as I suspect it will, you'll be captured. If you try to run, they'll get you with Chasers.

ZECHARIAH

Chasers?

TIBERIUS

Like your old Levi-cart, but smaller and faster. Everything has changed since you left. Even if they found proof, I suspect they'd cover it up.

Tiberius looks over to David.

TIBERIUS

One more thing...
 (in Felletterusk;
 subtitled)
 Het grasa li pärel?
 (translation)
 How do you trust the boy?

ZECHARIAH

(in Felletterusk;
 subtitled)
 Ka kortananil kä ha sil atef ulöj.
 (translation)
 I don't believe he's a spy.

TIBERIUS

(in Felletterusk;
 subtitled)
 Het crira li ras bato? Ha criro lej
 anjo li rivadago. Ti criro atel
 crotjav bato.
 (translation)
 How can you be sure? He could have
 been changed before you arrived. It
 could have been an act.

ZECHARIAH

(in Felletterusk;
 subtitled)
 Ka sik winikkesh haki nar crotjav.
 Ha saba grane atef frontumatjavero
 dega. Ka iostanil hadä.
 (translation)
 I have been watching his actions.
 (MORE)

ZECHARIAH (cont'd)
 He has the anger incurred from a
 regular transmutation. I do not
 suspect him.

TIBERIUS
 (in Felletterusk;
 subtitled)
 Maskün crotjav crira erandel ko
 milkavdel.
 (translation)
 Actions can be learned or
 remembered.

ZECHARIAH
 (in Felletterusk;
 subtitled)
 Ka sabanil ate elsud hadä bortil.
 (translation)
 I have no reason to doubt him.

TIBERIUS
 (in Felletterusk;
 subtitled)
 Yan ka grasa liki haltebjav.
 (translation)
 Then I trust your judgment.

They look over to David. He has a very confused look on his face as he looks from Tiberius to Zechariah. Tiberius smiles and walks over to a container with several wooden swords.

TIBERIUS
 David, right? Catch.

Tiberius pulls out one of the swords and tosses it to David. It sails through the air until David catches it by the hilt.

TIBERIUS
 Hm. Not bad.

He takes two other swords out of the container. He tosses one to Zechariah. Without warning, he swings his sword at David. Instinctively, David brings up his sword to block.

TIBERIUS
 Not bad at all. The boy has a lot
 of potential.

David looks at Tiberius incredulously for a moment before he tosses the sword to the floor. He folds his arms.

TIBERIUS
 Pay attention. The sword is the
 main weapon of a Rastem.
 (MORE)

TIBERIUS (cont'd)

It is your defense and your inner strength. Zechariah is a master. Observe.

(to Zechariah)

All right, Zechariah, let's see how rusty you've gotten out there in Hauginstown.

ZECHARIAH

Let's see what Jijunga has done for you.

The two face off. They start with a courtesy wave of the swords before attaining a defensive stance.

ZECHARIAH

After you.

TIBERIUS

I don't think so.

Zechariah nods, and with lightning speed, he and Tiberius clash their wooden swords together. Tiberius blocks each move Zechariah makes. The two are clearly from the same school of fighting as each move is deliberately made and evenly blocked.

The front door opens, and VLADIMIR, another older Fempiror with slim, chiseled features, a small mouth, clean-shaven face and hair, and eyes behind which hide many mysteries, enters.

He watches the mock battle for a few moments before the combatants notice him.

VLADIMIR

Mind if I have a go, Tiberius?

Zechariah and Tiberius cease the hostilities.

TIBERIUS

Vladimir, you really think you can beat him finally?

VLADIMIR

I keep up my training.

Tiberius hands over the sword. Vladimir twirls it around on his fingers with cocky confidence as he talks.

ZECHARIAH

How are you lately?

VLADIMIR

Disturbed, I would say. I received an urgent communication stating a code fifty-seven meeting was called for tonight. I knew only the great Zechariah would do such a thing. In fact, he's the only one outside the council who even knows what one is.

ZECHARIAH

How long have you been on the council?

VLADIMIR

I replaced you twenty-five years ago. It reduced the brunt of your loss.

ZECHARIAH

I understand Erim is not what it was.

VLADIMIR

Many new faces. Some not to be trusted. If you are back with more Tepish "evidence," your voice will fall on deaf ears.

ZECHARIAH

I have to try. If I do nothing, how am I upholding the Rastem Code? He doesn't deserve to be like us.

VLADIMIR

So you're showing off for the new one.

DAVID

The new one doesn't care.

The three stop and look at him.

ZECHARIAH

I don't know how much longer I will tolerate your insolence.

DAVID

Answer me this: if I go through this training to be a Rastem, I'm supposed to help people right?

ZECHARIAH

Right.

DAVID

So, could I go back to Hauginstown, and be their defense? I could defend my family and friends. I'd be passionate about it.

ZECHARIAH

No. You've already expressed some intentions about Hauginstown, and the Rastem Code prohibits your returning until properly trained.

DAVID

Can I ever go back?

TIBERIUS

You are dead to the people you left behind. You have to let them go. It isn't pleasant being shoved into this life, but you have to take it and make the best of it.

DAVID

What if I don't care about my life anymore or this Rastem life or your race? What if I don't care if I live or die?

ZECHARIAH

Then you die. I have no desire to waste my time on frivolous ventures such as a defiant child who refuses to listen to reason. If you wish to learn, we are open to questions. Otherwise, say nothing. Understood?

David nods, silenced.

ZECHARIAH

Now pay attention.
(to Vladimir)
Let's go.

The two give the courtesy wave of the swords, and set themselves to duel. Zechariah strikes almost before Vladimir's sword comes down from the wave. Vladimir defends.

The duel is far more intense than the one between Zechariah and Tiberius. Zechariah appears to be angrier in this one. Vladimir makes several attempts to change the direction of the battle to his favor, but is highly unsuccessful.

Vladimir is backed up against a wall.

Zechariah takes a final swing, and the sword flies out of Vladimir's hand and through the front window of the building, breaking it.

Unphased, Zechariah stands over Vladimir, sword at the throat. Vladimir looks a little afraid that Zechariah might kill him with a fake sword.

He smiles a nervous smile.

VLADIMIR

All right, you win.

Zechariah backs off, and tosses the mock sword to Tiberius.

ZECHARIAH

Sorry about the window, Tiberius.

TIBERIUS

Don't worry about it, Zechariah. It's not the first time I've lost a window to a sword. I really should consider reinforcing it.

VLADIMIR

Well, that was interesting.

ZECHARIAH

I win again.

VLADIMIR

Someday, I'll beat you. You're the only one I never have.

ZECHARIAH

If I ever get maimed, we'll have another go.

VLADIMIR

Zechariah, I am not here for a friendly visit. I have come personally to talk you out of this meeting.

TIBERIUS

Zechariah, I know many Rastem willing to investigate this without the knowledge of the council; Vladimir is one of those.

ZECHARIAH

Really?

VLADIMIR

Despite my political position, I believe there is a threat.

ZECHARIAH

But once a code fifty-seven is called, it cannot be retracted.

VLADIMIR

You could leave town first.

ZECHARIAH

I will not damage my honor.

VLADIMIR

All the same-

ZECHARIAH

David was changed into a Fempiror by a Tepish. He said he was a Fälskrüz. He even used a nilrof to do it.

DAVID

Used a what?

Zechariah turns to David, and then Tiberius.

ZECHARIAH

A nilrof. Tiberius, do you still have one?

Tiberius nods, and leaves the room.

VLADIMIR

Just because that's a Tepish device, doesn't necessarily mean that the order is returning.

ZECHARIAH

Whatever it means, the rogue referenced the Tepish, used Tepish equipment, carried out Tepish ideologies and claims to be the lowest rung of the Tepish Hierarchy. Whether we want to admit it or not, the Order of Tepish is being revived by someone. It must be stopped.

Tiberius returns with a box. He brings it to Zechariah and Vladimir. They open it. Zechariah reaches in and produces a chrome nilrof similar to the one Rufus used.

ZECHARIAH
Does this look familiar?

David flinches, and nods.

DAVID
That's why I have two marks where I
got injected. Like a pair of fangs?

TIBERIUS
The Tepish perpetuate the vampire
myth. This device not only easily
injects our blood as the serum, but
perpetuates the fang portion of the
myth.

VLADIMIR
This meeting will not go well. I
fear for you, old friend.

TIBERIUS
When the inevitable occurs, meet me
at the Safe House in Cerebdim.
We'll work out what to do from
there.

Vladimir checks the time.

VLADIMIR
The meeting approaches. Until then,
Zechariah.

ZECHARIAH
Until then.

INT. MEETING HALL - NIGHT

Zechariah and David sit at the forefront of the hall.
Tiberius sits at the back. Warriors guard the exits. Two at
the front and two at the rear. An ANNOUNCER rises at the
front.

ANNOUNCER
(in Felletterusk)
Välenh nördsta telnyatelpar
cunliskelero Fempiror.
(translation)
All rise for the entry of the
Fempiror Council.

Everyone stands. The SEVEN MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL, Vladimir, JATARUA, TYRONIS, OLIGAR, VYRNYA, and GHITISH led by Council Head Karian, enter. The council members all appear to be about the same age.

KARIAN
 (in Felletterusk)
 Cunliskel jyc ghortia. Erästa satz.
 (translation)
 The council now convenes. Please sit.

Everyone sits.

KARIAN
 We are here for an emergency meeting called by Zechariah, Rastem, and former member of the Council, removed for unfounded theories and disturbing the peace. Zechariah, I do hope you haven't called us all here in vain.

ZECHARIAH
 I assure you, Head Karian, that I have not. I have with me one David Taylor, a former resident of Hauginstown, which I currently protect. He was recently transmuted by a Fempiror named Rufus, who claimed allegiance to the Tepish Order.

The crowd gasps and talks amongst themselves.

ZECHARIAH
 The Tepish have existed for years in this capacity, but have not been a threat. However, this Tepish claimed to be a Fälskrüz, the lowest rank of the Tepish Hierarchy.

TYRONIS
 And why is that significant?

ZECHARIAH
 If you were an independent member of a dead order, why claim to be the lowest rank? Why not say you are the Elrod Malnak instead?

OLIGAR

It is the nature of the Tepish to instill fear, even those who work alone. What better way than to make you believe there are more than to say you are outranked?

ZECHARIAH

But the Tepish do not kidnap their victims; they leave them to be rejected by their families.

VYRNYA

I am not convinced.

ZECHARIAH

The Tepish are returning. They were taking David to be a part of an unwilling army, and when they are ready, they will attack and lay waste to everything.

GHITISH

Zechariah, you are getting out of order.

ZECHARIAH

My apologies, Council Head, but this is serious.

KARIAN

You claimed this urgency twenty-five years ago when you led our waning army to a desolate zone and found no evidence. We hold your claims as unfounded.

ZECHARIAH

What proof do you require? You will accept nothing short of invasion as proof. Then, you will call it isolated, sit quietly in your comfortable seats, and be slaughtered.

KARIAN

Zechariah, that is enough! Be silent!

ZECHARIAH

I will not be silent! I will not stand by and watch you allow my people to be destroyed from within.

VLADIMIR
Zechariah, please...

ZECHARIAH
No! This council no longer governs
in the best interest of the people.
Your leadership is worthless
because you do not lead. You are
all lambs awaiting your slaughter.

KARIAN
We cannot allow you to stir the
people with this non-existent
Tepish threat. You are under
arrest. Seize him!

The four guards draw their swords and approach Zechariah. He
draws his sword and moves David behind him.

ZECHARIAH
(to David)
Hang onto my neck.

DAVID
What?

ZECHARIAH
I don't want to worry about where
you are. I can carry you. Just keep
your feet off the ground.

DAVID
I understand.

David wraps his arms around Zechariah's neck from behind and
curls his knees into his chest. Zechariah fights off the
guards and leaps out the window, shattering it.

EXT. COUNCIL HOUSE ALLEY, ERIM - NIGHT

Zechariah charges down the alley, but he is blocked in on
both sides by guards rushing in. He looks from one side to
the other and straight up.

DAVID
We're trapped!

Without a word, Zechariah leaps from one side of the alley
wall to the other, bounding upward to the rooftops.

EXT. ERIM ROOFTOPS - NIGHT

With David still clinging to him, Zechariah charges across the rooftops, leaping from one building to another.

The guards catch up to him as below, several CHASERS, one rider levi-carts resembling wheel-less motorcycles, converge. Other guards leap up ahead of him.

ZECHARIAH

Get down. I'll protect you.

David climbs down and hides behind Zechariah.

The first guard rushes Zechariah. Zechariah easily fells him and takes his sword. The others rush in and Zechariah fends off their every blow with lightning accuracy. After felling several of the troops, he turns to David.

ZECHARIAH

Get on.

David climbs on Zechariah's back again. Zechariah holds the swords between his teeth and leaps to a lower rooftop, and then to the ground. He lands with a light thud, and runs with amazing speed to his Levi-cart nearby.

David dismounts. They both get into the Levi-cart and blast out of Erim. Four chasers follow them.

EXT. OPEN FIELDS - NIGHT

The Levi-cart crosses the land at high speed. The chasers gain on them. Zechariah turns to David.

ZECHARIAH

Listen. This controls left and right. This is speed. This slows us down. Maintain a straight course unless there is an absolute need to change directions.

DAVID

But I can't-

ZECHARIAH

Just do it.

David nods and takes the controls. Zechariah stands and faces the aggressors. He still has both swords. He slips his foot through a strap bolted to the Cart.

Two Chasers draw their swords and hold them out level with Zechariah's head. Zechariah holds both swords vertically and braces himself. The two Chasers hit hard, but he holds steady. They spin out of control, but soon regain it.

The two others take the advantage and try to ram the Levi-Cart on both sides to pin it.

ZECHARIAH

Speed up when I tell you to.

The Chasers rush at one another with the Levi-cart between them.

ZECHARIAH

Now!

David punches it. The cart thrusts ahead. The Chasers, attempt to correct forward, but are unable to control the momentum and collide.

One of the riders falls off as the rigs crash forward into the ground. The other uses the momentum to leap forward onto the back of the cart.

Zechariah meets him and they struggle hand to hand. Zechariah manages to hold the swords, but without room to use them.

The other Chasers have recovered themselves and rush the cart again, swords drawn. With little regard for their compatriot, they rush in at full speed, ready to lop off the heads of both fighters.

Zechariah sees this and ducks at the last moment. The rider jerks and then topples to the back of the cart. Zechariah takes the sheath of the dead Rider and pushes him overboard. He sheathes the extra sword.

The other Chasers wheel around again and charge the Levi-Cart head on.

Zechariah sheathes his sword and looks to a grove of trees off to one side.

ZECHARIAH

Head to the forest.

DAVID

Are you crazy?

ZECHARIAH

No time to argue.

Zechariah steers the cart towards the forest.

DAVID

We'll smash against a tree at this speed in the dark.

ZECHARIAH

You're a Fempiror. Relax and use your reflexes.

David takes a deep breath, grips the steering and flies into the trees.

Behind them, the Chasers speed after them, swerving through the trees at unnerving speed.

One of them settles behind the Levi-Cart. The rider ejects a grapple which attaches to the cart. The rider pulls his Chaser closer to the Cart.

Zechariah waits for the right moment, and then leaps from the Levi-Cart onto the Chaser. He and the rider struggle for a moment before he knocks the rider off the Chaser and into a tree.

He releases the grapple and takes off after the other Chaser. As they approach each other, they draw swords and battle at high speed while avoiding the onslaught of trees. Zechariah backs off and re-sheathes his sword.

He backs off and comes in from behind the Chaser, ramming the rider's rig from behind. After a second bump, the other Chaser spins out of control and into a tree.

Zechariah rejoins David. He signals David to stop, and Zechariah lands next to him.

LATER...

Zechariah is in control of the cart again. The Chaser is strapped to the back. They cruise slowly through the forest until they reach the open fields again. Zechariah punches the acceleration and they bolt off across the plains.

David indicates the Chaser.

DAVID

What're you going to do with that?

Zechariah shrugs.

ZECHARIAH

You never know.

Zechariah picks up the acquired sword and sheath and hands it to David.

ZECHARIAH

This will be yours. Tiberius or I will teach you to use it. Time was, you would make your own, but we don't have time.

David takes it and looks at it.

DAVID

I don't want this.

ZECHARIAH

I know.

David places the sword on the floor between the seats. Zechariah sighs.

ZECHARIAH

If you had not been attacked, you would be at home - safe and ignorant of everything you know now. You are now a part of a different society, and in this time and circumstance, no one has a choice.

Zechariah and David continue at high speed across the plains as sunrise threatens on the horizon.

EXT. CEREBDIM - DAY

Two figures, draped in hooded black DAY-TRAVEL CLOAKS walk into Cerebdim pulling behind them a strange wagon draped in a cloth that reaches the ground.

The people waking up pay it little attention. The figures do not look up, but keep their hoods low over their faces.

The figures drag the wagon around a corner where the building shadows them from the sunlight. The figures approach the garage door of the Safe House, which opens for them.

INT. SAFE HOUSE GARAGE - CEREBDIM - DAY

Once inside, the figures remove their cloaks; it is Zechariah and David. Zechariah pushes the covered Levi-cart out of the way, and they enter the Safe House proper.

INT. SAFE HOUSE COMMON ROOM - DAY

Tiberius, Zechariah, and David sit around a table with food.

TIBERIUS

You really stirred them up last night. Good show.

ZECHARIAH

I cannot believe how thick they are to sit there blindly...

TIBERIUS

It is a worthless venture to ponder their motives anymore. I often wonder who they work for.

ZECHARIAH

What does Vladimir think?

TIBERIUS

Ask him when he arrives.

Tiberius takes a drink.

The door opens and everyone turns to it. Vladimir stands in the doorway in his day-travel cloak.

VLADIMIR

Zechariah, you crazy malklek! Do you have any idea what the Council went through after your little display?

ZECHARIAH

Ask me if I care.

VLADIMIR

You killed several of Erim's security force. That is a serious crime.

ZECHARIAH

Do you know how infuriating it is to be wanted for upholding the Code we've used for over three hundred fifty years?

VLADIMIR

I could lose my position for just talking to you.

ZECHARIAH

I hope you do. It's certainly not worth keeping. The Council no longer desires peace, despite its lofty claims.

VLADIMIR

You cannot achieve peace by inciting war.

ZECHARIAH

You can, however, find yourself in a war by claiming peace. You can't reason with the Tepish. You can't sign a treaty. They will see your indecision and docility and take over. You don't get war when you take no action. You get annihilation.

VLADIMIR

That's a rather cold outlook.

ZECHARIAH

It's reality. I won't feign peace when it does not exist.

Silence veils the table. Tiberius clears his throat.

TIBERIUS

Well, Vladimir, welcome. We appreciate your presence.

ZECHARIAH

We need to find their home area.

The door slams open again. Everyone looks to the door. In the door stands Fertid, looking haggard and worn. His cloak is torn and he is burned in several places from the sun. He collapses.

Ildritch runs over to him along with Zechariah, Tiberius, and other patrons.

ILDRITCH
(to Zechariah, who is
closest)
Help me get him to a room.

Zechariah nods and together they carry Fertid off.

INT. SAFE HOUSE ROOM - DAY

Tiberius, Zechariah, Vladimir, and Ildritch stand in the room with an unconscious Fertid. They have removed the day travel cloak from him and dressed his wounds.

TIBERIUS
What do you think?

ZECHARIAH
He looks like an Elewo.

ILDRITCH
Really? They haven't been seen
since the Tepish came about.

ZECHARIAH
I know, but look at him.

VLADIMIR
His garb does resemble the old
order...

ZECHARIAH
...and he doesn't have a weapon.

TIBERIUS
He might have lost it.

ILDRITCH
Or it was taken from him.

ZECHARIAH
Tiberius, do you know where the
Elewo are supposed to be these
days?

TIBERIUS
No. When they left, I heard they
settled in some caves in the
mountains out west.

VLADIMIR
That's near Hauginstown, isn't it?

ZECHARIAH

It's also near where I suspected the buildup of Tepish forces twenty-five years ago.

ILDRITCH

Perhaps he escaped.

ZECHARIAH

Tiberius, we need to go there.

TIBERIUS

Zechariah, we can't assume every attack is Tepish related. We also can't assume this Fempiror is an Elewo. It's a full night's journey to those mountains, and we don't even know which one the Elewo are supposed to be in.

ZECHARIAH

Then we wake him up and find out.

ILDRITCH

This Fempiror is my guest, and he needs to sleep. I will not have you disturbing him.

VLADIMIR

We'll wait.

ILDRITCH

Get some rest. All of you. I'll let you know if he says anything.

TIBERIUS

Agreed. If our destination is beyond Hauginstown, then we'll need our energy.

INT. SAFE HOUSE ROOM - DAY

Tiberius, Vladimir, Zechariah, and David all sleep in the same room that contains one bed for each of them. There is a knock at the door. Tiberius jumps up to answer it. Vladimir and Zechariah sit up as well. David slowly stirs.

Tiberius admits Ildritch.

TIBERIUS

What is it, Ildritch?

ILDRITCH

He stirred for a moment. I tried to find out what happened to him. He said he is from the Urufdiam Plateau.

TIBERIUS

Urufdiam...

ZECHARIAH

Is he of the Elewo?

ILDRITCH

He didn't say. He just said the Dark West Fempiror are in danger. He escaped from a stronghold inside to get help. He said their numbers are overwhelming now.

VLADIMIR

Whose numbers?

ILDRITCH

He sounded delirious. He didn't say.

ZECHARIAH

I think it's worth checking out.

TIBERIUS

I agree.

VLADIMIR

When are we leaving?

TIBERIUS

You aren't needed?

VLADIMIR

The Council will not gather again for several weeks. We would not have anytime soon but for Zechariah's Code fifty-seven.

ZECHARIAH

My deepest apologies for disrupting the Council's busy lives and forcing them to concentrate on the people...

Vladimir shakes his head.

TIBERIUS

Zechariah, when should we leave?
It's just west of Hauginstown.

ZECHARIAH

We can leave at sunset and be at the
Urufdiam Cave just before sunrise.
We can reach the Dark West
stronghold using day-travel cloaks.

VLADIMIR

Who else will be going with us?

TIBERIUS

I feel the fewer the better just to
assess the situation. Zechariah has
David. I will ride with Kaltesh,
and you can be with Yori. I want to
be ready in case there is a
problem, but I don't want all our
warriors there to be destroyed.
I'll leave instructions on what to
do if we aren't heard from in a few
days.

DAVID

What do these Tepish want anyway?
If they did take over your council,
haven't they won already? What else
is left?

The three look at him, and then exchange glances.

VLADIMIR

The Fempiror society stands with
humanity in a very delicate
balance. The Rastem are their only
line of defense, and they don't
even know it. If the Tepish had not
been stopped, this world would be
nothing but Fempiror by now. If the
Tepish win and take over our
society, their ideals would also
take over, and our world will die.

DAVID

How?

ZECHARIAH

By turning every human into
Fempiror, we would all have long
lives, but no offspring.

VLADIMIR

The only way to create a Fempiror is to be transmuted. We cannot have children, so if the world were overrun by the Tepish, then it would be a world of Fempiror. Those who don't kill themselves would die after a few hundred years.

TIBERIUS

You might call it a slow genocide.

DAVID

That's what you fight for?

TIBERIUS

It is what we have always fought for. It would be far better if our race were completely destroyed because we are such a threat to the human race. We stay, however, to protect our mother race, as it were, from total destruction.

David looks at the floor, as if thinking.

TIBERIUS

The road is long and the nights are short. Let's rest and leave at night fall.

Everyone agrees and leaves for their rooms.

EXT. OPEN PLAINS - NIGHT

The sun has dropped beyond the horizon. Three Levi-Carts zoom across the surface of the land.

Zechariah and David ride together with the Chaser still strapped to the rear of his. Tiberius and Vladimir both travel in their own, each with a single passenger.

They travel non-stop throughout the night as the sun disappears completely and darkness engulfs the evening air. They pass small towns with fires burning for their own illumination.

EXT. PLAINS NEAR HAUGINSTOWN - NIGHT

As the caravan passes David's hometown, he looks out at the provincial little burg nestled in the trees.

Zechariah glances at his young passenger. David only stares off at his memories. A tear drops down his face.

EXT. URUFDIAM CAVE - NIGHT

The three Levi-carts zip towards an enormous rock face. They feint off to one side and enter a small cave.

INT. URUFDIAM CAVE - NIGHT

They stop their carts and all six get out.

KALTESH looks to be around 38. He is a well-built man with deep blue eyes and long brown hair tied back in a pony-tail. He is sharp of eye, clean-shaven, and dressed in the traditional dark garb of the Rastem.

YORI appears to be around 27. Her blonde hair is tied up in a tight bun and her hazel eyes are bright with life and enthusiasm. Her garb resembles the Rastem tradition, but seems to have been modified to her feminine lines. She always seems to walk with a smile.

Zechariah hands David the sword he acquired from the guard earlier and had then presented to David.

ZECHARIAH

Take this.

DAVID

I don't want it.

ZECHARIAH

You may need it.

DAVID

I don't know how to use it.

ZECHARIAH

You may have to learn.

David looks at the sword for a moment and shakes his head. Zechariah pulls two day-cloaks from the Levi-cart and tosses one to David.

Zechariah walks over to Tiberius, standing with Vladimir, Kaltesh, and Yori. David replaces the sword in the Levi-cart and puts the cloak on.

ZECHARIAH

Kaltesh, it's been a while. We left too quickly.

KALTESH

Well, Tiberius said we had to go,
so I assumed the pleasantries would
have to wait.

ZECHARIAH

David, this is Kaltesh. He's
younger, but quite well trained.

KALTESH

To Tiberius' credit, of course.

TIBERIUS

Of course.

ZECHARIAH

And this is Yori. She's barely a
hundred years old, and yet she's
managed to hold her own against me
before, and is an excellent
tracker.

VLADIMIR

Which is a prime reason we chose
her. Never go underground without
someone to get you out.

YORI

I have yet to be lost anywhere.

TIBERIUS

Let's go.

EXT. URUFDIAM CLIFF - DAY

The band of six walks huddled beneath their day cloaks as the
sun peeks over the ridge. They look like six black ants
traipsing under the dawning sun. They reach another larger
opening in the side of the rock face.

INT. DARK WEST ENTRY HALL - DAY

The six lower their hoods as they pass out of the sunlight.
They walk down a long hallway to a heavy door.

TIBERIUS

Stand back. We do not know what
measures the Dark West employs.

(to the door; in
Felletterusk; subtitled)

(MORE)

TIBERIUS (cont'd)
 Naltaka, mingorn Fempirorelero
 rakad fren. Ka sil Tiberius
 Erimero. Lew mälinna corönskjav
 eski.

(translation)
 Attention, guardian of the Fempiror
 of the Dark West. I am Tiberius of
 Erim. We come seeking counsel.

A voice sounds from all around them. It is calm and reserved.

VOICE
 (in Felletterusk;
 subtitled)
 Hav lajangev alma li?
 (translation)
 What allegiance do you claim?

TIBERIUS
 (in Felletterusk)
 Lew sil maskün piror rödelero
 Rastemero. Lew shua paltinjav
 rödelero Tepishero.
 (translation)
 We are warriors of the Order of
 Rastem. We desire knowledge of the
 Order of Tepish.

VOICE
 (in Felletterusk)
 Rastemel shua välgel paltinjav
 maskün harutobatel Tepishelero.
 Havrol dandua lew sufdä frült?
 (translation)
 The Rastem have always desired the
 knowledge of the whereabouts of the
 Tepish. Why should we help you?

TIBERIUS
 (in Felletterusk)
 Hav shua suf?
 (translation)
 What do you desire?

VOICE
 (in Felletterusk)
 Maskün sesakopjav enamua nillan.
 Lew shua nir azazdu. Het nar yazsar
 kläro li?
 (translation)
 Possessions mean nothing. We desire
 only wisdom. How many years have
 you walked?

TIBERIUS

(in Felletterusk)

Ka kläro siht rolda özla forshdro
yazsar din tiyo ponacemero kaki
saba re. Lewki paltinjav jatara
järvacjav deratjav nol bato.

(translation)

I have walked this world over four
hundred years as have two of my
companions. Our knowledge may be
valuable in trade.

VOICE

(in Felletterusk)

Lew tepöca.

(translation)

We accept.

The door opens. No one stands behind it. The six look at each other and pass through the doorway.

INT. DARK WEST HALLWAY - DAY

The door closes of its own accord when the six pass into the hallway. David whips around, but the other five pay it no mind. They glance around the featureless hallway.

A Fempiror, PEDAR, dressed in red and black armor, without the helmet, steps from the shadows just ahead of them.

PEDAR

Follow me. The Leader of the Dark
West is expecting you.

Pedar walks away from them. They follow.

Pedar leads them through a winding maze of corridors that would lose the most talented map follower.

DAVID

These are some strange hallways.

PEDAR

It is a defense mechanism. A
straight path to the heart is a
request for death. A difficult path
discourages assassins.

DAVID

Makes sense.

Zechariah looks over the David and smiles. David looks at him and shrugs.

INT. GATHERING CHAMBER, DARK WEST HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Pedar leads them on path beside a sheer drop opening into an enormous chamber that could hold thousands of troops. The path branches off and winds around the entire chamber. It is not lit fully, so the other side disappears into the darkness.

YORI

Impressive.

PEDAR

We have force enough to defend ourselves. This room serves not only as a massing area, but also as training. Training has concluded for today.

ZECHARIAH

How many strong are you lately?

PEDAR

I am not qualified to divulge such information.

ZECHARIAH

Of course.

Tiberius looks at Zechariah. Zechariah shrugs. Tiberius smiles. The group passes out of the Gathering Chamber.

INT. DARK WEST HALLWAYS - DAY

The group comes upon a door and Pedar stops. He turns to them.

PEDAR

This is the inner chamber of the Deldral of the Dark West Fempiror. Remember that you have been accepted upon the promises you have made.

Pedar bows and walks away.

The six stand and look at each other for a moment. Suddenly, the door opens and a voice sounds from around them.

VOICE

Enter.

INT. DELDRAL OF DARK WEST MAIN CHAMBER - DAY

The six walk into an expansive hall, richly decorated as if for a king. Light issues from gaps in the ceiling which serves to illuminate the room very clearly.

The walls are draped in rich tapestries, and doors lead out from the rear of the hall as well as the sides. At the far end of the hall sits the Deldral, ULRICH.

Ulrich is a large Fempiror, robed heavily in furs and seated on an enormous rock throne. Wisdom is set deep within his old eyes and he commands respect with an unbeatable presence.

To one side of Ulrich stands another older Fempiror, NIKOLAI, who whispers briefly to Ulrich as the six enter.

Nikolai appears to be in his 50's but maintains the fit look of the old Fempiror. His short black hair compliments his piercing blue eyes, but he holds an air of seedy-ness about him.

Tiberius stops a short distance from the throne. Ulrich stands to address them. It is his voice that has been speaking to them through the halls.

ULRICH

Welcome to the home of the Dark West Fempiror under the Urufdiam Plateau. I know you come with many questions, but it is late. Stay with us the day, and we shall answer all of your questions tonight when we are rested.

TIBERIUS

You honor us with your hospitality.

ULRICH

The Dark West have always treated guests with respect, and it is expected that the same be returned. My servants will show you to your quarters. We shall meet again this evening. Until then, our home is at your disposal. You may feel free to roam at your leisure, but return at the appointed time, or our deal is forfeit. That is all.

Ulrich sits.

YORI
That is all?

TIBERIUS
Yori, do not argue.

NIKOLAI
My lord, forgive me, but they have come a long way. Perhaps, there is something you would like to know now.

ULRICH
What I have spoken, I have spoken.

NIKOLAI
Surely, now is a far better time-

ULRICH
As you have pointed out, Nikolai, they have come a long way. I do not wish to tire them unnecessarily.

KALTESH
But what about the warrior-

ULRICH
All questions will be answered in due time.

NIKOLAI
What warrior?

ULRICH
Pedar will take you to your rooms.

NIKOLAI
I want to know who-

Ulrich puts up his hand, silencing Nikolai. Tiberius exchanges a glance with Zechariah.

TIBERIUS
We accept your invitation, and look forward to speaking with you later.

Tiberius bows, and the others do the same. The six turn to the door which opens, again, of its own accord. Pedar stands outside, waiting.

INT. DARK WEST HALLWAYS - NIGHT

Pedar leads them through another maze of hallways to a set of rooms - one for each of the six.

PEDAR

These are your rooms. You are welcome to rest or explore. Areas designated as secure will be marked as such. Be careful not to get lost. Good day.

Pedar leaves them alone in the hallway. They turn to each other.

YORI

Now what?

TIBERIUS

This certainly is very curious.

KALTESH

The warriors we've seen look nothing like the one who found his way to the Safe House.

ZECHARIAH

Ulrich did not want anything discussed.

TIBERIUS

What do you make of the armor?

VLADIMIR

Reminds me of the old Tepish design.

ZECHARIAH

Are we going to sleep, or do you want to look around?

VLADIMIR

I'm up for walking around.

KALTESH

I'm with Vladimir. I want to know what the big secret is.

TIBERIUS

We know nothing at this time. We are free to do as we wish. We should rest, but be alert.

Tiberius enters his room and closes the door.

ZECHARIAH

I agree. Until reason is given,
suspicion is not warranted. David,
will you be all right on your own?

David nods. They all enter their rooms except Vladimir, who walks down the hallway.

INT. DAVID'S ROOM - DAY

David looks around the room. It furnished with a bed and nightstand - the bare minimum in quantity, but of good quality and appearing comfortable. The carved-from-stone walls are cracked from age but well maintained.

He walks over to the bed and sits. The room is lit without fire, and David does not bother to find out where the button is. He lies down and passes out.

As David sleeps, one of the cracked portions of the wall swings open silently. Four red and black armored warriors step into the room and walk to David's sleeping form. David's eyes dart open as they surround his bed.

INT. ZECHARIAH'S ROOM - DAY

Zechariah sits on the floor of his room, eyes closed, hands folded in his lap. He appears to be meditating. Suddenly, his head snaps to one side. His eyes open.

INT. DAVID'S ROOM - DAY

David is bound and gagged. He struggles as the warriors carry him through the hole in the wall.

Suddenly, Zechariah storms in. Two warriors carry David through the secret passage. The other two face off with Zechariah. The battle is swift as Zechariah takes down the young warriors.

He looks into the passage as Tiberius, Yori, and Kaltesh enter.

KALTESH

What's going on?

ZECHARIAH

Suspicion is warranted. Two of our red and black friends took David through here.

YORI

Where's Vladimir?

They all look around.

ZECHARIAH

He may still have decided to look around.

TIBERIUS

Such is his choice, but doublecheck his room.

Yori and Kaltesh run out. Tiberius and Zechariah examine the bodies of the dead. Tiberius specifically picks up one of the swords.

It is of the same basic design as Zechariah's: a thin lightweight katana-style sword, but the blade is etched with a bat insignia.

ZECHARIAH

Elewo do not practice swordplay. Their proficiency has always been hand to hand.

TIBERIUS

It was their espionage function that kept them unarmed. Things change, but the blade looks more of a Tepish design.

ZECHARIAH

Still no sign of anyone who looks like the one who supposedly escaped from here.

TIBERIUS

True.

Tiberius replaces the blade on the floor. Yori and Kaltesh return.

YORI

Vladimir was not in his room.

KALTESH

No evidence he was even there.

ZECHARIAH

Should we wait for him to return?

TIBERIUS

He can handle himself. We need to follow our young friend.

ZECHARIAH

Then let's see where this goes.

The four walk into the hallway. Unlike the rest of the plateau underground, this hallway follows a single curved line to its destination.

Suddenly, Kaltesh pulls up short.

KALTESH

Wait. This is a trap, isn't it?

ZECHARIAH

Of course it is.

TIBERIUS

They're using David as a lure to get the rest of us. We must be prepared for anything.

YORI

Oh sure, excellent observation, Kaltesh. Always the teacher's pet.

KALTESH

Well, you see, Yori, when you hit two hundred, you can just start figuring these things out.

YORI

Of course.

They continue walking through the hallway.

INT. DARK WEST GATHERING CHAMBER - DAY

The two remaining warriors deposit David in an oversized chair with restraints in the center of the enormous Gathering Chamber. The warriors secure him. Nikolai approaches him.

NIKOLAI

Welcome to my world.

David struggles, unable to move or speak.

NIKOLAI

Oh don't bother to struggle. Your
life will end soon enough.

David squirms again.

NIKOLAI

Of course they'll know it's a trap.
There is not an idiot among them.
But this is a trap of conscience,
not cunning. What would they not do
for the innocent?

David holds still, his eyes questioning.

NIKOLAI

Look around you! They won't fall
for it, but they won't have a
choice.

David struggles again.

NIKOLAI

Enjoy the view.

Nikolai laughs and walks away. David looks into the dark
expanse of the room. On the upper walkway, Fempiror move into
position. On the lower walkways, more Fempiror stand ready to
pounce. David looks over to the dark opening he was brought
through.

INT. SAFE HOUSE ROOM, CEREBDIM - DAY

Fertid sits bolt upright in bed. He looks around.

FERTID

Hello? Where am I?

Ildritch enters.

FERTID

What's going on?

ILDRITCH

You are in the Rastem Safe House in
Cerebdim. How are you feeling?

FERTID

I'm fine now. We need to get to
Urufdiam with some help.

ILDRITCH

Relax. Some Rastem are heading out there now.

FERTID

How many?

ILDRITCH

Five.

FERTID

Five? Are they crazy? There are thousands of Tepish there! They'll be slaughtered!

INT. DARK WEST CHAMBER - DAY

Tiberius, Zechariah, Yori, and Kaltesh emerge in a room identical to David's. They look around for a moment, confused.

YORI

This looks familiar.

ZECHARIAH

Illusionary trick. It would have been more successful without the dead soldiers left behind.

KALTESH

I see.

TIBERIUS

Let's go.

INT. DARK WEST HALLWAYS - DAY

The four exit the room into a bare hall. One end of the hall is blocked, allowing access in only one direction. As they stare down the hallway further, it becomes apparent that the maze has been reduced to a single suspicious walkway.

TIBERIUS

I'll have to say this is the most blatant trap I've ever seen.

The four of them creep down the hall past the blocked hallways.

KALTESH

You know, if ... when we get ambushed, there's nowhere to go.

ZECHARIAH

Relax. Your peace is your strength.

They stop near the entrance to the Gathering Hall when they see David in the center.

TIBERIUS

I'm open to suggestions.

ZECHARIAH

I have none.

YORI

What are we up against?

TIBERIUS

David looks alone in there, but he's probably surrounded by every Fempiror in the place.

ZECHARIAH

What are they expecting?

TIBERIUS

Good question. They cannot presume that we don't think it's a trap.

ZECHARIAH

They will expect us to try and sneak around then?

TIBERIUS

That's fair to assume.

KALTESH

But what if they assume that we assume they assume we'll sneak around and assume we won't sneak around because we assume they're ready for us to sneak around. Should we sneak around anyway like they may assume we won't or come in behind in like they assume we will?

Tiberius and Zechariah stare and Kaltesh and then each other.

ZECHARIAH

He makes a good point too.

YORI

What if we just run in there, grab
him, and run out.

Zechariah and Tiberius look at Yori, and then at each other.

INT. DARK WEST GATHERING HALL - DAY

David sits in the chair, no longer struggling. He stares at the ceiling, fear apparent in his eyes.

Suddenly, Tiberius, Zechariah, Kaltesh, and Yori blast into the room, swords at the ready. With breakneck speed they cross the floor to David.

Zechariah, Yori, and Kaltesh stand around Tiberius as he breaks David free. He removes the gag.

DAVID

It's a trap!

TIBERIUS

Of course it is!

From the crevasses of the chamber, Fempiror dressed in red and black armor emerge. From the second floor, archers stand and take aim.

YORI

Archers on the second floor.

ZECHARIAH

Stand ready.

David released, the five of them make for the door they came in. It is blocked by a hoard of Fempiror.

KALTESH

They're firing!

A swarm of arrows closes in on the five. With lightning speed and accuracy, they block every one that was aimed for them. Several go astray and hit the Red and Black warriors. They fall to the ground.

The rest of them rush in for the kill. A fierce battle ensues between the four experienced fighters and the Red and Black Fempiror.

The fighting is unbelievably fast. Swords clash and astray blows are blocked by the speed and accuracy of the gauntlets on the four fighters' arms and legs.

David hides from the blows behind the fighters.

The archers fire again. Parrying blows with one hand, the four fighters split their concentration and block the incoming arrows with their gauntlets and dodging.

An arrow hits its mark in Yori's arm. She yells and feints to one side, a Fempiror sword just missing her. She recovers quickly, and with the arrow sticking out, she carries on.

Zechariah eyes the second floor.

As the archers are preparing another volley, several warriors emerge and take them down.

ZECHARIAH

Tiberius! Look!

Tiberius spares enough of a glance to see the archers turn their attention inward. They are being taken down by warriors dressed completely in black. Their faces are obscured by dark masks.

KALTESH

Could it be...?

Several of the warriors, armed with nothing except their hands and feet, jump down to the lower level and assist the fighters in dispatching the red and black warriors.

With the assistance of the additional warriors, the four fighters and David are able to make their way back into the hallway from whence they came. A larger warrior leads the way while another guards the back.

The Red and Black warriors start swarming after them, but some are delayed by the black warriors from the second floor leaping down in front of them.

INT. DARK WEST HALLWAY

The small detachment makes their way through the hallway. The warrior passes the door to the room.

TIBERIUS

We're not going back through here?

DARK WARRIOR

Too obvious. We must choose another path.

KALTESH
The way is blocked.

The Dark Warrior approaches the boulder blocking the hallway. He puts his hands together and drops his head in rapt concentration.

ZECHARIAH
Defend the rear!

Noises from the pursuing Red and Black warriors fill the hallway. With a loud cry, the Dark Warrior slams his fist through the boulder, smashing it into a million pieces. He regains his stance. The others look on in awe.

TIBERIUS
Only an Elewo could-

DARK WARRIOR
We must continue.

The group takes off running through the maze of corridors. The Dark Warrior takes lefts and rights seemingly at random.

At a crossroads, the group runs into a small group of the Red and Black warriors. They fight them off and continue.

The Dark Warrior stops in the middle of a long hallway with no apparent doors or openings anywhere.

YORI
What are we doing?

The Dark Warrior looks both ways, and then presses a secret passage open. The group files in and the Dark Warrior closes the door behind them.

Moments later, Red and Black warriors from both directions close the gap and look around, confused.

INT. DARK WEST CHAMBER - DAY

Inside the secret opening, the rock opens into a wide chamber before closing up again into another hallway. David slumps to the floor, exhausted.

DAVID
I was beginning to think this place
was all hall.

DARK WARRIOR
Come on, we're not out of this yet.

TIBERIUS
What's going on?

DARK WARRIOR
I had hoped to tell you when we spoke.

TIBERIUS
Who are you?

The warrior removes his mask to reveal Ulrich.

ZECHARIAH
Ulrich!

TIBERIUS
So the Elewo have not forgotten their style.

ULRICH
No. We are what we've always been. But I must explain later. The Tepish have overrun this place, and we must leave.

Ulrich takes off down the passage. The others follow behind.

INT. PASSAGE - DAY

Ulrich moves quickly through the passages. Tiberius catches up to him.

ULRICH
So Fertid got through.

ZECHARIAH
He did, but we didn't get much out of him. Only that he came from here.

TIBERIUS
How do you propose to escape this?

ULRICH
Are there just the five of you?

TIBERIUS
We had six. One of our number is missing. The youngest is unskilled.

ULRICH

Then it is plain to me that this battle must be left for another day. The Tepish have been bringing in many warriors, and I do not feel we can stand against their numbers.

ZECHARIAH

Where did they all come from?

ULRICH

Everywhere. They solicited us after you drove them from their base twenty-five years ago. We gave them refuge and left them alone. They've been building their numbers ever since, and only after they took over our home did we take notice.

Ulrich stops in this passage and presses on a part of the wall. It opens and they enter another passageway.

ULRICH

Before then, we paid them no mind. This way.

The wall closes behind them leaving no trace of a doorway.

INT. DARK WEST PASSAGE - DAY

The troupe continues walking through another long corridor.

DAVID

Where are we going?

ULRICH

Can I assume you left your transportation in the cave near the entrance?

TIBERIUS

We did.

ULRICH

We are going there. This mountain is littered with passageways, most of them we carved during our stay here over the last four hundred years.

INT. DARK WEST CRYSTAL CAVE - DAY

They pass out of the corridor into a natural cave. Sunlight streams through miniscule cracks overhead and reflects through a series of crystal formations, brilliantly illuminating the entire cave.

The group walks on a pathway leading them through the middle of the cave.

ULRICH

The Tepish do not know of this area. We were careful to keep some things secret from them. They know of passages between the rooms, but not of any others. There are many ways into this cave, and my Elewo will find their way here.

They reach a large natural open chamber and stop walking. Several black-clad Elewo are already there. Ulrich turns to Yori.

ULRICH

You'd best have that wound mended. See Ghasta over there; he's one of our medics. He'll take care of you.

YORI

Thank you.

Yori goes over to GHASTA, who waits for her.

ULRICH

Your transports have been brought into our own hold which is behind the cave. Another doorway you did not see in the cave leads into here.

ZECHARIAH

Clever.

INT. DARK WEST CRYSTAL CAVE - LATER

Zechariah, Kaltesh, Yori, and David sleep away from the group. Very few people are stirring and the place has filled out with Elewo.

Tiberius sits with Ulrich and talks.

TIBERIUS

This is a beautiful cave, Ulrich.

ULRICH

It is rare we can take advantage of the sun, but I always love it here.

TIBERIUS

What will you do?

ULRICH

The Tepish have run us out of our home. My hope was that Fertid could solicit a larger force.

ZECHARIAH

There wasn't much left of him when he got there. We left as soon as we could.

ULRICH

We cannot stay in this place because they are intelligent enough to find it. We have to leave.

TIBERIUS

The Safe House at Cerebdim is small and easily compromised. Who do you still know?

ULRICH

I have been in scarce contact with anyone from the old days. We live a lonely life, Tiberius.

TIBERIUS

This place would have been perfect for a refuge.

ULRICH

Yes...

Kaltesh appears behind them.

KALTESH

Why can't it still be?

ULRICH

I know the Tepish numbers. It is suicidal to remain here.

KALTESH

Then let's get rid of them.

TIBERIUS

We do not have the numbers. If I had brought a larger force, perhaps, but not as we are.

KALTESH

He said these people were captured in the last twenty-five years. That means they are inexperienced.

TIBERIUS

Kaltesh, you are inexperienced.

KALTESH

I have been sparring you for the last one hundred eighty years.

TIBERIUS

It's not the same.

KALTESH

I held my own today.

YORI

As did I.

Yori and Zechariah appear from behind Kaltesh.

TIBERIUS

Zechariah, this is folly.

ZECHARIAH

Perhaps, but we have a responsibility here. It is only their goodwill that allowed the Tepish in after I found them. It is undoubtedly our presence that sparked what just occurred. We owe it to them.

ULRICH

If this seems wise to you, the Elewo will welcome your help.

Tiberius crosses his arms and lets out a concerned sigh.

TIBERIUS

This is very risky.

ZECHARIAH

It would put a severe dent in the Tepish forces.

TIBERIUS

If we die, we help no one. The council will dismiss the incident, if they ever hear of it.

ZECHARIAH

We could win.

TIBERIUS

How?

ZECHARIAH

You know how.

Tiberius looks at Zechariah, who seems almost giddy to get at the Tepish. Tiberius sighs once more, and nods.

TIBERIUS

All right. It will be the Elewo forces with the four of us, if Yori is well.

YORI

I'm ready.

DAVID

What about me?

ULRICH

This area will be kept a secret. You may remain here with our medics since you are still untrained.

ZECHARIAH

I agree.

DAVID

Understood.

David stands off to one side, listening to the conversation.

TIBERIUS

What is the strength of their forces?

ULRICH

Over the past years, they have grown their numbers to several thousand, but since they use this place as a training ground and send their troops elsewhere, only a few hundred are here.

ZECHARIAH

So we're primarily fighting against new arrivals?

ULRICH

Their advantage will be their numbers, so we must be careful not to get overwhelmed. My people treat them peaceably for they have never interfered with us.

KALTESH

What is our goal?

ULRICH

We must remove the leader here, who is Nikolai. He is a cold Tepish who finds suffering to be amusing. He will show you no mercy.

ZECHARIAH

Where will we find him?

ULRICH

With this most recent development, he will make his home in the throne room or in the quarters behind. He has been here for nearly twenty-five years. He knows the tunnels very well.

TIBERIUS

Brief your people. We'll rest up and start in a few hours. We will rely on you to lead us to the throne room.

ULRICH

I am at your service.

The meeting parts company. Ulrich one direction while the Rastem return to their cots to rest. David stands off to one side watching them go, his arms crossed.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE, HAUGINSTOWN - DUSK

Beth exits a "General Store". She carries a ball of yarn of the same shade as the knitting in her room. She walks toward home, her arms crossed, holding the yarn ball.

Behind the statue, Abraham watches her. He turns and closes his eyes.

He sighs deeply, and then speaks inaudibly to himself for a moment. With a deep breath, he walks out from behind the statue towards her.

ABRAHAM

How are you holding up?

BETH

Good, I suppose. I don't know what I'm going to do.

ABRAHAM

Well, you still plan on getting married and having a family, right?

BETH

I planned on doing all that with David.

ABRAHAM

But what are you going to do now?

BETH

Abraham, I don't think-

ABRAHAM

Beth, I've tagged along behind you two my entire life, but inside, I've always wanted to be with you.

She stops. He halts a short distance behind her. She doesn't turn.

BETH

Abraham...

ABRAHAM

I don't mind saying it. I will miss David. He was my best friend, but maybe ... maybe we were meant to be together instead.

Abraham walks up behind Beth and gently rests his hands on her shoulders. She shakes him off and turns to face him.

BETH

He was your friend...

ABRAHAM

He's gone, though. He's never coming back. I don't want to minimize your grief, but you have to move on.

BETH

Abraham. It's not that easy.

ABRAHAM

Why not? What did he have that I don't?

BETH

He would never talk to me like this so soon after losing a loved one.

Beth turns to walk away. Abraham blocks her path.

ABRAHAM

Come on, Beth. What are you waiting for? I lo-

BETH

Get away from me!

Beth pushes him aside with adrenaline-rich strength. Abraham falls against the statue, crumples to the ground, and stays there. Beth storms off.

Abraham watches her go. After she crosses the small road, he sits up and pulls his legs into his chest and speaks quietly.

ABRAHAM

He's gone, Beth. He can't keep you forever. I promise you'll be mine.

He rests his head on his knees.

INT. DARK WEST CAVE VEHICLE HOLD - DUSK

David walks amongst the transports and Levi-carts in the Dark West storage area behind the cave they originally parked the vehicles in.

He runs his hands over the Chaser, still attached to the rear of Zechariah's Levi-Cart, a thought crossing his face. A movement behind him! He jumps, as if caught.

ZECHARIAH

David?

Zechariah walks over to him.

ZECHARIAH

What are you doing in here?

David shrugs.

DAVID

I'm just ... walking around. I
won't have much to do for a while.

ZECHARIAH

This is true.

DAVID

A lot has changed since I first saw
this machine...since I first saw
you. Please forgive me. It's hard.
I guess you know that.

ZECHARIAH

You may be assured that anything
you have said, I understand. Your
goal will be to assimilate yourself
to your here and now, and to make
the most of these circumstances.

DAVID

Thank you.

Zechariah gives David a hug, and they walk back into the main
cave chamber.

DAVID

Take care of yourself.

ZECHARIAH

Don't get into too much trouble.

DAVID

I won't.

INT. DARK WEST CRYSTAL CAVE - DUSK

Once in the chamber, David sees that a hundred Elewo, both
men and women, dressed in their traditional black uniform
vaguely resembling Ninja, with their hoods down, are
assembled along with Yori and Kaltesh.

Tiberius and Ulrich stand before them. Zechariah joins them
beside Kaltesh.

ULRICH

Fempiror of the Elewo Order. Today,
the Tepish Order has broken their
promise to us. They have raided our
home and done wrong to our guests.

(MORE)

ULRICH (cont'd)
 After centuries of living in
 silence, the time has come again to
 show that we are not as docile as
 they believe; to show the true
 strength of the Elewo.

The Elewo stand in silence, watching Ulrich. Their faces are
 solemn.

ULRICH
 Our Rastem brothers stand with us
 and bring their own experience to
 help us. In exchange for their
 goodwill, we will help them in
 their battle to prevent the Tepish
 from practicing their slow genocide
 on the human populace of our world.
 We will no longer hide. We will no
 longer be a mystery to outsiders.
 We will adopt the code the Rastem
 have held for centuries. We vow not
 to allow the Tepish to enact their
 revenge. With great solemnity, we
 vow to be the last Fempiror. There
 need be no more.

The Elewo beat their chests twice in quick succession.

ULRICH
 You have your assignments.
 (in Felletterusk;
 subtitled)
 Gus klug din Jehovah bato suffümor.
 (translation)
 Good luck and God be with you.

The Elewo put their hoods down and disperse out a dozen
 different passages. Ulrich leads a handful of Elewo,
 Tiberius, Zechariah, Kaltesh, and Yori through another
 tunnel. In moments, the cave is virtually empty.

David turns and heads back to the vehicle hold.

INT. DARK WEST CAVE VEHICLE HOLD - DUSK

David walks right over to Zechariah's Levi-Cart and detaches
 the Chaser. He turns it on and it floats a foot off the
 ground. He grabs a dark day-travel cloak from the Levi-Cart
 and wraps it around himself.

He locates the door release and opens the door. Indirect
 light streams in from the sun lying low in the sky. David
 runs over to the Chaser. An Elewo Medic runs in.

MEDIC

Hey! What are you doing?

David jumps on the Chaser and blasts into the setting sun. The Medic is powerless to stop him. He runs over to the door to watch David speed across the landscape. He shakes his head and closes the door.

INT. DARK WEST HALLWAYS - DUSK

SERIES OF SHOTS: Ulrich's team charges through hall after hall, bend after bend, fighting off Tepish warriors...the other teams storm sleeping areas...feeding areas... massing areas...fighting against Tepish, armored and unarmored, found throughout the plateau...the teams fell more Tepish than the Tepish do of them.

Ulrich's team reaches the door outside the throne room.

ZECHARIAH

(worried)

That was too easy.

ULRICH

It is possible we took them by surprise. The Elewo are not known for their rash actions. That's more of a Rastem trait.

ZECHARIAH

Touché.

The group kicks in the door to the throne room.

INT. DARK WEST THRONE ROOM - NIGHT

The group barges in. The room is empty.

TIBERIUS

Thoughts, Ulrich?

ULRICH

There are many passages from this main room.

TIBERIUS

Where would you go?

ULRICH

This way.

Ulrich starts toward the rear of the room. Instead of passing through the passage behind the curtain, Ulrich cuts to the left and opens a passage hidden among the decorative work in the room.

They all pass through and close the door behind them.

EXT. HAUGINSTOWN - NIGHT

David blasts towards Hauginstown on the Chaser. The sun has already passed below the horizon. He passes by the town and heads for the cave under the Old Mill.

He drives the Chaser into the cave, disappearing from view for a moment.

EXT. CAVE UNDER OLD MILL - NIGHT

David walks out of the cave, no longer in the day-travel cloak. He walks towards the town under the stars.

INT. DARK WEST HALLWAY - NIGHT

Ulrich and group walk down a hallway that appears blank. Ulrich stops and looks around.

ULRICH
This isn't right.

Suddenly, the walls on both sides of the company collapse revealing a large room and a hoard of Tepish warriors, armed and dangerous. Ahead of them stands Nikolai, smiling.

The group stands ready to do battle. The Elewo assume a fighting position, while the Rastem draw their swords. They are outnumbered.

NIKOLAI
So predictable, Ulrich. I knew you
would look here.

ULRICH
We have nothing to say, Nikolai.

NIKOLAI
Then I bid you farewell.

Nikolai walks away and the warriors swarm. Swords clash and fists fly as the trained Fempiror block and hit the young blooded Tepish. Elewo snap bones and Rastem hack limbs and run them through.

Ulrich breaks through the line and chases after Nikolai.

INT. DARK WEST POWER CHAMBER - NIGHT

Ulrich charges through the door into the enormous water power chamber of the Urufdiam Plateau.

A stone walkway spans across an enormous underground lake a hundred feet below. Sparks run under the water, giving the lake an eerie glow. Power lines run from the lake up the walls and out of various ports into the rest of the plateau.

Ulrich looks around slowly. Behind him, hanging above the door, Nikolai swings down atop the mighty Elewo. He recovers and Nikolai pulls his sword on him. Ulrich is undaunted by this show of power.

Nikolai takes several swings, but Ulrich blocks his blows with apparent ease. Frustrated, Nikolai moves faster but with less precision. The harder he tries, the easier the old Elewo blocks him. Ulrich hasn't even tried to hit him yet!

Finally, Nikolai swings especially hard. Ulrich sweeps the blade to one side and delivers one cracking blow to Nikolai's face. Nikolai's neck snaps. His body stumbles to one side and falls into the lake. Ulrich shakes his head.

Zechariah, Tiberius and company blast through the door and find Ulrich looking down.

TIBERIUS

Is everything all right?

ULRICH

It is such a waste to spend one's life in the hatred of others. Tell me, Tiberius... Do you fight because you love man or hate the Tepish?

Tiberius looks at Ulrich for a moment, silently.

TIBERIUS

It is for the love of mankind that we have always fought. But to love man is to hate the Tepish.

ULRICH

Well said. I and my Elewo will assist you. You may stay here.

Ulrich and Tiberius shake hands.

TIBERIUS

Let's finish this.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE, HAUGINSTOWN - NIGHT

Abraham remains on the ground where Beth left him. He gazes at the stars overhead. The grass shuffles. Abraham jumps to his feet.

Shocked recognition dawns on Abraham's face. David walks across the square towards Beth's house.

ABRAHAM

David?

David stops and turns to his friend.

DAVID

Abraham.

The two laugh and run towards each other, embracing.

ABRAHAM

My God, you are cold.

DAVID

It's a long story.

ABRAHAM

What happened to you? Where have you been?

DAVID

I've been changed. I can't explain everything. It's too much.

ABRAHAM

Changed? Into what?

DAVID

Physically, I'm different, but I'm still the same person you've always known.

ABRAHAM

Physically different?

DAVID
I'm a Fempiror. We're stronger,
faster, and live much longer than
regular humans.

ABRAHAM
Regular humans? You mean me?

DAVID
Yes. I'm not like you. Not anymore.

ABRAHAM
What are you doing here?

DAVID
I want to talk to Beth.

Abraham becomes defensive.

ABRAHAM
Why?

DAVID
It is personal.

ABRAHAM
You need to tell me why.

DAVID
It doesn't concern you.

ABRAHAM
Pardon me, David, but we buried you
yesterday, and I would like to know
why you want to see Beth...
especially if you're no longer
"like me." What are your
intentions?

DAVID
Since when are my intentions any
concern of yours?

ABRAHAM
You don't belong here anymore.
You're now what this town has been
hunting for to atone for your death
and that of Old Ben. Who is buried
in your grave?

DAVID
I don't know.

ABRAHAM

How do I know you didn't kill him?

DAVID

I have killed no one. Why would I?

ABRAHAM

But I can't trust you.

DAVID

Abraham, I am the same David you've known all your life.

ABRAHAM

No, you're not. You're cold. You disappeared, and now you come back and say you're different. How can you be the same and different?

DAVID

I don't have time for this right now.

David starts walking away, but Abraham grabs him by the arm and spins him around.

ABRAHAM

I'm not letting you get close to her.

DAVID

I don't want to hurt you.

Abraham attempts to fight with David, but David tosses him to the side. Abraham slumps against the statue, unconscious. David walks over to him. He kneels beside his friend's unconscious body.

DAVID

Forgive me ... old friend.

David walks onward.

INT. BETH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Beth sleeps. Her pillow is tear-stained and her face is blotched red. A shadow passes over her.

DAVID (O.S.)

Beth.

Her eyes shoot open. She rolls over and looks at the shadow standing over her in the moonlight.

BETH
Who are you?

The shadow moves down and the moonlight lights up David's face. Beth gasps with joy. She jumps out of bed and hugs and kisses him.

BETH
David, my dear David, what happened to you? Why are you so cold?

DAVID
It's a long story.

Snoring echoes from her parents' bedroom.

DAVID
Will you come with me? We can talk elsewhere.

BETH
Is it safe?

DAVID
I'll protect you.

INT. URUFDIAM PLATEAU - DARK WEST HALLWAYS - NIGHT

The battles continue. When the Tepish retreat, the Elewo chase them out of the Plateau. Most of the Tepish are driven out the main door and run for their lives. The Elewo cheer.

INT. DARK WEST CRYSTAL CAVE - NIGHT

Ulrich stands before the celebrating Elewo and the four Rastem. The Elewo numbers have been decimated.

ULRICH
My fellow Elewo, we have fought a great battle today and have taken back our home.

The Elewo all stand silently, looking at Ulrich.

ULRICH
However, the Tepish are still out there. This leader is gone, but others will follow.
(MORE)

ULRICH (cont'd)

We must finally choose sides in a war we don't want. To be the last Fempiror, we must adopt the pledge of our Rastem brothers: to protect humanity against the Tepish threat. You have always trusted me to lead you in the paths we should go, and should you desire not to follow this and retain the solitude that we have always enjoyed that is your decision. But I encourage you to join me now. To be the last of the Fempiror!

ELEWO ARMY

The last Fempiror!

The army beats their chest twice in quick succession. They break the meeting and celebrate their victory. Ulrich walks over to two of the Elewo and speaks to them. They nod and run off.

An Elewo runs up to Tiberius and points off in a direction. He looks concerned and interested. The other 3 Rastem follow him.

The Medic runs up to Ulrich. He listens for a moment, and then runs over to Tiberius and company.

ULRICH

Zechariah...

He looks down. Vladimir lies on the ground, beaten and bruised.

VLADIMIR

...and when I walked around that last corner, about twenty of them attacked me. When I woke up, these Elewo were carrying me here.

TIBERIUS

Rest, old friend.

Vladimir nods. Tiberius pulls Zechariah to the side. Ulrich follows.

TIBERIUS

Do you believe him?

ZECHARIAH

Considering how easily we beat their forces, it seems strange he would lose.

TIBERIUS

In an overwhelming number, though?

ZECHARIAH

It's possible. He's one of my oldest friends, though. I don't have a reason to distrust him.

TIBERIUS

Very well.

ULRICH

Zechariah, I have just received a rather disturbing message about your protégé.

ZECHARIAH

Is something wrong with David?

ULRICH

Unknown. He left.

ZECHARIAH

Left?

Vladimir looks up.

ULRICH

A medic advised me that he took the Chaser from your Levi-cart, along with a day-travel cloak, and took off right after we went into battle.

ZECHARIAH

The fool!

TIBERIUS

Where is he going?

ZECHARIAH

Hauginstown.

Zechariah storms off towards the vehicle hold. Vladimir jumps to his feet. The medics around him look to him. He waves them off as if he is fine.

INT. DARK WEST VEHICLE HOLD - NIGHT

Zechariah walks over to his Levi-Cart.

ZECHARIAH
Open the door.

The Elewo inside the hold nods and opens the door as Zechariah jumps in the Cart. Vladimir appears behind him. Zechariah punches it and blasts out of the cave.

Though the wake ruffles him, the Elewo stands for a moment, and then starts to shut the door. Vladimir steps forward.

VLADIMIR
One moment, friend. Perhaps I should follow him to make sure he doesn't run into trouble.

The Elewo gestures at the other Carts. Vladimir gets in one, and cruises out of the cave. The Elewo closes the door behind him.

INT. OLD MILL - NIGHT

Beth sits in shock. David stands near her, not speaking. Finally she looks up.

BETH
So that night we found Ben, you got changed into a...?

DAVID
Fempiror.

BETH
And there is no way to reverse it?

DAVID
No.

David kneels at Beth's feet. She looks at him, saddened.

DAVID
But I don't want to leave you.

BETH
And I don't want to lose you... again ... but...

DAVID
...but there isn't a choice.

BETH
I know. I don't want to accept it.

DAVID
I don't want to either, but we must. I just wanted to say good-bye.

Beth stands and pulls him up. She looks into his eyes.

BETH
I don't want to say good-bye.

DAVID
But we cannot be together.

BETH
Then let me remember you as my husband. Let us have the wedding night we never will.

DAVID
I love you, Beth.

BETH
And I love you, David ... forever.

They kiss passionately.

EXT. OPEN PLAINS - NIGHT

Zechariah drives his Levi-Cart as fast as it can go across the plains towards Hauginstown. His wake stirs up dust clouds behind him.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE, HAUGINSTOWN - NIGHT

Abraham remains as he was, against the base of the statue. A shadow passes over him. He stirs and looks up.

ABRAHAM
Who are you?

Vladimir kneels down to him.

VLADIMIR
A friend. What happened to you?

Abraham looks at the stranger in fear.

EXT. ZECHARIAH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Zechariah stops the Levi-Cart at his front door. He checks his garage mound first, and then runs inside.

INT. ZECHARIAH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Zechariah searches through his rooms. He pauses in his kitchen area beside a table. His eyes reflect deep thinking. He pounds the table in anger and storms out.

EXT. HAUGINSTOWN - NIGHT

Vladimir stands in the center of town with Abraham. The people of the town stand around him with torches.

VLADIMIR

It was as soon as I heard the
horrific stories of this town that
I came as fast as I could because I
knew the cause.

The townspeople mutter and shake their heads.

ABRAHAM

He's telling the truth. Only
tonight, I saw David Taylor. He was
alive and claimed to be something
else. He was going after Beth.

Abraham looks to Beth's Parents. Patrick holds his wife, who is teary eyed.

ABRAHAM

And she's gone, isn't she Mr.
Carpenter?

Patrick nods. Beth's mother cries.

VLADIMIR

This person is not your David. Not
the one you remember. He is now a
possessed follower of Satan, bound
to do his will. His soul cannot be
saved. Tell us, Abraham Barber,
where would they be?

ABRAHAM

There's only one place they would
be: the old mill.

VLADIMIR

My friends, do you want to free
yourselves from this menace?

Muttering and nodding of heads all around.

ABRAHAM

He's going to take Beth away from
us! Do you want that?

Shouts of "No!" come out variously.

VLADIMIR

Follow me then! I will rid your
town of this pestilence forever!

More cheers from the crowd. Vladimir and Abraham lead the
torch-bearing mob out of the town.

INT. OLD MILL - NIGHT

David and Beth sit next to each other, fully dressed. Their
mouths are locked in a long kiss. Finally, they separate.
Satisfaction reigns on both of their faces.

BETH

I love you.

DAVID

I love you.

BETH

I should get back.

DAVID

I know.

David stands up and holds his hand out to Beth. As Beth takes
his hand, she hyperventilates. She releases his grasp. David
kneels to her.

BETH

What's ... happening...

She collapses to the ground.

DAVID

Beth? Beth!

Suddenly, a hand snatches David from the ground and slams him against the wall.

ZECHARIAH

What the hell do you think you're doing?

David looks at Zechariah, speechless.

ZECHARIAH

Answer me! What did you do to her?

DAVID

We ... uh ... sort of ... consummated...

Beth arches her back and screams. She passes out, unconscious on the floor.

DAVID

What's happening to her?

Zechariah throws David across the room, cracking the wall where he hits and crashing to the ground. Zechariah re-approaches him.

ZECHARIAH

What do you think is happening to her? The serum to turn one into a Fempiror is in your bloodstream. Sexual relations would also give her the serum. It worked slower, but is still effective.

David stumbles to his feet.

DAVID

Forgive me ... I didn't mean to...

ZECHARIAH

If you didn't mean to, you would have done as I asked, and not come back!

Zechariah tosses David across the Mill again. David crashes on the floor next to Beth.

ZECHARIAH

Give me one good reason not to kill you.

David backs up against the wall. Zechariah gets in his face. David cringes.

ZECHARIAH

Well?

DAVID

Forgive me. I didn't know.

ZECHARIAH

If you are to survive, you must follow our rules. You are but a child to us, and it will be a long time before you will be a man.

David looks to Zechariah. Zechariah's face does not soften.

ZECHARIAH

Get ready.

Zechariah turns away.

ZECHARIAH

It looks like we have another passenger.

DAVID

What?

ZECHARIAH

If it was your wish to have her come, then you have it. She cannot stay here.

DAVID

But ... why not?

Zechariah sighs with irritation.

ZECHARIAH

You will study the Rastem Code and learn it like your Bible. You have cursed her, so we have no choice. It's part of the Code.

DAVID

(quietly)
She'll hate me.

Zechariah turns to him, grim.

ZECHARIAH

Undoubtedly.

The sound of a large crowd permeates the silence. Zechariah runs to the door. He opens it just a little and looks out.

EXT. OLD MILL - NIGHT

The entire village approaches the mill with torches. In the lead are Abraham and Vladimir.

INT. OLD MILL - NIGHT

Zechariah closes the door.

ZECHARIAH
We have a problem.

David has Beth propped up against him on the floor, putting her dress together.

DAVID
What is it?

ZECHARIAH
I think your loved ones have come
to give you a going away present.

DAVID
What?

David lays Beth down and looks out.

EXT. OLD MILL - NIGHT

The crowd grows closer. David's eyes widen as he spots Abraham in the lead.

INT. OLD MILL - NIGHT

David gasps.

DAVID
Abraham!

He starts to open the door and go out, but Zechariah stops him. He closes the door.

ZECHARIAH
Wait! Vladimir is there.

DAVID
I saw him.

ZECHARIAH

As did I, but why is he here? And why is he leading the town here?

Zechariah looks thoughtful, but disturbed.

ZECHARIAH

I assume that hole goes down to the cave where you parked the Chaser.

DAVID

How did you know that?

ZECHARIAH

I parked the Levi-Cart next to it and heard you up here.

David averts his eyes, blushing.

ZECHARIAH

Take Beth and escape that way. I will deal with Vladimir and the crowd.

DAVID

Are you coming?

ZECHARIAH

I'll take the Chaser. You and Beth just take the Levi-Cart and go.

DAVID

Very well.

David turns to get Beth. Zechariah starts for the door. David turns to Zechariah.

DAVID

Zechariah.

Zechariah looks at him.

DAVID

Thank you for everything.

Zechariah smiles.

ZECHARIAH

You have begun a long road, David. Follow it to the best of your ability, and you'll find this is not such a hard life. Good luck.

DAVID

You too.

Zechariah exits the Old Mill as David lifts Beth and jumps down the hole.

EXT. OLD MILL - NIGHT

Zechariah exits the Old Mill and watches the crowd approach. Vladimir rouses them.

VLADIMIR

There he is! The murderer who has been plaguing your city. He took David from you!

The crowd shouts in blood lust.

TOWNSPERSON 1

Give us back Beth!

VLADIMIR

(low; to Abraham)

Is there any other way out of that Mill?

ABRAHAM

There is a hole in the floor which leads to a cave underneath.

VLADIMIR

Go there. The imposter may try to escape that way.

Abraham nods and runs off. Vladimir rouses the crowd again.

VLADIMIR

He has killed before and will kill again! You know what he is! The walking undead! The spawn of Satan! A bloodthirsty criminal who has been left bereft of a soul by God!

Zechariah watches Vladimir, unimpressed. The crowd roars again in their lust for retribution. Zechariah steps forward. The crowd stops and gasps.

ZECHARIAH

Tell me, old friend, when did the

Tepish buy your loyalty?

VLADIMIR

Evil dead! I am a Master Vampire
Hunter who will have your head.

ZECHARIAH

Really? And these have fallen for
this charade?

Vladimir approaches Zechariah. The crowd cringes, afraid of
their new friend being hurt by the "vampire."

VLADIMIR

Fear not! I will slay this villain!
(low; to Zechariah)
Of course. They have two deaths
with no closure. They will believe
anyone.

ZECHARIAH

Why are you doing this?

VLADIMIR

Because you are trouble. And the
council wants your head.

ZECHARIAH

The council is afraid of the truth.

VLADIMIR

No, my friend. The council IS the
truth.

Zechariah's face drops.

VLADIMIR

Yes, you figured it out. Your
warnings came too late. Twenty-five
years ago, when you found the
massing of the meager Tepish army,
most of the council had already
changed their allegiance. You were
ousted because they knew you would
not follow the Tepish way. The
council did not want your words,
because it was they who have been
ordering the transmutations.
Council Head Karian IS the Elrod
Malnak.

Zechariah's mouth drops open in shock.

ZECHARIAH

Then it is over. The Fempiror way
of life is dead.

VLADIMIR

Only the Rastem way, dear friend.
The Tepish way - the way of truth -
is the new way.

ZECHARIAH

The Tepish way is vengeance. That's
no way to live a life.

VLADIMIR

It makes no difference. The Council
of Erim is ours. The only task that
remains is to stamp out the only
opposition that poses any threat:
the Rastem. You're first.

Zechariah draws his sword. The crowd gasps.

ZECHARIAH

If I die; may I be your easiest
battle. Let the Rastem live
forever, and may your threat always
remain.

Vladimir draws his sword.

VLADIMIR

If you die, your order will fall.

ZECHARIAH

Never!

The two clash in a fierce sword battle. The crowd with their
torches stands well back from the combatants. Looks of
confusion pass between them.

Zechariah's style remains swift and direct while Vladimir's
is more cocky, occasionally twirling his sword around his
fingers.

Zechariah looks to the Old Mill behind Vladimir. He springs
himself over Vladimir's head, parrying blows as he flies. He
lands never missing a beat and backs to the door.

With a swift kick to Vladimir, Zechariah jumps in the doorway
and closes the door.

Vladimir springs to his feet, and kicks the door in.

INT. CAVE UNDER MILL - NIGHT

David stands on the floor of the cave. He looks off to one side and sees the Levi-Cart next to the Chaser. He carries Beth to the Cart and puts her in the passenger side.

He spots the sword between the seats. He picks it up and looks at it for a moment. As if accepting his fate, he straps the sword to his back and draws it, holding it before him.

Abraham appears at the entrance.

ABRAHAM

What are you doing?

David looks up. Sadness falls across his face, as if knowing what is going to happen. He re-sheathes the sword.

ABRAHAM

You think you own her? You think you can just show back up after being dead, and take what you want?

DAVID

Abraham, it's not like that.

ABRAHAM

Then what is it?

DAVID

She has to come with me.

ABRAHAM

Why? What did you do to her?

DAVID

It was an accident. She got changed into a Fempiror like me.

Abraham is speechless for a moment. His eyes bulge as anger wells up inside of him.

DAVID

I didn't mean for it to happen. We just... I really messed up.

David looks at Beth, still unconscious. Abraham's hands ball into a tight fist. David looks back up just as Abraham nails him ... hard ... in the face. David flies off his feet and hits the floor.

ABRAHAM

(in tears)

You bastard! How could you do this to her?! She did nothing but love you...

(screams)

...and you ruin her life!

Abraham collapses to the ground, crying. David rises and walks to him. Abraham jumps to his feet and pushes David away.

ABRAHAM

Get away from me!

Abraham stumbles back.

ABRAHAM

Don't touch me...

DAVID

Forgive me.

ABRAHAM

Don't talk to me.

David walks to the Levi-Cart and looks back to Abraham, who stands in the way of the exit, his head bowed. He is shadowed in the moonlight, so only his silhouette shows.

DAVID

Abraham, stand aside.

Abraham doesn't respond.

DAVID

Abraham, stand aside.

ABRAHAM

No.

David steps toward him.

DAVID

We need to go.

ABRAHAM

I have decided you do not need to go. You don't need to go anywhere.

Abraham looks up, his eyes filled with blind anger and tears.

ABRAHAM
You need to die.

David takes a step back, surprised.

INT. OLD MILL - NIGHT

Zechariah and Vladimir remain engaged in their battle within the Mill. They fight fiercely. None of the people enter after them.

EXT. OLD MILL - NIGHT

The crowd grows restless.

TOWNSPERSON 1
Did you see how they fought?

TOWNSPERSON 2
It looked like they knew each other.

TOWNSPERSON 3
Maybe they've met before.

TOWNSPERSON 2
Hey! How do we know this Hunter isn't one of them?

TOWNSPERSON 1
But he was helping us.

TOWNSPERSON 3
I don't trust him!

Murmurs of agreement pass through the crowd.

TOWNSPERSON 3
I say we burn the mill down!

Chanting of "Burn it down!" ensues. They throw torches on the Mill and it is quickly engulfed in flames.

INT. OLD MILL - NIGHT

Zechariah and Vladimir halt the battle for a moment to notice the fire.

ZECHARIAH

It looks like your friends
abandoned you. Ironic, really.

Vladimir thrusts with his sword. Zechariah blocks him. The battle continues.

CRACK! Debris falls. Zechariah sidesteps it. Vladimir takes the advantage and runs Zechariah through.

Vladimir holds his sword inside Zechariah, who is not yet dead. He looks into Zechariah's face.

VLADIMIR

The Tepish will rule forever!

Zechariah spits in his face. Vladimir twists his sword. Bones crack. Zechariah jerks, his eyes opening wide. Vladimir withdraws his blade. Zechariah slumps to the ground.

INT. CAVE UNDER OLD MILL - NIGHT

David backs up to the Levi-Cart. Abraham rushes him, arm back to strike. David sidesteps Abraham, pushing him to the ground.

He jumps into the Levi-Cart and punches it. Abraham recovers and grabs onto the back of the Cart as it blasts out of the cave.

INT. OLD MILL - NIGHT

Vladimir walks over to the hole in the floor and jumps through it as the Old Mill collapses above him.

INT. CAVE BELOW OLD MILL - NIGHT

He lands in the cave. Burning ash and debris flutter down around him, but he pays it no mind. He sees the Levi-Cart riding away with Abraham hanging on the back.

Vladimir smiles and walks to the Chaser. He powers it up and takes off after the Levi-Cart.

EXT. OPEN PLAINS - NIGHT

Abraham climbs his way onto the back of the Cart. David spots him.

ABRAHAM

I can't allow you to poison the world.

DAVID

She was an accident.

ABRAHAM

No more accidents, then!

They struggle for a brief moment, but David overpowers Abraham. He holds him on the brink of the Cart.

DAVID

Forgive me, old friend.

ABRAHAM

I am not your friend. I will hunt you till the day I die.

DAVID

I know. Take care.

David tosses Abraham off the cart. Abraham crashes to the ground, rolling several times before coming to a stop, face down in the grass.

David and Beth bolt off into the distance.

Abraham slowly rises to his feet. He shouts after David.

ABRAHAM

Damn you! I will follow you to the ends of the earth! You will never escape me!

Abraham drops to his knees, in tears of frustration.

ABRAHAM

Damn you...Beth, how could he do this to you...?

A soft hum grows from behind him and then ceases. Footfalls approach. Abraham whips around to find Vladimir standing behind him. He gasps and backs away. Vladimir walks toward him.

ABRAHAM

What do you want?

VLADIMIR

Idle words, my friend. You cannot follow him.

ABRAHAM
Leave me alone.

VLADIMIR
But you'll never be able to compete
with him as you are.

Vladimir pulls a nilrof from his belt. He stabs his arms and
withdraws some blood behind his back.

ABRAHAM
Why?

VLADIMIR
He is stronger, faster, and will
live ten times longer. You need my
help.

ABRAHAM
I'll be fine.

Abraham stands and walks away.

VLADIMIR
I insist.

Vladimir stabs the nilrof into Abraham's neck and empties it.
Abraham falls to his knees, convulsing.

Abraham screams piercing the night calm.

THE END