

Shark Road

written by

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FADE IN.

EXT. A COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

A bright happy sun shines down on a field next to a dirt road. A small, horned almost-rabbit hops by.

Chasing it are three little girls.

They wear fine, silky clothes that almost resemble pajamas. None of the outfit combinations contain more than two colors. Each outfit is embroidered with intricate patterns. Like paisley, but more curvy and swirly. The patterns never repeat.

Each of the girls has blonde hair of varying lengths, is healthy and is clean.

They giggle as they chase the almost-rabbit.

Two women follow them, walking along the dirt road. They are in their early 20s, darker hair and darker complexion. They wear similar clothes to the children except that the materials aren't fine or silky and feature monochromatic colors. The patterns are similar to the girls, but less intricate and with more repeated elements. The women aren't as healthy or as clean as the girls, either.

ERISEN is the younger and more attractive of the two, but she still comes from the same peasant caste as LUCRETIA.

ERISEN

He's returned to the island, that's what I heard.

LUCRETIA

You learned of this from your extensive network of spies?

They giggle. Erisen swats playfully at Lucretia.

ERISEN

You going to the Return Festival?

Lucretia frowns at her.

AKAREN walks up to Lucretia. Akaren has very short blonde hair. Her gold and red clothes shimmer with reflected white light.

The other girls continue to chase the almost-rabbit. At the edge of the field is a Dark Forest. Beyond the forest is a wall of mist.

AKAREN

Nan Lucretia? Why do they call this
Shark Road.

Lucretia casts a puzzled glance at Erisen.

ERISEN

I don't think....

Lucretia looks down at Akaren.

LUCRETIA

Don't worry about such things. That
name comes from before.

Akaren looks puzzled at first.

AKAREN

Oh.

Akaren runs to catch up to the other girls. Lucretia looks
after them.

LUCRETIA

Don't get too far ahead!

ERISEN

You'll never catch it!

She giggles.

They continue to follow, but the kids are farther away.

They don't speak for a bit.

ERISEN (CONT'D)

You never answered the question.

LUCRETIA

Do I have to?

Lucretia hides a smile.

ERISEN

Yes, you have to answer the
question. Why else would I have
asked?

LUCRETIA

I did answer the question.

Erisen stops.

ERISEN
Did you?

LUCRETIA
(more pointedly)
Do I have to?

Erisen doesn't get it.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)
(frustrated)
Do I have to go?

Erisen throws up her hands.

ERISEN
Well of course you have to go!

LUCRETIA
Why? He doesn't know who I am.

Erisen frowns.

ERISEN
He knows who everyone is.

HARA (O.S.)
Nan Erisen! Nan Lucretia!

TWO of the young blonde girls run up to the older women.

One of the girls, HARA, has shorter hair than the other and her clothes are a light green matched with a darker green. She speaks up.

HARA (CONT'D)
It's Akaren?

LUCRETIA
What is it, Hara? What about Akaren?

TEHANU is the other of the blonde girls, her clothes are pink and blue. She points towards the forest.

The mist encompasses everything beyond 10-15 feet into the forest. Everything: trees, sky, light.

Lucretia and Erisen look to each other with concern.

They turn and look towards the Dark Forest.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)
Grackit!

The word is not polite.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)
You watch these two, I'm going into
the woods.

Lucretia begins to run towards the forest.

Erisen gathers the girls.

She stares after Lucretia.

ERISEN
(to no one)
Nobody goes into the woods.

Not even the road went into the woods.

INT. THE DARK FOREST - MOMENTS LATER

By herself, Lucretia walks through the woods.

The deeper she goes into the woods, the darker it gets.

She hears a branch snapping off to her right, but she can't see anything.

She scans that portion of the forest, but sees nothing.

Something unseen takes off at a speed well beyond that of a blonde child.

Lucretia continues to walk deeper into the forest.

There isn't really a path here, but the underbrush is light.

Lucretia stops.

She lowers herself to look at the ground.

She sees a footprint. It points forward.

Lucretia follows.

Further into the woods, she holds her hand up and she can barely see it.

She turns and looks back towards the edge of the forest.

It's far enough away that the light barely reaches her. The forest is almost cave-like.

She turns and keeps walking.

A few steps more and she is in complete darkness.

She pauses.

From in front of her, she hears footsteps.

She moves forward.

As she does, a light glow begins to creep in from a central point ahead of her.

Lucretia hears a child scream.

She runs towards the sound.

With each step, the whitish glow continues to grow.

She emerges from the forest, but stumbles to the ground.

She finds herself next to Akaren.

LUCRETIA

Akaren?

Akaren stares towards the light source.

Lucretia looks, too.

They see a massive column of black rock.

Mists surround the edges and top of the mountain, so that no light or other features can be seen.

A cave at the front of the mountain is large enough to hold hundreds of people. It has a large rock shelf that creates a balcony looking down on the rest of the cave.

On the ground level, three cave passageways, relatively evenly spaced apart lead deeper into the mountain.

A white glowing algae grows over much of the interior of the cave, illuminating the caves and passageways.

On the large rock shelf sits a stone throne, carved out of the mountain long ago.

A dirt road leads from the cave directly towards where Lucretia and Akaren stand.

The dirt road leads up to the flowing channel of water that rages between the beach where they stand and the black caves.

As the road reaches the channel, the jawbone of a massive shark stands as a gate.

Just beyond the gate is a stone platform with a link and a chain on it. On the shore is a mechanical contraption of some sort, to the side of the Shark Gate.

Lucretia grabs Akaren's hand.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)

We shouldn't be here. We are warned about the gate at the end of Shark Road. To never come here.

She yanks Akaren's hand and they turn and swiftly walk back into the forest.

INT. THE DARK FOREST - MOMENTS LATER

Lucretia walks Akaren towards the edge of the forest, holding her hand.

She holds the hand tightly, but they are almost out of the woods.

LUCRETIA

Never, never go near there again.

Akaren nods her head.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)

No, say it.

AKAREN

Okay. I will never go near there again.

They leave the forest and emerge into the light.

Akaren stops and looks back.

Lucretia grips Akaren's hand tightly.

AKAREN (CONT'D)

Why?

Lucretia pulls her closer and bends down to look directly into her eyes.

LUCRETIA

Because the things in there will eat you.

After a beat, the camera flies over Lucretia's shoulder, back through the woods.

It passes where Lucretia stopped when she heard the sounds.

It passes Akaren's footprint.

It passes the point of total darkness.

It passes the areas of growing, glowing light.

It emerges from the forest.

The camera stops, focused on the cave structure.

From the very center of the opening cave, a lone figure appears.

It is not human. It has white, scaly skin, no hair and wears only woolen shorts. This is ESSIRI, short and thin, carrying a twisted horn made from some massive beast, the Great Horn.

Essiri lifts up the Great Horn and blows. The sound starts as a whistle before ramping up to a roar.

Three passageways empty into the larger cave.

From the center cave, another one of the white scaly beings comes out.

More join it.

Soon they fill the cave.

Hundreds stand side by side, staring towards the forest.

The beings are not quite human, but stand slightly taller and more muscular than average humans. Their skin is white and almost scaly. They otherwise appear human, except they are hairless and if there are gender variations, none are visible.

They wear short pants woven from some kind of wool.

Their skins are covered in scars and crude tattoos, but not randomly. The marks have patterns. The larger and older members of the group have more marks. The youngest children have none.

The camera zooms in closer and stops on one of the beings, TERIEL.

Teriel looks younger than most of those they stand near. Teriel also lacks the scars and markings the older ones have.

The only marking on Teriel's skin is a small sun symbol on their chest near their right shoulder. Teriel is otherwise unmarked and unscarred.

The older ones have many markings. All, regardless of age, have a marking on their chest beneath their right shoulder. A few others have the same sun marking, but there are several others: A leaf, a shark's fin, a fish, the moon, a wave. Each of the patterns is repeated throughout the room.

The adults all wear a thick strap of leather-like material around their necks. These necklaces each hold a large shark's tooth as a token. The tokens have various black markings on them. None of the younger ones wear the tokens.

Next to Teriel stand ELFARRAN, who has only a leaf marking and KEST, who only has the fish marking. Kest is taller, has a broader frame and looks more adult than Elfarran or Teriel. Elfarran is smaller and thinner.

The crowd settles.

A group of the largest and oldest of the beings walks to the front of the crowd. Each of the right shoulder symbols appears only once among this group, the Elders.

The crowd all raise their hands in the air and grunt in the direction of the Elders, who nod appreciatively.

UAHTO emerges from the crowd.

Uahto is far from the tallest of the Elders, but Uahto has the broadest frame. Uahto carries more weight than the other beings, as if they get to eat more and more often.

The marking on Uahto's chest beneath their right shoulder is a shark's tooth. The shark-tooth token hanging from Uahto's neck is marked with a thick black X.

Unlike the rest of the beings, though, Uahto has a second shark-tooth token hanging around their neck. The marking on this one looks like a crude crown.

Essiri carries the Great Horn to the side of the throne and sets it next to a knife carved out of bone.

Uahto walks up to each of the Elders and briefly taps their hand on each Elder's right shoulder marking. Each nods in response.

Finally, Uahto stands in front of the group.

Uahto walks to the throne and picks up the Bone Knife.

Uahto holds the knife up and the crowd grunts in return.

UAHTO
Ir-I-Oth!

Irioth steps forward. The crowd grunts in response.

Uahto takes the knife and carves a straight line across the front of Irioth's left shoulder. The knife doesn't tear the skin easily and it bleeds. The marking runs deep.

Uahto places a shark tooth token around Irioth's neck. On the shark tooth is the symbol of two small X's.

Uahto holds the knife to the crowd. The crowd grunts in return.

UAHTO (CONT'D)
Ter-I-El!

Teriel steps up.

Uahto cuts Teriel's left shoulder in the same place as Irioth. The same straight line.

Uahto places a token around Teriel's neck. The token has three straight vertical lines on it.

Uahto holds the knife to the air. The crowd grunts in return.

CUT TO:

Uahto holds up the knife. The crowd grunts.

UAHTO (CONT'D)
El-Far-Ran!

Uahto cuts Elfarran and places a token around their neck. On the token are two horizontal lines, with a circle below them.

CUT TO:

Uahto holds up the knife. The crowd grunts.

UAHTO (CONT'D)
Dey-A-La!

Deyala's token has five small circles that make up a larger circle.

CUT TO:

Uahto holds up the knife. The crowd grunts.

UAHTO (CONT'D)

Kest!

Kest's token has three small circles in a triangle formation.

CUT TO:

Uahto holds up the knife.

UAHTO (CONT'D)

Az-Ver!

Azver's token has two diagonal lines.

The crowd grunts.

CUT TO:

The crowd repeatedly grunts while Teriel and the others bleed.

INT. CAVE PASSAGEWAY - LATER

Teriel, Elfarran and Kest run through a glowing cave. As they move, the passage inclines upwards.

Effortless, the young ones run upward. They reach a split in the passage. One passage leads off towards several smaller caves. The other continues upward. They go up.

They pass another level, a passage leading towards a large cave. Towards that larger cave walk Uahto and Irioth.

Teriel, Elfarran and Kest continue to the end of the passage. The sun peers into the passage from outside.

They stop short of the exit.

A shelf carved into the cave wall holds a pile of crudely-woven hats of various shapes and sizes. They all share large enough brims to provide significant protection from the sun.

Teriel grabs one of the hats and puts it on. The others each do the same.

Teriel steps out into the sun. It's an entirely different world than inside the caves.

The others follow.

Even with the hats, the brightness makes them squint at first.

As their vision clears up, the Plateau Fields come into view.

The top of their mountain home is about two acres. Where the interior of the mountain was black rock, the top of the mountain has a layer of soil. And that soil is alive with plants.

The fields are grassy. At one end of the plateau, a ridge rises, almost creating a fence. Beyond nothing but the mists.

This end is filled with dozens of almost-sheep. They all have horns of variable number, anywhere between one and five. They are covered in a thick brownish wool. A half dozen of the beings guard the almost-sheep.

Nearby, one of the beings sits on a rock and uses a crude knife to shear one of the almost-sheep.

At the other end of the plateau, there is no natural ridge and the edge of the mountain drops off sharply into the mists.

Near that end are rows of various crops, most small and low to the ground, but a field of corn-like stalks blocks off most of the plateau, keeping anyone from wandering off the edge.

A few beings tend to the crops.

Near the center of the plateau, Uahto lounges with a group of beings, including Irioth, Deyala and a dozen others. They eat fruit and lazily watch others working.

Elfarran heads towards the almost-sheep while Kest and Teriel head towards the crops.

The healing wounds on Kest and Teriel appear to have no infection.

Uahto openly caresses several of the nearby beings. It's not sexual, but it is intimate.

Irioth pouts while staring at Uahto. Irioth walks towards the crops to get more fruit.

On Irioth's left shoulder, the wound from the naming ceremony is healing slowly. It is probably infected.

Elfarran walks up to one of the beings tending the almost-sheep. SEGOY is taller than Elfarran, but just as thin. Segoy has no shark scars and no other markings beyond the right shoulder marking of the leaf.

Segoy hands the wooden staff they were holding to Elfarran and runs away smiling, their work shift over.

Elfarran begins to tend to the almost-sheep, very comfortable and composed with the job. Elfarran's left shoulder marking is also recovers slowly, with some infection visible.

Segoy happily runs along, not particularly paying attention. Segoy does not have the left shoulder marking.

Segoy smashes into Irioth, bounces off and falls to the ground. As they fall, Segoy screams loudly.

This scares the nearby almost-sheep. Most run away from Segoy, towards the enclosed end of the plateau.

But one bolts towards the crops.

Irioth grunts and points after the runaway almost-sheep.

Segoy scrambles up and chases after the spooked animal, but they can't catch up.

Segoy starts screaming incomprehensible sounds.

Uahto and the crowd of sycophants stand up as the almost-sheep bolts past them.

Segoy spots Teriel and slows to a walk.

SEGOY

Ter-Ri-El!

Segoy repeats the name, no longer chasing.

Teriel looks up and the almost-sheep is barreling right at them.

Kest is farther ahead, near the not-corn husks.

Teriel gets into a position facing directly at the oncoming sheep.

Kest holds up a hand to signal that Teriel should wait until the right moment, but Teriel has already turned away.

Teriel hunkers down, ready to leap at the beast and take it down.

Teriel feints towards the left. Then towards the right. Teriel anticipates which way the almost-sheep will run.

Teriel almost leaps too early. Teriel pulls back.

The sheep breaks to the right, Teriel freezes up and does nothing. It speeds past them, bleating a farewell as it goes past.

Irioth has caught up to Segoy and grabs the younger one by the neck. They walk towards the caves.

Teriel looks down in shame.

The almost-sheep bolts through the crops directly towards the cliff.

Teriel gives chase, but the sheep appears ready to run straight to its death.

Kest breaks from the not-corn husks and makes a beeline for the sheep. Kest leaps into the air.

Kest lands on the beast, knocking it to the ground. Kest's hands dig into the wool and grab ahold harshly.

The creature bleats in pain, but it stops struggling as Kest calms it.

After it is calm, it trots back towards the rest of the herd.

Teriel helps Kest stand up.

Uahto walks towards Kest and Teriel, who are making their way back towards the center of the plateau.

UAHTO

Kest!

Uahto motions for Kest to come near. Uahto pulls the Bone Knife from the throne room out of their pocket.

Kest approaches Uahto.

Uahto, with a big smile, takes the knife and puts it to Kest's chest.

Uahto pushes the knife into the skin and thick black blood seeps out.

Kest stands tall and proud.

Uahto carves a small triangle into Kest's chest.

Uahto wipes away the blood.

The surrounding crowd makes grunts of approval.

INT. CAVE PASSAGEWAY - LATER

Teriel, Elfarran and Kest walk down the passageway, the sun shines from the exit behind them.

After a dozen or so steps inside, they turn towards the passage that goes back down into the mountain.

Turning the corner leads them back to the eerie light of the algae, which makes each of them look even more translucent and they almost glow themselves.

They take the passage towards the level with the smaller caves, below Uahto's level.

They walk past the first two caves towards the last. Other beings walk in and out of the caves, paying them no mind.

They enter the last cave.

INT. YEVAUD'S CAVE - LATER

Teriel walks into a larger cave, the living quarters of Yevaud and their followers.

Yevaud sits on a rock outcropping at the front of the room.

The symbol on the shell around Yevaud's neck is a V with a third vertical line emerging from the center upwards.

The same symbol is painted in blood on a banner made from wool that hangs on the wall behind Yevaud.

A half dozen others sit around the room, eating or sleeping.

Yevaud has the sun marking on their right shoulder.

Teriel walks up to Yevaud, who stands.

Teriel reaches out and covers Yevaud's sun marking. Yevaud returns the greeting.

The greeting is not repeated with Kest and Elfarran.

Yevaud opens a bag and pulls several pink fruit out and hands them to Teriel. Teriel hands the extras to Kest and Elfarran.

Unlike the young ones, Yevaud has numerous marks up and down their body that include the scars of battles with sharks. Even the older veteran beings that have shark bites have fewer than Yevaud.

Yevaud points at Teriel and motions for them to sit down. Yevaud waves around the room at all present, bringing them closer.

When all are settled Yevaud takes a last bite of fruit and throws the core aside.

Yevaud bangs their fists upon their chest.

Yevaud sits upon a rock in front of the others. Once again, Yevaud smacks their own chest.

YEVAUD

Ye-Va-Ud!

Yevaud points towards a row of scars from a shark bite on their arm.

Then they point at a larger set of teeth marks on their leg.

Then they point at a few shark teeth marks that cross their neck.

Yevaud stands up and walks closer to Teriel. Yevaud stresses the marks on their neck again.

Teriel finally looks away.

Yevaud walks over toward the woolen mattress where they sleep and digs around for something.

Yevaud pulls forth a shark's tooth larger than any used for tokens or barter or any other purpose. The tooth is nearly the size of a hand.

Yevaud holds the tooth up, showing it to everyone.

Yevaud points towards the teeth marks on their neck.

Yevaud holds up the tooth higher.

Yevaud throws the tooth across the room. It hits the wall and shatters.

The beings around the room recoil in horror and gasp.

They all turn to look at Yevaud.

Yevaud turns their back on the crowd. Yevaud walks over to their bed, lays down on their side, with their back to the rest of the crowd.

Yevaud goes to sleep.

INT. CAVE PASSAGEWAY - DAY

Irioth stands in the passageway, holding Deyala's hand.

Irioth leans in close enough to kiss Deyala.

Deyala shies away.

Irioth makes a small circle with their fingers.

Deyala shakes their head no.

Irioth moves in to try for another kiss, making the circle again.

Deyala crosses their arms in an X.

Irioth frowns.

Deyala offers a smile with a question in it.

Irioth reaches down towards their shorts and reaches into the pouch on the front.

Irioth pulls out a polished, but relatively small shark tooth and holds it up in the light.

Deyala smiles.

Deyala reaches for the shark's tooth, but Irioth pulls it away. Irioth offers their lips instead.

Deyala leans in to give Irioth the kiss, a brief peck.

Irioth hands Deyala the shark's tooth.

Irioth makes the small circle again.

Deyala nods with a smile.

Irioth moves in and the two kiss passionately.

Suddenly, Yevaud walks into the passage and sees with Irioth and Deyala are doing.

Yevaud makes a loud grunting sound and crosses their arms in an X.

Irioth lets go of Deyala and steps back.

YEVAUD

De-ya-la!

Yevaud points down the passageway with a frown.

Deyala walks away quickly.

Yevaud turns back towards Irioth.

He glares for a moment and then points directly at the shark's fin marking on Irioth's shoulder.

YEVAUD (CONT'D)
U-Ah-To!

Irioth steps forward, violating Yevaud's personal space.

Yevaud doesn't back down.

Irioth walks away, following the direction Deyala went.

Yevaud stares after Irioth, then follows.

EXT. THRONE CAVE - DAY

The entire community walks from the Throne Cave out towards the Shark Gate.

Drummers play in the background, beating out the Shark Trial song.

At the front of the crowd are the elders, not far behind them are Teriel and friends.

Uahto walks to the front of the crowd and stands before the Shark Gate.

Uahto holds up their hands to quiet the crowd. They listen.

UAHTO
Ir-I-oth!

The crowd begins chanting Irioth's name.

Irioth emerges from the crowd, attempting to hold back a smile. They suppress it.

Irioth walks up to Uahto.

Uahto holds out their arm and places their hand over Irioth's shark tooth marking. Irioth returns the gesture.

The crowd grunts.

Two beings bring out Segoy, who struggles, but can't escape.

Next to the Shark Gate is mechanical contraption with a lever. Deyala walks over to the lever and takes ahold of it.

Irioth walks over to the platform and stands in the middle of it.

The beings bring Segoy up towards the platform. Segoy struggles, but the others are too strong.

Teriel casts a grim glance at Elfarran and Kest.

Elfarran closes their eyes.

Uahto holds up the knife and then slits Segoy's throat. Black blood comes rushing out.

Teriel and Kest look away.

Uahto begins finding other arteries and cutting them.

Irioth looks on with glee.

Segoy stops moving. Uahto doesn't stop cutting.

 UAHTO (CONT'D)
 Se-goy!

The crowd returns the chant of the name of the sacrifice.

Irioth walks forward and picks up Segoy's corpse, making sure to get as much blood as possible on their own skin.

Irioth walks to the platform, bringing the body with them.

Blood gushes onto the platform. The platform inclines slightly outward from the center. Blood flows down the platform and over the side in every direction.

Deyala begins to crank the lever. Irioth stands tall on the platform, next to Segoy's corpse.

The platform moves towards the center of the channel. In the channel, several sharks are already gathering.

It is feeding time.

The platform separates from the dock, leaving Irioth standing on a circle barely large enough to hold the length of Segoy's body.

As the platform moves nearly a dozen feet from the shore, it comes to rest in the center of the channel. It trails blood as it moves towards the center. Once it stops, blood leaks off in every direction.

The sharks start to notice.

The crowd moves closer to the shore, so they can see the action better.

One of the smaller sharks emerges from the water briefly next to the platform, almost getting the lay of the land.

In the center of the platform, mostly obscured by Segoy's body, is a short chain. It is covered in Segoy's blood.

Irioth peers into the water at the sharks.

Irioth reaches down and wraps the chain around their arm.

Then the sharks come.

The first one leaps up and grabs ahold of Segoy's leg. The shark rips off part of the leg and almost pulls the body off the platform.

Irioth holds the chain more tightly.

A smaller shark leaps up and takes a small nip out of Irioth's arm. Their grip on the chain loosens briefly, but Irioth holds tight. Irioth starts bleeding.

Another shark drags Segoy's body into the water. Sharks tear the body apart.

Irioth shifts their position towards the center of the platform, but just as they do, another shark leaps over the platform and smashes into Irioth's body.

Irioth is knocked off balance, but pulls themselves back up with the chain. The shark flops down on the platform, stuck.

Irioth violently kicks the shark into the water.

Another shark smashes into Irioth while their foot is in the air and Irioth flies off the platform into the water. They manage to hold onto the chain.

In the water now, Irioth sees at least a dozen sharks.

The nearest one takes a nip from Irioth's arm. The blood begins to flow.

The sharks swarm.

Irioth sees a shark swimming at them in a fast speed. Irioth looks down at the chain and starts to unwrap it.

Another shark takes a nip at Irioth's leg, drawing blood again.

Irioth ignores the bite and lets go of the chain. The fast-moving shark considers attacking, but swims past. As it goes by, Irioth thrusts forward, swimming at superhuman speed, and grabs ahold of the shark by its fin.

The shark swims faster, trying to shake Irioth off. Irioth digs into the shark's gills, grabbing hold of the creature.

It swims around, thrashing in a frenzy, circling the platform.

It shoots upward out of the water, attempting to shake Irioth off. Once it emerges from the water, Irioth lets go of the fin and immediately starts to pummel the shark.

The second blow hits the shark in the eye, bursting it as blood runs out.

It falls downward and crashes its body onto the side of the platform with a splat.

Irioth falls off of the shark and lands on the platform.

Irioth pulls the shark's body onto the platform. It is blind from this side. It thrashes.

Until Irioth stomps on its head. The jaw breaks. Teeth shatter. The shark stops moving

Another shark leaps from the water and grabs ahold of Irioth's arm and doesn't let go. It pulls Irioth into the water.

But Irioth reaches back and grabs the chain, arresting the shark's momentum. The shark is shaken loose, but it takes a chunk of Irioth's leg with it.

Irioth puts their other hand on the chain and pulls themselves back up onto the platform.

On the shore, Uahto cheers. The crowd grunts.

Irioth stands up and stomps on the dead shark's head again.

Irioth reaches down and pulls up a portion of the shark's jawbone. It doesn't come loose.

Sharks come swimming by rapidly on either side of the platform. Irioth sways back and forth to avoid either and then steadies.

Irioth stomps down again, breaking off the rest of the jawbone.

Irioth lifts it up and hefts it like an axe. At the other end of jawbone, several razor-sharp teeth remain. Irioth swings the jawbone like an axe.

A shark leaps out of the water and hits Irioth's with its body and knocks them into the water again.

As Irioth falls, the shark clamps its teeth around their chest and starts to thrash.

Irioth jabs the jaw into the new shark's eye. It starts thrashing around erratically and smashes its body into the platform, dazing itself. It lets go of Irioth.

Irioth grabs ahold of the chain.

The thrashing shark opens its mouth to bite Irioth.

Irioth jams the jawbone into the shark's gills and pushes straight through to the platform, nearly ripping the shark in half.

Other sharks begin to tear chunks off of the second dead shark.

Irioth pulls on the chain, bringing themselves up to the top of the platform. Once upon the platform, Irioth stands tall and stares back at the crowd. They thrust their arm, still holding the jawbone into the air.

The crowd explodes in a series of grunts. Uahto is ecstatic.

Teriel glances at Kest with concern.

Irioth brings the jawbone down and places the sharp tooth against the center of their chest. Irioth pulls the razor-sharp tooth downward, ripping into their scales. Blood flows, but a vertical straight line has been added to Irioth's markings.

The crowd grunts.

Irioth moves the jawbone over and cuts a second marking for a second shark.

The crowd grunts even louder.

Deyala turns the crank and starts to bring the platform back to the shore.

Teriel pushes through the crowd to leave. Elfarran and Kest follow.

Others push in towards Irioth as the platform reaches the shore. They pull Irioth forward, grunting.

Irioth throws the jawbone to the ground. Several beings scramble to claim it.

Uahto pulls the knife from their pocket. Uahto places the knife to Irioth's stomach, just above their navel, and starts to carve.

Blood flows as Uahto carves into Irioth's skin.

Uahto leans out and a crude star shape, dripping with blood, now adorns Irioth's stomach. Uahto has the same Shark Trial marking and so do the Elders and most of the older beings.

EXT. THE SHARK GATE - DAY

Teriel, Elfarran, Kest, Irioth, Deyala, Azver and several others of similar youth stand at the Shark Gate.

Irioth stands at the platform crank. A smile on their face.

Irioth cranks the handle and the platform moves about three feet into the channel. A few sharks swim through, but it isn't feeding time.

Elfarran shakes their head.

Irioth makes a sound that must be a laugh.

Irioth walks to Elfarran and holds out their hand.

Elfarran pulls a small shark tooth from their pocket and gives it to Irioth.

Irioth pockets the tooth.

Irioth walks to the center of the group and pushes everyone away. They turn and look at the channel and the platform.

Irioth grunts. Irioth runs. The others watch excitedly. Crowd chatter begins.

Faster and faster, Irioth runs towards the channel. Just short of the edge, Irioth leaps through the air and lands on the platform. The landing is easy.

Irioth runs and looks back towards the shore. Deyala and Azver grunt.

CUT TO:

Kest easily lands on the platform.

CUT TO:

Deyala lands on the platform and stumbles a little, but is never in danger of falling.

CUT TO:

Azver lands on the platform.

CUT TO:

Elfarran runs towards the channel, but upon approach has second thoughts and skids to a stop at the edge of the channel.

Elfarran turns back to the others, shaking their head.

Irioth holds out a hand.

Elfarran puts a small, shiny shark's tooth into Irioth's hand. Irioth, Deyala and Azver laugh.

CUT TO:

Deyala moves the lever and the platform stops another foot away from the shore.

CUT TO:

Irioth lands on the platform again, with a massive grin.

CUT TO:

Teriel lands on the platform easily.

CUT TO:

Deyala lands short on the front end of the platform, slips and falls on their face. They try to hold on, but slide into the water.

Elfarran shares a laugh with Kest.

CUT TO:

Azver lands on the platform.

CUT TO:

Kest lands on the platform, but on the short end. Kest teeters, but manages to get onto the platform safely.

CUT TO:

Deyala cranks the lever. The platform stops a foot further out.

CUT TO:

Irioth starts their run from farther back this time. At the edge of the channel, Irioth launches themselves as strongly as possible.

They land on the back end of the platform, stumble once or twice and fall into the water on the far side.

Elfarran cheers.

CUT TO:

Kest walks up to the edge and judges the distance. They shake their head and put a shark tooth into a wet Irioth's hand.

CUT TO:

Azver stands at the edge of the channel and shakes their head. They hand a shark tooth to Teriel.

CUT TO:

Teriel stands looking at the platform. Kest pats Teriel on the shoulder.

Irioth looks on with contempt.

Teriel starts running.

As they get closer to the edge of the channel, Teriel looks down and sees where Elfarran skidded and made a mark in the dirt.

Teriel hits that mark and leaps as strongly as possible.

Teriel lands on the back side of the platform and starts to teeter.

Teriel slips. While falling, Teriel twists so that they land face down on the platform.

With the platform's wetness, Teriel starts to slide off the other side.

Teriel reaches out and grabs the chain in the center of the platform. The slide stops and Teriel pulls themselves back up onto the platform.

A bored shark swims by.

Teriel stares back at the shore and nods at Kest, who stands cheering with Elfarran.

Irioth gives the handful of shark's teeth won through the game to Kest.

Kest nods at Teriel on the platform and smiles.

EXT. PLATEAU FIELDS - DAY

Teriel walks among a crowd making their way outside onto the plateau fields.

The sound of drums, playing the Mating Song, can be heard from outside.

Teriel grabs a hat before exiting the cave.

Outside, Teriel makes their way through the crowd. They join Kest and Elfarran, but they are not near the front of the crowd.

Standing before the crowd are Irioth, Deyala, Azver and Uahto.

Uahto raises their arms and the drums stop.

Irioth steps forward, holding two of the island's pink fruit.

Deyala steps forward, holding two fresh fish.

Azver steps forward holding two small bunches of orange grapes from the plateau fields.

The trio exchange gifts and each teaks a bite of the gifts given to them.

The remains of the gifts are passed among the crowd.

The trio face Uahto again.

Before Uahto is a bed made from a crude woolen mattresses.

Irioth, Deyala and Azver walk to the mattress. The crowd closes in a circle around them and the mattress. The Elders stand side-by-side at one end of the circle.

Irioth takes off their shorts. Deyala and Azver also disrobe, although the camera doesn't show genitalia.

Uahto walks up to them holding three strips of cloth.

Uahto ties one of each Irioth and Deyala's hands together gently.

Uahto ties Deyala and Azver in the same gentle way. The circle is completed when Irioth and Azver are joined.

Uahto raises their hands high in the air. The drums begin to play the mating song again.

The crowd, except for the Elders, turn around, facing away from the newly joined trio.

Uahto walks over and takes their place among the elders.

Irioth kneels partially down onto the bed. Azver quickly joins in. Deyala joins, but a bit slower.

The three begin to kiss and caress each other.

The Elders watch.

The camera does not.

INT. THRONE CAVE - DAY

People are filing out of the Throne Cave through various exits.

Uahto stands from the throne and walks towards Kest.

UAHTO

Kest.

Kest stops and turns towards Uahto, the rest of the crowd continues to file out of the cave. Teriel and Elfarran are horsing around and don't see that Kest stays behind.

Uahto places their hand on the small of Kest's back, in an overly familiar way and directs Kest away from the shuffling crowd.

Uahto leads Kest into their room. A being guards the doorway once they enter.

Uahto walks across the room and grabs a small crude pitcher filled with a dark liquid. Uahto picks it up and pours it into two crude cups.

Uahto hands a drink to Kest and takes a sip of their own.

Kest takes the drink with a frown.

Uahto holds up their drink. It's a suggestion.

Kest reluctantly takes a sip.

Uahto smiles a smile with a question in it.

Uahto steps closer to Kest.

Kest takes another sip.

Uahto UAHTO (CONT'D)
 Kest?

Kest nods and looks down towards the floor.

Uahto brushes their hand down the side of Kest's face.

Kest looks up.

Uahto makes a circle symbol with their hand.

Kest looks shocked.

Uahto makes the circle again.

Kest points towards Uahto's shark scars. Kest points towards their own scar-free body. Kest shakes their head no.

Uahto smiles. Uahto runs their hand down from Kest's face down their chest and lower.

Kest steps backward, almost stumbling. Kest drops their drink.

Uahto steps closer.

Kest backs off even more and makes an X across their chest.

Uahto frowns.

Kest turns and runs out of the room.

Uahto grunts angrily.

EXT. PLATEAU FIELDS - LATER

Teriel and Elfarran recline in the grass near the crops. The tall corn-like stalks provide a bit of shade.

They are far enough away from any others that they seem to be alone and secluded in the shade.

Kest comes running towards them, laughing.

Kest falls to the grass playfully, rolling into Teriel and Elfarran while laughing.

Kest waves their hands to get Teriel and Elfarran's attention.

Kest makes an X symbol with their hands. Then a shark tooth. The others nod.

Then Kest makes the circle symbol for sex. Then Kest points at their own chest.

Elfarran and Teriel look at each other and then at Kest and all three burst into laughter.

Elfarran leans towards Kest and kisses them.

Kest sits up, staring at Elfarran.

Teriel puts their hand on Kest's shoulder.

Elfarran hands Kest a piece of fruit. Kest smiles.

Teriel hands Kest a fish. Kest takes it.

Kest sets the gifts down and reaches into their pocket.

Kest pulls out their hand to find two small shark's teeth.

Deyala peeks from around the not-corn stalks, watching them.

Teriel takes one of the shark's teeth and puts it in their pocket. Elfarran does the same.

Teriel leans in and kisses Kest.

Kest returns the kiss, then turns and kisses Elfarran.

Deyala sees them kiss and pulls back behind the stalks. Deyala covers their mouth in glee.

Teriel looks at Elfarran and they exchange sharks' teeth while laughing.

Deyala, unseen by the trio, runs up the hill towards Uahto's crowd, who lounges close to the not-sheep.

Kest takes a bite from the fruit.

Teriel and Elfarran kiss.

Uahto, Irioth, Deyala and others come down the hill.

Kest and Teriel kiss while Elfarran caresses them both.

Kest and Elfarran kiss while Teriel massages Kest's shoulders.

UAHTO (O.S.)

Kest!

Kest, Teriel and Elfarran look up.

Uahto points at them and then makes an X across their chest.

Irioth and others rush the trio and grab and restrain them while the rest of the crowd grunts.

INT. THRONE CAVE - LATER

Everyone fills the Throne Cave room. Uahto sits upon the throne. The Elders stand around Uahto.

Teriel, Kest and Elfarran stand before the throne.

The Elders stand in a row to the side of Uahto.

Uahto stands and walks in front of the Elders.

Uahto stops before each of them and looks them directly in the eye and puts their hand on the marking on each of the Elders' shoulders: the sun, the leaf, etc.

Then Uahto walks towards Teriel. Uahto raises a finger and points directly at Teriel.

Then at Elfarran.

Then at Kest.

Uahto holds up their hand and makes a circle.

The assembled crowd gasps and murmurs.

Uahto walks over to Irioth and points out to the barely-healed shark bite on Irioth's arm.

Uahto points towards the teeth marks on Irioth's chest.

Uahto holds up their hand and makes the circle approvingly.

The crowd nods.

Uahto returns to Kest and points to their arms. No scars.

Uahto points towards Elfarran's chest. No scars.

Uahto points towards Teriel. Then Uahto crosses their arms in an X.

Slowly, Uahto strides to the Elders. Uahto stares at them.

Each Elder, in turn, points to their own Shark Trial markings.

Last is Yevaud. Yevaud frowns.

Yevaud points towards their Shark Trial markings as well.

Uahto looks up with a smile.

Uahto pulls the Bone Knife out of their pocket and holds it up to the sky.

The drums begin playing the Shark Trial song.

Slowly, the crowd starts to grunt. Eventually, they all grunt except for Teriel, Elfarran and Kest.

Uahto points towards Kest. Irioth grab's Kest's arm and brings them to the front of the crowd.

Uahto points towards Elfarran. Several beings grab Elfarran.

Uahto points towards Teriel. Deyala and Azver grab Teriel.

Uahto walks toward the Shark Gate. The prisoners are brought along and the crowd does as well.

Before the gate, Kest, Elfarran and Teriel are brought forward.

Uahto walks up and looks each of them in the face. They turn and walk back and forth between the trio.

Uahto holds up the knife and points toward Elfarran. The beings holding them step forward, presenting Elfarran to the crowd. The crowd grunts.

Uahto steps in front of Kest and stares at their eyes.

Uahto steps to Teriel.

Uahto points the knife at Teriel.

Deyala and Azver step forward with Teriel. The crowd grunts.

Kest tries to step forward, but Irioth holds them back.

Uahto steps up to Teriel and points the knife at Uahto's own shark scars.

Then Uahto points the knife at Teriel.

Uahto points the knife at Elfarran and looks back at Teriel. It's a question.

Teriel doesn't respond.

Uahto walks up to Teriel's face and smiles. Uahto points towards Elfarran and then pokes Teriel in the chest.

Uahto holds up their hands. The question is clear this time.

Teriel doesn't respond.

Uahto nods at Deyala. Deyala and Azver take Teriel back to the crowd. Teriel struggles, but it's not enough.

Uahto waves at Kest. Irioth brings them forward with glee.

Uahto grabs ahold of Elfarran and walks them up to the platform.

Uahto shoves Elfarran onto the platform.

Irioth brings Kest to the front.

Uahto steps up to Kest's face. Uahto shows no emotion. Kest almost explodes with rage.

Uahto takes the Bone Knife and cuts Kest's throat.

The crowd gasps and grunts.

Elfarran falls to their knees.

Deyala and Azver grip Teriel tightly. They aren't enough.

Several other beings rush over and grab ahold of the raging Teriel.

It takes dozens of blows to the head to calm Teriel down.

Meanwhile, Uahto has cut Kest's body many more times and the bloody corpse lays on the platform. Elfarran lays across the body and cries.

Uahto walks over to the lever and starts cranking.

The platform starts moving into the water as Kest's blood flows into the water.

The sharks are hungry.

A half dozen beings have wrestled Teriel to the ground. Teriel cries.

Uahto stops the crank and the platform comes to rest in the middle of the channel.

Elfarran kisses Kest one last time then stands up. Elfarran looks back towards the shore.

A shark leaps up and tears off Kest's foot.

Teriel looks up and makes eye contact with Elfarran.

Elfarran holds up a hand and waves to Teriel.

Teriel struggles with the beings. Unable to wave, they nod a reply.

Elfarran kicks Kest's body into the water, towards Teriel and the others.

Elfarran turns around and dives into the channel as the sharks attack Kest's body, tearing it to shreds.

The crowd on the shore starts grunting in excitement. Uahto rages with anger. Irioth looks uncertain.

The sharks don't follow Elfarran, who swims quickly to the opposite shore.

Uahto holds an X across their chest and others, like Irioth, do the same. Everyone grunts.

Elfarran makes it to the far shore and wearily crawls out of the water.

Teriel pulls away from the beings and stands up.

Elfarran, now standing on the far shore, looks back at Teriel one last time, waves and runs into the Dark Forest.

The crowd rages in Elfarran's absence.

INT. YEVAUD'S CAVE - LATER

Teriel lays on one of the padded mattresses, pretending to sleep.

They continue to toss and turn. Teriel finds no rest.

Teriel sits up. Teriel looks around, but everyone else sleeps.

Teriel stands up and charges out of the cave.

INT. THRONE CAVE - LATER

Teriel stands in the entrance to the Throne Cave.

Nervously, Teriel looks around the cave and finds no one.

Teriel walks slowly across the Throne Cave, making sure to make no sound.

Teriel stares at the throne. They run a hand along the carved shape.

Teriel turns and looks around the rest of the cave. Still no one.

Taking a deep breath, Teriel sits on the throne.

At first, Teriel doesn't react.

Then comes a small smile.

In the distance, an unknown cough pierces the silence.

Teriel leaps from the throne, again looking around for anyone else in the cave.

Teriel takes a deep breath and leans over the side of the throne to pick up the Bone Knife.

Teriel looks at the knife with awe.

Then Teriel takes the knife and puts it their pocket.

Teriel looks back down at the Great Horn.

Reverently, Teriel runs their hand up and down the shape of the Great Horn.

Teriel lifts the Great Horn up and blows.

Teriel sets the Great Horn back down and waits.

Seconds later, beings start flowing into the room.

INT. THRONE CAVE - MOMENTS LATER

The Elders are lined up to one side of the throne. Irioth, Deyala and Azver stand to the other. The room is filled.

Uahto walks into the room and takes a seat on the throne. Uahto angrily grunts at Teriel.

Uahto holds their arms up, in a questioning gesture.

Teriel walks up to Irioth and points at their fresh Shark Trial scars. Teriel pokes Irioth in the chest harshly to do so.

Teriel walks to the Elders and repeats the gesture, but with more respect. Teriel gestures rather than poking them.

Teriel turns and points towards the Shark Gate.

They turn back and point at their own unscarred chest.

The crowd explodes with grunts and cheers.

Teriel turns their back to Uahto and walks towards the Shark Gate.

EXT. SHARK GATE - LATER

The crowd follows Teriel from the throne room towards the Shark Gate.

The drums play the Shark Trial song.

Uahto and Irioth walk ahead of the Elders. They all follow Teriel.

Azver walks towards the platform lever.

Teriel does not wait and walks directly towards the platform, which is still bloody.

Teriel looks towards Azver.

TERIEL

Az-Ver!

Azver looks back towards the crowd that is making its way towards the Shark Gate. But they're still too far away, Azver can't see anyone who can tell them what to do.

TERIEL (CONT'D)

AZ-VER!

Azver looks back at Teriel and unsure of what to do, Azver starts cranking the lever. The platform carries Teriel into the channel. Sharks swim past. More than usual.

Uahto grunts towards Irioth and Deyala who run off.

Uahto and the crowd arrive at the Shark Gate. Teriel is no more than a foot into the channel, but moving further away from them.

EXT. THE SHARK GATE - LATER

Teriel stands on the platform in the center of the channel.

Uahto stands near the Shark Gate.

Irioth and Deyala are back. They hold a sheep between them. Irioth carries the shearing knife.

Teriel stands tall on the platform.

Irioth slices the sheep's throat. They stab it multiple times.

Deyala and Irioth pick up the bloody sheep and toss it to the sharks.

Several of them leap up and catch the sheep. They rip it to shreds.

Another shark leaps up and nips at Teriel, who sidesteps it easily.

The crowd begins to grunt as they move closer to the shore.

Teriel looks down into their pocket and sees the Bone Knife.

As Teriel is looking down, a shark leaps out of the water and smashes into them, knocking them into the water.

Another shark swims straight at Teriel and clamps down on their leg and swims away from the platform, dragging Teriel along.

Teriel reaches down and grabs the knife.

The shark swims towards the end of the channel. Below the water's surface the channel is blocked by a wall. In the middle of that wall is a single shark-sized hole.

Teriel begins stabbing the shark repeatedly, tearing into its body, its gills, its eye.

Another shark swims through the hole. It barrels straight at Teriel and grabs them by the arm without the knife.

Teriel writhes in agony as their black blood joins the red blood of the first shark. Teriel is pulled back along the channel.

Almost back at the platform, Teriel slashes the knife towards the shark, stabbing it in the gills.

The shark twists and turns and smashes into the base of the platform, loosing its grip on Teriel.

Teriel quickly stabs it again and it starts to flee. As it does, another shark attacks it. And another. They tear the bleeding shark to bits.

Teriel swims towards the opposite shore from home. This side of the channel gradually rises out of the water to the beach.

EXT. FOREST BEACH - LATER

Teriel crawls out of the water and flops down on the ground, bleeding.

They try to catch their breath. Teriel quickly stashes the Bone Knife in their pocket.

After a few seconds, Teriel stands up and looks back towards the shore.

Uahto stands in the center of the Elders, who stand at the front of the people.

Uahto raises a hand and points at Teriel.

Uahto brings the hand back and crosses their arms across their chest.

One by one, each of the elders does the same.

Yevaud stares at the ground.

Yevaud looks up at Teriel.

Yevaud crosses their arms, too.

The rest of the crowd joins in, crossing their arms as well.

Irioth crosses their arms. Irioth is the only one who smiles.

Teriel keeps their head held high as they walk into the Dark Forest.

The crowd turns and walks away from the Shark Gate.

As they walk away, Uahto places their hand on Irioth's shoulder and they share a smile.

EXT. DARK FOREST - LATER

Teriel walks through the forest, unbothered by the darkness.

They walk slowly, unsure of their environment.

As they walk along, Teriel glances down at the ground.

They see the footprints of Lucretia and Akaren.

Teriel kneels down to look at them.

They run their hands over the contours of Lucretia's footprint.

Somewhere in the woods, a twig snaps.

Teriel leaps to their feet, staring into the darkness.

A pair of glowing red eyes stare back.

Teriel pulls the Bone Knife out of their pocket and crouches.

Ready.

A hairy beast the size of a small hippopotamus comes charging from the forest towards Teriel.

It is fast. Teriel has no time to attack and must dodge.

The beast slows and turns its mass back towards Teriel.

Teriel gets ready again. The not-hippo barrels forward.

This time, Teriel is ready. Once the beast gets near, Teriel leaps into the air.

Teriel digs the Bone Knife into the creature's back and holds on. It roars as it begins to stumble. Teriel now rides the shambling monster.

It tries to shake Teriel, but Teriel grips both hands on the knife and digs deeper.

The beast roars as it careens first into one tree and then into another before smashing head first into a third.

The impact breaks the beast's neck and sends Teriel flying.

Moments later, Teriel groans as they get up.

Teriel walks over to the beast and yanks the knife from its hide. Then they slump down against the dead beast.

Teriel puts the knife to their chest and drags down, making a straight line. They jab an elbow into the dead beast.

Teriel looks back towards the direction of their home.

Teriel then carves two more lines in their chest for the sharks.

Then Teriel carves the Shark Trial marking above their navel.

Once done, Teriel wipes the blood from their body and wipes their hands off on the dead beast.

Teriel cleans the knife the same way.

Teriel starts to breath heavily.

The breathing starts to slow. Teriel's eyes grow heavy.

Teriel falls asleep.

EXT. A COUNTRY ROAD - MUCH LATER

Teriel snaps awake. The sun is starting to go down.

At first Teriel can't place where they are. Their eyes dart around, looking at the late afternoon sky, the grassy field, the Dark Forest and finally, Teriel focuses on the road.

Teriel stands up and walks towards the road.

Teriel looks down at the road and sees footprints similar to those they saw in the forest. But there are more this time.

Teriel looks back towards the forest. And then down Shark Road, going away from the forest.

Turning their back towards the forest and the mists that surround it, Teriel begins walking down Shark Road.

EXT. A COUNTRY ROAD - LATER

As the sun goes down, Teriel begins to tire. Teriel's wounds are no longer bleeding, but they might be infected.

Teriel wanders off the road into woods. These woods are smaller and nowhere near as foreboding as the Dark Woods.

Teriel walks far enough into the woods to be out of sight of the road. Teriel looks back and can't see anything but woods.

Teriel finds a bed of something similar to pine needles and lays down.

Eyes close and Teriel sleeps.

EXT. THE NOT-SO-DARK FOREST - DAY

Teriel wakes early the next morning, laying in the not-pine needles.

Teriel opens their eyes without moving.

And spots one of the horned not-rabbits.

Teriel remains still. The rabbit hops.

And hops again.

Once more and it is near Teriel.

Teriel leaps and catches the creature easily.

They pick the thing up and take a bite out of. It squeals.

Teriel stands and walks back towards the forest, eating their breakfast.

INT. THE THRONE CAVE - NIGHT

Irioth walks into the Throne Cave.

Uahto sits on the throne and waves Irioth over.

Once Irioth arrives at the throne, Uahto points to the ground next to the throne. The Great Horn sits there, but it is alone, the Bone Knife is gone.

Uahto walks towards the edge and looks out towards the Dark Forest.

Uahto points into the distance.

Uahto holds up five fingers and points towards Irioth.

Irioth nods.

EXT. THE SHARK GATE - MOMENTS LATER

Irioth leaves with five other beings, including Deyala and Azver.

Another being stands at the platform crank.

Irioth steps onto the platform and the rest of their friends do, too. Irioth turns and looks back at Uahto, who stands in front of the throne staring out at them.

Irioth crosses their arms across their chest in an X. The others follow.

The platform begins to cross the channel as the lone being cranks it.

Sharks swim by frequently, but Irioth continues to stare at Uahto.

Uahto returns the X symbol.

EXT. A COUNTRY ROAD - LATER

Teriel rounds a curve in the road, and they see Castle Gensher for the first time.

The castle isn't large. It's nearly as tall as the caves where Teriel came from, but narrow for a castle.

It sits atop a hill, making it the tallest thing this side of the Dark Forest.

The castle is made of large stone blocks. Down the hill are a series of smaller structures, mostly single-family dwellings.

Teriel takes a few more steps down the road, stumbling as they stare at the castle.

Teriel comes to a fork in the road. One road heads into the hills and towards the castle. The other heads downhill past the castle and surrounding village.

Near the intersection is a sturdy hut, made of materials from the forest. It is small, with a thatched roof. In the front is a well, a small garden and a few small goat-like animals.

Teriel pays no mind to the hut. Instead, they sit down in the middle of the road, never taking their eyes off of the castle.

And wait.

And wait some more.

And some more.

EXT. LUCRETIA'S HUT - LATER

Lucretia walks out of her front door.

She raises a hand to shield her eyes from the bright sun and stares at Teriel.

Teriel looks back at her.

She waves.

Teriel doesn't return the wave.

Lucretia smiles a bit and waves again.

Teriel raises a hand and awkwardly returns the wave.

The sound of hooves can be heard racing down the hill road.

LUCRETIA
Hey! Who are you?

Teriel stands up and looks in her direction.

The sounds of the horses grow louder.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)
They're coming.

She points up the hill. Her not-goats run and hide behind the house. An orange tabby, SNOOFA, curls around her leg.

Teriel turns to see two armored and armed men, ORM and PENTHE, riding six-legged almost-horses.

Teriel reaches into their pocket and pulls out the Bone Knife.

The knights approach Teriel, their steeds slowing to a stop. Each pulls out a short sword, made of a black metal.

ORM
You!

Teriel stares up at them.

PENTHE
Stand down... creature.

Teriel doesn't react.

Orm and Penthe dismount, but keep their weapons pointed at Teriel.

Lucretia hides herself behind the well, so that the knights don't see her.

ORM
Drop your weapon!

PENTHE
Now! Or we will make you drop it.

They move to flank Teriel, who takes turns staring at each of them.

They move closer, readying their swords.

ORM
Last chance.

PENTHE
I hope it doesn't listen.

Penthe smiles a contemptuous grin.

And within a fraction of a second Teriel is on him. The full force of Teriel's motion knocks Penthe to the ground.

Teriel buries the knife into Penthe's shoulder as they fall. Penthe screams.

Penthe's armor is the only reason he's not dead. He still holds the black sword.

He tries to swing the sword, but there's no room. He takes the butt of the sword and smashes it into Teriel's head. Teriel falls towards the ground, but as they fall, they lash out with the Bone Knife, burying it in Penthe's neck.

Orm buries his black blade between Teriel's ribs, but it doesn't get very deep before Teriel kicks Orm away with a savagely.

Orm stumbles backward as Teriel staggers to their feet.

Orm nearly falls, but is able to stabilize himself just as Teriel rushes towards him.

Orm holds up his sword and is able to fend off Teriel briefly.

Teriel is able to knock Orm off balance, though, and the knight crashes to the ground this time.

Teriel leaps on top of the fallen knight, but Orm manages to stab Teriel again.

Teriel staggers and Orm tries to pull loose.

But Teriel snarls and jabs the Bone Knife directly into Orm's head.

As Orm dies, he manages to stab Teriel once more.

Teriel looks down at the new bloody stab wound.

Teriel falls to the ground.

Lucretia comes running from the house as Teriel passes out.

EXT. LUCRETIA'S HUT - MOMENTS LATER

Teriel opens their eyes and has trouble with the sun. It takes them a few moments to fully adjust and be able to see.

Teriel stands up and wipes blood from their forehead.

They try to take a step, but stumble.

Lucretia takes a step in Teriel's direction.

Teriel stumbles towards her.

LUCRETIA
Are you okay? I've never seen
anything like that.

Teriel stumbles and falls forward. Lucretia rushes to catch Teriel, but doesn't make it in time. Teriel crashes to the ground.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)
Grackit!

Snoofa runs and hides.

INT. LUCRETIA'S HUT - LATER

Teriel sleeps on a bed, not just a mattress, but a bed.

Lucretia sits watching Teriel, sipping on a glass filled with black liquid.

Teriel awakens and sits up quickly, moving away from Lucretia, backing into a corner.

LUCRETIA
Ah, you're finally awake.

Teriel grunts.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)
You hungry?

Teriel stares at her as she stands up. She grabs a chunk of bread from the table. She takes a few steps and tosses the bread onto the bed. It lands at the opposite end from Teriel, who flinches.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)
It's bread. You eat it.

She walks back to the table and picks up another chunk of bread. She tears off a piece.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)
You eat it.

She takes a bite and starts chewing. After a few seconds, she picks up her glass of black liquid and washes down the dry bread.

Teriel doesn't move at first.

After a few seconds, though, Teriel grabs the bread and hugs it to their chest.

Lucretia watches Teriel, but doesn't move. Snoofa walks into the room.

Teriel takes a bite of the bread. They look up at Lucretia. Then at Snoofa. Then Teriel starts to chow down on the bread.

Lucretia smiles. Snoofa meows.

Two pots sit on a stack of heavy bricks in the corner of the room. She takes turns stirring each pot

She walks over to a set of shelves and grabs two bowls.

Lucretia returns towards the bricks. She fills a bowl with a meaty stew from the first pot.

Then she fills the second bowl with stew from the second pot, which has no meat.

She shows Teriel the two bowls and then sets them down on the table. Lucretia sits. The two bowls sit equidistant between her chair and the one she offers to Teriel.

She points to Teriel and then to the chair.

She places spoons in each of the two bowls. She waves Teriel over.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)
C'mon. You need this stuff.

The bread is gone, but Teriel's hunger isn't. Teriel hesitates briefly, but then walks over and sits carefully on the chair.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)
Take your choice. Leaded...

She points at the bowl with meat.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)
Or decaf.

She points at the bowl without meat.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)
Take your pick.

She pushes one bowl forward and then the other, then lets them go.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)
Your loss.

She grabs the bowl with the meat and starts eating.

Teriel watches her.

She pushes the other bowl in front of Teriel.

She goes back to eating.

Teriel sniffs the bowl.

Teriel starts to eat. Slowly at first, but then quickly.

Soon the bowl is empty.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)
I thought you might be hungry.

She picks up Teriel's bowl and scoops out more.

He starts to wolf down the second bowl.

She looks towards the window.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)
More will come. Soon.

He keeps eating.

CUT TO:

Teriel sleeps on the bed, snoring.

Lucretia walks over to the bed and starts to pull a blanket onto Teriel's bare chest.

She takes a closer look at Teriel's wounds.

They are infected.

She walks outside and towards the garden. Snoofa follows with a meow.

In the garden, Lucretia makes her way to a row of cactus-ish plants. She tears off a few stalks and walks back inside.

She snaps the thick stalks and they ooze a clear liquid. She bends down and starts applying the liquid to the various wounds.

Teriel stirs, but doesn't wake.

Snoofa leaps up onto the bed and sniffs one of Teriel's wounds. It sharply recoils from the smell, leaps off the bed and runs away.

INT. LUCRETIA'S HUT - LATER

Teriel wakes and sits up. They look across the hut, but Lucretia isn't in her bed.

Teriel stands up and the cot creaks.

They walk over to the table, where more bread sits. Teriel grabs the bread and quickly eats it.

Teriel walks over to the window that looks outside.

Outside, Lucretia stands on a rock, maybe a foot above the ground.

Teriel looks at her with concern.

She leaps from one rock onto another one of similar size, about a foot away.

Teriel's face lights up.

Teriel jumps down and rushes outside. Snoofa follows.

Lucretia leaps from the second rock to a third.

Teriel comes running towards her, grunting and smiling like an idiot.

She looks up at Teriel with some concern.

Teriel rushes to the first rock and hops up on it.

LUCRETIA

Be careful! Are you healthy enough
for that?

Teriel leaps from the first rock to the second. Then they leap back to the first.

Snoofa curls between the rocks.

Teriel waves at Lucretia, who starts to laugh.

Teriel waves again.

Lucretia leaps back to the second rock. Teriel laughs out loud.

Teriel waves her away. She jumps back to the third rock.

Teriel jumps to the second rock. They laugh again.

Lucretia jumps to a fourth and final rock.

Teriel jumps to the third and without stopping, bounces immediately again and lands on the fourth rock with Lucretia. Teriel bumps into her and almost knocks her down, but Teriel grabs her hand and pulls her back up onto the rock.

Snoofa chases the near-goats away.

He laughs loudly jumps down and runs back towards the hut.

Laughing, Lucretia hops down and follows. Teriel goes back into the hut.

INT. LUCRETIA'S HUT - CONTINUOUS

Lucretia comes inside. Teriel stands looking out the window.

Teriel turns and smiles at Lucretia, but makes no other sound.

LUCRETIA
Can I get you anything?

Lucretia smiles.

Teriel smiles, too.

Snoofa walks in and curls around Teriel's leg.

Teriel walks across the room and sits at the table.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)
You're hungry?

Teriel nods their head.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)
Okay, wait right here.

She grabs a cloth walks back outside. Snoofa follows her.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)
I'll find a way.

She bends down with the cloth and picks up a piece of cat shit. Snoofa playfully swats at her as she does.

Lucretia walks back inside.

She fills two bowls with stew and sits them at the table.

She sits down and unwraps the shit and drops it into one of the bowls. She pushes the bowls towards Teriel.

Lucretia points at the shit bowl then the non-shit bowl. She points to Teriel.

Teriel shakes their head no.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)
Choose.

She smiles and nods.

Teriel looks down at the bowls. They reach forward and take the shit bowl.

Teriel pushes the non-shit bowl towards Lucretia.

Teriel picks up a spoon and goes to eat the shit stew.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)

Stop.

Teriel looks up.

Lucretia takes the bowl and spoon from Teriel. She tosses the bad stew outside. Snoofa chases it.

She refills the bowl with non-shit stew and hands it and the spoon back to Teriel.

She smiles.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)

Thank you.

Teriel leans forward to eat. As they lean forward, their token becomes clearly visible. Teriel looks at it closely for the first time.

Lucretia gasps.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)

Wait.

She stands up and walks toward the door.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)

I have something to show you.

She goes outside.

Teriel stays seated as she is gone.

Outside, Lucretia hunts for something, tossing and throwing things around, making a racket.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)

Where is it?

Teriel stands up and walks over to the pot on the stove.

They open the first pot and warily sniff it. Smelling no shit, Teriel reaches in and pulls out a chunk of meat.

The cat, Snoofa, walks back in and curls around Teriel's leg, purring. Teriel kicks at it softly. It walks away.

Teriel tosses the entire piece of meat into their mouth and closes the pot.

As Teriel turns around, Lucretia walks back in.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)
Found it! This will blow your mind.

She gestures for Teriel to join her. She sits down and pulls something out of her pocket, something wrapped in cloth.

Teriel frowns and backs away from Lucretia.

She looks at Teriel and then she laughs.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)
No, no, no. This you will like.

He loosens up.

She unwraps the cloth as Teriel watches raptly.

Lucretia opens up the cloth to reveal Elfarran's token.

Teriel grabs it and looks at it up close. They very clearly recognize the two horizontal lines with the circle below them.

She grabs her cup takes a drink of the black liquid. She winces after taking a sip.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)
I met your friend.

Teriel looks up at her and back at the token.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)
He came down Shark Road, just like you did.

Teriel walks over to her. Teriel holds up the token.

TERIEL
El-Far-Ran.

Lucretia reaches up and touches the token. Teriel withdraws it at first but then loosens up.

LUCRETIA
Elfarran?

Teriel nods.

Lucretia smiles.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)
Who are you? What is your name.

She points to Teriel.

Teriel looks at her, puzzled.

She leans in closer and points at the token around Teriel's neck.

Teriel looks down. Then they look up, smiling.

They points to themself.

TERIEL
Te-Ri-El!

Teriel points to her.

LUCRETIA
Teriel?

Teriel nods and points to her again.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)
Lucretia.

She points to herself.

Teriel points to her.

TERIEL
Loo-Cree-Sha!

She smiles.

LUCRETIA
Close enough.

They smile.

Teriel looks down at Elfarran's token. Then they look back at Lucretia.

TERIEL
El-Far-Ran?

Snoofa jumps up into Teriel's lap. Teriel recoils at first, but then relaxes.

Lucretia walks over towards the window.

Teriel pats Snoofa on the back. The cat starts purring.

LUCRETIA
The king must have your fr...
Elfarran.

Teriel looks at her questioningly.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)
Come here.

She waves Teriel over.

Teriel looks down at the cat.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)
Snoofa, grackit!

She waves the cat away and Teriel follows her to the window.
Teriel puts Elfarran's token around their own neck.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)
There.

She points out the window.

In the distance, Castle Gensher's windows are illuminated
with fires and candles.

She takes another drink of the black liquid.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)
The king's men took your friend.

She grabs ahold of Elfarran's token. She points at the
castle.

Teriel looks down at the token and then up at the castle.

Lucretia holds the token a little longer before letting go.

She gets up and walks across the room.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)
The king is a petty tyrant...

She digs through a box on her shelf. She pulls out a
necklace.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)
...who thinks he controls
everything. I have to hide this...

She holds up the necklace. Hanging from the center is a
bright green gem with red flecks in it.

Teriel walks over and looks closely at the necklace.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)
...from him.

Lucretia puts it on.

She takes another sip of the black liquid.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)
This isn't our first world, you
know?

Teriel walks towards the door. Lucretia walks over and stops
Teriel.

She points towards the bed.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)
There was one before this.

She pulls Teriel by the hand towards the bed. She gently
pushes Teriel onto the bed.

She starts blowing out candles.

Teriel lays down.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)
We left the old world. I don't
really remember it. But I know
about it.

She blows the last light out.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)
You can leave this world tomorrow.

She gets in her bed.

Snoofa jumps up onto Teriel's bed and settles down, purring.

EXT. CASTLE ROAD - DAY

Teriel begins walking towards the castle, Lucretia stands at
her front door.

LUCRETIA
Teriel!

Teriel stops and turns to look at her.

She tosses Teriel a loaf of bread larger than either of their
heads.

Teriel catches it easily and tears off a chunk.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)
Save some for later.

Teriel tosses the chunk of bread into their mouth and puts the rest into their pocket.

Teriel waves at Lucretia. She waves back.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)
Stop by again some time.

If Teriel hears her, they don't respond. Teriel turns and walks towards the castle.

Lucretia picks up Snoofa and walks inside the hut.

EXT. CASTLE ROAD - LATER

As Teriel walks closer to the castle, structures start to appear more frequently. Small homes, each associated with small garden plots. A few have livestock.

Teriel walks past a house and peers towards it. A man and a woman staring out the window hide to avoid Teriel's gaze.

Teriel walks on, leaving behind the small cluster of homes.

The road turns and as Teriel rounds the corner, there stand Erisen and Hara.

Erisen stares at Teriel, fear carved into her face. She grabs ahold of Hara and they move towards the house.

ERISEN
Come quickly.

Hara follows, staring at Teriel.

HARA
What is it?

Erisen makes eye contact with Teriel.

ERISEN
It comes from the Dark Forest. It is the darkness. It devours children.

She slams the door shut.

Teriel walks on.

EXT. CASTLE ROAD - LATER

Teriel isn't running away from Erisen's house, but moves quite fast, nonetheless.

Teriel doesn't get very far before a group of knights on the back of six-legged steeds comes galloping towards them.

At first, Teriel considers running, but there's no way to outrun the beasts.

Looking up, Teriel sees many more of the knights and steeds than before.

Teriel considers fighting. They reach a hand into the pocket with the Bone Knife.

The knights all point short swords at Teriel.

Teriel lets the Bone Knife fall back into their pocket.

The knights continue to point swords at Teriel as a crowd begins to gather from surrounding homes.

The captain of the knights, BENDERESK, is a man in his 50s with long white hair. The armor still fits, but barely.

BENDERESK

I don't know what the hell you are,
but I am tired of seeing your like
around here.

Two of the knights dismount and grab Teriel, who puts up no resistance.

BENDERESK (CONT'D)

Get that thing to the castle.

They start moving.

EXT. CASTLE GENSHER - LATER

The knights walk the restrained Teriel through the crowds outside the castle.

Up close, the castle looks almost as imposing as the caves Teriel came from.

The crowds are fascinated and a little scared of Teriel. They make space for Teriel and the knights to get past them.

Teriel stares up at the castle.

BENDERESK
Move along. Now.

The knights shove Teriel towards the castle gate. The larger of the knights, HATHA, grips Teriel's arm, but his sword is sheathed. SERRET, the thinner of the two, keeps his sword at the ready.

HATHA BENDERESK (CONT'D)
Hatha.

HATHA
Sir!

BENDERESK
Take it around the back way. Don't let it see... the other one.

HATHA
Yes sir! Serret, get that thing moving. Take the river route.

SERRET
But that's...

Hatha smacks Serret upside the head and they move on.

INT. CASTLE GENSHER - MOMENTS LATER

Benderesk walks into the castle's throne room. It is filled with rich tapestries and golden chalices and a large black iron throne. The throne is exactly the same size and the same basic shape as the throne at Teriel's home cave.

The king, MAHARION, is a man in his mid-40s. He wears robes of the finest silk, with four colors and the most intricate of patterns. He wears a crown of gold and multicolored jewels. The center jewel in the crown is a bright green with red flecks.

Standing next to Maharion is the queen, MANAN. She is taller than Maharion, younger, more attractive.

Benderesk walks to the front of the throne and kneels before Maharion.

Maharion nods.

Benderesk stands.

MAHARION
You have news?

BENDERESK

Yes sir. I have captured another of the creatures.

Manan's interest is piqued.

MAHARION

Another one?

BENDERESK

Yes sir. The creature killed two of our men down at the intersection with Shark Road.

MAHARION

Shark Road? Again.

BENDERESK

We kept it separate from the other one. Wasn't sure how you wanted to... handle things.

Maharion leaps to his feet and claps his hands. He is happy.

MAHARION

Let's have a fucking party!

He bursts into laughter. Benderesk joins in.

Manan rolls her eyes and walks out of the throne room.

She walks down a corridor and turns into a room. The room is a large library, with thousands of books. These are all textbooks and popular hardbacks and paperbacks from the 1980s-2010s.

She walks up to a shelf and pulls down a book that says *Cryptozoology*. She starts leafing through the pages and comes across something that looks a lot like Teriel and the other beings.

She closes the book and carries it out of the library.

INT. CASTLE GENSHER - LATER

The knights escort Teriel into the banquet hall.

Maharion sits at the head of the stout wooden dining table. He eats roasted meat on the bone and drinks wine.

Around the table and at smaller side tables sit dozens of men in women.

Their robes are fine, two-colored and have intricate, non-repeating patterns. Erisen is among the crowd, but there are no children present.

MAHARION

Nice, nice, nice.

The knights bring Teriel towards the front of the banquet table and stop in front of Maharion.

Maharion looks at Teriel and laughs.

MAHARION (CONT'D)

Yes! Tonight's entertainment is finally here.

Manan looks up at Teriel.

MANAN

This one is significantly larger.

Maharion laughs. The court joins in.

MAHARION

More monster, more fun!

The crowd laughs uneasily. Maharion laughs harder and the crowd follows suit.

Maharion stares at Teriel.

MAHARION (CONT'D)

It sure is a disgusting thing, isn't it?

The crowd laughs. A few throw insults at Teriel.

MAHARION (CONT'D)

I think I would like to play a game.

MANAN

Please don't.

Maharion looks over at her but says nothing.

MAHARION

Bring it before me, I would like to test it.

The knights bring Teriel to the front.

MAHARION (CONT'D)

You are a scary thing, aren't you?

Nervous laughter.

Maharion nervously looks around the room. Unsure of what to do next. The crowd watches expectantly.

He picks up a piece of fruit.

Some titters.

Maharion stands and throws the fruit at Teriel. It is a good throw, it hits Teriel in the head. Maharion claps and laughs. A few others join in.

Teriel responds with something between a snarl and a hiss.

MANAN

My king, if I may?

Maharion sits back down.

MAHARION

You... you may.

She lifts up the text book.

MANAN

I have scoured the great works of
the Great Researchers.

Maharion scowls.

MANAN (CONT'D)

I think these things are not unlike
us...

The scowl turns to rage.

MANAN (CONT'D)

...they share our use of tools...

Maharion stands up and knocks his plate to the floor with a clatter. Manan stops speaking. She is afraid.

MAHARION

I am weary.

He snatches the book from Manan's hand. Then he walks to the wall and grabs a torch.

Maharion walks out of the Banquet Room. He follows the hall to the library. The rest of the crowd follows.

Manan does not. She sits in her chair.

She begins to cry.

Benderesk moves to comfort her, but she waves him away.

Maharion tosses the book into the library.

Then he lights everything in the library on fire.

Manan cries.

Maharion pushes through the crowd and moves back into the Banquet Room.

MAHARION (CONT'D)
Now, lets hear no more about the
pasts of others.

He walks up to Teriel.

MAHARION (CONT'D)
Back to the main event!

He looks Teriel in the eyes. Teriel looks away.

MAHARION (CONT'D)
Pay attention.

Maharion smashes the torch into Teriel's head. Teriel doesn't catch on fire, but the blow to the head is savage.

Teriel snarls, but doesn't fight back.

MAHARION (CONT'D)
What are things like you afraid of?

Maharion holds the torch up to Teriel's face. Teriel shies away from the fire, but otherwise doesn't react.

MAHARION (CONT'D)
Hmmm... Boring.

Maharion smashes Teriel in the head three more times with the torch, drawing blood and knocking Teriel unconscious. Teriel falls to the ground.

Maharion tosses the torch to the ground and walks back to the table and grabs a hunk of meat off the table and takes a bite while smiling. Food sticks to his beard.

He picks up a goblet of wine, spilling some, and takes a sip.

MAHARION (CONT'D)
Now this is a fucking party!

INT. CASTLE GENSHER - LATER

Teriel opens their eyes. Two knights stand with black blades pointed at Teriel, who is still restrained.

Maharion walks over towards Teriel and begins to visually inspect them.

MAHARION

What are you beasts? Where do you
come from?

Maharion runs a finger down Teriel's cheek. Teriel flinches and growls more strongly than is wise.

Maharion turns and walks back across the banquet hall. He goes back to the head of the table and sits down.

MAHARION (CONT'D)

Well, I couldn't figure it out when
I had one of you. Let's see what
two gets us.

He claps his hands.

MAHARION (CONT'D)

Benderesk!

BENDERESK

Sir!

Benderesk walks out of the room.

Maharion laughs as he takes another bite from the leg of something or other.

Teriel stares at Maharion.

Seconds later, Benderesk and several knights return to the room.

Between them, they guide Elfarran, who is alive, but injured. Elfarran can walk, but not easily.

MAHARION

Now the fun begins!

Teriel sees Elfarran.

Teriel bursts free from the knights holding them and rushes towards Elfarran.

As Teriel lunges forward, Benderesk steps forward and blocks Teriel's path.

Teriel lunges forward, but Benderesk stabs Teriel in the ribs with his black blade.

Teriel loses confidence and backs up.

Benderesk steps forward with his sword, driving Teriel back.

Teriel shows attack, but the sword deters them once again.

MAHARION (CONT'D)

Enough!

Maharion steps into Teriel's line of sight, holding a carving knife to Elfarran's neck.

Teriel snarls.

Maharion pushes the blade further into Elfarran's neck, drawing blood.

Teriel backs down.

MAHARION (CONT'D)

I've had enough of this! The
monsters will be killed!

The room erupts in cheers.

Two knights grab Elfarran and stand them next to Teriel.

MAHARION (CONT'D)

I am the king and I shall execute
the creatures myself. It is my
burden.

Maharion walks up to Teriel, pointing the knife at their face. Teriel snarls, but not too aggressively.

MAHARION (CONT'D)

Which one should I kill first?

The crowd starts making suggestions.

MAHARION (CONT'D)

Calm down, calm down.

Maharion walks in front of Elfarran and points the knife at them.

This drives Teriel into a rage. Teriel launches out of their position, ripping away from the knights. Teriel throws their entire weight into Maharion's body.

The room erupts into chaos.

Elfarran rips away from their captors.

Teriel grabs Maharion's knife-wielding hand as they fall atop the king, crashing to the ground. The crown falls from Maharion's head and slides across the floor near Elfarran.

MAHARION (CONT'D)
You'll die for this!

Teriel squeezes.

Elfarran knocks one of the knights over and scrambles to grab the knight's loose sword.

Maharion screams and the pressure on his wrists causes him to drop the knife.

Teriel breaks Maharion's wrist and reaches to grab the Bone Knife from their pocket.

Teriel pulls it out and slits Maharion's throat, silencing the king's whining screams.

Elfarran stabs a knight.

Teriel scrambles towards Elfarran. Teriel grabs Elfarran's arm, cocks their head towards the exit and grunts.

Elfarran nods and limps quickly towards the exit.

The court are all running around trying to get out, creating a wall between Teriel and the knights. Benderesk and Manan lean over Maharion's corpse.

Teriel looks down and sees the crown. They reach down, grab it and throw it in their pocket.

Teriel chases after Elfarran.

INT. CASTLE GENSHER - LATER

Manan sits upon the throne. The room is still filled with chaos.

MANAN
Benderesk!

Benderesk turns away from escorting people from the room and walks up to Manan.

BENDERESK
Yes, my queen?

MANAN
The crown has been stolen.

BENDERESK
The creature?

MANAN
Who else?

Benderesk turns to walk out of the room.

MANAN (CONT'D)
Bring it back quickly.

BENDERESK
Yes, my queen.

MANAN
It will be difficult to hold this
place together without it.

He walks out of the room. She walks to the window and looks outside.

The chaos has made its way to the streets around the castle.

EXT. LUCRETIA'S HUT - LATER

Teriel and Elfarran awkwardly move down the hill towards Lucretia's hut.

Teriel stops. Elfarran looks up at them.

Teriel takes Elfarran's token from around their own neck and puts it back around Elfarran's.

They exchange a smile.

They start walking again.

As they come closer to the hut, they don't see any movement. Lucretia is nowhere to be seen.

Teriel looks up with concern. They spot blood near the door of the hut.

Teriel walks to one of the rocks and carefully leans Elfarran against it.

IRIOTH (O.S.)
Te-Ri-El!

Teriel looks up to see Irioth walking from inside the hut towards them. The rest of Irioth's crew follows. Their hands and faces are covered in red blood. A few still eat chunks of meat.

Irioth and the others stand staring at Teriel.

Teriel looks at the blood and becomes enraged. Teriel rushes them.

They run at Teriel, Irioth in the lead.

Down the Castle Road come Benderesk and a dozen knights.

Teriel pays no mind and rushes directly at Irioth.

Teriel steps in a puddle of blood, splashing their legs. Teriel looks down.

Irioth connects with a powerful punch that sends Teriel sprawling to the ground, falling in the puddle of blood. Most of Teriel's front side is now covered in blood, except their face.

BENDERESK (O.S.)

You creatures, stand down! I am
here on behalf of the queen. I am
here for the crown.

Irioth looks up at the knights. They grunt and look at the other beings, who all start to converge towards the knights.

Irioth looks down at Teriel.

Irioth nods their head towards the knights.

Irioth holds a hand out to Teriel.

Teriel shakes their head no.

Irioth spits on Teriel and rushes off towards the knights.

CUT TO:

Benderesk is held between two of the beings, covered in blood and wounds.

The ground is littered with the bodies of the knights. No other human remains alive.

BENDERESK (CONT'D)

You can kill me...

Irioth does. Irioth stares at Teriel.

They toss Banderesk's body to the ground.

CUT TO:

Irioth holds a sword over Elfarran, but stares at Teriel.

Teriel stares back with a snarl.

Irioth places the blade on Elfarran's neck.

Teriel drops to a knee. The other beings grab Teriel.

Irioth walks up to Teriel. Irioth spits in Teriel's face.

Irioth searches Teriel's pockets and finds both the Bone Knife and the crown.

Irioth stares at the crown for a bit, then puts it and the Bone Knife in their own pockets.

Irioth points down the Shark Road towards home and grunts. The other beings move Teriel and Elfarran down the road, past the bodies of the knights.

EXT. LUCRETIA'S HUT - MOMENTS LATER

Irioth and the beings are gone, but the bodies of the knights litter the landscape.

Snoofa comes from down the Castle Road, weaving her way through the bodies of the knights and over near the rocks. The cat stops to sniff the rock that Elfarran lay against and the puddle of blood that Teriel fell into.

LUCRETIA (O.S.)

Snoofa, grackit! I can't believe
it's you!

Lucretia walks from around the back side of the house towards the cat.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)

They really did a number on my
goats.

She picks up the cat and walks toward the house.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)

I hate going to market for goats.

She looks up towards the field of bodies.

LUCRETIA (CONT'D)
I am NOT cleaning that up.

She walks inside the hut.

EXT. THE SHARK ROAD - NIGHT

The beings are camped out in one of the fields along Shark Road.

Irioth stands watch, looking back towards the castle.

Behind Irioth, the rest of the beings sleep surrounding Teriel and Elfarran, who are bound together.

Teriel wakes to see Elfarran staring at them.

Teriel smiles.

Elfarran weakly returns the smile.

Teriel leans in and kisses Elfarran. Elfarran passionately returns the kiss.

Irioth hears something and turns. Teriel and Elfarran pretend to be asleep.

Irioth scowls, but seeing nothing, returns their vigilance towards the castle.

Teriel and Elfarran open their eyes and kiss once more.

INT. THRONE CAVE - NIGHT

Everyone is assembled. The drums are playing the Shark Trial song.

Uahto stands at the head of the crowd and raises their hands. The drums stop.

Uahto nods to the Elders.

Irioth and others bring forth Teriel and Elfarran.

Irioth and Uahto seem gleeful.

Uahto points at Teriel and Elfarran, then yields to Irioth.

Irioth holds up the crown.

The crowd bursts into gasps and shock. Then they start to cheer.

Uahto and Irioth frown.

Yevaud walks up to Irioth and takes the crown. They bring it to the other Elders and it is passed around.

Yevaud walks over to Teriel and Elfarran and walks them forward toward the front of the group while the crowd cheers.

Yevaud hugs Elfarran. Then Teriel.

Uahto grunts.

Irioth steps forward, now holding the Bone Knife.

Irioth buries the knife in Yevaud's chest.

The crowd goes silent.

Deyala, Azver and a half dozen other beings spring forth and attack the Elders.

Irioth stabs the Elder holding the crown and takes it back.

Within seconds, all the Elders are dead.

Uahto raises their hands and the crowd goes silent.

Uahto points at Elfarran and Irioth slits Elfarran's throat.

Teriel roars in anger, but so many beings come at them, Teriel is overpowered and driven to their knees.

Irioth proudly holds the Bone Knife up for all to see. The crowd gasps. Uahto grins.

Holding the knife lower, in front of their chest, Irioth turns towards Teriel with a grin.

Teriel stares at the Bone Knife. A gleam of light catches the blade. Teriel explodes upward, breaking free of those restraining them.

Teriel smashes their head into Irioth's hands from below, jamming the upright knife through Irioth's jaw and into their brain.

The smile leaves Irioth's face.

Irioth falls to the ground. Dead.

Uahto screams and several large beings that share the shark fin marking rush towards Teriel.

Teriel scrambles and pulls the knife out of Irioth's jaw, gaining control of it as the first of Uahto's goons arrives.

Teriel buries the knife in the first goon's chest.

Deyala hits Teriel with a club.

Teriel stabs Deyala in the heart.

Teriel turns and moves towards Uahto, who cowers.

Another being rushes Teriel, only to find the knife buried in their eye socket.

Teriel moves closer to Uahto.

Azver leaps at Teriel, but Teriel lands the knife in Azver's chest. Azver falls to the ground, taking the knife with them.

Teriel tries to pull the knife free, but can't.

One last being attacks them, but Teriel smashes their body into a wall, knocking the wind from them. The being falls to the ground and Teriel stomps the being's head.

A splash of blood lands on Teriel's face.

Teriel turns towards Uahto, who turns to run.

Teriel is on top of Uahto before they can take more than a few steps. Uahto crashes to the ground.

Teriel grabs Uahto's head by the ears and smashes it into the ground.

And again.

And again.

And again.

Teriel's entire face is covered with black blood now.

The crowd stares at Teriel. Even those with a shark fin marking refuse to challenge their new leader.

The strongest of the remaining beings takes a knee in fealty to Teriel. The others follow.

Teriel walks over to Elfarran's corpse. Teriel kneels down and kisses Elfarran one last time.

Teriel takes Elfarran's token and adds it to their own.

Teriel walks back to the Uahto's corpse. They kneel down and take the king's token from around Uahto's neck and adds it to their own.

Teriel walks over Irioth's corpse. They kneel down and pick up the crown with a bloody hand.

Teriel walks to the throne and sits down.

The hand holding the crown is so bloody, a drop slips from the end of Teriel's finger and falls to the ground.

Teriel puts the crown upon their head.

The kneeling beings begin to grunt while Teriel stares into the night.

FADE OUT.