

THE WARDENS OF FATE
"Pilot"

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I/E. LAVISH BEDROOM/WOODS- NIGHT

The woods. A RED-HAIRED GIRL runs through the trees. Distant SHOUTING, BARKING DOGS, and straining SCREECHES can barely be heard over the girl's heavy breathing.

CASTLE GUARD
She must not reach the barrier!

CUT TO:

ASHARA (mid 20s) is half-Elven. In her bed, she starts breathing heavily as well. She CLUTCHES at her chest and gasps as-

CASTLE GUARD #2
The hounds are losing her send in
the Garroters!

The girl dares to look back and TRIPS. We see her face as she struggles to pick herself up-

Ashara WAKES quickly sitting up and revealing amber eyes.

ASHARA
(gasping) Alexandra.

BLACK OUT.

EXT. CITY STREETS- DAY

We see the city of Austus. The streets, the usual foot traffic of MERCHANTS and PATRONS, and the noticeable presence of Southern CROWNSGUARD around.

INT. AUSTUS CHURCH BACKROOM- DAY

A room filled with various crates and chests. About a third of them have been cracked open and rifled through.

VANDREN (early 30s, half-demon) picks a lock on a chest and pops it open.

VANDREN
For gods' sake!

BREN (early 30s, burly human) anxiously paces the room while Vandren attempts to pry open a small crate.

BREN
Vandren can you please hurry it up.

VANDREN

If I find another stack of old
crumbly shitty parchment I'm gonna
lose it.

BREN

I knew this was a bad plan.

VANDREN

Relax, Bren. I already explained
that this- AHA!

He pops open the crate and displays a small ORNATE BOX.

VANDREN (CONT'D)

I don't know why you doubt me.

BREN

It's a box.

Vandren smacks Bren's arm.

VANDREN

It's obviously an important box if
it's been stowed away so well.

BREN

With a broken lock?

Upon closer inspection, the latch is in fact already slightly
detached from the box.

VANDREN

Well that's unfortunate.

CHURCH GUARD (O.S.)

What was that? Did you hear
something?

The suddenly panicked pair turn towards the door.

BREN

I thought you said you knew the
guard rotations.

VANDREN

I say a lot of things.

Vandren quickly starts stuffing the box and anything else he
can into his and Bren's satchels.

VANDREN (CONT'D)

Just try to I don't know... hide!
Or something.

BREN

Hide?! Your plan is to hide? The two of us barely fit in this room-

CHURCH GUARD 2 (O.S.)

I think so. I'll go with you to take a look.

VANDREN

Okay, I admit it. I got the rotations wrong.

BREN

This was supposed to be an easy one Van. We have to pay off-

The CHURCH GUARD reaches the threshold of the room.

VANDREN

Hello sir! Lovely day we're having isn't it?

Vandren grabs a random crate lid and CHUCKS it at the guard.

BREN

This is so bad.

VANDREN

All I have are my daggers and you got mad at me last time!

BREN

Because you killed a crownsguard!

The second guard arrives to aid his companion.

CHURCH GUARD 2

Intruders! We need aid! Stop in the name of-

BREN

Gods be good. The day just started.

Bren grabs Vandren and WOOSH! They disappear...

EXT. AUSTUS CHURCH BACK ENTRANCE- SECOND LATER

And reappear at the back entrance of the church.

VANDREN

See. You get so worked up but it always works out.

A group of GUARDS BURST through the back entrance.

CHURCH GUARD
Halt! By ordinance of Dressarian
law surrender yourselves!

BREN
You were saying?

VANDREN
We should really figure out a way
to make that trick of yours less
tiring.

The pair start booking it as they're chased by guards.

INT. THE NIDUS TAVERN- DAY

CAIUS NIDUS (late teens, lanky, half-orc) carries a serving tray of tankards over to a nearby table. LEVIA NIDUS (50s, orc) his mother mans the bar.

LEVIA
Caius, the back corner table needs
their-

CAIUS
Already on it Ma!

He clumsily navigates through the busy tavern.

RANDOM MAN
Oy! I paid for a full pint try to
deliver one!

CAIUS
Doing my very best sir.

RANDOM MAN
Your best is pretty shite.

He places everything down and then rushes back to the bar.

CAIUS
I think I would find this less
humiliating if they weren't so
rude.

LEVIA
It's honest work. But yes, he's
always a bit snippy, isn't he?

Caius sits down and starts picking at the counter.

LEVIA (CONT'D)

Taking an early break are you? Last I checked there are a lot more tables that need you.

CAIUS

This is such a pain in-

LEVIA

This is what puts food in your belly and a roof over your head.

CAIUS

I know. It's just that-

LEVIA

You should feel lucky we even have a place like this. We could've lost a lot more and had to give up a lot more but we've managed to stick it out. Most folks around here can't say the same.

CAIUS

I know! I am grateful for it. I was trying to say... I'm sorry.

LEVIA

It's alright.

She comes around the counter to give him a kiss on the side of his head.

LEVIA (CONT'D)

I know you have grand dreams. But I need you here with your head out of the clouds.

CAIUS

I got it Ma.

LEVIA

I know you do. But you could really prove it to me by going down to Illya's.

CAIUS

What? Come on.

LEVIA

You don't want to wait tables then go do errands.

CAIUS

I- ugh, fine.

Levia drops a small satchel of coins in Caius' hands and he heads out of the tavern.

RANDOM MAN

Boy, I'm out of ale!

CAIUS

Complain to someone else.

EXT. CITY STREETS- DAY

As Caius walks to the trade market he bumps shoulders with A slightly older version of the girl in the woods: ALEXANDRA (early 20s, human?, armored). She's staring at a MAP.

ALEXANDRA

Oh, pardon me.

CAIUS

Yeah, whatever.

He continues on.

Walking alongside her is ZAVI (late 20s, dwarf, warrior get-up).

ZAVI

Why is it so hard for people to be polite?

ALEXANDRA

Zavi, in all fairness, my attention is a bit diverted at the moment.

ZAVI

He could see. So, he could move.

The two continue to make their way through the busy and broken-down streets.

ZAVI (CONT'D)

Gods, I don't remember Austus being this run down.

ALEXANDRA

Wars take a toll. With your pessimistic philosophy, I figured you would expect this.

ZAVI
I'm choosing to ignore that.

ALEXANDRA
How shockingly mature.

ZAVI
One day Alex, I'll find out where
all your pompous attitude comes
from.

The comment lifts Alexandra's head from the map.

ALEXANDRA
Pompous?

ZAVI
Oh? Did my oversimplified
evaluation of you strike a nerve?

ALEXANDRA
Touché.

ZAVI
Honestly, sometimes it feels like
you're begging for it.

ALEXANDRA
What did you say? "Choosing to
ignore?"

Alexandra brings the map back to her face.

ZAVI
Very funny. You know, it'd be great
if those celestial visions of yours
included actual directions.

A trio of GUARDS goes flying by searching and yelling for two
individuals.

ZAVI (CONT'D)
I mean this place is a total mess.

ALEXANDRA
I told you it had to be Austus in
my dreams and they haven't steered
me wrong yet.

ZAVI
Yeah, I get that but-

ALEXANDRA

And your symbol has been guiding us towards the same place. This city.

ZAVI

I get it! But I'm done with this whole map and wandering in circles thing. You're just screaming to be pick-pocketed.

She snatches the map away from Alexandra.

ALEXANDRA

Fair point. I guess our best option is to ask around. Although that might bring a different kind of trouble.

ZAVI

How so?

ALEXANDRA

Every time we're "sent" somewhere it usually comes with something unsavory to fix.

ZAVI

Gotcha. We could try to find a diviner or a mender but a tavern keeper is probably our safest bet. They're usually the town gossip.

ALEXANDRA

Of course you would recommend a tavern.

ZAVI

We're gonna end up coughing up some coin either way. Might as well get something out of it.

More GUARDS run by.

ALEXANDRA

It is a mess. Shame. Used to be quite lovely.

EXT. ALLEYWAY- MEANWHILE

Vandren and Bren manage to evade the guards and duck into an alleyway.

BREN
Ekros is gonna be so pissed.

VANDREN
I swear to the Dawnmaven herself
the place was supposed to be empty.

BREN
One stint in a church and suddenly
you're religious?

VANDREN
Oh, you've finally developed a
sense of humor?

Beat.

VANDREN (CONT'D)	BREN
I'm sorry alright.	"I'm sorry alright."

VANDREN (CONT'D)
Fuck you.

BREN
Such an unexpected response.

DAFT
No, this is unexpected.

The pair JUMPS as a looming SHADOW appears behind them. It steps forward to reveal DAFT (Minotaur, one eye, terrifying).

VANDREN
Daft! To what do we owe the
pleasure?

DAFT
Quite a ruckus you've caused. Boss
isn't happy.

VANDREN
Oh it'll die down quickly trust-

DAFT
Trust? You? A tall order.

BREN
We were given false intel on the
guards' schedule.

DAFT
That warning was mighty clear
wasn't it Vandren?

BREN

Warning?

VANDREN

I took it as more of a strong suggestion.

Daft pulls out a large GREAT HAMMER.

DAFT

Well let me make another. I suggest you don't put up much of a fight.

A MASKED FIGURE appears on the other side of the alleyway.

Vandren and Bren put their hands up as bags are thrown over their heads and they're knocked out.

EXT. TRADE MARKET- DAY

Caius arrives at the market. Magic hums about freely as VENDORS utilize potions, baubles, and little tricks to try and lure CUSTOMERS. He walks by a SMALL CHILD who's awestruck by one such vendor.

SMALL CHILD

Mama, look! Look!

MAMA

Yes, I see.

SMALL CHILD

(whispers) He's going to get in trouble!

MAMA

No dear, things are different in Dressaria. Come on we have to go register-

SMALL CHILD

but Mama!

The MOTHER drags the child away while Caius goes to one of the bigger stalls. He's greeted by ILLYA (female half-elf, mid 50s).

ILLYA

Caius! I figured you'd be coming by today.

CAIUS
 Been coming my whole life so safe
 assumption.

ILLYA
 Your mother's usual?

CAIUS
 Yep.

Illya gathers up goods into a large basket. The basket is
 bottomless as she places more and more items.

ILLYA
 Alright, that should be everything.

CAIUS
 Thanks.

ILLYA
 Okay, out with it. What has you in
 a sour mood today?

CAIUS
 It's nothing.

He goes to hand her coins but the older woman just glares.

CAIUS (CONT'D)
 Please don't do this. I got enough
 from my ma today.

ILLYA
 What did you argue about this time?

She takes the coins and hands him the basket.

CAIUS
 She never listens to me!

ILLYA
 I doubt you're a very good listener
 yourself.

SOLDIER #1
 Excuse me miss?

Caius' reply is halted by the arrival of THREE SOLDIERS. They
 all don tattered and worn armor/military garb.

SOLDIER #1 (CONT'D)
 I don't mean to interrupt but we
 have coin to spend and
 unfortunately very little time.

Caius takes them in with a look of wonder and excitement.

CAIUS

Are you from the last deployment?
From- from the front?

SOLDIER #3	SOLDIER #2
sigh	Unfortunately

Soldier #1 glares at the younger two.

SOLDIER #1

We are.

CAIUS

That's- that's incredible! How has it been? What is it like? It must be amazing. I heard the our armies have giants as big as mountains and beasts with-

SOLDIER #1

Let me stop you. We don't have time to chat, like I said, we're on limited time for errands.

SOLDIER #2

You should be thanking the gods no one's forcing you to go yet.

SOLDIER #3

Listen brat just piss off and-

SOLDIER #1

Shut it! Both of you.

SOLDIER #3	SOLDIER #2
Sorry, sir.	Yes, sir.

SOLDIER #1

Apologies lad but we're here on a very short leave. One we didn't think we'd live to see. So, while we're miles and miles away from... that. I'd rather not regale some local boy with tall tales. What's actually out there isn't pretty. Isn't worth remembering. All we want-

CAIUS

I-

SOLDIER #1

Please. Let us get our things and
be on our way. Please.

ILLYA

Caius, leave them be. Here you lot
go. On the house.

SOLDIER #3

Thank you very much miss.

Soldier #2 still puts a few coins down at the stall.

SOLDIER #2

I won't be needing it soon.

Caius is still focused on Soldier #1.

CAIUS

You know I'm not terrible with a
spear. I could show-

SOLDIER #1

Try and dream of something better
for yourself alright?

CAIUS

Right.

Caius grabs his basket and sheepishly heads back home.

INT. NIDUS TAVERN- DAY

Zavi and Alexandra sit at a table opposite a very DRUNK
SAILOR rambling on.

SAILOR THOMAS

But you have to- have to
understand. This thing was giant
like actually just... so big!

ALEXANDRA

Very impressive.

Levia arrives at the table.

LEVIA

Hello Thomas. How would you like a
free pint on the house at the best
seat here?

SAILOR THOMAS

You- you are the greatest woman in the world.

LEVIA

Oh I don't know about that dear.

THOMAS (he's just gross looking) stumbles over towards the bar and somehow manages to get himself in the seat before slumping over.

ZAVI

You just rescued us from one of the most painful conversations I've ever had.

ALEXANDRA

He was basically talking to himself. Was he rambling about a fish or a whale? Or a shark?

LEVIA

It changes every day, hon. So, anything I can get you ladies to make up for the terrible company?

ZAVI

Actually, it'd be great if we could ask you some questions. We just arrived and we're trying to get our bearings.

LEVIA

Oh! Well welcome to Austus and more importantly welcome to the Nidus Tavern the name's Levia. Th very proud owner.

Zavi gives Alexandra a look and a nod.

ALEXANDRA

My name is Alex and this is Zavi.

LEVIA

Well it's lovely to meet you both. Wish you two had visited us at a better time.

ALEXANDRA

We were actually sent here by-

ZAVI

Sent is a strong word. We're really just wondering if there was maybe a monastery or church that was popular? Any notable diviners?

LEVIA

You holy folk?

ALEXANDRA

Yes.

ZAVI

Something like that.

LEVIA

Right... Well, we do. Abner's is probably what you're looking for. He's the priest at the Autumn Square Church. It's the nicest building here you really can't miss it.

ZAVI

Do people usually refer to it as Abner's or are the two of you close?

LEVIA

No, no. It's sort of what everyone started to call it some years back. Not many folks around here are too religious but Abner has really done a lot to help out, especially since the war started. It's less about gods and prayers and more about-

ALEXANDRA

The community. People.

LEVIA

Exactly.

At that moment an upset Caius marches through the tavern all the way to the back quarters.

LEVIA (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry but that gloomy young man is my son and-

ALEXANDRA

By all means. We really appreciate you taking the time.

LEVIA

Thank you. Hopefully, this won't take long and I can get right back to you gals.

She heads off.

ZAVI

Well that wasn't a ton of info.

ALEXANDRA

But a good place to start.

ZAVI

You think with both of us being tied to divinity it's got to be a church??

ALEXANDRA

Do you have a better idea?

ZAVI

Unfortunately, no. Time to go pray I guess.

ALEXANDRA

For someone devoted to a god it always surprises me how much you hate religion.

ZAVI

The gods I like. What people choose to do in their name, that's what I tend to have issues with.

The pair gathers their things and heads out.

INT. EKROS' HIDEOUT- DAY

A corridor lined with rooms revealing a multitude of ILLICIT ACTIVITIES and ODD BEINGS. Debauchery, gambling, mopping up red messes, you name it.

Bren and Vandren are being escorted by Daft and VIRA (tall lizard person). The two whisper to each other.

BREN

I think I'm going to be sick.

VANDREN

Gods relax Bren it's gonna be fine.

BREN

Fine? How on earth could this be fine? It's the first time we've been allowed down here and we were brought with bags over our heads-

VANDREN

Yes but we-

BREN

And knocked unconscious.

VANDREN

I think you need to take some deep breaths.

BREN

How am I supposed to just breathe in a place like this?!

Daft and Vira briefly look back at the duo.

VANDREN

Salutations.

BREN (CONT'D)

Sorry.

VANDREN (CONT'D)

Look, let me handle the talking. I'll explain the schedule mishaps. We give Ekros a fair cut and we'll be on our merry way.

BREN

We don't even know what we grabbed!

Vandren sucks in a breath at the second exclamation but the brutes ignore them this time.

BREN (CONT'D)

How will we know there's anything "fair" at all? You were mostly digging up papers. Ekros doesn't strike me as a big reader.

VANDREN

Oh please, with the number of guards sent after us there has to be something big. Has to be.

They reach the final room at the end of the hall. Vira motions for them to stay put as they take out MULTIPLE KEYS to unlock the door.

DAFT

Alright boys.

BREN
I really, really don't feel good
about this.

VANDREN
I won't lie to you. My confidence
has been shaken.

BREN
Why would you tell me that?

The door opens, SCRAPING against the floor.

VIRA
In.

VANDREN
Right, yes. Going.

BREN
Vandren...

Vandren grabs Bren's face pulling it down to be eye level
with him.

VANDREN
It's going to be fine. Just tell
yourself it'll be fine.

VIRA
Now.

BREN
In we go I guess.

The door shuts behind them.

DAFT
Can't say it was nice knowing them.

He and Vira head back down the hall.

INT. NIDUS LIVING QUARTERS- DAY

Caius drops the basket down and plops himself onto his bed.
Levia soon enters.

LEVIA
I see you got everything from
Illya. Thank you for that.

He faces the wall away from her.

LEVIA (CONT'D)

Can't imagine you'd be this upset over errands.

CAIUS

Please just leave me alone.

LEVIA

I will. Once you give me an explanation for stomping through the place and staring at the wall while I'm trying to talk to you.

CAIUS

It's nothing.

LEVIA

Don't you lie to me.

He finally turns around to face his mother.

CAIUS

It doesn't matter if I tell you because you won't give a shit.

LEVIA

Language! If something is bothering you-

CAIUS

Of course something is bothering me! I try to tell you every day that something is bothering me but you don't want to hear it.

LEVIA

Caius. Mind your manners.

CAIUS

I want to be out there. I want to be doing something worthwhile. I should be out there proving myself not wasting my life away handing drunk idiots ale!

LEVIA

Your father put everything he had to get this place and give you something-

CAIUS

Yeah well he's dead so...

Beat.

LEVIA

Do I look like someone who needs
that reminder?

CAIUS

No, I-

LEVIA

Right. But I think you might need
one. Yes, your father is gone. Gone
because he had to be dragged into
all that bloodshed and massacring
and evil!

CAIUS

Ma I know-

LEVIA

You think those silly stories all
those trainees tell have anything
to do with what's actually out
there. Do you think for one second
that if you spoke to someone who
had seen all that hell that they
would be glowing with pride?
Bragging?

Caius falls silent.

LEVIA (CONT'D)

Gods above I bet you did speak to
someone. And I bet you made a damn
fool of yourself. Your father died
a hero so that you would never have
to try and be one. You should be
grateful for it!

CAIUS

I'm sorry.

LEVIA

I know you are! You always are. I
know life here isn't perfect. I
know you miss him. Gods know we
both do. But the best way to honor
him is right here. It's not
anywhere else.

She gives him a kiss on the forehead.

LEVIA (CONT'D)

You can take the rest of the day off but when the sun goes down I want you out there helping me again, alright?

He nods.

LEVIA (CONT'D)

Thank you, my sweet boy.

She leaves him in his room alone.

EXT. AUSTUS CHURCH- DAY

Zavi and Alexandra arrive at the church which is now SWARMING with GUARDS. Some can be seen questioning LOCALS.

ZAVI

Now we know what some of the chaos was about. Did your dream happen to include a perimeter lockdown?

ALEXANDRA

No it did not.

ZAVI

Something was stolen.

ALEXANDRA

Lip reading?

ZAVI

See that old elf guy over by the front door. He's arguing about somebody... running away? A robbery I'd guess. I can't get much more than that with these damn guards walking back and forth.

ALEXANDRA

Must have been something important. Looks like a third of the city's watch is here.

The two head towards the front entrance. They approach CAPTAIN LUTH (human, 40s) and FATHER ABNER (elf, 60s+) having a heated conversation.

LUTH

For the last time sir yes, they were in the back storage room.

ABNER

And how did they get there?

LUTH

We cannot say at this time as they have yet to be apprehended.

ABNER

This city is hardly massive. Your swarms of crowns-folk can't simply two people?

LUTH

Father Abner, we are doing our best but the men here are new. They are reinforcements from Petraia they do not know these roads nor do the people who live here trust them.

ABNER

I understand that!

Abner takes a moment to collect himself. Plastering on a sickeningly sweet smile.

ABNER (CONT'D)

Of course, I understand that. I know the people here better than most. Unfortunately, all I'm hearing Captain are excuses.

ALEXANDRA

What I'm hearing is you might need help.

Upon Zavi and Alexandra's arrival the surrounding GUARDS draw their weapons and Luth takes a step in front of Abner.

ZAVI

We just came to talk. You Father Abner?

ABNER

I am, yes.

ZAVI

My name is Silla and this is...

ALEXANDRA

Erin.

ZAVI

We're in need of some... divine guidance and were told to find you.

Both her and Alexandra pull out hidden AMULETS brandishing two equally ornate symbols of two different gods.

ABNER

Wonderful. Well, all are welcome here though I do wish you had come at more temperate times. Captain, please tell your colleagues they can stop this failed attempt at intimidation.

ALEXANDRA

If we are interrupting we can easily return later.

ABNER

Nonsense. Besides, you are saving me from hearing more of the Captain's inane excuses.

Luth goes to speak but stops himself. He hesitantly calls off the other crownsguard.

ABNER (CONT'D)

You may also return to your post.

LUTH

Father, I do not think that is wise.

ABNER

I do not appreciate being questioned, Captain. And I think I would prefer you addressed me as "sir".

LUTH

Fa- sir, I understand but-

ABNER

Is this my church?

LUTH

Yes-

ABNER

Well, these are holy women Captain. They brandish Empiryan symbols. A proper conversation in the church is in order. You can stand careful watch... outside.

Luth scans over Zavi and Alexandra before stepping aside.

LUTH
Yes, sir.

ABNER
Shall we?

ZAVI
I believe we shall.

Zavi marches into the church and Abner quickly follows behind but Alexandra pauses...

ALEXANDRA
Apologies Captain...?

LUTH
Luth, ma'am.

She gives him a nod and then goes inside.

INT. AUSTUS CHURCH- CONTINUOUS

Father Abner walks to the center of the room while Zavi and Alexandra stay near the entrance.

ALEXANDRA
This is quite impressive.

ZAVI (TO ALEXANDRA)
(whispering)
If you were wondering where all the
coin was going-

ABNER
You seem so surprised! I'll try not
to take offense.

ALEXANDRA
Oh no, no, no. Just given the
current climate I thought the
church might be stretched beyond
its means.

ZAVI
It seems you're one of the few
places here that isn't totally
falling apart.

Zavi starts meandering around scanning the place.

ABNER
Yes, well the city takes great
pride in our work.

ZAVI

So we've heard. Shocked you're not housing half the city or at least the latest on leave.

ALEXANDRA

Manners, Silla.

ABNER

It is alright. We have found our resources are better used in outreach than housing.

ZAVI

What kind of outreach?

ABNER

Many donate to our cause. In turn, we like to give back in way of food and supplies.

ALEXANDRA

Is the blockade outside a common occurrence?

ABNER

A lot of questions.

It comes out like a sneer. It stops Zavi in her tracks.

ALEXANDRA

My apologies I was just wondering-

ABNER

No, no inquisitive minds should be lauded not reprimanded. It has been a stressful time and I'm afraid at times I do let it ruin my patience.

ZAVI

So, the small army outside?

Zavi whispers some words and her eyes begin to glow slightly.

ABNER

Right, well, we had an unfortunate incident earlier this afternoon. Shortly before you arrived in fact. Two criminals stole my... stole incredibly precious donations to the church.

Zavi looks at Abner and for a moment seems SCARED. She then starts walking back towards Alexandra.

ABNER (CONT'D)

A horrible tragedy.

ALEXANDRA

It must have been quite the sum to warrant such a response.

ABNER

Priceless... But enough of my troubles. What is it you require of me or of those beyond us?

ZAVI

We'll come back at a more convenient time. It's alright.

She gives Alexandra a pleading look and GRABS her arm.

ZAVI (CONT'D)

(whispers) We need to go.

ALEXANDRA

(whispers) What did you see?

ZAVI

(whispers) Please let's just go.

ABNER

Oh no, I would love to know why you are both here. I have been a rather poor host and even worse help. You must let me amend this.

ALEXANDRA

We've only just arrived. No need to rush anything especially with all this going on.

ZAVI

We traveled pretty far and I think we might've underestimated how tired we are.

ALEXANDRA

We can come back when we're better rested. Maybe we could help with your search?

ABNER

How very kind of you but, your help will not be necessary. I have a feeling my items will find their way back to me rather shortly.

ZAVI
Right... so, we're gonna go.

She starts basically dragging Alexandra out.

ABNER
If you insist but do hurry back soon.

The duo reaches the door.

ABNER (CONT'D)
May their light shine upon you to protect-

ALEXANDRA
And strengthen your soul.

A slightly too wide grin takes over Abner's face.

ZAVI
Yes, thank you for... that. Let the light be a beacon or whatever the fuck. Let's go.

ABNER
Until we meet again.

The door shuts behind the duo.

ABNER (CONT'D)
Little godling.

INT. EKROS' CHAMBER

If the church was light and extravagance, this cave of a room is its total opposite.

On a high-backed chair is EKROS (bird-man, 40s, gnarly looking).

EKROS
Bren Alcaste and Vandren Cofwind.

VANDREN
Ekros! An honor to be brought to your chambers. Last we spoke it was over in-

EKROS
I was informed of your disaster up above.

BREN

Above?

Ekros LAUGHS.

VANDREN

Right. Well, you see, I was given some incorrect information on the guard rotations and-

EKROS

I remember explicitly outlining what was off limits. Am I misremembering?

VANDREN

No.

EKROS

So you must understand why I might be a bit aggravated with the sudden increase in crownsguard everywhere.

VANDREN

They have no way of linking it back to you.

EKROS

Hm. Well, I'd be more certain of that had you listened and avoided Abner.

Beat.

EKROS (CONT'D)

What did you get?

VANDREN

Right!

Vandren unlatches his satchel from his belt and Bren's when he doesn't move.

VANDREN (CONT'D)

I think you'll be quite pleased. With the panic that's going on this stuff has to-

EKROS

Hand it over.

VANDREN

Like... actually hand it to you?

EKROS
Did I stutter?

VANDREN
Nope. Clear and concise.

Vandren slowly walks to him and hands off the bags. A low RUMBLING can be heard from the darkness behind Ekros.

BREN
We were just trying to hit
somewhere big.

Ekros' heads SNAPS to Bren.

BREN (CONT'D)
In the hopes of paying you
sufficiently. For all you've done
for us.

VANDREN
Precisely. Showing our gratitude
down to the last copper.

Ekros rifles through the satchels. No emotion.

EKROS
Do you take me for a fool?

Ekros slowly makes his way to the duo. He dumps the contents of the satchels as his other hand pulls out a SCIMITAR.

EKROS (CONT'D)
Or perhaps you're truly so foolish
as to think I would want such
garbage.

Crumbling papers fall from the satchels along with flaking and broken coins, dulled and cracked gemstones, and the occasional bone.

Ekros reaches Vandren and places the scimitar under his chin.

EKROS (CONT'D)
So which is it? Arrogance or
stupidity which has you defying my
orders and bring me trashed
merchandise.

BREN
(to himself) One more. I just need
one more chance today.

THE VOICE

You understand what it means to ask
for more Bren.

BREN

(to himself) Please.

THE VOICE

Always so selfless. Do not forget
to watch your own back.

VANDREN

We thought it was a good haul. It
was an honest mistake.

EKROS

You thought-

WHAM! He is cut off and thrown back by a blast of blackish-green energy.

BREN

Van, we need to go now.

Ekros LAUGHS. The GROWLING from the shadows grows louder.
Closer.

EKROS

Now, that was truly a mistake.

From the shadows emerge a pack of mangled and mutated-looking
GIANT RODENTS.

EKROS (CONT'D)

I think I'll miss you most Bren.
Your hidden vigor. Our chats have
always entertained me.

Vandren tries picking the main door locks while Bren stares
down Ekros.

EKROS (CONT'D)

Our future together could have been
bright. With your gifts. Though I
imagine whatever being grants you
power from beyond, would have taken
its own pound of flesh eventually.

Bren grabs Vandren and again BOOSH!

From behind Ekros, large mutated rodent-like creatures fully
EMERGE. The sound of the main door unlocking can be heard.

EKROS (CONT'D)
Rip them to pieces little ones.

INT. EKROS' HIDEOUT- SECOND LATER

They appear on the other side of the locked door in the middle of the long hallway.

VANDREN
I thought you were tapped for the day?

The large doors to Ekros' chambers CREAK open and the pack of rodents begins to SPILL out.

BREN
Amended a deal.

The duo set off.

INT. NIDUS LIVING QUARTERS- DAY

Caius enters in a huff covered in spilled ale. He starts rummaging through a wardrobe gathering clothing and items in a large bag.

He then heads over to his mother's bedside table where he places A LATTER then takes out a SMALL MEDAL with the name Harold Nidus.

CAIUS
I have to do this. I have to.

Caius collects his things and then sneaks out of the tavern.

EXT. CITY SQUARE- MEANWHILE

Alexandra and Zavi are walking through the city square.

ALEXANDRA
You need to slow down. What exactly did you see?

ZAVI
I've explained this five times over already. Whoever or whatever that is it's not this city's priest. We should leave.

ALEXANDRA

And you're sure it's not something we've seen before?

ZAVI

Father nefarious in there? Oh no, I would remember that.

ALEXANDRA

Very funny.

ZAVI

A probably deadly creature posing as a beloved city figurehead yes, let me just start rolling on the floor in laughter.

ALEXANDRA

This must be why we were sent here. To fix this.

ZAVI

No. No, do not get started with this-

ALEXANDRA

We've been looking for something more. We thought it would be a guide or just another stop along the way but this... this might be a chance to do some actual good. Not just slaying some beasts for coin or bringing in bounties.

ZAVI

That is good work.

ALEXANDRA

It's not what we're meant for.

She pulls at the amulet chains around their necks.

ALEXANDRA (CONT'D)

You can't keep pretending as if this means nothing.

ZAVI

Like you keep pretending you're not still running away from something.

Beat.

ALEXANDRA

That was low.

ZAVI

It was honest.

ALEXANDRA

Well this time I am arguing that we stay-

ZAVI

This is beyond us-

ALEXANDRA

While you're afraid of a fight.

ZAVI

I am-! Don't do that. Don't play on my ego like that alright it's not gonna work.

ALEXANDRA

You want to know what was stolen just as badly as I do.

ZAVI

"Donations to the church" is what he said.

ALEXANDRA

And you knew that was a lie the second he said it. He said "my". This is personal.

ZAVI

That captain sensed something is off. I wonder if anyone else has noticed anything.

ALEXANDRA

Do you think the thieves had any idea?

ZAVI

I doubt it. Bet they were just hoping for a good score.

ALEXANDRA

Regardless I would like to know their motivations in all of this.

ZAVI

I'd rather just find what they took.

ALEXANDRA
 Guess that means we're staying
 right?

ZAVI
 Unfortunately yeah, it does.

GUARD 1
 You two. Halt.

The pair turns to find a small GROUP OF GUARDS aimed toward them across the square.

ALEXANDRA
 Apologies, are you speaking to us?

GUARD 1
 We have been asked to bring you in.

ZAVI
 By who? What the fuck is this
 about?

ALEXANDRA
 Zavi, give me a moment. May I ask
 on what grounds?

GUARD 1
 For questioning in relation to
 events of today. You can either
 come with us willingly or by force.

ALEXANDRA
 With crossbows raised you can
 hardly expect me to believe that.

ZAVI
 We don't want a fight.

A guard FIRES a crossbow and the arrow barely misses Zavi.

GUARD 1
 We do as he commands.

There's an odd sheen to his eyes and a *grin* appears.

ZAVI
 Well, we tried.

Alexandra pulls out a sword, Zavi her mace and shield, and
 the guards CHARGE forward.

EXT. SLUM STREETS- DAY

Vandren and Bren RACE through the worst parts of the city trying to ESCAPE Ekros' giant rodent-like beasts.

VANDREN

Shit, shit, shit, shit, shit! Can't you hit them with something?

BREN

You literally have throwing knives!

VANDREN

Daggers! Which aren't cheap and don't magically boomerang back to me. Your whatever magic blasts are free.

BREN

Sometimes you really are a bastard.

Bren quickly stops, turns, and lets out TWO BLASTS of that same blackish-green energy toward the creatures. One misses but the other HITS and BASHES into one of the beasts.

VANDREN

Ha! Yes!

BREN

Just keep running.

VANDREN

I'm going, I'm going, I'm going.

Vandren has taken the lead dashing through side streets.

VANDREN (CONT'D)

We should head towards the town square.

BREN

What? No, there's a ton of people there.

VANDREN

Yeah, more people means more targets that aren't us.

BREN

We should try to leave the city.

VANDREN

They're monsters, not guards they don't respect jurisdiction. The square is closer.

BREN

Fine but you better focus. Hitting a dead end would not be fun right now.

VANDREN

Ooo wonderful wordplay.

BREN

Fucking focus!

Vandren takes them towards another side street and...

EXT. CITY STREETS- DAY

Caius sneaks around. He speaks to a RANDOM PASSERBY who seems a little out of it.

CAIUS

Excuse me, do you know where recruits are supposed to sign up?

PASSERBY

No clue kid. But there's some kind of commotion at the square-

CAIUS

Are people in trouble?

PASSERBY

Uh, probably. You got money on ya?

CAIUS

I can help people. I can do this.

PASSERBY

Sure, yeah. Whatever you say.

The passerby stumbles off and Caius RUNS to the square.

EXT. CITY SQUARE- CONTINUOUS

Caius arrives and sees the guards BATTLING it out with Zavi and Alexandra.

CAIUS

What is going on?

ZAVI
Hey it's the kid!

ALEXANDRA
Where's Levia? Does she know you're here?

GUARD
They have reinforcements coming!
Grab him!

ALEXANDRA
You need to leave.

CAIUS
What- oh shit.

A guard heads towards Caius forcing him into the fray.

EXT. CITY STREETS- MEANWHILE

Vandren and Bren are still running.

VANDREN
It's right up ahead.

BREN
We should just stop and fight them.

VANDREN
We're outnumbered.

They round a corner and spot the commotion in the square.

VANDREN (CONT'D)
This is perfect! I told you this would be perfect.

BREN
Yeah great we're about to get other people killed.

VANDREN
Oh please they look perfectly capable.

The pack of rodents quickly appears behind them.

EXT. CITY SQUARE- CONTINUOUS

The last remaining guard is holding back Caius' spear when...

GUARD 2

What in Hellasis' name-

His head is RIPPED OFF by a giant rodent.

CAIUS

Oh thank the gods my arms were
about to give out.

The same rodent turns towards Caius.

CAIUS (CONT'D)

I take that back.

ZAVI

Alex? Where the fuck did those come
from?

ALEXANDRA

No idea. Keep fighting we can ask
questions later.

ZAVI

Always works for me. Kid, get your
back to mine!

CAIUS

My name is Caius and I'm 17 dammit
I'm not a kid.

ZAVI

Oh my bad. Literal child get over
here so you don't die.

They match up back to back staving off the beasts while
Alexandra takes the offensive.

VANDREN

Genuinely I thought a guard would
last longer.

BREN

Okay, now we're fighting.

VANDREN

But-

BREN

Vandren we're helping!

VANDREN

Fuck me.

Vandren daggers in hand posts himself behind a nearby cart while Bren races to a semi-collapsed wall on the other side and FIRES off blasts.

The group does a decent job of working together and killing the beasts until the last one LUNGES at Caius leaving a nasty GASH on his arm. The young man SCREAMS out.

CAIUS
I can't hold my spear!

ZAVI
We got you don't worry. Al-

ALEXANDRA
Already here.

With her SWORD GLOWING brightly with RADIANT light she STRIKES down the last rodent. It's quiet.

BREN
Was that the last one?

ZAVI
Looks like it. Gods, what a mess.

Suddenly the corpses of the beasts melt away into the ground leaving just the dead guards.

VANDREN
That was somehow more horrifying than when they were alive.

ALEXANDRA
How bad is the wound?

CAIUS
I'm fine.

ALEXANDRA
I wasn't asking you.

ZAVI
Once we get a second I'll be able to heal him up fine. A better question to ask is who the hell are you two?

Bren and Vandren look at one another.

Uh...

VANDREN

Uh...

BREN

GUARD CAPTAIN
Get them all! Dead or alive the
murderers must pay!

In the near distance, another GROUP OF GUARDS starts heading
toward the square.

VANDREN
This honestly doesn't look great
for us.

ALEXANDRA
Are you alright to run?

CAIUS
I told you I'm fine!

ZAVI
We have to go. We got lucky there
but we can't take another big
fight.

BREN
Not a single thing has gone right
today.

VANDREN
City limits it is then.

ZAVI
I don't have a better idea so sure.

Bren puts his hands out and a giant screen of smoke appears
across the square.

ALEXANDRA
Smart.

Alexandra SLAMS her sword on the ground and suddenly a line
along the smoke SHAKES the cobblestone and turns it into a
GIANT DITCH.

CAIUS
Who are you guys?

ZAVI
Questions will have to wait.

The group books it towards the city limits.

EXT. CITY STREETS- MEANWHILE

Daft and Vira watch the party flee and are about to follow when...

ABNER
Quite the show.

Abner appears behind them and looks sickly.

DAFT
Don't think this really concerns you.

VIRA
Get lost, father.

Abner laughs and steps closer to them.

ABNER
Under different circumstances I would kill you for that but right now you are far too useful.

DAFT
What are you-

Suddenly the pair's eyes glaze over a milky white.

ABNER
I need my things back and you are going to lead me to whoever hired those buffoons.

EXT. PALACE COURTYARD- NIGHT

Ashara is hurriedly walking down a courtyard path being trailed by ORAMI (female gnome).

ORAMI
My lady. It is rather late do you not think you should return to-

ASHARA
Don't start with formalities, this is not the time.

ORAMI
I- yes, Ashara.

As they arrive at a door Ashara abruptly stops.

ASHARA
Where is Luxarius at this hour?

ORAMI
Master Vallish? Oh, um, I imagine
in his chambers.

ASHARA
Is that so?

Beat.

ORAMI
Actually! I may have heard a rumor
or two that he often spends his
nights in the Scindo Tower.

ASHARA
Thank you Orami. Now stay here.

Ashara pushes through the door leaving Orami behind.

ORAMI
But!

ASHARA
Stay there!

INT. SCINDO TOWER- MOMENTS LATER

Ashara is STOMPING up stone tower stairs. She arrives at an iron door and with a quick gesture it flies open.

INT. VALLISH'S LABORATORY- CONTINUOUS

LUXARIUS VALLISH (human, 60s, spindly) is seen working with POTIONS and MAGICAL MATERIALS at a desk.

LUXARIUS
Lady Hevral? Why this is a
surprise? How may I-

ASHARA
You're going to help me find her.

She SLAMS the door shut and a lock CLICKS into place.

LUXARIUS
My apologies I am unaware of who
you are referring to.

ASHARA

Cut the bullshit. I'm talking about
Alexandra.

EXT. CITY STREETS- DAY

We're back to Alexandra's face before slowly taking in the
rest of the group as everyone closes in on the city limit.

ASHARA (V.O.)(CONT'D)

I know she's alive.

END OF EPISODE.