

# DEAD STAR

by

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**FADE IN:**

**AN ICY CLIFF**

looms against the purple night.

A bare hand CLAWS at white snow as it searches for a GRIP.

Black ash and cold stone lie beneath.

The hand finds a ROCK but it slowly DISLODGES.

The rock SLIPS AWAY and FALLS to the icy depths below.

HAVIK DAVENPORT (30s) clings to the cliff. His noble face, with black hair and purple eyes, is marred by his frozen beard, and tempered with exhaustion, fear, and insanity.

He argues with his UNCLE, a voice born from fresh madness.

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)

*Even if the beacon's lit, they'll kill  
you before you get there.*

HAVIK

No... You're wrong... You have to be...

Havik looks DOWN at the jagged rocks beneath him, then UP to the summit that awaits. A cold wind BLOWS. He CLIMBS higher.

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)

*Listen to reason! You must leave him  
behind! It's the only way!*

HAVIK

Shut up, damn you! Why won't you ever be quiet? I made my choice when I entered the wastes! I can't leave him now! I'm sorry, uncle.

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)

*Don't you understand? They've tasted the  
flesh of man and now they hunger for it.  
What they want is blood!*

HAVIK

But what if... What if they're really --

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)

*-- No! You mustn't think of it! Do not  
remember! You can cower in your cabin  
when you reach the ship, but for now you  
must not fear... Wolves can smell fear.*

Havik PULLS himself to the summit, COLLAPSES to his knees, and desperately breathes hot breath onto his frozen fingers.

HAVIK

Just... Just a moment's rest...

Havik lies on the snowy floor, closes his eyes, and smiles.

## FLASHBACK

### SERIES OF SHOTS -

A) Havik drags a make-shift sled across a wintry wasteland.

Bundled within is the unconscious body of JHEV (50s), a gruff brown haired man, Havik's captain and friend. A wolf HOWLS.

B) Havik runs alone through a snow storm. A sword in hand.

C) Havik glances every which way as the HOWLING approaches.

D) Havik turns and a wolf LUNGES RIGHT AT HIM!

### BACK TO PRESENT

Havik's eyes startle open. He chuckles... and it soon gives way to raucous LAUGHTER that ECHOES across the hills below.

HAVIK

Dear Goddess... I'm going mad...

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)

*Quiet! They could have heard you. Now is not the time for rest.*

Havik stands and LOOKS UP.

FAR ABOVE HIM. Above the forest and the wolves. Above all the world. THE DEAD STAR sits on its throne in the sky, watching.

### TITLE: "DEAD STAR."

Held motionless over the North, the Dead Star shadows the world like a great disc in the sky that's terrible to behold.

It is black and cratered, with a vexing violet aura that turns the pitch black North into a relentless purple night.

Between the sky and the star, countless mountains of rock drift forever in the Sea of Heavens. A SHOOTING STAR falls.

### ATOP THE CLIFF SUMMIT

Havik looks out upon rolling hills of white and dark forests.  
Distant mountains peak against the black purple sky.

HAVIK  
I've made it this far, haven't I? In  
spite of you.

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)  
*You hasten only to your grave.*

HAVIK  
What difference will a few days make?  
I've already lasted a full week.

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)  
*A week of flight and fear...*

**FADE TO:**

### IN THE SNOWY HILLS

Havik groans with effort as he pulls Jhev in the sled.

And there against the wastes of endless white snow, Havik  
spots one spec of green. A solitary TREE in the valley.

**SUPER: "FIVE DAYS EARLIER."**

Havik makes his way towards the tree.

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)  
*They're coming for you Havik... Did you  
think you could outrun them with such a  
heavy sled? It's only a matter of time.*

HAVIK  
Quiet! I'll hear no more of it!

JHEV  
Havik? Did you say something Havik?

Jhev rustles within his bundles of furs and leathers.

HAVIK  
There's a tree. We'll find shelter there.

JHEV  
Good... Good...

## THE LONE TREE

A mighty pine that once stood over a hundred feet tall has finally been felled by time. Its roots are up turned, and its massive branches provide ample shelter from the night.

Havik pulls the sled beneath a large branch.

## IN THE TREE SHELTER

Havik hacks away branches with a sword.

CUT TO:

Jhev is asleep in the sled. Havik sits resting, when

A BEAM of WHITE LIGHT pierces the branches.

Havik peers out to the sky, where THE SILVER STAR has appeared, moon-like. His eyes go wide with hope.

HAVIK

Goddess... Even in this forsaken land,  
where the light of the Red Star never  
shines. Please... Hear my prayer...

The moon DISAPPEARS behind a cloud, and its light FADES.

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)

*It is no sign. Only the black of night.*

Havik pulls a SACK from the sled and rifles through it.

HAVIK

Ten rolls of bread. Five slices of hard  
cheese. Four sausages...

Havik reveals a glass jar from his pack and stares at it.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*This jar was Brackens. The one he  
collected that queer salt in. Half  
Brackens poured in a circle round  
Narvis... and the other half...*

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)

*Fool! Do not think of it! I told you not  
to think of it!*

Havik shakes away his uncle and uncovers Jhev. His sea blue eyes open, face a cold sweat, and brown grey hair a mess.

Havik presses the glass jar against Jhev's lips.

HAVIK

Easy now. No need to speak. Drink first.

Jhev swallows down the watered rum. When finished, he spits.

JHEV

It tastes like ash.

HAVIK

If you've strength enough to complain,  
you've strength enough to eat. Here.

**CUT TO:**

Half eaten bread and slices of cheese sit between them.

JHEV

How far have we come, Havik?

HAVIK

Not far.

Havik presses his palm against Jhev's forehead. He sighs.

JHEV

Do you think they've lit the beacon?

HAVIK

They're your crew. Your men. You tell me.

JHEV

Yes. It's lit. It's there waiting for us.

HAVIK

Without that beacon, these wastes will  
swallow us long before we find the shore.

JHEV

There's honor to be had, isn't there  
Havik? When we return? Even though we've  
so little star metal? Even though  
everyone's dead...

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)

*He says too much.*

Havik looks away from Jhev's entreating eyes.

JHEV

Will anyone even believe us, Havik?

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)

*Do not let him say the words.*

JHEV

They'll think we went mad. I know what  
I'd think if someone told me that --

HAVIK

-- Shh. Do not speak of it. Save your  
words for prayer. Mourn when we reach the  
ship. Rest now. The Silver Star sets...  
We've a long night ahead.

Havik pockets the remains of their meal and covers up Jhev.

**CUT TO:**

Havik SHARPENS the sword with a piece of whetstone.

HAVIK

Perhaps I've lost them...

Havik pauses... then continues sharpening the blade.

He stares up at the clouds, waiting for the light to return.

HAVIK (CONT'D)

They followed from the Barrens, that is  
to be certain... But there's game beyond  
the Gate. With the first scent of elk or  
rabbit, they'll go off to hunt easier  
prey... They're only animals, after  
all... Only animals.

**FADE TO:**

**BLACK DREAMSCAPE**

Dark, EMPTY wasteland surrounds Havik on all sides.

Havik looks to the sky, where silent LIGHTNING splits the  
heavens in purple and gold streaks.

Against the flashes, Havik sees an endless MOUNTAIN range on  
the horizon. Jagged edges make the world look torn asunder.

A great WIND picks up.

With each flicker of light the shadowy BEAST comes into view.

Havik gasps with fear.

It lay across the black field as if a mountain itself, and  
when it RISES, the mountains ECLIPSE and the ground TREMBLES.

**BACK IN THE TREE SHELTER**

Havik awakens to the soft purple glow of dead night.

The world is SILENT, and a thin white veil of fresh fallen snow covers everything. Violet shadows dance across his face.

HAVIK

The Dead Star's light is a foul thing.

A blood curdling SCREECH sounds out from the distance.

It WHIMPERS a moment... then falls still.

HAVIK (CONT'D)

A rabbit, most like. That's all it is.

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)

*They're upon you, fool! Be ready!*

Havik sits up. His breath FROSTS in the air.

Havik HOLDS his breath.

HEAVY BREATHING still sounds from behind him.

Havik turns, and through the white shroud of his shelter, a large GREY WOLF starts GROWLING.

The wolf's GREEN EYE stares directly into his.

HAVIK

It sees me.

The wolf HOWLS and from the distance more wolves respond.

When Havik reaches for his sword, the wolf outside darts off.

HAVIK (CONT'D)

Jhev! Jhev...

Havik rushes to Jhev's side... but the man is out cold.

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)

*His fate is sealed! Use it to your  
advantage! Push him off the sled and  
leave him to the wolves! Do not hesitate!*

HAVIK

No.

Havik unsheathes the sword.



HAVIK (CONT'D)

If this is the end of me uncle, then let  
it be with honor. If I must live a lord,  
then at least I'll die a knight, and wrap  
myself in glory.

Havik pushes himself out from the shelter.

HAVIK (CONT'D)

The day could yet be mine.

### **OUTSIDE BY THE LONE TREE**

Sword in hand, Havik trudges through the snow and comes to a  
stop alongside one of its mighty upturned roots... WHEN

Havik gets KNOCKED down! The sword FLIES from his hand!

A WOLF BITES at Havik's throat, teeth only inches from flesh.

Its DROOL sprays across Havik's face and into his mouth.

Havik looks to the sword as he struggles against fanged jaws.

With a jolt of determination, he THRUSTS his arm into the maw  
of the beast and LUNGES for the sword.

Its fangs BITE down through thick layers of clothing.

WARM RED BLOOD drips out onto the fresh white snow.

And when Havik's hand wraps sweetly around the sword's hilt,  
he runs the blade through the wolf's throat. It releases its  
hold and falls to the ground, WHIMPERING in pain.

Havik BASHES in its skull with a few STOMPS of his boot.

He steps back, PARANOID a second wolf might attack him, but  
when none appears he finally stops to catch his breath.

Havik rubs his wounded arm and stares down at the dead wolf.

The corpse gives out a GHASTLY MOAN!

HAVIK

Abomination...

He kneels beside its dead body.

HAVIK (CONT'D)

How is that thing not dead?

Its FUR is knotted with brambles and ash.

HAVIK (CONT'D)  
But it *is* dead...

And though it does not move...

The wolf MOANS again... Guttural, and wet.

Havik catches a WHIFF of something FOUL and doubles over.

He DRY HEAVES into the snow.

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)  
*Are you still such a child, that you lose  
your stomach at the sight of a kill?*

# **FLASHBACK**

## **NINE YEAR OLD HAVIK**

follows a bouncing BALL down a dimly lit castle corridor.

It rolls beside a tall and ominous DOOR... and stops.

**CUT TO:**

## **INSIDE A DARK ROOM**

A sliver of light splits the darkness. Havik's BALL rolls in.

He cautiously enters, when a SHADOW overtakes him.

Havik turns, and looming behind him stands HAVIK'S UNCLE:

HUBERT DAVENPORT (40's)

whose imposing dark haired stature shares Havik's Ancient  
purple eyes.

HUBERT DAVENPORT  
Havik.

Havik drops his ball.

HUBERT DAVENPORT (CONT'D)  
You know what happens now...

**CUT TO:**

Havik watches as his gagged WHIPPING BOY (9) gets lashed with  
a whip by a SOLDIER. Hubert frowns.

HUBERT DAVENPORT (CONT'D)  
Every choice has an aftermath. It's time  
you learned that, once and for all.

The Boy cries out with every strike, and Havik's had enough.

HAVIK  
Stop! Stop it! I hate when he's whipped!  
I hate it!

Havik rushes to the Boy's aid and gets struck by the whip!

A single LASH draws blood across Havik's cheek.

Havik doesn't even touch his wound. He stares defiantly.

Hubert waves the stunned Soldier away.

HUBERT DAVENPORT  
So! You finally stand in the boy's  
defense! Eh, Havik?

HAVIK  
It's stupid! He didn't do anything. I'm  
the one who disobeyed you. I went in your  
solar, not him! It's my fault. Whip me.

HUBERT DAVENPORT  
What's that now? You think you don't need  
a whipping boy anymore, eh? You think  
you're old enough now? Is that it Havik?

HAVIK  
I'm almost *ten*!

HUBERT DAVENPORT  
Then you know what happens now?

HAVIK  
No...

Hubert draws a knife.

HAVIK (CONT'D)  
I cut him loose?

HUBERT DAVENPORT  
You cut his throat.

The Boy protests in frenzied moans.

Havik is stunned.

HAVIK  
But... Why?

HUBERT DAVENPORT  
What is your name?

HAVIK  
Havik Davenport...

HUBERT DAVENPORT  
And who are you?

Havik sighs.

HAVIK  
I'm first in line to the Lordship of  
Witchblood castle, after you, uncle.

HUBERT DAVENPORT  
And what does that mean?

HAVIK  
It means... I have to be an Inquisitor...

HUBERT DAVENPORT  
That's right.

HAVIK  
But I'm not *ten* yet...

Havik takes the knife from his Uncle.

HUBERT DAVENPORT  
And yet, your training starts today.

Havik approaches the Boy... SLOWLY... CAUTIOUSLY...

And brings the sharp blade up to the Boy's throat.

The Boy falls still.

His amber eyes plead out to Havik, desperate and wet.

Havik's own eyes tear. But it makes no difference.

Blood spills.

Hubert smiles.

The knife drops.

**END FLASHBACK**

**HAVIK KNEELS IN THE SNOW BESIDE THE DEAD WOLF**

His world SPINNING.

HAVIK

His eyes were like honey... Have I not  
suffered long enough for it?

POP! The wolf's chest BURSTS open!

Havik REELS as if expecting a shower of blood and gore.

Instead, thousands of tiny BLACK FEATHERY SEEDS puff up into  
the breeze carried by miniature sails of dark silky strands.

HAVIK (CONT'D)

No! No! No!

Havik stands STRUCK with mortal TERROR by the vision of the  
necromantic BLACK CLOUD rising up from the wolf's corpse.

HAVIK (CONT'D)

It cannot be!

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)

*Run, you fool! Run! When you're far away,  
safe in the ship, all will be as if a  
dream. Stay here and die!*

Havik turns and spots another WOLF RACING towards him.

Without hesitation Havik holds up his sword.

The Wolf LEAPS and he PARRIES with the blade.

A second swing and the sword is bloodied. The wolf, dead.

Snow starts to fall. The flakes are thick and heavy.

Wolf calls HOWL in the distance.

Havik runs.

**INSIDE THE TREE SHELTER**

Havik pushes his way in and finds A LARGE WOLF sitting by the  
sled. Its white fur is RED with blood.

HAVIK

Jhev! No!

Havik's heart drops, until he sees the sled is UNDISTURBED.

The wolf's gnawing on a rabbit. It looks up and GROWLS.

Havik backs away, and it follows him

### **OUTSIDE**

Where Havik holds the sword up in defense.

The wolf stalks him... step by step.

Havik takes some WILD swings but the wolf keeps its distance.

Somewhere nearby, more wolves HOWL.

HAVIK

Is this wretched beast biding its time,  
waiting for the pack to be upon me?

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)

*Do not hesitate!*

Havik takes a mighty swing, but strikes only snow.

THE WOLF CHARGES!

Fangs and claws TEAR at his chest.

Havik falls back with the wolf upon him! It SNAPS its teeth.

With all his strength, Havik PUSHES the wolf aside, and  
readies his sword again.

And when the wolf LEAPS he THRUSTS THE STEEL through it's  
heart and buries the blade deep up to its hilt.

But the wolf COLLAPSES on top of him, pinning him down.

IT DIES AGAINST HIS CHEST spilling blood over Havik's face  
and streaming into his mouth. He coughs uncontrollably.

Havik pulls himself away and tries to remove his sword...

But the wolf's too HEAVY and the sword won't budge.

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)

*Dead weight.*

The HOWLING grows closer.

Havik struggles to free the sword in futility.

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)

*Do not hesitate! Run! Run!*

Havik looks to the distance then runs back into the shelter.

HAVIK  
Jhev! I can't leave him!

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)  
*No! He'll only slow you down.*

Havik emerges with the SLED in tow.

HAVIK  
I've already made my choice uncle... And every choice has its aftermath.

Havik pushes out into the wintry night.

### **AT THE TOP OF A HILL**

Havik stands beside the sled overlooking the LONE TREE.

A PACK OF WOLVES has descended upon it.

They FIGHT OVER THE FLESH of the fallen corpses.

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)  
*Wolves do not eat wolves...*

Rings of snow BLACKENED with corruption surround each corpse.

HAVIK  
It spreads...

The furs of all the living wolves are COVERED in BLACK SEEDS.

Havik watches them fight, almost numb to the horror...

But when he feels in his pocket and removes a roll of bread, true fear sets in. Fear and panic.

**CUT TO:**

### **THE TREE SHELTER**

Where a SACK of food sits FORGOTTEN.

**BACK TO:**

### **THE HILL**

Where Havik stuffs the leftovers from his pocket in the sled.

HAVIK  
This isn't enough... It's not enough...

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)  
*If you've time enough to complain, you've  
time enough to run.*

Havik grabs the straps to the sled and pushes forward.

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)  
*They won't be sated forever...*

#### **SOMEWHERE LOST IN THE SNOWY HILLS**

Havik pulls the sled through an empty white wasteland.

He looks back along the way he'd come...

Far in the distance the wolves are gathered, STALKING him.

They HOWL as if aware he's watching.

Havik looks around at the emptiness in every direction.

The snow storm grows stronger.

He drops to his knees and digs into a snowdrift.

#### **INSIDE THE MAKESHIFT SHELTER OF SNOW**

Havik huddles beside Jhev who's still in the sled.

JHEV  
What was it he said, Havik?

HAVIK  
Shh. I told you to get some sleep.

JHEV  
Don't you remember?

HAVIK  
Who?

JHEV  
The man. All those years ago. The last  
surviving man of our fleet. That glorious  
fleet of ships.

Havik bites his fingernails.

HAVIK  
You know for yourself what he said.

JHEV  
Tell me...



HAVIK

He spoke of a pirate that commanded water itself. The very waves they sailed obeyed the pirate's ungodly will... *Magic*, the man swore.

JHEV

Magic...

HAVIK

He was half drowned, mad from drinking the salty brine. He never lived to see dry land again... They were the fevered words of a dying man. Such words cannot be trusted.

JHEV

Don't you believe, Havik?

HAVIK

It was madness. Madness and nothing more.

JHEV

But after everything we've seen?

Havik BITES too hard. BLOOD POOLS on the tip of his finger.

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)

*No! I told you! You must not think of it!*

HAVIK

Quiet! Quiet... Do you hear that?

They hold their breath. GROWLING creeps closer from outside.

Through the thin wall of snow the SHADOW of a wolf appears.

Havik's fingers twitch against his stick.

The SHADOW moves away, and the GROWLING slowly fades...

**FADE TO:**

**HAVIK'S ARM PUSHES OUT FROM BEHIND THE SNOW**

as he emerges and takes in his surroundings.

The storm has passed... but

FRESH wolf tracks encircle his pitiful shelter and lead off to the distance where the PACK OF WOLVES ARE WATCHING.

Havik STARES back at them... his fists clenched.

HAVIK  
They mock me...

Havik looks to his unconscious friend...

Then turns back to the wolves...

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)  
*Feed them Jhev, or you will not make the  
shore alive.*

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**SOMEWHERE LOST IN THE SNOWY HILLS**

Havik CHEWS a piece of cheese and SPITS it into Jhev's mouth.

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)  
*If you don't eat, you'll die. Better him  
than a Davenport...*

Havik spots a ROCKY OUTCROPPING that rises in the distance.

He grabs the straps and starts making his way towards it.

**ATOP THE SUMMIT OF THE ICY CLIFF**

Havik looks out towards

THE HORIZON

Where the FIRE of a lit BEACON turns the white world to RED.

**CUT TO:**

Havik CLIMBS quickly, but carefully, DOWN the icy cliff.

**CUT TO:**

Havik rushes to the sled, and kneels happily beside Jhev.

But when Havik unwraps Jhev's face, he GASPS in horror.

Jhev's VEINS are now BLACKENED with POX.

His eyes flutter open, and he coughs black phlegm.

JHEV  
(weak)  
The ship...

TEARS come quick to Havik's eyes.

JHEV (CONT'D)  
Could you see it?

HAVIK  
Yes, Jhev. It's there. The fire is close,  
and the red and green sails of *your* ship  
are there too.

JHEV  
My... ship?

Havik cradles his friend and offers him a sip of water.

HAVIK  
Yes, Jhev. Your ship. I'm giving it to  
you. I only needed it to get me here, and  
that part is done. When we return,  
Wandering Turtle is yours. A fine  
beginning to your new fleet. And a good  
business for your sons.

JHEV  
My sons...

Jhev breathes deep.

JHEV (CONT'D)  
Kalev was never the sailor. Give the ship  
to Jace.

HAVIK  
You can give it to him yourself, when we  
return.

JHEV  
Havik...

Jhev's PALM OPENS... and his fingers REACH OUT.

Havik takes him by the hand. Jhev SQUEEZES.

Jhev looks up into Havik's eyes... silent as the grave.

HAVIK  
You'll be fine old friend. You'll see.  
We'll return by the silvery light of the  
Rat's Moon. We'll send a raven before we  
get there, so when we arrive they'll all  
be waiting for us. Those marble docks at  
Astermount will shine as bright as Lady  
Celinda's hair. Your sons will all be  
there, and so will my father and uncle.

Havik looks up to the HORIZON.

HAVIK (CONT'D)

We'll feast in Salt Comet Hall as the  
singers make praise of your bravery.  
Honors will be pinned, and all the Realm  
will know of the men who braved the Gate  
and lived to tell the tale. Can you see  
it, Jhev? Jhev...

But his friend is gone.

The light has left his eyes...

And even his corruption seems lifeless.

Havik closes his eyes, and grieves.

**CUT TO:**

Havik STANDS over Jhev's corpse packed in the sled.

Snow starts to fall. Thick and heavy.

He looks to the LEFT, where the PACK OF WOLVES HOWLS.

He looks to his RIGHT, where the BEACON FIRE awaits.

Then looks back down at Jhev.

HAVIK

His sons will have his ship, and his wife  
will have his bones.

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)

*Don't be a fool! He'll burst and corrupt  
you as well!*

Havik nods, rightfully concerned... SO

He PACKS SNOW on top of Jhev's body in the sled.

HAVIK

The snow should keep the black seed down,  
and when I reach the ship... We'll burn  
him and I'll have my bones.

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)

*Do not risk black death for white bones!*

Havik takes the sled by the straps, and starts PULLING.

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)  
*Fool! He is cursed and you are tired!*  
*Leave his body to the wolves!*

Havik and his sled FADE into the endless white of the wastes.

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)  
*You're too tired to drag him any*  
*further... You must leave him... You are*  
*too tired... Too tired... ...*

**FADE TO:**

### **A LUSH NORTHERN FOREST**

where Havik spurs his horse forward and slows to a halt beside Jhev, who's staring off into the distance.

HAVIK  
 What is it?

Jhev motions towards the break in the forest.

JHEV  
 You were right. Behold m'lord...

They ride forward and emerge into a clearing.

JHEV (CONT'D)  
 The gate to the top of the world.

### **THE GATE TO THE TOP OF THE WORLD**

rises before them. Only a gate in name, it is a great mountainous ring that encircles the horizon.

Far, far above it the Dead Star looms overhead.

HAVIK  
 We've found our path... Ride back and  
 fetch the others.

JHEV  
 Aye!

Havik watches as his friend disappears into the forest.

### **A ROCKY PATH LEADS TOWARDS THE MOUNTAIN**

Behind Havik and Jhev are their ranging party of 8. There's

BROWNBEARD (40's) - a wizardly jester with a bearded face,  
 his belly rolling with laughter.

BRACKENS (30's) - the grizzled first mate riding beside him.

NARVIS (20's) - a cloaked woman. Skin black as tar and emerald eyes that watch everyone with suspicion.

There's also

JAXON, HOROWAY, NIMMET, and FLINT - Four Stout Sailors in the prime of their life, each courageous enough to make the trip.

All ride their own horses, while eight dray horses PULL TWO WAGONS, both laden with tools and supplies for their journey.

And last, but not least...

KEVIN GRACIOUS (16) - Havik's young and eager noble squire.

He rides up beside Havik with bright eyes and a loud voice.

KEVIN

This terrain should give the drays no trouble, my lord. We can take this way back with our wagons full of the stuff.

HAVIK

Good. See to it the path's marked. Fell a tree by the entrance.

Havik and Jhev watch as Kevin turns and rides off.

JHEV

He's a good lad, this Kevin Gracious. A fine choice for squire.

HAVIK

My uncle's choice...

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)

*He's dead you fool. They're all dead.*

## **ALONGSIDE THE SHADOW OF THE RIDGE WALL**

Havik and his rangers stop at the edge of the snow line.

A MASSIVE HOLE tears through the mountain and descends into the Earth. GREAT VINES OF BLACK MOSS hang hundreds of feet in the air, and POOLS OF MUD collect at its entrance.

HAVIK

A demon's gate for a demon's wall.

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)

*Fool! There were no demons until you  
loosed them.*

KEVIN

You truly believe in such things my lord?

HAVIK

In what? Demons? Magic? Hah!

Havik laughs and spurs his horse forward. Kevin follows.

HAVIK (CONT'D)

We Davenports are educated in the greater  
truths of the world. What men called  
magic was truly the work of what the  
Ancients called Scientos. If ever magic  
was real, it's now as dead as the djinn  
in their prisons. The dead ice that never  
melts nor breaks. Worthless in all but  
name and faith.

Havik and his rangers light torches and lead the horses into

### **THE TUNNEL**

where THICK MISTS cloud the air and pools of silver muck  
bubble and block their way.

Horrid MUSHROOMS and other ghastly flora litter the ground.

Everyone watches with disgust as Brownbeard gets off his  
horse and collects a particularly nasty specimen.

Jaxon leans over the side of his horse and retches.

BRACKENS

This place smells awful. There I've said  
it. Why'd we go this way, anyway? Can't  
we have picked a less foul tunnel?

Brackens holds up his torch to the darkness.

BRACKENS (CONT'D)

Are we even sure it's the way in? Look at  
it! It runs so deep even the Dead Star's  
light doesn't reach us.

NARVIS

One day Eldaria will be as dead as the  
star above. She is both Mother and  
Father. She was born, and she will die.

(MORE)

NARVIS (CONT'D)

She has a navel where the Delvers dwell,  
breasts across her many mountains that  
milk the world with water. And here, at  
the top of the world was her cock. Now  
she bleeds. One day Doom will come again,  
and with it her death, and ours.

They listen to her words in thoughtful silence.

## **FLASHBACK**

### **INSIDE A SEEDY TAVERN**

Jhev sets down two mugs of Ale and sidles up into the booth.

Havik takes his mug, but his eyes are on Narvis, who sits  
silent at the edge of the bar nearby.

HAVIK

Tell me about the girl. The Abreegan.

JHEV

Narvis was a pirate Captain's daughter  
once... I say once cause the bastard  
turned his back on her like no father  
ever should... Made her walk the plank he  
did. She never told me why. Afterward she  
took the black robe for her own and been  
a dark wizard ever since. She knows a  
thing or two about piracy, if you gather.  
'Specially useful since we'll be having  
precious cargo and the like.

HAVIK

There are no pirates where we're going,  
Jhev. I've made my choice. I want Donner  
Brackens to be your second, not a wizard.  
There is blood between the two of you,  
but I'll hear no more of it.

## **END FLASHBACK**

Havik watches as Brackens rides up alongside Narvis.

BRACKENS

This world has no cock love, but I've got  
mine right here! Come and take a look!  
Get real close now. It won't bite!

NARVIS

Where her cock once stood she now has  
only the Barrens. The Doom carved it from  
her groin, and the gate remains from  
where one of her hairs burned away.

(MORE)



NARVIS (CONT'D)

Perhaps I'll carve out your cock  
Brackens, and make you like the Mother.

BRACKENS

What in blazes does a world cock look  
like, let alone one of its hairs?

BROWNBEARD

It was a tree. The life tree whose leaves  
once graced the Heavens. And it was no  
hair, but a mighty root that carved such  
a hole. Though some say the wall rose  
round it.

BRACKENS

Aye, and who says that?

BROWNBEARD

Some say it. Somewhere.

#### **AT LAST THE TUNNEL RISES UP**

and all ten of them, wagons in tow, crest a hill together.

THE BARRENS BEYOND

lay within an indented pit dug into the ground as if scooped  
by the Goddess herself. All surrounded by mountain and a ring  
of fire and brimstone.

CLOUDS OF BLACK SMOKE linger in the air, and PERPETUAL  
LIGHTNING STORMS brew ever above the cursed lands.

Havik's gaze draws upwards, up to the FURY OF THE SEA OF  
HEAVENS eclipsing even the Dead Star in the sky above.

Far in the distance... a shooting star CRASHES to the ground.

HAVIK

Here is where the world ends and the  
Heavens begin.

Horoway draws out face masks for the horses and fastens them  
over their bridles.

Nimmet and Jaxon pass out masks to the men.

Brownbeard opens a heavy jar and applies paste on the masks.

BRACKENS

It smells like shit and vinegar!

BROWNBEARD

You can choose not to wear it, if you prefer. But you might find the stink preferable to the yellow cough.

HAVIK

From here on out. This will be the smell of star metal.

BRACKENS

And that means gold! Gold! All the gold we could ever wish for!

Havik smiles as he stares in Brackens' sea blue eyes.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*Lesser men and their lust for gold. Star metal means only the promise of power.*

Havik and his ranging party push out into

### **THE FIRELANDS**

where they march past STEAMING POOLS OF BOILING WATER.

Without warning the EARTH QUAKES and the horses startle.

A FISSURE opens alongside them and spews a WALL OF FLAME!

IT ROASTS one of the pack laden horses alive...

Then closes and grows still as quickly as it erupted.

Brackens pulls out a long knife and approaches the horse.

BROWNBEARD

What are you doing? Put that away!

BRACKENS

You want I should leave fresh meat to go to waste?

BROWNBEARD

That horse is cursed! Leave it to the Goddess!

Brackens sheathes his knife with an angry glare.

He spurs his horse and rides off.

**FADE TO:**

**THEY EMERGE INTO THE BARRENS**

where their horses clop through endless fields of GRAY ASH.

Havik bids his horse to stop, and everyone follows suit.

His eyes scan the horizon... gazing upon

THE CENTER OF THE BARRENS

where a **SHADOW** sits, round and wide, directly in the center.

Not only pitch like a Silver Starless night, but foul and tainted and covered in black soot while the Barrens is gray.

Directly beneath the Dead Star that rises overhead.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*A shadow at the center of the world.*

He hops down from his horse and onto the gray ash, where he digs his hand deep into it, and runs it through his fingers.

HAVIK

*It's time we get started!*

Havik gets back on his horse as LONG SHOVELS are unloaded from the wagons and passed out between them.

**FADE TO:**

**SHOVELS DRAG THROUGH THE ASH**

as the caravan slowly crawls its way across the Barrens.

Havik idly scoops up a shovelful of ash, examines it from horseback, and drops the shovel back down for more...

When his eyes focus in on strange shadows rising up ahead...

They slowly come into focus...

HEAVY SHEETS AND GIRDERS rise up from the ground like pins in a map. Some rusted... Some black as night...

Some even covered in strange hieroglyphic writing...

HAVIK (V.O.)

*The Ancients leave their eldritch marks even in this lost place.*

HOROWAY

I found some! Captain! M'lord! I found  
some! Star metal! It's star metal!

They gather around Horoway, who points out the silvery flakes  
in his ash with pride for his discovery.

Shovels are brought out and they dig into the ash.

CLINK! Brackens shovel hits metal!

All together they clear out from the ash A SILVER METEORITE  
the size of a large bowling ball.

BRACKENS

Horoway! Let's hear it for Horoway!

They cheer and congratulate him as Jaxon and Nimmet hoist the  
heavy sphere onto the empty wagon.

There it sits. One single sphere of the stuff.

They stand there... marveling at it... Eyes bright.

Faces hopeful...

As a shooting star CRASHES to the ground in the distance...

**FADE TO:**

### **A SILVER METEORITE**

gets pulled from the ashen ground by Jaxon and Nimmet.

Their beards have grown thick.

Their faces weary and pale.

### **SUPER: "THREE WEEKS LATER"**

With a tired heave they lift the star metal up onto the  
wagon, up on a MASSIVE PILE of the stuff.

### **INSIDE A SMALL TENT**

A thick-bearded Havik fills two goblets with wine, and hands  
one to Jhev as he enters and takes a seat.

JHEV

It is time for us to go home.

Havik hands him the wine, and he thirstily drinks it.

HAVIK

My friend... Had you taken to notice  
those Ancient pillars we passed?

JHEV

I and all of us. And what of it? The  
Ancients are no strangers to the isles.

HAVIK

Their spacing intrigued me. I've been  
plotting it out, and I think they might  
have at one time been corner castles for  
a great wall. Look here.

Havik removes the glove from his hand, and draws a circle  
with his finger in the ash and dust on the ground.

HAVIK (CONT'D)

This is the Barrens. And this path here  
is the ground we've covered. Standing  
steel can be found there, there, there,  
and here was the large one spied  
yesterday. It's clear they were once  
connected! Like watchtowers on a wall.

JHEV

A wall then. And a wall for what?

HAVIK

The shadow.

JHEV

No, Havik! No!

Jhev passes his hand over the dust and erases the map.

JHEV (CONT'D)

It is folly and I will not abide it.

HAVIK

We need not bring the wagons. Stay with  
them if you must, and I'll take any man  
who will not fear.

Jhev stands, empties out his goblet, and tosses it aside.

JHEV

Go then and be damned.

Jhev storms out from the tent, leaving Havik to stare at the  
purple pool of wine in the ash...

**FADE TO:**

**HAVIK REARS HIS HORSE**

as he faces each and every one in his ranging party.

Flint gulps.

FLINT

*Into the shadow m'lord?*

HAVIK

If you will not follow, you are free to wait with the wagons. I'll think no less of you.

Jaxon and Nimmet are pleased to hear that.

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)

*They're dead! All dead! And you're the more foolish of them all!*

**CUT TO:**

**HAVIK RIDES TOWARDS THE SHADOW**

followed by Narvis, Brownbeard, Kevin, Brackens, and Flint.

They come to a stop at

**THE EDGE OF THE SHADOW**

marked by a sharp contrast between the gray and black ash.

Narvis unhorses and kneels at the edge where ash meets ash.

Havik dismounts and takes a knee beside Narvis.

He runs ash between his fingers... It sticks to his ring.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*Black rust...*

Narvis fills two glass jars with the foul stuff.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*The cock was a tree of metal?*

Havik stands and looks out across the vast black sea.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*Leagues and leagues of it.*

He looks to the sky, up to the violent Sea of Heavens.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*Could it have been a bridge of Ancient  
iron that spanned the Sea of Heavens  
itself and met upon the Dead Star?*

Havik climbs back onto his horse. Kevin comes to his side.

HAVIK

If I knew how deep the rust was... and  
how far apart its center... a man could  
calculate the size of what once stood in  
this place.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*My cousins will be green with envy.  
Mysteries and metal. A fine dish to  
serve.*

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)

*Fool! You'll only serve them death! And  
the rest of the Realm along with them.*

KEVIN

What's that my lord?

HAVIK

Gather your courage. I mean to walk the  
length of it. If it's deep enough that  
the horses can't tread, we'll turn back.

Havik coaxes his horse forward and they all follow.

**FADE TO:**

### **DEEP IN THE HEART OF THE SHADOW**

Havik and his party come to a stop.

A circle of black even darker than the rest lies before them.

In the stillness of the moment... they find only silence.

BROWNBEARD

Even the air dies here.

NARVIS

This is our Mother's wound, covered with  
the tears of the damned. Look how the  
lightning does not strike.

They all look above to the abated storms and see it's true.

The sky threatens with lightning, but it never lashes.

Narvis rears her horse and turns to address all five of them.

NARVIS

In this place no lightning strikes. No fires burn. No water falls. No wind blows. The icy chill of the North is well removed, and even the ground is dead. This place is a sacred crypt of holy import, bound beneath the unholy light of the Dead Star. In *this* place *nothing* has power, and we should pray to the Goddess that *nothing* will be found. Here we'll find only ghosts and bones and the graves of Eldaria should be left to the dead.

Wind or not, her hair sways with the intensity of her speech.

NARVIS (CONT'D)

Let us turn horse and leave this place. You have your distance from shore to center.

BROWNBEARD

I say she has the right of it!

BRACKENS

And I say she's afraid of a little dead cock!

HAVIK

Grab your shovels! When we reach its shadowy heart, we dig.

BROWNBEARD

Bugger that! I'm going back to the wagon.

HAVIK

Go. Come. I will dig myself if I must.

Brownbeard turns his horse and rides full gallop away.

Havik turns back to face the shadow's center.

NARVIS

Do not go, my lord! It is unwise!

Havik pays her no heed and rides deeper into the shadow...

When his HORSE SUDDENLY REARS and throws him forward!

But instead of crashing he DISAPPEARS into the ash!

Brackens and Brownbeard make the sign of the Goddess.



**IN A HIDDEN DARK PLACE**

Havik struggles to his feet in a world of black shadows.

In the distant darkness he hears the WHINNYING of a horse.

Havik takes out a torch and lights it... illuminating

A GREAT SEA OF THE BLACK ASH

hovering as a ceiling. He reaches up and pulls a handful of the stuff into his hand... Specs of it linger in mid air... Drifting back up to rejoin the sea...

HAVIK (V.O.)

*A layer of magnetism! Scientos not magic!*

KEVIN (O.S.)

My lord! Lord Havik! Can you hear me!

HAVIK

Yes! Stake the horses! It's safe!

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**DEEPER IN THE SHADOW'S UNDERWORLD**

Brackens, Flint, and Kevin follow Havik's lantern.

Kevin walks with his longsword out to the darkness.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*My squire is afraid.*

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)

*Fool! You should have been afraid as well! Some things are meant to be feared.*

Soon the ashen ground levels and becomes a field of

CHISELED WHITE GRANITE COBBLESTONE

with a polished marble path leading into shadow.

KEVIN

This place is a marvel. Do you think there is a temple?

HAVIK

The Ancients did not build temples.  
(pointing to his head's temple)  
Their gods were here.

FLINT

What about the djinn?

HAVIK

Djinn... Man... Both are their own gods in truth. Even the magic of a djinni can be outdone by a man's mind put to action.

FLINT

Men have no magic. Men cannot be gods.

HAVIK

That is so. Men do not have the powers of the djinn, but they have their wits to accomplish great feats. What one man can do, another can do. And when any man reaches new heights... Every man is raised in turn.

FLINT

Djinn are gods!

Something in his tone angers Havik.

HAVIK

Djinn are gods, *my lord*.

FLINT

Djinn are gods, m'lord. Man can only play at god. No man has ever been magic, and no man ever will. What every man can do, any one of the djinn can lay to ruin.

KEVIN

Come Flint. Even you should know, the djinn are dead and caged. Their magic forever frozen in their icy altars.

FLINT

Frozen or not, the djinn are gods to me.

Havik turns from them and follows the marble path.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*Why pray to a statue when you can pray to the Goddess? Faith is a very strange thing when misplaced.*

The path leads them towards

# **A BROKEN CRATER IN THE MARBLE**

where the path spirals and cracks around a pit of white sand.

Intricate patterns are chiseled into marble, spiraling around the center in a series of eight colorful arrangements.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*This pit must be the shadow's heart.*

Havik climbs down into the white pit and kneels.

They gasp as he scoops up some of the stuff... and TASTES IT!

HAVIK

Salt... It's only salt. Ha ha. Salt!

BRACKENS

What's that there?

Havik chills as he hears the words. Brackens is pointing...

Pointing towards...

HAVIK (V.O.)

*What is that?*

Havik inches over the sand towards it...

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)

*It is Doom you fool! Doom! You should have left it there! Just as Narvis said!*

Brackens stands over a **BLACK ORB** the size of a pumpkin.

He bends over and picks it up with surprising ease.

BRACKENS

It's lighter than it looks! And it looks like a giant hazelnut... black with age.

Havik gets close and takes the orb to examine it.

It's smooth and seemingly made of shell. No seam, nor stem, and when he shakes it to his ear it makes no sound.

Brackens bends over and fills a large jar with the salt.

BRACKENS (CONT'D)

This will fetch a fine price! Spice your soup with Eldaria's cock m'lords? Only fifty doubloons a rattle!

Havik covers the nut with a bundle of cloth, hands it off to Brackens, and holds the lantern up to the darkness.

HAVIK  
Whatever we might seek to find in this  
forgotten place, we've found it.

And when Havik starts to walk back, everyone eagerly follows.

**CUT TO:**

**THE TWO WAGONS**

where Jhev, Jaxon, Horoway, Nimmet, and Brownbeard all wait  
at the shadow's edge as Havik and his party approaches...

Havik and his four followers come to a stop.

BROWNB Beard  
What did you find, my lord?

HAVIK  
Go ahead. Show the man what we found.

Brackens dismounts, steps forward, and reveals THE BLACK ORB.

BROWNB Beard  
It feels like a shell of some kind.

BRACKENS  
Aye, that's what I said. Like a big nut.

BROWNB Beard  
It has an earthly aroma.

NARVIS  
In what manner was it found?

HAVIK  
In a bed of salt at the heart of the  
shadow's shadow. Hidden in the dark lay a  
field of marble and in its bosom was dug  
an ornate carved pit. Filled with white  
salt, that thing sat in the crux of it.

NARVIS  
A carved pit?

HAVIK  
Yes. It was most carefully shaped and  
unusual to behold. Art or altar.

NARVIS  
The carvings... Can you draw them for me?

Havik takes a knee and draws shapes in the ash.

Eight jagged fissures. Eight spiral tendrils. Eight diamonds.

Havik watches as a gloom overtakes Narvis' pretty face.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*They are just shapes in the sand.*

NARVIS

I know this. Here is our Mother. These are eight veins that give her life. These the eight winds that carry her life to all creation.

HAVIK

And the diamonds?

NARVIS

The eight colors.

HAVIK

Colors?

NARVIS

The colors of magic.

HAVIK

And what are those for?

NARVIS

They are not *for* anything. They are everything. All that is, all that was, and all that ever will be are of the color. Whether a thing is one, or some, or all colors together, no thing can be without color. When one color leaves a thing, another takes its place.

HAVIK

What does that even mean? Speak plainly.

Narvis reaches in a pouch and pulls out a leaf.

NARVIS

What do you see here?

HAVIK

A leaf.

NARVIS

And what color is it?

HAVIK

It is green.

NARVIS

You are looking with your eyes. Look with your heart.

HAVIK

It is... the color of the forest?

NARVIS

Yes. And when the leaf is being burned to cook your meal. What color?

HAVIK

The color of fire.

NARVIS

And when the fire has left it. What then.

HAVIK

The color of ash.

NARVIS

No. It is still the color of the forest. You cannot change the nature of a thing. Fire was added to the leaf, and fire taken away. It is still the same color as the leaf.

HAVIK

But it's no longer a leaf. It's ash.

NARVIS

The leaf is born in ash. Fire has darkened it, so to again *appear* the leaf, it must be lightened. And how so?

HAVIK

With the color of water.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*Basic chemistry. And what colors must I mix to turn lead into gold, pray tell?*

HAVIK

If you are so wise that you see in color. Then what color, pray tell, is that?

He points at Brownbeard polishing the nut with his shirt.

NARVIS

No color. It should be returned to the shadows from whence it came.

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)

*Fool! You should have listened to her!  
And now it's too late.*

HAVIK

Brownbeard! So what *is* that thing?

BROWNBEARD

A nut, most like.

BRACKENS

*I told you it was a nut, m'lord! And I  
ain't no bleeding wizard.*

HAVIK

No one doubts your wisdom, Donner. What  
do you make of this... nut?

BROWNBEARD

Hard to say for certain, my lord. Only  
way to know for sure would be we treat it  
like any other nut.

HAVIK

And how's that?

BROWNBEARD

We crack it open.

HAVIK

And see what's on the inside.

NARVIS

This must not be done!

Everyone startles to attention as Narvis stands and shouts!

NARVIS (CONT'D)

If any of you have reason to trust me,  
then hear me now and trust my words.  
Look around you! Look now!

She spreads her arms and motions to the shadow behind her! To  
the lightning above! To the fissures! To the Sea of Heavens!

NARVIS (CONT'D)

This place is not to be trifled! I have  
come on this mad quest because I have  
lust in my heart. Some lust for riches.  
Other for power and glory. But I lust to  
see the world! This place is sacred to  
me... and to the people I call brother,  
sister, master...

(MORE)

NARVIS (CONT'D)

I told you not to go, m'lord! We had no right to disrupt the Mother's wound! It must be returned. I beg of you! Please! Give me the thing, and I will take it back to the shadow myself.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*She truly fears it...*

HAVIK

Narvis. What did you mean when you said it has no color?

NARVIS

You... You would think I'm mad.

BRACKENS

Too late for that!

HAVIK

If you're to give me counsel then speak up and give it! I've no use for wizards that give me half truths and riddles. If you don't wish to serve me then say so and be done with it.

NARVIS

The colors... I can see them.

She seems relieved, as if that secret weighed upon her soul.

HAVIK

Everyone can see in color.

NARVIS

No... The colors of magic.

HAVIK

Is this some trick that you learned when you took the black?

NARVIS

No, m'lord. They... They only ever took me in *because* I had the sight.

HAVIK

Were you born with it?

NARVIS

I...

BRACKENS

Well! Should I open it or not?



HAVIK

Quiet! You were saying...

NARVIS

Year ago. My father... He made me...

HAVIK

I know the story.

NARVIS

When they pulled me from the sea I was half dead and half mad. It was days before I knew where I was, or even *who* I was. They said I had terrible nightmares. The things they said I screamed in the night. It gives me terrors. When my wits returned I had the sight.

HAVIK

What is it like?

NARVIS

Auras of light and color that surround all things. Stone and fire. Water. The Sky. They all have a color that glitters in waves around them. Living things, like birds and trees. Their colors are a mix of the eight, and they glisten golden by day, and glimmer silver by night. It's people that have the most beautiful colors of all! Their bodies shine pink and sparkle when in love, and grow fierce and red and melt with black when hate is in their hearts.

She steps close to Havik. Her voice turned to whisper.

NARVIS (CONT'D)

My sight lets me know the truth of a man. His soul laid bare... A grievous thing to know in a world of masks and masquerades.

HAVIK

That dirt there. That black rust there. You see their colors?

NARVIS

Yes.

HAVIK

And when you look at the nut? What color?

NARVIS  
It has no color.

HAVIK  
But what does that *mean*! What do you see?

Havik rises, GRABS the nut from Flint's hands, then rushes back to Narvis and HOLDS IT RIGHT IN FRONT OF HER FACE!

HAVIK (CONT'D)  
Damn it, wizard! What do you see!

She cries out. A soft moan whimpering from her lips.

NARVIS  
No! Please!

Narvis turns away from him crying in hysterics.

Havik BACKHANDS her across the face!

HAVIK  
Look at it!

She holds her cheek and stares with the color of hate.

HAVIK (CONT'D)  
What do you see!? Tell me!

NARVIS  
Nothing! Damn you! I see nothing!

Narvis ceases her crying and stands tall.

HAVIK  
What do you mean nothing? No colors?

NARVIS  
No! I mean I cannot even see it! When it's covered all I see is cloth. But when it's exposed it is not black. It is not empty of color. IT IS A HOLE! A hole in creation that distorts the world like some terrible lens. A cracked mirror is what that is. Empty and dark, and I fear if I should get too close I might tumble inside and lose myself forever. And when a man holds it bare... in his hands... His is the very color of death. Even if you'll not heed my words and wish to take it as a trophy. Do so. But never open it. Consider my words carefully, m'lord. The risk is too great.

HAVIK

Flint!

Havik tosses the nut to Brackens who catches it in cheer.

FLINT

Yes, m'lord?

HAVIK

Fetch the sledge hammer.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*Let her fear her colors. There is no magic. Only Scientos.*

BROWNBEARD

Why not heed her words? We could take it back unopened. Let us do that.

HAVIK

And what? Leave the glory to my uncle and father? And worse yet, should they open it themselves, with great pomp and circumstance, and it turn to poison cloud that kill them both? What then? Give the House to my young cousins and take great stain upon my honor? She is right on one count. The risk is too great.

Brackens lays out a canvas so the pieces can be collected.

HAVIK (CONT'D)

No, Brownbeard. No. We'll open the thing here. Now. And then we'll see what color the meat has in store for us.

NARVIS

Nooooo!!!!!!

Havik turns to a knife's blade SLICING ACROSS HIS FACE.

He falls to the ground, hot blood trickling down his neck.

HAVIK (V.O.)

She meant to kill me!

Narvis approaches Havik with her knife, but Brackens is quickly upon her! He pulls a knife and steps between them.

HAVIK (V.O.)

Good Donner Brackens!

Their knives parry, blade on blade, up til Narvis somersaults and kicks Brackens in the head, KNOCKING him aside.

Kevin CHARGES! But his wild swings are no match for her careful parries. She disarms the squire and kicks him away.

Horoway is luckier, and as he steps past her guard he CUTS DEEP INTO HER THIGH with the steel of his sword.

But Narvis SWEEPS OUT HIS LEGS, and seconds later her blade's in his heart. Horoway sounds a guttural dying groan.

She watches him die as A SLEDGEHAMMER CLIPS HER SHOULDER!

She gets smashed to the floor, blood pooling from her leg, tears in her eyes. Flint looms over her raising the hammer.

HAVIK

Enough! It needn't have come to this.

NARVIS

Do not open it.

HAVIK

Restrain her.

Narvis cries in pain as Brackens binds her arms with rope.

NIMMET

We should kill the bitch! She murdered poor Horoway.

BROWNBEARD

She's hurt, my lord. She'll die if we do nothing.

HAVIK

Tend to her then... Flint!

FLINT

Yes, m'lord!

HAVIK

Time to put that hammer to better use.

Flint stands over the orb on its canvas cloth. He takes a few practice swings and readies his stance.

HAVIK (CONT'D)

Go ahead. Do your worst.

With a heaving raise of the heavy hammer, and a mighty down stroke, the steel strikes its mark...

But the shell just sinks down into the dirt... Uncracked.

Brackens picks it up from the dirt with a frown.

**CUT TO:**

**A HEAVY IRON ANVIL**

has been placed on the canvas. Brackens sets the orb atop it.

Once more Flint's aim is true, and the hammer squarely hits the nut's crown. KABOOOM!

Not unlike a heavy flash of thunder, a fell wind sweeps dirt and ash to the air, leaving only the SHRILL RINGING of the reverberating iron and steel...

As the dust settles they see its foul black shell has been split in two equal halves. Both fallen onto the cloth.

The black bile has only encrusted the shell's exterior.

The core of the shell is white...

And there, upon the anvil, a large clump of pale white foam.

Havik plunges his hand inside... and pulls from its depths

**A WHITE BEAN** no larger than an apple.

Delicately curved, irregular in shape and slimy to his touch.

All eyes are on it. Narvis is aghast. Brownbeard's eyes tear.

HAVIK

And what color is this, my lady?

NARVIS

All colors...

HAVIK

You spoke of a giant tree, wizard?

BROWNBEARD

Not just any tree, my lord. The world tree! The tree of life that first was planted in the times before the Doom! When the Gate of Heavens first opened and the Goddess made Eldaria her home... She planted this tree as her first act.

NARVIS

That is a lie!

BROWNBEARD  
It is no such thing.

NARVIS  
The masters say the tree was here even  
before the Goddess.

BROWNBEARD  
That's absurd! The texts say -

NARVIS  
Your texts are wrong!

**IMAGE:** A YOUNG WOMAN climbs among the roots of THE WORLD TREE  
whose heights tower thousands of feet above her IN DAYLIGHT!

NARVIS (V.O.)  
*When the world was young, a girl came to  
this place from far away. She was thirsty  
and tired, and sat beneath the tree.*

**IMAGE:** She rests beside a clear pool of water in the roots.

NARVIS (V.O.)  
*She drank from the waters that pooled by  
its roots, and slept in the shade of its  
branches.*

Brackens laughs.

BRACKENS  
What shade? The Dead Star's aura -

BROWNBEARD  
Was not there! The tree stood long before  
the Doom that brought the Dead Star.

**IMAGE:** AT NIGHT an ELF-LIKE MAN appears before her.

NARVIS (V.O.)  
*By the light of only the Silver Star she  
dreamed, and in her dream the tree became  
a beautiful man.*

**IMAGE:** Beneath the only star, A BLUE STAR, they kiss.

NARVIS (V.O.)  
*There, beside the stream of life, he came  
into the night... and made love to her.*

**IMAGE:** She awakens with a FULLY PREGNANT BELLY.

NARVIS (V.O.)

*And when she awoke she was pregnant with child.*

Brackens bursts into laughter again.

BRACKENS

So what you're saying is. She dreamed she fucked Eldaria's cock!

NARVIS

Yes. And the child she bore would grow to become the Goddess.

BROWNBEARD

Blasphemy! The Goddess is no child of a mortal woman! Sage Dioratemus in his scripture wrote:

**IMAGE:** A PORTAL opens above Eldaria. Through it pours the light of the galaxies, and THE SKY FILLS WITH STARS.

BROWNBEARD (V.O.)

(singing a hymn)

*And as the Gate of Heaven tore a hole  
above the world, a sea of stars that  
never shone upon the sky unfurled.*

**IMAGE:** A Fresco of: THE GODDESS offering gifts of food, chalices, horns of plenty, and angels to humanity.

BROWNBEARD (V.O.)

(singing)

*The Goddess made her home beneath the sky  
she held so dear, and left the children  
of the stars forever free of fear. And  
she was not of mortal kind, and lived  
forever young. Where men would die, she  
would live on, her song forever sung.*

Brownbeard takes a deep breath. Jaxon claps awkwardly.

BROWNBEARD

His words are clear. The Goddess made her home here *after* the Gate opened. Would you deny it?

FLINT (O.S.)

M'lord...

But Flint's words go unheeded. All eyes are on Navis.

NARVIS

I can speak scrolls too.

(harsh chanting, subtitled)

*Isfet, his heart black, his reign  
finished, cursed Ma'at a hex of  
vengeance. Mortal once, so mortal shall  
you be again. And Isfet closed the Gate,  
and doomed the world.*

BROWNBEARD

You speak a *cursed* tongue! I will not  
suffer this woman's heresy!

HAVIK

And I will not suffer this pointless  
debate! Enough! Eldaria's cock. This  
tree. You both admit it once existed!  
Could this be its seed?

FLINT (O.S.)

M'lord?

HAVIK

And could this seed be planted?

Havik holds it up for Brownbeard to inspect.

BROWNBEARD

Looks and smells fresh enough to me.

NARVIS

It's growing even now.

BROWNBEARD

Do you mean to plant it here?

FLINT (O.S.)

M'lord?

HAVIK

Here? In this wasteland? Of course not.

BROWNBEARD

If it truly is the world tree's seed then  
it is a holy relic! We must bring it to  
the Academy where they'll see it safely  
to Starcrown Cathedral for the High  
Priests to decide what to do with it.



HAVIK

If this seed grows a tree that all the world will covet, then I will see it grow on Davenport lands, behind Davenport walls. Let the Priests pilgrimage.

JHEV

Your uncle will prize this above all else! Should we not bring it to him?

HAVIK

Yes Captain. My uncle will surely -

FLINT (O.S.)

M'lord?

HAVIK

What Flint! What! What is it?

But when Havik turns to face Flint he finds him *bone white*.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*Fear has taken him.*

A strange BLACK ICHOR has pooled beside each shell.

No longer black on the outside, its totally white shell drips stains of rancorous dark bile onto the canvas.

It puddles about like spilled mercury in two separate pools.

HAVIK

What... is that?

JHEV

The shell... It was... It had...

BRACKENS

I think what our dear Captain's trying to say, m'lord. Is the nut wasn't black at all, but just had this shit all over it.

KEVIN

It looks like ink.

BRACKENS

It looks expensive, I think. Shall I fetch a few jars?

And all at once the pools of Stygian fluid send forth TENDRILS like a living thing and pulls its two halves to one.

BROWNBEARD  
Dear Goddess!

JHEV  
What *is* that thing?

BRACKENS  
I don't like the look of it. May be best  
if we leave it be.

Havik takes a knee and picks up the shell pieces.

HAVIK  
This is odd. Brownbeard, feel this.

BROWNBEARD  
It is white glass, my lord.

BRACKENS  
That makes no sense.

JHEV  
Glass? No way it's glass. It took a full  
hit of the hammer and cracked in two.  
Glass would shatter.

BRACKENS  
But it's so much smaller! Look!

Brackens takes the pieces and fits them together.

What once was a large pumpkin's now a small softball.

HAVIK  
It really is smaller... How much of that  
bile was on there? And why had it melted  
so suddenly after being split asunder?

Havik's mind reels with the possibilities...

## **FLASHBACK**

### **TEN YEAR OLD HAVIK**

sits at the feet of his uncle, Hubert Davenport.

HUBERT DAVENPORT  
In a world where magic is dead, all men  
stand as equals.

He rises from his chair and circles Havik like a shark.

HUBERT DAVENPORT (CONT'D)

And yet the only thing distinguishing us from the beasts, is our ability to reason. Money, land, and power all come at a price. But your mind is one weapon that's free. You'd best learn to use it.

HAVIK

Do my Ancient eyes give advantage to Davenport reasoning uncle?

Hubert flashes a brief, wicked smile.

HUBERT DAVENPORT

Don't you have other puzzles to solve?

**END FLASHBACK**

Havik stares at the seed in the palm of his hands.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*Concentrate. Think. The woman sees colors. The seed was rainbow and the nut black abyss. The seed is alive. The shell glass. Ancient made. They stored the seed in a jar... But the outside...*

Havik looks to the tarp, and watches as the Stygian liquid slowly drains through scattered burned holes in the canvas.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*The outside moves as if some living thing. Why did it melt? What caused such a feat? Was it the salt? The Dead Star's aura? No... it did not melt until it cracked. It chose to melt. But why? Why choose to melt once it cracked.*

Havik rubs his wounded face with his hands, still wet with the foam of the white seed.

BROWNBEARD

My lord, you're bleeding! Let me tend it.

Havik turns away from him and steps away towards the shadow.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*The tree grew here, and here was found its seed. Perhaps the blackness grew upon it. But what if it was already there when placed upon its salty altar?*

(MORE)

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

*If I had my holy seed relic set upon by  
foul growth that would not burn or cut,  
I'd certainly not smash it for fear of  
shattering the glass inside. What then  
could I do to protect my object? Surround  
it by a wall. Maybe an iron castle, aged  
through such millennia that it crumbled  
down to nothing. And this... buried at  
the heart of its shadow for longer than  
the castle stood... But why would it melt  
once broken? Why would it choose to melt?*

He stares at the seed... fear crossing his face...

HAVIK (V.O.)

*Because it could not, previously, get  
inside the glass...*

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)

*Fool! You should have listened to her!  
And now you've killed them all!*

Havik turns to face Brackens.

HAVIK

Put the seed in its shell for storage.

BRACKENS

Aye!

BROWNBEARD

My lord, your wound!

HAVIK

What now, damn it? I know I'm bleeding. I  
can feel it better than you!

BROWNBEARD

No my lord! It's gone! The wound on your  
face! It's healed!

HAVIK

Quiet, will you! My head is pounding.

Havik wipes away foam and blood from his cheek... to feel not  
a scar, but fresh undamaged skin!

HAVIK (CONT'D)

Dear Goddess! You're right! It's healed!

JHEV

That's incredible! I see it as well!

HAVIK (V.O.)  
*Impossible but true... This small bit of  
 foam and its healing wonder may be more  
 valuable than seed and metal together.*

Havik hands the seed to Brackens.

KEVIN  
 It's healed! It's true! A wonder!

NIMMET  
 M'lord! Let me scoop this foam into  
 Horoway's heart and revive him.

Nimmet races towards the anvil with outstretched palm, and  
 Havik cannot help himself. He BACKHANDS Nimmet to the ground.

HAVIK  
 You presume too much sailor! This prize  
 is far too precious to be wasted on the  
 likes of him.

Havik takes note of the hate in Nimmet's eyes just then.

HAVIK (V.O.)  
*I should be more cautious with these  
 small folk so far from the Realm.*

HAVIK  
 Moreover! I will not risk the Dead Gods'  
 wraths. Steal from that nightly caravan  
 and you take from the Heart-eater's  
 dinner plate. May be they'll plunder your  
 soul instead to balance their wagons.

Jaxon and Kevin make the sign of the Goddess.

HAVIK (V.O.)  
*That should appease them.*

Nimmet rises humbly to his feet. Hate replaced by fear.

NIMMET  
 Yes, m'lord.

HAVIK  
 Even so, I'll not have one of our rangers  
 die on the journey back. Brownbeard. Come  
 take some for the girl.

BROWNBEARD  
 Yes, my lord.

Brownbeard scoops some foam into his hand, and offers it up to Narvis, who does not refuse. She swallows the foam...

And incredibly the deep gash in her leg starts to heal. Her bones creak and realign and she regains use of her shoulder.

HAVIK

The seed is in its shell? Bring it here.  
I mean to store the foam for keeping.

Brackens opens the shell and Havik fills his hands with foam.

When NARVIS SHRIEKS! Jaxon fumbles for his dagger! And Brownbeard stands aghast at some horror behind Havik.

He turns to find the ebony sludge had pooled up through the cloth, and now was REACHING UP FROM ITS PUDDLE!

IT RISES to the air as if it were forming some ghostly amorphous hand composed of the vile ink.

FLINT FAINTS to the floor at the horrible sight of it.

On instinct Havik stuffs the remaining foam in his pockets.

NARVIS

Protect the seed!

Like a bow would loose an arrow, the blob of malignant ooze shoots spurts of black goo at the shell.

Some lands on the foam, HISSING HORRIFICALLY as it dissipates like a shadow at star-rise.

But some portion of the Stygian fluid falls on the seed itself, and SEEPS INTO IT, where it muddies the delicate white of the seed with spirals of black like ink on milk.

Narvis sounds a FOUL SCREAM, and by the time Brackens closes the shell once more, the seed within is black as tar.

Kevin LUNGES for the blob with his sword, and his swing slices through as if it were porridge.

Covered with its drippings, the fluid creeps up the sword's blade and Kevin tosses it away in alarm!

JHEV

We should leave.

HAVIK

Ready the wagons! We're going. Now.

Everyone scurries to action while Brackens waits with Havik.

BRACKENS

What about the... thing?

HAVIK

We leave it.

BRACKENS

The anvil as well, m'lord?

HAVIK

We are done with mining. Let it rust.

BRACKENS

Shall we leave him as well?

He gestures towards the unconscious Flint, not three feet from the villainous creature rising from the cloth in arrogant defiance of the laws of nature.

HAVIK

Curse him. I'll not risk getting near it.

Havik holds his hands to his mouth and shouts!

HAVIK (CONT'D)

Flint! Flint! Get up! Flint! Wake up!

Flint slowly comes to consciousness and grabs at his mask, gasping for air... But the creature notices his movement.

It returns to puddle form and SNAKES its way towards Flint!

BRACKENS

Flint! Flint! Look out!

The puddle creeps upon him and trails along Flint's chest.

HAVIK

Dear Goddess.

He swats at the demon and cries out in alarm. Though perhaps that is his folly, for when his mouth gapes wide...

The obsidian horror GUSHES ITS WAY IN until the whole sum of it's swallowed by Flint in one great heaving gulp.

Havik wretches the contents of his stomach to the floor.

Brackens runs in panicked fear before stopping to look back.

BRACKENS

M'lord! Are you coming?

Havik watches as Flint convulses in death and falls still.

HAVIK

Wrap the sphere well and place it in the wagon! The one Narvis it *not* bound in! Leave at once and lead the wagons East towards the gate!

BRACKENS

What about you? You can't mean to stay!

HAVIK

I do not plan to! Have Kevin and Jaxon bring me my horse! And my sword!

Havik turns back to Flint's body on the floor...

When all at once FLINT RISES as if a shade from his grave.

He stands arms loose. His neck limp. A vacant gaze.

HAVIK (CONT'D)

Flint... ?

Flint unleashes a guttural groan with no hint of reason.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*A man possessed.*

His body lurches into an awkward inhuman stance.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*It's as if his body is foreign to him.*

Flint's eyes look upon Havik's. Utterly black. Alien. Devoid.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*No color. The obsidian horror moves him.*

EVIL FLINT (FLINT)

(in Ancient, subtitled)

Heeeellllllllloooo... Eldarian...

Havik takes a step back.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*He called me Eldarian... Could this intelligence be foreign even to Eldaria?*

He stares deep into Flint's unfamiliar eyes.



HAVIK (V.O.)  
*Could it have come through the Gate of  
 Heavens, and not be of this world at all?  
 Dear Goddess... It is no mortal thing.*

## FLASHBACK

### TEN YEAR OLD HAVIK

sneaks into his uncle's solar and hides behind a pillar.

Hubert Davenport sits on the other side deep in conversation with LORD KEFKA, an elderly man in motley robes.

HUBERT DAVENPORT  
 No Lord Kefka. No. Magic is dead and  
 wizards are fools. But in truth, I  
 believe it never existed at all. All this  
 myth and legend you cling to so tightly  
 is nothing more than the outlandish  
 beliefs of the religious devout. The  
 Djinn? The Goddess? Hah! Call faith what  
 you will, but the only magic there ever  
 was, was Scientos. And it was upon *that*  
 pillar that the Ancients built antiquity.

Hubert spots the shadow of his nephew and smiles. He picks up a heavy book and creeps towards Havik with his back to him.

HUBERT DAVENPORT (CONT'D)  
 We, as nobility, must better ourselves  
 above all mankind, and reclaim the power  
 lost when Doom arrived and the Ancients  
 fell. And in so doing... Havik... We  
 Davenports will elevate all humanity to  
 its former glories... And our mark on  
 civilization will be immortalized.

Hubert turns the pillar, faces Young Havik, and SMASHES the book in his face! WHAM! Havik crashes to the floor in a heap.

He stares up at his uncle as he wipes his bloodied nose.

HUBERT DAVENPORT (CONT'D)  
 Pathetic. You still have much to learn.

## END FLASHBACK

Havik takes a step closer towards Flint's inhuman eyes.

HAVIK (V.O.)  
*If I'm dealing with magic and gods I must  
 think as a wizard...*  
 (MORE)

HAVIK (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*Ancient devout gave the Goddess a name.  
 They called her Ma'at, and she is the  
 Goddess of truth, justice, and above all  
 else... Order. Only one other god, apart  
 from Ma'at, remained in Eldaria after the  
 Doom. The dark one...*

The blood drains from Havik's face.

HAVIK  
 (in Ancient, subtitled)  
 Are you... a god?

EVIL FLINT  
 (in Ancient, subtitled)  
 I am...

HAVIK (V.O.)  
*Two gods. One the Goddess of Order. The  
 other the God of... Chaos.*

HAVIK (CONT'D)  
 (in Ancient, subtitled)  
 Are you... Isfet?

Flint's mouth YAWNS impossibly wide and his throat makes an  
 UNKIND GURGLING SOUND. Black bile spills out, and the gurgle  
 repeats itself, growing louder and louder.

HAVIK (V.O.)  
*Is it... Laughing?*

EVIL FLINT  
 (in Ancient, subtitled)  
 No. The Lord of Chaos is trapped within  
 his temporal prison. Never has the Gate  
 swung open, and never will it close.

HAVIK (V.O.)  
*If not Isfet then which?*

The CLOPPING OF HORSE'S HOOVES grows ever closer.

HAVIK  
 (in Ancient, subtitled)  
 Then... Who are you?

EVIL FLINT  
 (in Ancient, subtitled)  
 I... am...

JAXON  
 Look out, m'lord!

Jaxon rides past Havik on horseback, his sword swinging!

HAVIK

No!

It CUTS A SWATH through flesh and bone with a discharge of blood and gore. But Flint stands firm and unfazed.

Horrific black tendrils of the primordial abomination that lurks within holds Flint's corpse together.

KEVIN

My lord! Your sword!

Havik turns, finds the sword in air, and CATCHES IT!

Evil Flint's eyes are on Havik, holes that they are.

His mouth drips bile and blood.

EVIL FLINT

(in Ancient, subtitled)

You will pay for your transgressions!

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)

*Do not hesitate!*

Havik THRUSTS his sword and drives the tip STRAIGHT THROUGH FLINT'S CHEST all the way up to the hilt!

EVIL FLINT

(in Ancient, subtitled)

No blade can defeat me!

Havik grins, and raises his off hand: CUPPED and laden with foam! And when the accursed devil laughs, Havik RAMS HIS HAND inside Flint's mouth and shoves foam down his throat!

A HIGH PITCHED WHINE drives Kevin to his knees and draws blood from Havik's ears. The horses rear in terror!

SMOKE and MIST rises in toxic clouds from Flint's mouth.

Havik lifts his boot to the demon's chest, and with both hands on the hilt, looses the sword from Flint's heart.

He kicks Flint's corpse away and it falls to the ground.

HAVIK

(in Ancient, subtitled)

No blade.

Jaxon LEAPS from his horse, blade in hand, and swings so hard he SEVERs FLINT'S HEAD from its body.

Steam rises from the corpse. The black ichor dissipated.

JAXON

Flint's curse is lifted. His soul will pass. Look at how he steams of cleansing.

KEVIN

Lord Davenport used the stuff that healed his wound. I saw you, my lord! He took it from his pocket and stuffed it down Flint's gullet! Twas that which cured the curse, and not your sword.

JAXON

It doesn't matter how they die, little one. Just as long as the killing is done. I saw what it was, and I saw it go inside him. This task is half finished.

KEVIN

What do you mean to do?

JAXON

Burn him.

Havik finds himself laughing.

KEVIN

Something funny my lord? Or are you just happy to see the thing slain?

HAVIK

I'm recalling something Flint said to me. He said... Men have no magic... And men can not be gods.

KEVIN

I don't follow, my lord.

HAVIK

It said it was a god.

JAXON

Foul magic and lies. Some devil in the rust, perchance, but no god.

HAVIK

I am not so sure. Kevin! Fetch Narvis and bring her here. I mean to know what colors she can see.

KEVIN

Narvis has been put to rest, my lord. A  
potion to cease her screaming.

Jaxon uncorks a bottle of lamp oil over Flint's body.

HAVIK

No, Jaxon. That's too little oil. We've  
no tinder to waste, and the flesh is too  
wet to burn so easily.

JAXON

We can't leave the body to rot. I would  
see that demon burn.

HAVIK

As would I.

JAXON

Then what would you have us do?

HAVIK

We'll drag the body by horse to the  
fissure. Such an end will leave no ash.

JAXON

But that's a day's ride in the wrong  
direction.

HAVIK

And will be more still on returning! I do  
not mean to cross the fires. The others  
will wait at the gate with the wagons.

JAXON

And suppose while we drag him, it emerges  
from Flint, and it climbs up the rope.

KEVIN

Why not just sling Flint's body over its  
own horse?

JAXON

And have a demon horse to answer for!?

HAVIK

We'll take three garrons. Jaxon you'll  
pull the dead man behind you, and Kevin,  
you'll ride with him. Backwards. Keep a  
mindful watch, and should the horror  
climb up the rope... Cut it.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

## **THE WAGON TRAIN PARTS COMPANY**

with Havik, Jaxon, and Kevin as they ride to the Firelands.

### **SERIES OF SHOTS -**

**A)** Kevin stares at the canvas bag dragging behind the horse.

**B)** They've made camp. Havik waters the horses. Jaxon applies paste to his mask. Kevin stares at the canvas bag.

**C)** Havik and Jaxon sleep... and still Kevin stares...

**D)** Havik awakens to a bleary eyed Kevin. It's Havik's turn to take watch.

**E)** Havik stares at the bag. He hears a noise and JUMPS out of fright! But it's only Kevin... He can't sleep.

**F)** Both sit staring at the bag as Jaxon awakens cheerfully.

### **END SERIES**

## **HAVIK SITS ASLEEP ON HIS HORSE**

and gets startled awake to the sound of Kevin hooting.

JAXON

Look there, m'lord!

Havik spots the Firelands growing closer ahead of them.

HAVIK

Goddess be praised. The sooner this is done the better.

## **AT THE EDGE OF THE FIRELANDS**

Havik, Jaxon, and Kevin dismount from their horses and stare.

Jagged scars cut the land in fractal patterns across a labyrinth of smoke and flame. Cliffs loom over deep fissures.

HAVIK

We'll take him to that ridge there. See how it glows. Eldaria's blood pools below it. That jut of land overhangs it, and we'll toss him over into the fire.

Jaxon walks to the corpse bag and cuts the rope with a knife.

KEVIN

All three of us my lord? You should stay here. This is a squire's task.

HAVIK

I'll not have my glory taken from me. I am not afraid.

KEVIN

Your glory's already been won! I'll not return to the Realm and tell of my noble lord who fell to smoke and flame after felling himself a demon. Let *me* do the deed while you command from the rear as a King would his army.

Jaxon gives a confused SHOUT. Havik and Kevin rush to him.

HAVIK

What is it?

Jaxon points at holes in the canvas bag that carried Flint.

KEVIN

My lord. Holes of the same kind were left by the puddle when it first appeared...

HAVIK

Whether the horror is in the body or not, it does not change our task. We must burn Flint's corpse at once.

KEVIN

While you wait out here? No! It... It might be out there... Watching...

HAVIK

I'll either burn the body or wait here, but I will not get on my horse and flee as you would have me do. So which way would you have your noble lord then? Burnt or bedeviled?

Havik pushes past Kevin and helps Jaxon lift Flint's corpse.

HAVIK (CONT'D)

Stay and watch the horses! I do not mean to walk to the gate from here.

Jaxon and Havik carry the corpse

**INTO THE FIRELANDS**

where the heat grows spiteful and smoke rises everywhere.  
 They strain to carry deadweight cross the treacherous ground.  
 When all at once Havik's world spins.  
 He drops Flint's body, comes to his knees, and coughs himself  
 into the blackness of unconsciousness.

**FADE TO BLACK.**

KEVIN (V.O.)  
 Lord Havik... My lord... Do you hear me?

**FADE IN:****HAVIK COUGHS**

as he's roused awake to water from Kevin's waterskin.

KEVIN  
 There now. Take a drink, my lord.

HAVIK  
 What happened?

KEVIN  
 You passed out for near ten minutes. Your  
 mask was bone dry. When's the last time  
 you applied Brownbeard's paste? Here, put  
 this on. I've wet it for you.

HAVIK  
 Go back to the horses Kevin.

KEVIN  
 Are you sure?

HAVIK  
 Yes. I'm alright. I'm fine now. Thank  
 you. Jaxon and I will complete this task.  
 See to the horses. This won't take long.

Havik and Jaxon HOIST Flint's corpse and head further in.

**FADE TO:****A FIERY SUMMIT**

where Havik and Jaxon set Flint down with a huff.



Jaxon empties a waterskin over his face, while Havik takes five willful steps towards the edge of the cliff.

No further than a hundred feet below rests a sea of lava.

Unable to resist his baser urges, Havik gathers phlegm up in his throat, and SPITS OVER THE EDGE!

He watches as it falls with precision and vaporizes.

Satisfied, Havik turns back to face Jaxon, and freezes.

HAVIK

Look out! Jaxon! Behind you!

In realized panic Jaxon turns to face THE OBSIDIAN HORROR - rising up from the ground in amorphous splendor.

Without warning it LEAPS INTO JAXON'S MOUTH and is consumed!

HAVIK (CONT'D)

*No! Do not hesitate.*

HAVIK CHARGES! He TACKLES Jaxon to the ground, who starts to violently seize in a fit of madness!

Havik grabs at Jaxon's jaw, forces the butt of a wineskin through his teeth, pries his mouth open...

AND STUFFS A HANDFUL OF FOAM down Jaxon's throat!

A horrific blood-curdling screech is followed by a gush of foul steam... Jaxon's corpse comes to a silent stillness.

HAVIK (CONT'D)

Jaxon... ?

POP! Jaxon's eyes turn black AND DETONATE! POP!

Havik digs his feet into the ground and gains enough leverage to start DRAGGING Jaxon's corpse to the ledge.

And there, at the edge of the feverish abyss, Havik steals a glimpse at the fiery chasm that looms below.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*No god or devil can survive that drop.*

With all his might Havik starts to PUSH Jaxon's corpse over the edge, when all at once the obsidian horror EMERGES!

It leaps from Jaxon's mouth and pours over Havik's coat.

Havik becomes unhinged! As if a man on fire he pulls at his clothes and strips down to his bare chest in seconds.

The horror gets tossed to the floor along with them.

Havik inches away and falls to his back! Jaxon's corpse teeters for a moment, then tips from the cliff and falls.

EVER SO SLOWLY the obsidian horror creeps towards Havik.

It puddles before him not three feet away, and with snail like precision begins its vertical rise from an inky pool.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*I can be taken by a god, or I can spit in  
its face and cast myself to the flames...*

Havik stares in horrified defiance as it hovers before him.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*My mind would not be my own. And that  
seems a fate worse than death... If I'm  
to die... I'll not do so smelling shit.*

Havik rips off his breath mask and tosses it away.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*So this is how Havik Davenport comes to  
his final end. By fire or by fraud.*

Havik backs away to the edge of the steep cliff.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*One simple step and it's done.*

He lifts his left foot... lingering over the drop.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*If I burn in flame will I go to the  
netherworld? Or will I cease to be?*

Havik presses his foot back into solid ground.

HAVIK

My name is Havik Davenport! And I...

He pauses as a queer thought overtakes him.

Digging his hand in his pocket, Havik PULLS FROM IT all that remains of the magic nut's frothy white foam...

The HORROR REACTS as if Havik means to throw it! BUT INSTEAD -

HAVIK OPENS HIS MOUTH AND EATS IT! Grinning all the while!

He licks his palm, and laughs, and smiles. Giggling as the magic foam drips and froths on his lips like a mad dog.

HAVIK (CONT'D)

Ha! I win!

The demon releases a HORRENDOUS SQUAWK of godly rage!

Havik covers his ears as the obsidian horror returns to a puddle, and speeds off down the path towards the Barrens.

Havik savors victory, til it turns to vinegar in his mouth.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*Oh, no! Kevin!*

#### **HAVIK RUNS CROSS THE FIRELANDS**

still bare-chested as he races back towards his squire.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*Think Havik! Think! Suppose he's taken,  
what then? Shall I come to terms with it?  
Bargain my services? And if not, what  
then? Cut off Kevin's legs and flee?*

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)

*Fool! He's already dead, and your fate is  
nearly sealed.*

#### **HAVIK EMERGES FROM A WALL OF SMOKE**

to the screaming of the horses as they come into view.

KEVIN IS ON HIS BACK! Wildly swinging his sword as he scrambles away from the demon rising from its puddle.

HAVIK

Kevin! Run!

Kevin drops his sword and takes off in a panic.

The horror shrinks back down and glides after him.

Havik reaches his three horses, only to find one of them's broken its leg in the commotion. It whinnies in pain.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*I'll not leave this noble animal to be  
taken by the god.*

Havik unsheathes his sword, then places his hand on the wounded horse and calms it for a soothing moment.

Then he steps back, and with his eyes averted, CUTS ACROSS THE BEAST'S BARE THROAT. It falls to the floor quite dead.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*A sad end for Jaxon and his mount.*

Havik mounts his own horse, grabs the reins of Kevin's, and cuts both free from their ropes with a swing of his sword.

HAVIK

Kevin! Get ready!

Havik rides them both in full gallop towards Kevin, who's running in fright with the Horror following close behind.

KEVIN

What!?

HAVIK

Your horse! Get ready!

With the demon rising from its puddle even as it moves, Kevin manages to pull himself up onto his horse!

But the demon launches a tentacle that LEASHES to Kevin's steed, and flows its volume UP ITS OWN TENTACLE til the sum of the thing's upon the back of Kevin's horse.

KEVIN

No! Ahh!

HAVIK

Kevin! Jump to my horse! Kevin!

Havik reaches out as he rides alongside him, but Kevin's fear has taken hold, and he stares upon the ebony viper, beholden to its slithering hypnotic form.

Havik grabs hold of Kevin's collar, and with all his might pulls him like a bag of sand from one horse to the other.

But the Horror had made its move.

It's wrapped round Kevin's leg and slithering up his body.

Havik pulls at the boy and they both come TUMBLING off the horse and onto the ashen floor.

Havik tries to rise but he's broken his leg...

He growls in pain and spits blood.

HAVIK

Get your shirt off! Kevin! Get it off!

Kevin screams and curses, swatting and twisting as if helplessly set aflame.

Havik watches the dreadful sight as the unholy creation slips inside Kevin's skin and begins its dance of death.

Havik wipes blood and foam from his mouth, and marvels as the foam's latent magic HEALS his broken leg.

He slowly rises to his feet as his injury recovers.

Havik mounts his horse, unsheathes his sword, and turns to face Kevin... who rises into an awkward stance. Inhuman.

Havik watches Kevin smile grotesquely. He shifts his body and cracks his bones and finds his center of balance.

HAVIK

(in Ancient, subtitled)

Who are you?

Kevin takes one step forward... AND STANDS TALL.

Black bile drips and puddles from Kevin's tongue.

EVIL KEVIN

I...

It taps on the temple of Kevin's head with its index finger.

EVIL KEVIN (O.C.)

Know what Kevin Gracious knows...

HAVIK (V.O.)

*That... is the worst of all possible outcomes... It knows me. It knows my family. Dear Goddess! It knows the Realm.*

HAVIK

What do you want?

Kevin lets loose A HORRIBLE WAIL that whines with such tremor Havik's horse rears back and Havik grows dizzy.

Kevin TAKES OFF in a run directly towards... the other horse!

Havik grabs the reins of Kevin's mount and spurs both horses!

HAVIK (CONT'D)

Hyah!

He rides them into a gallop, and looks back to gain certainty of his victory, when he sees Kevin SHOOT A TENTACLE of Stygian fluid out from his palm and onto the horse!

It wrangles its neck and pulls back with such force that Havik loses his grip on the reins.

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)

*Do not hesitate!*

As Kevin steps up to the horse and begins to mount it, Havik SWINGS with his sword and cuts true across the steed's neck.

Blood spills in sheets, and Havik rears his own horse away from the creature's death throes so he can face his foe.

Havik holds the sword high, blood still dripping from steel.

Any mortal man would be afraid at Havik's countenance, but Kevin looks up with cold, black, empty eyes...

Havik turns and flees!

But Kevin begins a ceaseless run IN CHASE! He SPRAYS a black tentacle from his hand and grips round Havik's side-pack.

Havik uses his sword to CUT the pack from his horse, but some of the relentless black pile climbs up onto his blade.

He tosses his sword away and down onto the Barrens ground.

Havik rides safely away... only looking back to watch as Kevin stops beside the pack and recovers Havik's sword...

The spilled black bile slithers to his boot and up his leg.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*The drop rejoins the bottle...*

**FADE TO:**

#### **HAVIK RIDES ACROSS THE BARRENS**

Kevin remains in sight as a distant spot on the horizon. Ever running ceaselessly towards Havik... But falling behind.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*Ahorse I'll outpace him five to one...*

Havik slows down the pace of his horse...

HAVIK (V.O.)

*I have no man to keep my watch, and soft  
as death he'll creep up on me...*

Havik halts, dismounts, and opens the side-saddle that remains for him to feed and water his horse.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*It knows my squire's mind. It knows the  
path I mean to take, from here, to gate,  
to ship itself. It even knows the ship's  
crew well. Far better than I.*

Havik pets his horse's head and watches it drink.

HAVIK

We'll have to take an irregular course...  
just to throw it off our trail...

**FADE TO:**

**AT THE EDGE OF THE BARRENS**

Havik rides his horse towards the wagons on the horizon...

**SUPER: "THREE DAYS LATER"**

**INSIDE THE CARAVAN**

Havik gets close enough to discover that one of the wagons has lost its axle and wheels, and five horses are missing.

Nor are there any of his rangers...

HAVIK

Hello! Is anyone there?

NIMMET

M'lord! Thank the Goddess you're safe! We  
feared the worst.

Nimmet appears from the second wagon and rushes forward.

HAVIK

Nimmet. Is the seed safe?

NIMMET

Yes, m'lord. It's packed in tight. We  
wrapped it with cloth and straw, and  
buried it deep in the pile of ore. It's  
not going anywhere.

(he frowns and spits)

And neither are we.

Havik adjusts himself on his horse's saddle. He points.

HAVIK

Five horses are gone. Three garrons and two drays.

NIMMET

Aye, m'lord. The wagon hit some loose rock and broke the axle as you see. Wheel's busted too. With such a heavy load we ain't got the wood to repair it. Jhev was most distraught. He said we should just leave the wagon behind. *One wagon o' metal's better than two if it means our lives* he said. But Brackens wouldn't hear none of it.

Havik dismounts his horse, and he and Nimmet walk the horse to the others, tie it, water it, and feed it.

HAVIK

Good Donner Brackens.

NIMMET

Well, first mate he may be, but he didn't seem too quick to follow Jhev's command. It finally came to fisticuffs, and Jhev took a black eye and broken rib or two, but Brackens got the better and won the argument. He ordered Jhev and I to remain here and watch both wagons while he went for wood. He meant to take Brownbeard with him and two drays for the lumber they'd gather, but Brownbeard didn't trust Narvis back here with the seed. So in the ends Brackens ordered Narvis along as well, and she seemed content enough to help. She'd surely abandon them to go back to the ship herself, but knows getting back without her Captain would only mean her hanging. Sailor's Law and all. If she wants to live she's no choice but to play along. She thought Brackens might kill her for Horoway's death out there, but Brownbeard pledged he'd protect her if he tried, and she believed him. Them wizards stick together they do.

HAVIK

When did they leave for the gate?



NIMMET

Two and a half days ago, m'lord. It's less than a day's ride to the gate from here, and it ain't much wood we need. They'll be back soon. I'm sure of it.

HAVIK

Well, it was good of Brackens to try to fix the wagon and save our cargo. But the situation has changed in a way Donner does not know. I mean to abandon the wagon, and head straightaway for the gate with the one that remains to us.

NIMMET

But all that star metal!

HAVIK

It is not lost. It will sit right there, unmoved, until a second expedition comes to our hidden cove, and uses our map, and takes our path through the Barrens to claim it. We'll have our prize, and you your fair share eventually.

Nimmet nods to himself as Havik smiles through his teeth.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*I'll never return to this place. It's cursed with devils, and when I sing my songs it will be shunned for generations.*

NIMMET

That's true.

HAVIK

Fetch Jhev. I mean to tell you what happened at the fissure before we unbury the seed. I have bad news.

NIMMET

Aye m'lord. I heard it already. I mourned for poor Jaxon all last night I did.

Nimmet holds his cap over his heart with sad eyes.

NIMMET (CONT'D)

He was like a brother to me, he was.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*How can he know this? Unless...*

Havik laughs just then, half taken by hysteria.

NIMMET

M'lord?

HAVIK

You said you cried for Jaxon, Nimmet?

NIMMET

Yes. A cruel fate to burn to death. I don't find it quite so amusing, m'lord.

HAVIK

And how, pray tell...

HAVIK (V.O.)

*Yes, pray tell, pray tell.*

HAVIK

Did you come by this information exactly?

JHEV (O.S.)

Havik! Havik is that you I hear?

Jhev emerges from the hooded wagon, followed by Kevin, who's holding his long dagger with a hunk of sausage at the end.

KEVIN

My lord! I'm ever so relieved to see you safe! We feared the worst when you didn't return so quickly behind me!

Kevin brandishes his dagger menacingly.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*So this is how he wishes to play it. What a viciously clever creature this obsidian horror is. Perhaps it truly is a god...*

HAVIK

Kevin Gracious! It's good to see you.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*Yes. I can play this game as well.*

KEVIN

You look ragged tired.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*He acts as Kevin through and through. Even the way he carries himself and speaks his voice. No... This is no mimicry. It's as if he's become him altogether. He is Kevin and Kevin is him.*

HAVIK

I came as fast as my horse could ride.

KEVIN

I was thick with urgency as well, my lord. Ever since I lost you in the Barrens, I knew it all the more important to reach the camp and summon help.

Kevin takes a bite of sausage and chews as he speaks.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

I would never let them leave without you.

HAVIK

I must remember to thank my uncle for appointing me such a leal squire.

KEVIN

Hubert Davenport, the Lord of Witchblood Stronghold. How we all love him so. He is as if a second father to me.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*He openly mocks me with his intimate knowledge of my House.*

HAVIK

Kevin... How is it that you made it back before me? All without a horse?

KEVIN

I rode the poor creature to death I did. As luck would have it, that was just a small ways from where the wagon broke.

NIMMET

A sad story. Good you're here to sing it.

JHEV

So the demon's truly dead then, Havik?

Havik stares deep into Kevin's human eyes...

HAVIK (V.O.)

*He must be able to pull the blackness deep within, and hide it from sight. Another godly trick.*

HAVIK

It's a quite the story to tell. Kevin! Be a good squire and cook me some breakfast.

NIMMET

No need to exert yourself, little man.  
You've both had a rough few days. I know  
where the wine is, and I'll help you  
break your fast quite well m'lord.

HAVIK

No.

They're all surprised by Havik's firm response.

NIMMET

No, m'lord?

HAVIK

No. It is my squire's task.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*If he makes his move now, I'll pull  
Nimmet's knife and set it to purpose.*

KEVIN

Oh, please, my lord? I'm so tired. This  
is my first meal in days.

JHEV

Oh, just let him rest, Havik. No need to  
break the boy.

HAVIK

Very well. Nimmet. Fetch me wine, cheese,  
and a sharp blade to cut it.

NIMMET

As you say, and I'll put some stew on the  
kettle for you as well.

HAVIK

If you insist... So tell me, Kevin.  
Actually. I'm quite famished. Might I  
take that dagger of yours and have a bite  
of that sausage?

KEVIN

Best not my lord. I've had a queer cough  
since the fire land.

Kevin frowns and fakes a cough.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

I might just have a flush on me, and I'd  
not mean to worsen your health.

HAVIK

I am not afraid. Give it here.

Jhev pats Havik on the back and gives a hearty bellow!

JHEV

Ha! Of course! Havik Davenport's afraid of nothing! But still, can you not marvel at your squire's lealty? Best appease him, lad. This one aches for knightship no doubt, upon return to the Realm.

HAVIK

Yes... Upon return to the Realm.

Nimmet arrives with a plate of cheese, goblets, and wine.

NIMMET

We're short a few men, so I thought we'd have a drink of the good stuff to their passings.

Havik takes Nimmet's knife and cuts himself some cheese.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*Sharp enough to kill.*

JHEV

So you were saying of the demon's end?

HAVIK

Let Kevin tell the tale again. I'll sing my song when he is done.

Kevin swallows his sausage and STABS a piece of cheese.

KEVIN

Well... When we reached the fire lands, you and Jaxon went to bring Flint to his fiery grave, but you fell to the choke of the sulfur and passed out. We carried you to safety, and I continued on with Jaxon in your place. It was at the fissure where we meant to put Flint to the fire, and that's where the foul thing came out of his corpse. Jaxon struggled with it, and when the wicked cur was upon him, he nobly threw himself to the fires, taking himself and the thing down with him to hell. To Jaxon's bravery!

JHEV & NIMMET

To Jaxon!

They hoist their goblets in cheer and drink the wine.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*A fine song this thing sings. And what  
might it do if I were to call it out?*

KEVIN

It was when I returned I found Havik in a state of madness. He spoke strange things and looked through me, as if he were dreaming or lost in delirium. I thought him taken with a terrible sickness, and when I found some of the nut's healing foam in his pockets... Well, I fed him a handful. It seemed to calm him down too. So I secured him in his saddle, and we set out on our horses.

JHEV

That's some quick thinking lad!

KEVIN

But a windstorm came upon us. We lost one of the horses and most of our supplies. In the storm I lost Havik as well. His illness had not yet been cured, and I feared him for dead, lost in the Barrens. I am quite glad you recovered, my lord.

JHEV

Aye, we all are. And all thanks to you and your bravery. Good enough for a knightship after all maybe!

HAVIK

It's knighthood.

NIMMET

So. Our lord tells me he means for us to abandon the broken wagon.

JHEV

See! I knew my lord's mind all along! Better to have *half* the cargo than *none* at all! Still... We've both waited this long, and it's quite a lot of metal to leave behind. If the threat is truly dead, as you say my lord, why not simply wait for our rangers and make the repair?

KEVIN

Yes. Why mean to leave the wagon my lord?

Havik slams down his wine goblet and stands.

He sheathes the cheese blade in his belt.

HAVIK

I'll not be second guessed by my squire!

KEVIN

I was only asking. I did not mean to -

HAVIK

I know what you meant!

Nimmet and Jhev rise as well, surprised by Havik's temper.

JHEV

Settle down Havik.

HAVIK

You'll address me as *my lord*!

JHEV

Then settle down *my lord*. The demon's danger's passed. You're only weary from your struggle, and tired. Kevin's a good lad. When our rangers return you can take stock of our situation with fresh mind.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*Careful now, Havik. One false move and I'll find my men dead and my cargo lost, as I flee from a puddle across the Northern Wastes.*

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)

*Fool! Your men are dead already, and soon you will be joining them...*

NIMMET

Aye, m'lord. It'll do us no good to leave here now, only to come across Brackens with his lumber. We'd have to turn round when we could have just waited.

HAVIK

You're supposing I'd mean to come back to fix the wagon.

JHEV

Well why in blazes wouldn't we? If they already got the lumber, it won't take long to fix the damned thing.

(MORE)

JHEV (CONT'D)

And what's a few more hours in the Barrens? We've been here four damned weeks as it is.

HAVIK

We don't know when Brackens might return, or if he's even coming at all.

NIMMET

Why not send a scout, m'lord? I'll ride ahead and find them. If Brackens ain't by the gate, I'll return. Won't take more than two days. And if I come with no word of him, then we count them as lost, and leave with one wagon.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*It's sound advice. My mind and Nimmet's would be as one, if not for this god that lurks amongst us. No matter what, I cannot let it get back to the ship. Let it swim to the Realm.*

HAVIK

Wise words, sailor. But my mind is on the seed. Whether or not our rangers return, the ore must still be removed from the broken wagon. There's work to be done. Nimmet. Kevin. I want you to take down the cover and bring the wagons side by side. And clear out all that nonsense. If we're only to take one wagon, I'll not have goblets and crates of wine using up space better served for star metal.

NIMMET

But the wine?

HAVIK

Put it in your pack then! Just see to it the work is begun.

NIMMET

Aye, m'lord. I think I'll do just that.

KEVIN

Me too my lord? But my breakfast?

HAVIK

You can break your fast later. Now be a good lad and hop to it. If you're to gain a knighthood then you'd best be quick about it. I'll have no complaints from a man who's just a squire and nothing more.



Kevin flicks the cheese from his knife and sheathes it.

KEVIN

Yes, my lord.

Kevin leaves to help Nimmet with the wagon.

JHEV

What's the matter, Havik? With such great victories won I'd expect you in better cheer. We've seen a terrible thing, it's true. And we've lost men. But look at what we've gained. Your plan's succeeded beyond our wildest hopes. Even one wagon's a substantial prize.

Havik takes Jhev by his arm.

HAVIK

Jhev... Kevin is a man possessed.

JHEV

What?

HAVIK

Quiet, you fool. Do you want him to hear?

Havik whispers sweet unheard words into Jhev's listening ear.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*Jhev and I must be of one mind.*

As the words sink in, Jhev becomes wroth with fury.

JHEV

We must thrust the foam upon him, Havik. And force the devil into the open.

HAVIK

Perhaps. But once out of Kevin, what then? It can become any one of us, and we are all at risk. Narvis is the key. She can see colors, and while its ichor may lurk deep within the heart of a man, I'm certain she will see it, and root the darkness out into the light.

JHEV

And if not?

HAVIK

Then I fear it may come to the worst.

JHEV

What do you mean?

HAVIK

The horror must be allowed neither seed nor passage to the Realm. And I ate the foam. So I know it's not within me.

JHEV

Then we could all eat it.

HAVIK

I fear the creature kills the man if it's inside him when the foam's consumed.

JHEV

But it doesn't enter a man if he's eaten it already?

HAVIK

It seems not to. Given the chance it passed me up because of the stuff.

JHEV

So Nimmet and I will eat some. And then we will know the traitor.

HAVIK

The only foam that remains to us is with the seed. I do not mean to gather it in the horror's presence. Besides... There's not much left, and it doesn't seem to kill it, only anger it and kill the man. Whatever foam we have must stay with the seed to keep it safe.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*And hopefully restore the seed from its corruption.*

JHEV

Then what's the alternative, my lord?

HAVIK

I mean to separate us in two parties. You, me, and Narvis would head towards the ship with the seed and the working wagon, while everyone else repairs the other and follows close behind us.

JHEV

Why Narvis?

HAVIK

Flint had the right of it. Men have no magic. But this girl... Her sight makes her more than just a man. She's the only one that can uncloak its nature, and the only host that would yield it advantage and greater power. She must be kept safe.

JHEV

Dear Goddess.

HAVIK

*We three* would reach the ship first. Then all that's left is for you, their Captain, to sing a sad song to the men.

JHEV

And order us to set sail, leaving our party and the horror behind?

HAVIK

Aye.

JHEV

But Havik... Their fates would be sealed.

HAVIK

A fell fate, it's true. But one in service of the Realm's greater good. I have a duty. And you have yours.

JHEV

And what if it protests when we order our caravan separated?

HAVIK

If it comes to that -

KEVIN (O.S.)

My lord!

Havik turns to where Kevin and Nimmet have set the wagons side by side. Kevin's pointing off to the distance.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

The rangers are returning!

HAVIK

Jhev. Do not speak of this. Treat Kevin no differently. Mark my words carefully. I mean to consult with Narvis first before making final decision.

JHEV

I won't stand none too close to Kevin,  
neither my lord. That's for sure.

Havik mounts his horse and rides

# **OUTSIDE CAMP**

in the direction of his returning men...

And only moments later Kevin follows on a horse of his own.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*He is relentless.*

Havik rears his horse and waits as Kevin rides up to him.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*Perhaps it wants a moment alone to gloat  
or make parley. We are ten minutes from  
the rangers at least. No doubt it waits  
for Narvis to arrive to reveal itself.*

HAVIK

Halt!

Kevin brings his horse to an abrupt stop as Havik faces him.

KEVIN

What's the matter, my lord? Your squire  
should be beside you when you ride.

HAVIK

Yes, my *squire* should be! Perchance  
you'll spill out of him any time soon,  
and give him chance to do so?

Kevin seems truly perplexed by the question.

KEVIN

My lord?

HAVIK

Come now! No one can hear us! There's no  
need to play it coy! If we are to speak  
then let us speak.

KEVIN

Play coy my lord? I do not catch your  
meaning. We are speaking.

Havik and his horse circle Kevin like a shark.

HAVIK

Do you think that I've forgotten when you took my squire in the fire lands? Or perhaps you think me weak willed enough to believe your fiction? No. My squire is dead, and you are but his shadow! Now tell me. What do you want from us?

KEVIN

My lord...

(eyes tearing, lips quivering)  
You're frightening me.

Nimmet and Jhev have grown concerned and are running over.

HAVIK

I HAVE HAD ENOUGH OF YOUR GAME!!! I *know* what you are! I *saw* you take Kevin's form! Do not pretend to have left him. No mortal man can walk such distance and outpace me on a horse!

KEVIN

I told you, my lord. I had my horse, and it died towards the end.

HAVIK

You must think me a fool to make your lies so transparent! I killed the other horses!

KEVIN

It's the flush, my lord! You must have never truly recovered from your sickness! You only need rest. Three days alone in the Barrens would weaken any man. It's just your mind playing tricks on you!

HAVIK

Why must you lie if no one is witness? Tell me true, or I will bathe you in the foam you love so much! Who are you?

KEVIN

I'm Kevin Gracious!

HAVIK

Stop lying to me!

KEVIN

I'm not lying! I swear by the Four Halos of Virtue that I am your leal squire, and Lord Robert of Cliffwatch is my father!

Havik considers Kevin's fine performance.

HAVIK (V.O.)

Could he truly be my squire? No. Of course not. He plays me for a fool!

HAVIK

You may have a squire's brain, but I am a Davenport! I'll not be so easily fooled!

Havik rears his horse and rides close to him.

HAVIK (CONT'D)

This is your last chance, before I force it from you! Who are you?

KEVIN

By the Litany and all that is sacred and true. By the fucking Goddess herself. I am my lord fathers' fifth true born son!

Havik's TAKEN BY RAGE! He ROARS at the top of lungs and LEAPS from his horse! TACKLING KEVIN TO THE FLOOR!

They collapse in a heap with Havik on top. He GRABS Kevin by the chest and bashes him against the ground in a fury.

Kevin rises to a knee and THROWS A RIGHT HOOK that clips Havik's jaw and sends him crashing back to the ground.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Nimmet! Jhev! Help! Help! His lordship's lost his mind!

At his wits end, Havik spits blood, grabs a fistful of ash, throws it in Kevin's eyes. He grabs at his face, and

HAVIK PUMMELS KEVIN to the ground. They roll about grappling with hate in their eyes until Nimmet and Jhev are upon them.

NIMMET

What the hell's gotten into you two?

Nimmet pulls Kevin away and Jhev lifts Havik to his feet.

HAVIK

Get away from him Nimmet!

Havik pulls out his knife, and Kevin pulls out his.

NIMMET

Stop this! M'lord! This boy's done us no wrong.

JHEV

This *boy* is the demon, Nimmet.

NIMMET

No, that cannot be!

HAVIK

He's been feeding you lies and falsehoods! I saw the foul thing enter him with mine own eyes. He said he came here on a horse that died? I killed both of those horses myself!

Kevin looks to their accusing eyes and tosses his knife away.

KEVIN

I came on a horse! I told you! How would I have made it otherwise?

HAVIK

On your demon legs you cur! I nearly rode my horse to death trying to outpace you! Jhev. Pick up that dagger. Nimmet. Go get some rope.

NIMMET

This is madness, m'lord! When the horror took Flint it made a voiceless monstrosity. This boy here is Kevin Gracious true and true!

Nimmet keeps himself between Kevin and Havik as Jhev recovers the dagger and brandishes it for himself.

NIMMET (CONT'D)

He only just ten minutes ago reminded me of the three doubloons I owe him. What kind of demon keeps tabs on his gambling debts?

HAVIK

A *clever* one. And you're wrong on one count. Flint was not voiceless when he rose a man dead. He spoke in the Ancient tongue, and claimed he was a god.

Nimmet and Jhev don't like the sound of that one bit.

Jhev's dagger shakes in his hand with fear. Nimmet turns to Kevin in fright and backs three long steps away.

And as for Kevin Gracious... He is afraid.

Blood and sweat glistens on his face by the light of the Dead Star. His freshly changed and clean kept attire now a mess.

KEVIN

Please... Please, sirs. His lordship is mistaken. I saw the demon fall with Jaxon into the pit myself.

HAVIK

Ha! Will you never end this charade! Can you believe this thing? It *knows* the game is up, but *still* it presses on with its fabrications. Give it up! I know the truth! You're not fooling anyone!

Kevin begs and pleads with his hands and eyes.

KEVIN

I'm not lying! You must have dreamed it different, my lord! You were burning mad with fever. Plays tricks on a man's mind.

Kevin looks to Nimmet and Jhev with sorrow on his face.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

I did everything I could to help him! I swear it! The foam must have made him grow even madder! How was I to know? It's not my fault! It's not!

Nimmet seems to catch on to the fact it's one man's word against another. He scratches his chin and looks to Havik.

NIMMET

M'lord. Would you mind if I might ask *it...* and *you* a few questions? You know... to get a fair appraisal of the situation...as it were.

Havik nods and gestures with his knife to Kevin.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*Let them talk. I would hear everything this demon has to say. It's more clever than I thought, but no Davenport will give up a game of wits so easily.*

NIMMET

So... Kevin. You say you saw Jaxon and the demon fall from the cliff?

KEVIN

That's... That's right.



NIMMET

Now did you actually see them hit the fire? Or did you *just* see them fall over the edge?

KEVIN

There's no way they survived.

NIMMET

So which is it? Did you see them burn or didn't you?

KEVIN

No, alright! I only saw them fall off the cliff! I just assumed... They burned! They had to! No man could...

NIMMET

No man... But a demon? We all saw it... What it could do.

KEVIN

But... But if it survived then... What if it... It could have...

Kevin looks to Havik with fear in his eyes.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*I do not like the color of that look.*

KEVIN

What if the demon took Havik?

Even Jhev turns to Havik with sudden doubt.

JHEV

You're not saying... Havik...

HAVIK

This is insanity! You cannot believe it! By both accounts I ate the foam! By my words *and* his lies I either ate the foam of my own volition or had it given to me!

Doubt leaves Jhev as quickly as it had come.

JHEV

That's true! If he ate the foam, then he can't be the demon!

KEVIN

But what if. What if it followed him, and took him later when we were separated?

Jhev finds the doubt return, caught with indecision.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

The foam kills a man possessed and heals the wounded, it's true. But after a day? Two days? Three days? What then?

Kevin looks to Nimmet and Jhev with his deceitful eyes.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

I know that I am *not* the demon, and the two of you were here together.

Kevin's gaze shifts back to Havik.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

The one who casts the first stone...

HAVIK

You can't believe this?

NIMMET

He makes a good point m'lord. How are we to know?

HAVIK

I am a noble lord and the Commander of our party! It is not yours to know, only to serve and obey!

NIMMET

But what if you're not... *you*?

HAVIK

I am. And if it comes to it, I will swallow foam to prove it.

KEVIN

He must not be made to eat the stuff.

NIMMET

Why not?

KEVIN

Because I am not the demon. But if *he is*, and we give him the foam, my lord will surely die. We must coax the thing out of him in some other fashion.

NIMMET

A *squirely* thing to say.

HAVIK

Narvis will sort this out. Your game of wits is for *nothing*! You want your plans revealed then? This is what I think! It means to take over Narvis because of her magic sight. The only people surely *not* taken by the demon are Brackens, Brownbeard, and the woman wizard. She must be protected at all costs. Her *and* the seed.

Havik stands tall, channeling the drama of his words.

HAVIK (CONT'D)

This false god cannot be allowed to return to the Realm. Civilization would be at stake! Don't you get it! Our whole world could be at risk!

Jhev, Nimmet, and even Kevin, are struck by his speech.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*I must be going truly mad to believe such words. The thing is a mimic and a self proclaimed god. It could be a King in a day, and ruin the Realm in a year. But what interest would a god even have in the Realm? No. The seed's what it wants. Why else wait millennia wrapped tight around it? The girl's my only advantage, and I must not let her be taken by it.*

The four of them stand in long silence while the Rangers grow ever closer in the distance.

Havik stares at Kevin's suspicious eyes.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*But what if it's already won? I saw the seed corrupted. Has its victory been achieved? This masquerade nothing more than its idea of entertainment to pass the time? Or does it play a deeper game.*

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)

*If you concede victory, then you have already lost. Either play to win, or worship the damned thing and be done with it. There's a chance the demon makes for a generous master, and it might have a use for you as something beyond a host.*

HAVIK (V.O.)

*My uncle has the right of it.*

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)

*Fool! This game is already finished! And soon it will be you who has lost.*

Jhev's the first to break their awkward silence.

JHEV

*I'm sorry, Havik. But I can't get it out of my head. I have to say it.*

He turns to face Nimmet and Kevin.

JHEV (CONT'D)

*When Havik sung me his song, and said Kevin was the beast, he made plot with me to stop it.*

HAVIK

*Jhev! This is madness.*

KEVIN

*Quiet! You had your turn my lord. Let him speak. I am innocent and I will hear evidence against the accusation. Unless you are afraid?*

Havik clenches his hand round the knife hilt... and nods.

JHEV

*He said we couldn't let the thing get back to the Realm, so he meant for me to eat the foam to prove I was clean... then split the party and leave you all behind. The only sure way to escape the demon and gain both star metal and seed.*

NIMMET

*A cunning plan. But I might have done the same thing myself, if I were a fancy noble lord or a ranger Commander. Which both things I am not. May have been inhuman, but it don't make him the demon.*

HAVIK (V.O.)

*Nimmet has a bit of logic. I might find future use for this sailor, uncle.*

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)

*Fool! Nimmet is dead, and soon you will be joining him.*

JHEV

No! Don't you get it? He was gonna betray you all and get everything! It's exactly what the demon would do!

HAVIK

It's exactly what a *Davenport* would do, Jhev! And you know it!

KEVIN

You meant to leave us! You monster!

Demon or not, no one expected Kevin's assault.

He tackles Havik to the ground, and is quickly atop him with hands wrapped tight round Havik's throat.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

YOU DEMON!

Havik grabs at Kevin's face and presses his thumbs in his eyes! Kevin cries in pain and falls to his back.

Havik scurries to retrieve his knife.

Nimmet tries to restrain Kevin and gets kneed in the groin and knocked aside. Kevin and Havik face one another.

Havik and Kevin knife fight, blade on blade in an equal match, til Havik flips Kevin onto his back.

But when Havik lunges with his knife outstretched, Kevin GRABS THE HILT, and they grapple onto the floor, rolling over one another. Each man struggling for control of the knife.

The CLOPPING of hooves approaches as Kevin finds himself on his back, Havik PRESSING the knife closer to Kevin's heart.

Kevin manages to WRESTLE Havik onto HIS BACK! The blade gets held inches from Havik's throat. Their eyes lock.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*Demon or not, my death won't be at the hands of my squire!*

In that dark, dark moment, as Havik feels the chill of the blade against his neck, blood kissing steel and flesh...

By some glorious advantage Havik finds himself in possession of the knife, his squire on his back.

Blood gushing from Kevin's nose.

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)  
*Do not hesitate!*

Havik plunges the knife into Kevin's chest! Then pins the boys arms with his knees, and holds the steel to his throat.

KEVIN  
You've killed me!

HAVIK  
It is no mortal wound, but a dead man sings no songs. And when I slit your throat your blood will sing darkness, and we will face a god once more instead of this cursed deception.

Havik presses his face close to Kevin's. Sweat dripping.

HAVIK (CONT'D)  
Now I ask again. Who are you?

KEVIN  
My lord... I'm -

HAVIK  
Careful now. I want the truth this time.

KEVIN  
My name is Kevin Gracious.

BROWNBEARD (O.S.)  
What's the meaning of this! My lord! Are you injured?

Havik glances over his shoulder and finds Brackens, Brownbeard, and Narvis upon their horses.

Along with two crudely wheeled sleds laden with lumber.

HAVIK  
Get back! Get away, all of you! Narvis stay back! Don't come any closer! As your lord I command you!

Kevin laughs and Havik keeps the blade at his throat.

HAVIK (CONT'D)  
Quiet you...

BRACKENS  
What trouble has your squire gotten to, m'lord?

Brackens unsheathes his longsword and dismounts.

HAVIK

He's the demon! I saw the foul creature enter his body and wear it as a man would a cloak! Now he's fed his filthy lies to Nimmet and Jhev to make them doubt me!

KEVIN

Help! Help, he's gone mad! It's him! Not me, it's him! He meant to leave us all behind and steal the metal for himself! That's right! Havik's the demon not me!

HAVIK

One more word and I'll slit your bloody throat and take the measure of your lies.

BROWNB Beard

Havik? The demon?

KEVIN

it's true, I swear it!

BRACKENS

That's *just* what a demon might say!

HAVIK

Narvis! Prove me right! What colors can you see?

NARVIS

Colors? I'm not sure! Such anger and hate and confusion over you all!

Nimmet approaches Havik with his arms raised disarmingly.

NIMMET

Easy now.. Give me the knife, m'lord.

HAVIK

Back Nimmet! Back now!

Nimmet smiles the sweetest smile. His tone is sugared water.

NIMMET

(quietly)

If you mean to kill him, kill him now and be done with it. Go on. Cut the boy's throat and we'll see if the horror's inside him or not. And if he's not in there, well...

(MORE)

NIMMET (CONT'D)

Might be that *your* throat's the one  
that's slit next. Otherwise m'lord...  
Give me the knife.

JHEV

Havik. Let the poor boy be.

NIMMET

Easy now, m'lord. We'll sort out whether  
Kevin's the demon or not, don't you  
worry. Just give me the knife.

HAVIK

Alright! We'll discuss this like  
civilized men!

Havik pulls the blade from Kevin's throat and backs off.

HAVIK (CONT'D)

Just stay back Narvis! And don't take  
your eyes off Kevin! I've reason to  
believe the obsidian horror wants to  
possess you for your magic sight.

NARVIS

Good heavens!

Havik places the knife in Nimmet's open hand.

NIMMET

You're making the right decision!

Nimmet sheathes the blade... helps Havik to his feet...

and whispers sweetly in his ear...

EVIL NIMMET (NIMMET)

(in Ancient, subtitled)

Only now can you can see...

His voice chimes in an aberrant resonance.

EVIL NIMMET (CONT'D)

(in Ancient, subtitled)

... how easy it is for gods to set mere  
men upon themselves.

Havik's humiliated more than he is afraid. Utterly humbled.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*I have been beaten...*

HAVIK

How?



EVIL NIMMET

One drink from my stream. One night's  
sleep beneath my branches. One dream.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*My squire... He remembers falsely. I may  
have been unkind, but at least he lives.*

Brownbeard carefully tends to Kevin's wounds. Nimmet bids  
Havik away from the others... and he follows.

HAVIK

You speak of the Goddess.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*Tread carefully now, Havik.*

HAVIK

Ma'at's mother drank the stream of life.  
She slept beneath the world tree. She  
dreamed. And she gave birth to a god...  
So... Do you mean to impregnate the girl  
and birth kin?

HAVIK (V.O.)

*A race of Stygian gods...*

Nimmet raises his head back and laughs with such fervor that  
he draws attention. Narvis looks, but pays him no mind...

HAVIK (V.O.)

*She can't tell that Nimmet is the fiend.*

EVIL NIMMET

Men are not born gods, Eldarian. And  
those you call gods have only stolen  
their divinity. The one you call Goddess  
was once just a woman. And the one you  
call Isfet was once just a man.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*Why is it telling me this? First it plays  
that mad game of wits and brings me near  
to killing Kevin... But it also tried to  
talk me down. It gave me a choice... Has  
this thing been testing me? What does it  
want? Who is it? What is it? What does it  
matter. If it will speak, then I will ask  
my questions and have my answers...*

HAVIK

Once?

Nimmet places his finger to Havik's mouth in silence.

EVIL NIMMET

Predictable. All men seek power, but  
leave it to a *Davenport* to seek divinity.

BRACKENS (O.S.)

M'lord!

Brackens rushes up and interrupts them.

BRACKENS

We've got a proper amount of lumber, and  
some good meat. Shall I set about  
starting a fire and readying the wagon  
for repairs? By the way m'lord. Our  
apologies for taking so long to return,  
but I bear troubled news from the gate.

Nimmet laughs while Havik's frustrated for the interruption.

HAVIK

Well! Out with it!

BRACKENS

Our way was impeded by some great  
migration of animals. Packs of elk and  
caribou, moose, and other queer sorts of  
large game were carving a path South and  
West through the forest. Brownbeard told  
us it was not uncommon for the animals to  
move to warmer climates when the cold  
winds blow, and it was no queer thing but  
simply a wonder of the North and a  
blessing to behold.

Brackens takes off his hat and frowns.

BRACKENS (CONT'D)

Problem is m'lord, such game o' plenty  
brought the predators as well. Brownbeard  
noted tracks for a *great pack of wolves*,  
and we took greater trouble in effort to  
avoid them catching scent of us.

HAVIK

Aye! So there's wolves in the woods! What  
of it?

BRACKENS

They caught our scent anyway, m'lord. We  
thought we'd lose them in passing through  
the gate.

(MORE)

BRACKENS (CONT'D)

But Narvis swears she saw them follow us into the Barrens. A mighty queer thing for wolves to do. The gate is afoul with odor, and your wizards said wolves would abhor the place, especially with all the fresh meat to be had out there. But they stalked us all the same.

Brackens looks to the horizon with fear in his eyes.

BRACKENS (CONT'D)

Might be they're out there right now, m'lord... Coming...

HAVIK (V.O.)

*The lies and legends of a self proclaimed god trump a few wolves in the wood.*

HAVIK

Everything else can wait! I want you and Narvis to go get the sphere.

BRACKENS

It's under a bit of ore, m'lord! It could take a while.

HAVIK

Then you'd best get started!

Brackens gets on his horse, and he and Narvis return to the wagons, both trotting wide past Kevin, Jhev, and Brownbeard.

EVIL NIMMET

Your two gods are of the same ilk, Eldarian. Both drank from her spirit becoming as brother and sister, daughter and son. And though both drank their fill of her, the man still yearned for more. His thirst had not been quenched.

HAVIK

Her?

EVIL NIMMET

Eldaria.

HAVIK

Eldaria's not a god. It's just a name we give to the planet. Yes. I am noble born, and I know of worlds beyond the Gate of Heavens. A world is but Stone and Fire, Water and Air. It is no living thing.

HAVIK (V.O.)  
*Can a planet be alive?*

EVIL NIMMET  
 You are mistaken. Worlds are gods  
 Eldarian. Beyond the Gate lay her  
 children. And she is Mother to them all.

**IMAGE:** EIGHT COLORFUL GEMS hover atop the WORLD TREE.

EVIL NIMMET (V.O.)  
*Upon her head once sat a crown of eight  
 jewels. And all creation marveled over  
 her for wearing them.*

Havik drags his fingers through his unkept beard.

HAVIK  
 The eight colors? The eight elements are  
 simply virtues of nature. Wind may be a  
 thing we capture in our sails, but how  
 can it be jewel?

EVIL NIMMET  
 Elements are magic. And magic can be  
 frozen.

HAVIK  
 How can fire be frozen?

EVIL NIMMET  
 As crystal.

HAVIK  
 Like the djinn...

EVIL NIMMET  
 The eight jewels were the elements made  
 gem. And through her crown, Eldaria  
 controlled all elements of creation.

HAVIK  
 Her crown. What happened to it?

**IMAGE:** A Fresco of: The Goddess kneeling before an OLDER WOMAN, as an EIGHT GEMMED CROWN gets placed on her head.

EVIL NIMMET (V.O.)  
*All mothers have mothers, and it was she  
 who bore Eldaria that crowned her.*

**IMAGE:** A Fresco of: The Goddess and her Crown surrounded by a circle of DOZENS of MEN and WOMEN all holding hands.

EVIL NIMMET (V.O.)

*All those gods that once were, including  
the Mother's mother, held hands in  
willing sacrifice, and gave to their  
favorite child an empty Castle and her  
jeweled crown to rule it by.*

**IMAGE:** A Fresco of: THE GODDESS overlooking the Barrens of Eldaria from A TALL CASTLE spanning the Heavens.

EVIL NIMMET (V.O.)

*So what's a lonely god to do?*

**IMAGE:** The GATE OF HEAVENS opens and starlight pours through.

EVIL NIMMET (V.O.)

*Why open the Gate to her Castle of  
course, and populate her Kingdom.*

Nimmet spreads out his arms in a great big yawn.

EVIL NIMMET

The rest is long sad tale... Perhaps some other time.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*He does nothing but toy with me as if I'm  
some amusement. I must know its secrets.*

HAVIK

Tell me. Please.

EVIL NIMMET

Eldaria's son was thirsty.

# **SERIES OF SHOTS -**

**A)** A YOUNG MAN stares up at the GATE from the CASTLE.

EVIL NIMMET (V.O.)

*He wished to leave the Castle and drink  
in the Kingdom, but it was not meant for  
her chosen heirs to mix with her lesser  
born children.*

**B)** The Man hides behind a pillar and stares at the Goddess on her throne... His eyes fixate on the crown's eight gems...

EVIL NIMMET (V.O.)

*He grew to despise his Mother, and he  
desired her crown. Why should the son not  
rule when he was fit to?*

**C)** A YOUNG WOMAN unsheathes a sword and stands in resolute purpose with her back to the Gate.

EVIL NIMMET (V.O.)  
*So to keep her son from leaving, she sent  
 her daughter to guard the Gate.*

**D)** The Young Man holds a sword against the Goddess' throat.

EVIL NIMMET (V.O.)  
*The son, enraged by this, threatened to  
 kill his Mother if she did not relinquish  
 her crown.*

**E)** The Young Woman comes running past him as he hides...

EVIL NIMMET (V.O.)  
*And when the sister stepped away from the  
 Gate, he seized the opportunity.*

**F)** The Man watches as THE GATE OF HEAVENS CLOSES...

And the starry night becomes black as the void...

EVIL NIMMET (V.O.)  
*If he could neither drink the Kingdom nor  
 rule it, then neither could his Mother,  
 for once he closed the Gate even she  
 could never open it again.*

**G)** The Goddess TEARS HER CROWN TO PIECES!

EVIL NIMMET (V.O.)  
*The Mother, in her anger, tore the crown  
 from her head and broke it into eight  
 pieces. If she could not rule, then no  
 one could. But the son was not satisfied.*

**H)** The Young Man gathers the pieces from her feet, separates the eight gems in his hands... and crushes them to form

ONE SINGULAR GEM of glowing gold.

EVIL NIMMET (V.O.)  
*He grabbed each of the gems, one by one,  
 and as he had no crown to wear them, he  
 took the gems in hand, and crushed them  
 into a single jewel.*

**END SERIES**

Nimmet smiles just then... and Havik's blood pales.

HAVIK  
What happened next?

EVIL NIMMET  
Doom... And Chaos.

Nimmet uncorks a wine bottle and takes a long swig.

HAVIK (V.O.)  
*Thousands of years in a pit must give  
even a god a thirst for wine and speech.*

EVIL NIMMET  
The son may have gained the gem, but he  
did not know the mysteries of the thing.  
The jewels were not objects to be had,  
but living beings with their own  
identities, wants, and even children.

#### **SERIES OF SHOTS -**

**A)** The Young Man gets overwhelmed by the power of the crystal. His body begins to transform to monstrosity.

EVIL NIMMET (V.O.)  
*They abhorred being forced into a single  
body when they were of eight minds. Their  
power overwhelmed him. And he was forever  
changed by it. Cursed. Darkened.  
Empowered.*

**B)** A Fresco of: A GOLDEN MAN surrounded by golden aura.

EVIL NIMMET (V.O.)  
*So they chose for their one body one  
mortal form. A chosen hero to come to  
their aid against the son.*

**C)** The Golden Man cowers before the might of a LOOMING SHADOW. Wind whips to the BEATING OF GREAT BIG WINGS.

EVIL NIMMET (V.O.)  
*The magic of the son's gem was useless  
against its avatar, but the hero's one  
advantage would not prove to be enough.*

**D)** The Golden Man GETS IMPALED by a lengthy DARK CLAW.

EVIL NIMMET (V.O.)  
*The hero was slain by the son.*

**E)** Mortally Wounded, he gathers his strength and swings his sword INTO THE GOLDEN CRYSTAL! It shatters to pieces!

EVIL NIMMET (V.O.)

*And as his last dying act, with the minds  
of the gem in agreement, the hero killed  
the crystal, and the crystal let itself  
be killed.*

**F)** A wave of energy erupts across the face of Eldaria and out into space, where it crashes over the only two stars:

The Red Star... and A BLUE STAR.

The Blue Star takes the brunt of the energy wave...

And it freezes... transforming into THE SILVER STAR.

EVIL NIMMET (V.O.)

*In that one moment magic died, and around  
the shattered crystal the universe broke.*

## **END SERIES**

Nimmet takes another swig from his wine bottle.

EVIL NIMMET

Reality abhors a paradox, and the vacuum  
of magic and the tear in creation's  
fabric must be contained... Or else.

HAVIK

Or else what?

Nimmet balls his hand, then pops them out outstretched!

EVIL NIMMET

Poof! The end.

HAVIK

The end?

EVIL NIMMET

Of everything, everywhere, everywhen. But  
only in here. Inside the Castle. But out  
there, past the Gate. Life would go on.  
As long as it stayed shut, of course.

HAVIK

And if it were opened?

EVIL NIMMET

Then the tear would end the Kingdom as  
well, I'm sad to say. And every man and  
god within it.

(MORE)



EVIL NIMMET (CONT'D)

Fortunately the pieces of the crystal,  
and the Lord of Chaos too, both became  
trapped in eternal frozen prison.

**IMAGE:** Strange shadows creep across the frozen snow.

EVIL NIMMET (V.O.)

*But even now, the son reaches out through  
the bars of his cage with dark influence.*

**IMAGE:** The shadows leave behind... wolf tracks.

EVIL NIMMET (V.O.)

*And those he's claimed as minions seek to  
open the Gate and free him.*

Havik doesn't like the sound of that one bit.

HAVIK

But wouldn't that destroy everything?

EVIL NIMMET

Everything and everyone. Even the  
crystal's frozen children, whom you call  
the djinn, would cease to be. Only the  
crystals would remain.

HAVIK

But the crystals were broken to pieces.

EVIL NIMMET

Eternity is time enough for every piece  
to be found.

Havik stares into Nimmets eyes... struggling...

HAVIK (V.O.)

*But all this hinges on one crucial  
detail. One single question that remains  
unanswered... Who is he?*

EVIL NIMMET

You mean you still do not know who I am?

Fear passes through Havik.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*Did it just respond to a question I gave  
no voice?*

EVIL NIMMET

Yes. It did.

HAVIK (V.O.)  
*It can read my thoughts?*

EVIL NIMMET  
*Yes. It can.*

Havik becomes infuriated!

HAVIK  
 Then why put me through such deceptions!  
 Why pretend! Why the game?

Nimmet smiles a most wicked smile.

EVIL NIMMET  
 Because I wanted to see how you think.  
 Yes, it was a test. Why? Because if the  
 son is to gather his minions then why  
 shouldn't I? Your Ancient blood is what I  
 call Eldarian, the first mortal race. Yes,  
 it does give you advantage. And no, I do  
 not know your family's line. Why am I  
 doing all this? Why gather my minions at  
 all? Why toy with a Davenport to see if  
 he could serve me? Who am I? WHO AM I!?

HAVIK  
 You said you were a god!

EVIL NIMMET  
*I am a god.*

HAVIK  
 But who are you!?

A shooting star CRASHES in a distant explosion.

Nimmet takes a step back and throws his arms wide!

EVIL NIMMET  
 You mean to say you still do not know!!??

Nimmet's blue Gulgari eyes stare deep into Havik's soul...

EVIL NIMMET (CONT'D)  
*I am...*

And at that Nimmet looks up.

Havik trails his gaze... Up beyond the broken pieces of the  
 Sea of Heavens... Up, up, and up...

HAVIK (V.O.)  
*The Dead Star...*

to the Dead Star.

HAVIK (V.O.)  
*Worlds are gods.*

HAVIK  
 Are you?

Nimmet nods and smiles.

EVIL NIMMET  
 I am.

HAVIK (V.O.)  
*Worlds are gods.*

HAVIK  
 The Goddess of light! Ma'at is the  
 daughter! She's the Red Star! The frozen  
 prison! Isfet is the Silver Star! And  
 you...

Havik takes a step backwards.

EVIL NIMMET  
 I am.

HAVIK  
 But how can that be?

EVIL NIMMET  
 Why do you suppose men think of their  
 gods as men? Because while all worlds are  
 gods... so too are all gods men.

HAVIK  
 So what then, is the tree?

EVIL NIMMET  
 Think of the tree as an antenna.

HAVIK  
 And what, pray tell, is an antenna?

EVIL NIMMET  
 (with a disappointed sigh)  
 Think of the tree as a head, upon which  
 shall rest my crown of gems. Well...  
 Let's just say the head won't be planted  
 here on Eldaria... Besides...

Nimmet looks up to the Dead Star as if it were a mirror.

EVIL NIMMET (CONT'D)  
It's too late for that now.

HAVIK  
Your crown... But the crystals are locked away in Isfet's prison! And this still doesn't answer my question!

Havik gains his composure and stands tall.

HAVIK (CONT'D)  
Fine! You are a god! You are the Dead Star above me made flesh below! But you said Eldaria only bore two chosen heirs, and they are the red and silver stars in the sky. But who then are you? If all other worlds are the children of Mother, then are you another one of her sons?

EVIL NIMMET  
She's not my Mother! I fear I lied about one little thing. Not quite every one of the Ancient gods plunged to death so freely for Eldaria to claim her throne.

Nimmet's eyes darken with a fluctuation of his inner horror.

EVIL NIMMET (CONT'D)  
(in Ancient, subtitled)  
One clawed its way back from the depths of death itself. And when the universe broke in a single place, the Gate cracked, and one slipped through.

Nimmet cracks his bones and channels some of his power as he stands tall before Havik, basking in his own unholy light.

EVIL NIMMET (CONT'D)  
I am to Eldaria as an uncle, and it seems my sister's chosen daughter has led the Kingdom and its flock astray. But now I'm back to see that all is set to proper order. What is my name? Well... As a King requires a crown, one which I do not have, and a noble lord requires a title... My name shall be Prince. Prince... of... Darkness.

Havik can't help but remain stunned by Prince's words.

PRINCE (EVIL NIMMET)

Yes, I quite like the sound of that. I could be Prince of Death, as all men call me the Dead Star, but I'm not quite dead, now am I? No. My name is Prince, and as for you... as you have *thought* well enough to please me, I shall allow you to be my first servant if you will swear yourself to me.

Prince takes a step forward, and Havik a step back.

PRINCE (CONT'D)

Say the words, and you shall *forever* belong to me. No matter what. And should I ever achieve my crown and the Kingdom is born anew... You will live on with me. To begin again.

HAVIK

Yes... My Prince.

Havik makes his choice... and kneels.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*I will service my Prince well.*

BRACKENS (O.S.)

M'lord!

Havik turns to find Brackens waving from the wagon.

HAVIK

What is it!

BRACKENS

It's best you look yourself, m'lord! Come at once to see!

Havik and Prince share a mystified expression, and run

# **INTO THE CARAVAN CAMP**

where they find Brackens and Jhev at the broken wagon.

HAVIK

What's happened?

Narvis sits CRYING at the edge of the wagon atop a pile of silvery ore. Clean streaks rain down her soot covered face.

BRACKENS

At least we know why the wagon broke.

Brackens climbs up onto the wagon and shows Havik where LIVING ROOTS have grown from a stashed cloth bundle.

They WRITHE and BURY themselves down into the ground.

BRACKENS (CONT'D)

Damn thing seems to have taken root, m'lord. I had a look see under the wagon from the other side, and there's a whole damned trunk. Must have been a small one before I left to get lumber, cause I didn't notice it. But it's there *now* alright! And holding the wagon firm to the ground.

PRINCE

No!

Prince climbs onto the wagon and PUSHES Havik aside.

He drops to his knees and grabs at the ore.

PRINCE (CONT'D)

No! No, no, no, no, no! No!

BRACKENS

Cheer up, Nimmet! It's no big thing. We can saw the wagon around it, and put her back together. Don't you worry neither m'lord. We've enough lumber to fix it and return with both wagons of the stuff, just as planned.

PRINCE

No! This *cannot* be!

Prince tears at the cloth and reveals THE BLACK SEED where writhing branches seething with expectant life grow outward.

PRINCE (CONT'D)

No! There's no time to waste! We must cut the thing loose before its roots get any deeper! We cannot let it take root here!

HAVIK (V.O.)

*Do not hesitate.*

Havik pulls a knife from Brackens belt, and with the grace of a dancer, kneels close behind Prince...

And from left to right in one fluid motion...

Slits his Prince's throat.

Red blood and Stygian fluid SPRAY from the wound in rhythmic bursts propelled by Prince's heart.

Havik PUSHES Prince into the pile of vines where he struggles against each twirling tendril as they strangle at his limbs.

Prince STARES UP at Havik and lets loose a HORRIBLE SCREECH.

NARVIS FAINTS. Blood pours from Havik's ears as he GRABS a large chunk of ore... and BASHES IN his Prince's skull.

Prince gets PULLED UNDER and CRUSHED by the vines! His essence makes them GROW with a FURY that SHAKES THE WAGON!

Jhev starts to panic! A piece of splashed horror is on him!

Havik TACKLES Jhev off the wagon and onto the ground, where Jhev pulls off his breeches and tosses them aside.

The tiny drop of Horror rises up from the clothes as BRACKENS dumps a portion of SALT on it! It SIZZLES and TURNS SOLID.

Jhev and Havik catch their breaths. Brackens holds up a jar.

BRACKENS

It's salt from the pit. I saw the jar just over yonder. I figured. Solid in salt... Why not be solid by salt again.

JHEV

Thank the Goddess! A sound logic if I ever heard it. Right my lord?

The wagon has risen up near EIGHT FEET to the air.

THE SEED has taken root and seems a FURIOUSLY GROWING TREE.

It's then that they hear it: WOLVES HOWLING in the distance.

Havik looks to the horizon and counts out a dozen of them.

HAVIK

Brownbeard! Wolves!

Brownbeard leaps to a panic beside a wounded Kevin.

HAVIK (CONT'D)

Get my squire to horse! Get him safe!

SCREEEEECH! The Obsidian Horror rises from the wagon!!!

Looming above them, Prince is no longer recognizable as Nimmet. He jumps from the wagon and takes a knee...

Rising before them... Flesh and bone and black bile all joined as one in the grotesque shape of a man ten feet tall.

And looming behind his Prince, The World Tree grows with horrific speed. Corrupted with ash grey roots and dark wood.

Black vines bud leaves of wicked purple with black spots.

HAVIK (V.O.)  
*Dead leaves for a Dead Star.*

NARVIS FALLS from the wagon above and crashes into the ground between Prince and Havik. Her leg SNAPS to her screaming.

Prince and Havik's eyes meet for a terrible second...

Before he turns his gaze towards Narvis...

HAVIK  
Narvis!

Havik rushes forward and FACE PLANTS THE GROUND! WHAM!

He looks up to find A LARGE WOLF rushing over him...

The beast LEAPS at Prince! But he swats it away with a terrible godly strength and its bones shatter to pieces.

More wolves arrive and THEY CHASE PRINCE out of sight behind the growing tree... which CONSUMES the dead wolf...

And in three villainous seconds thousands of saplings sprout from every orifice of the creature leaving only a fine mist of vaporized blood wafting to the air.

Jhev bends to his knees and vomits at Havik's feet.

Above them all the wagon starts to BREAK APART!

And when pieces of star metal RAIN around Narvis, Havik races forward! He dodges falling ore and crackling wood...

Props her arm round his neck... Lifts her up...

And with no time to spare - Havik gets her to safety JUST as THE WAGON COLLAPSES behind them in a blast of sound and fury.

HAVIK  
Brackens! Come help Narvis!

Brackens comes to his side, and Havik rushes towards Jhev.



HAVIK (CONT'D)

Jhev! Jhev!

JHEV

What?

HAVIK

Go get horses and bring them back here!  
Can you do that?

JHEV

Yes.

Jhev gathers his resolve and runs towards the horses.

Havik takes a moment to look upon the tiny dark marble of salted horror that lies on the ground with Jhev's pants.

When all around and beneath him, THE GROUND OPENS UP to millions of tiny black and white sprouting saplings...

All growing at an incredible rate.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*This place will be overrun in minutes!*

But no saplings grow round the spilled salt...

Havik scoops the dark marble and wraps it in some cloth.

HAVIK

Quickly Donner! Pour that salt of yours  
in a circle round the two of you!

(as Brackens follows orders)

No, only use half of it. Yes, a full  
circle. And splash a little here and  
there for good measure. That's right.

BRACKENS

Why, m'lord?

HAVIK

Take this bit of salted horror.

Havik hands him the dark marble wrapped in its salted cloth.

HAVIK (CONT'D)

Keep it close should I not return. Wait  
for the horses then take her to safety.

BRACKENS

And what do you mean to do m'lord?

Havik takes the jar of salt from Brackens with a smile.

HAVIK  
Whatever I can.

With the jar held close Havik runs round the collapsed wagon.

The sinister sapling field spreads out around the growing central stalk, and half a score of secondary roots take hold.

Havik spots his Prince SURROUNDED BY WOLVES as he LIFTS one of the wolves above his head and RIPS IT IN HALF!

Blood and gore rain over him... making him grow...

Havik races towards Prince and their eyes lock, or at least, the two mounds of glowing bile that just might pass for eyes.

A wolf LEAPS at Prince and he simply TEARS THE WOLF'S SPINE out, and tosses both body and bone in opposite directions.

And when Prince opens its gaping maw and lets loose its horrific hateful SHRIEK...

Havik SCREAMS to his maximum as well, and tosses the salt from his jar right down the demon's gaping gullet.

Prince GRABS AT HIS THROAT tearing vine and flesh while grunting in execrable pain. His body sizzles and solidifies.

The wolves are quick upon him. PRINCE SCREAMS as the pack of wolves tear him to shreds and start to devour his flesh.

But... as Prince's foul black blood spills to the ground in sheets, all around him the saplings grow with such a sudden and furious fervor that it sends Havik flying backwards.

And the monstrous sylvan grove consumes Prince and wolves together in a single heaving gulp.

The growing stalks seem like flesh themselves as a pulsing sac of leaf and petal forms dripping with vile purple sap.

And in all the time it takes for Havik to stand...

MASSIVE BUDS SPROUT and the blossoms within them BURST!

All at once a deluge of tiny black seeds rises up and catches wind! Tens of thousands carried upward by dark silky strands.

Havik's fear overtakes him...

and he runs...

# UNTIL THE SAPLINGS ARE NO LONGER UNDERFOOT

Havik turns back to look at the camp.

Doom has befallen it.

Another pack of wolves has arrived and set upon the horses in a frightful bloodbath. The second wagon of star metal is nowhere to be seen, and neither is anyone else.

Jhev rides up alongside Havik leading three extra horses.

JHEV

Their packs are laden with food and what metal I could gather.

HAVIK

What about Brackens and Narvis?

JHEV

Lost in the brambles. I could not see nor reach them.

Havik mounts a horse and spots Brownbeard, also on horse... as a wolf is racing up behind him.

HAVIK

Brownbeard! Behind you!

And when Brownbeard turns the wolf LEAPS and tears the throat from his horse, bringing him and his mount crashing down.

The pack descends on Brownbeard and rips him limb from limb, tearing him to shreds in a frenzy of bloodlust.

Kevin's unconscious body is strapped upon a nearby horse. It REARS from the smell of blood and races off into the Barrens.

And when a wolf takes notice of Havik and Jhev, they rear their four horses and take off at a gallop!

Neither speaks as their two pack horses get taken one by one.

Havik rides alongside Jhev as the wolves chase them down.

HAVIK

Your sword! Give me your sword!

Jhev tries to pass it to him, as a wolf TAKES DOWN Jhev's horse, and they both go crashing to the floor.

Havik dismounts and recovers the fallen sword, as the wolf SINKS ITS TEETH into Jhev's side.

Havik swings the blade and severs the head of the wolf. Black seed puffs up from its fur, all knotted with the stuff.

HAVIK

Jhev. Are you alright?

JHEV

Yes... Yes it's not too deep.

Havik turns as another wolf TAKES DOWN the last horse. Havik rages in fury, charges forward, and slays the beast.

They look around in a panic. The wolves that had chased them are sated with their kills, and their saddlebags scattered.

HAVIK

Grab what you can!

They collect as many sacks as they can carry, with as much star metal and provisions as they can muster...

and set off in the direction of THE GATE on the horizon...

**FADE TO:**

**WHERE THE BARRENS MEETS THE GATE**

Havik awakens from sleep to find Jhev taken badly ill.

His bare hand proves Jhev's head flush with fever.

He examines Jhev's wounds with a frown, and redresses them.

HAVIK

If only Brownbeard were here...

**FLASHBACK**

Brownbeard gets ripped apart by the wolves.

**END FLASHBACK**

Havik shudders with the thought.

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)

*No! Do not think of it! Hide in your cabin to the madness of gods and demons, but first you must reach the ship.*

HAVIK

Just through that gate and we'll be out of the Barrens, Jhev.

But Jhev can barely speak let alone carry himself well.

Havik looks back to the Barrens... towards the wolves looming in the distance... stalking him... Then up... up to...

#### THE CORRUPT WORLD TREE

Hundreds of yards tall and dreadful in its countenance.

The royalty of its magnificent branches crowned with a head of black leaves... And shimmering in the air above them...

Millions of black seeds... a dark cloud taken to the wind, rising up over the ridge wall... and out across Eldaria.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*If I'm to ponder the horrors I've seen,  
I'll not have the strength to carry on.*

Havik looks to Jhev, who's hobbling away down the tunnel.

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)

*Leave him to the wolves... He'll only  
slow you down.*

HAVIK

No, uncle! I won't leave him.

Havik adjusts his pack and follows after Jhev.

HAVIK (CONT'D)

He's my friend uncle... And I won't let him die.

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)

*Fool! He's dead already... And now...  
So are you...*

**FADE TO:**

#### **HAVIK HAS FROZEN TO DEATH IN THE SNOW**

His body covered in a thin layer of ice. The sled beside him.

HAVIK (V.O.)

I have frozen...

Ever so slowly the ice cracks and shatters, and life returns to Havik... his breath misting in the frozen air...

And there in the distance... A BONFIRE...

HAVIK (V.O.)  
*The beacon... The ship...*

Havik grabs the straps to the sled, still laden with Jhev's corpse, and sets himself off towards the beacon.

HAVIK (V.O.)  
*How is it that I am not dead... The  
 foam's magic... It must be...*

WOLF HOWLS sound from the distance, and Havik walks faster.

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)  
*I told you to leave him! What the wolves  
 want is blood!*

HAVIK  
 They're close. But they've not found me.

Havik presses on as snow begins to fall...

**FADE TO:**

**BENEATH THE BLACK DARKNESS OF THE SNOWSTORM**

Havik drops to his knees... and prays...

HAVIK  
 Ma'at. My Goddess. Your grace doesn't  
 shine in this dark place. I know that  
 now. Shall I pray to your brother, Isfet?  
 Or shall I pray to your Mother, who sits  
 below me and not in the Heavens above? I  
 do not even truly know how to pray. I've  
 always cast my worship upon the altar of  
 Scientos. But please. Hear me now. Ma'at.  
 I beg of you. Give me some sign that I am  
 not forsaken. If I am not to be Prince's,  
 then am I to be nothing? Please, I beg of  
 you. Ma'at, Eldaria, and yes, even you  
 Isfet. Give me a sign!

Havik weeps salty tears...

As a BRILLIANT GLEAM OF WHITE shines from the horizon.

HAVIK (V.O.)  
*The Silver Star rises... And the false  
 day is upon me... Isfet... Have you  
 answered my prayers from within your  
 timeless prison?*

But some twinkling reflection glints in the distance. A pillar of ice halfway between him and the beacon fire.

WOLF HOWLS close in on him. He looks to the pillar.

HAVIK (V.O.)  
*Something to climb...*

Havik pushes towards it...

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**HAVIK COLLAPSES IN EXHAUSTION**

beside the frozen pillar. A tower of ice thirty feet high.

He looks to the distance where wolves are racing towards him.

HAVIK (V.O.)  
*Mere minutes and they'll be upon us.*

He looks to the fire... A SHIP IS docked in the water nearby.

HAVIK (V.O.)  
*If we climb this ice, we might be safe  
from wolves and visible to crew. Their  
spyglass could fall upon this as marker.*

Havik looks to Jhev's corpse.

HAVIK  
*But what of Jhev. I'll never lift him up  
this rock... I'm sorry Jhev.*

Havik packs Jhev's body with snow and ice against the pillar.

After a moment of silent prayer he starts to climb the ice...

AND FEELS HIS LEG GET CAUGHT BENEATH HIM...

He looks to find JHEV'S ARM - Reaching from its snowy grave!

Havik screams a DEATHLY HOWL that loosens the snow upon the pillar! It all comes COLLAPSING DOWN upon them!

Havik tumbles away as Jhev's corpse is buried beneath it.

Havik rises up and looks to the pillar - its cloak of snow lost. Its ice laid bare to the light of the Silver Star.

A jagged crystal sparkling like a million cold diamonds...

And inside a dark crimson shape at its dead frozen center.

HAVIK (V.O.)  
*A djinni! Frozen magic... Could this  
 djinni be the crystal's child? Or has  
 Isfet led me to one of his minions...*

Jhev claws himself up from the grave and stares at Havik.  
 His eyes a solid onyx just as when Prince took the others.

HAVIK  
 (in Ancient, subtitled)  
 Prince?

HAVIK (V.O.)  
*Can you hear me, my Prince of Darkness?*

Jhev opens his mouth to give a guttural groan gargling with  
 congealed blood and wet bile.

Bits of black seed float up from his mouth as he wails.

HAVIK (V.O.)  
*If this is my Prince, then he is some  
 abomination of himself. He did not mean  
 for the tree to grow here. The seed was  
 dead, and it was meant for dead ground.*

Jhev turns from Havik, and POUNDS HIS FIST AGAINST THE ICE!  
 As if caught in an ungodly rage, he does it again and again!  
 AND THE FROZEN ICE THAT NEVER MELTS CRACKS OPEN.

SPLINTERS OF ICE shatter outward, large shields tumbling and  
 exploding into millions of glistening shards.

HAVIK (V.O.)  
*How can this be!!!*

Jhev lets forth another howl and SPEWS A WAVE of the black  
 seed across the ice! Bits take hold here and there in cracks.

And within seconds their tiny roots expand into the ice.

HAVIK (V.O.)  
*Does it mean to corrupt the djinni  
 itself!? This is the Doom of our age.*

HAVIK  
 (in Ancient, subtitled)  
 Prince! Prince! ... Isfet? Isfet!

That gets Jhev's attention... He turns to face Havik.



HAVIK (CONT'D)

Isfet?

JHEV GETS TACKLED TO THE SNOW as the pack of wolves attacks!

Havik lifts a jagged piece of frozen ice the size of a spear and backs away, caught helpless in awe of the spectacle as:

One by one Jhev tears every one of the wolves apart...

But not before Jhev's left leg is ripped from his corpse...

In the quiet aftermath of the bloody battle, the pools of blood and black bile that stained the virgin snow...

Steam with their own inner heat and boil and glow.

Soon the whole of the carnage is effervescent with a lavender light. It swells and flows into the crystal, consumed by the djinn through the cracks in the frozen ice.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*Magic is born again...*

Jhev stares at Havik... and neither smiling nor shrieking, the corpse starts a steady crawl towards him...

HAVIK (V.O.)

*That is not my Prince.*

Havik turns from Jhev, and leaning on the spear of dead ice with every step, pushes himself away towards the beacon...

**FADE TO:**

**THE BEACON IS BUT A HUNDRED YARDS AWAY**

but every step for Havik's a battle waged against exhaustion.

He looks back the way he'd come... Jhev is getting closer...

HAVIK (V.O.)

*Ten minutes... Ten minutes rest...*

He collapses down into the snow and catches his breath.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*Is it to be the Age of Corruption that  
men will sing of in a thousand years?*

*(he laughs)*

*What men? It will be the end of ages, and  
the end of men.*

*(MORE)*

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

*Even if I get away, it will only be known that a Davenport went into the woods, and what emerged was death and darkness and despair. Davenport will mean Doom until the end of days... And I will have been its herald.*

Havik looks to Jhev... ever crawling towards him.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*Ten minutes... No longer.*

**FADE TO:**

### **WHITE DREAMSCAPE**

Havik dreams he's frozen as ice in an endless snowy waste.

In the sky above him he sees ISFET'S WINGED SHADOW - trapped within the shell of the Silver Star.

He sees the Red Star glowing with fire, and when its warmth rushes over him, he turns into a pool of water.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*When man is gone, will the Delvers and the Devilkin remember us? Or will they be gone as well?*

But the Red Star goes dark... and Havik becomes a man.

The Silver Star grows closer in the sky, and while once the size of a silver egg, it now is a MIGHTY CRYSTALLINE MOON that looms so close it kisses the Corrupt Tree's heights.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*If Isfet's cell swings open, it spells not just the end of man, but the end of the Castle as well. Man, Delver, and Devilkin alike. The end of all Eldaria. The end of Ma'at, my Goddess. Even the end of my Prince...*

Above him the SILVER STAR CRACKS - and the wind that swells down upon the world is infernal.

Mountains and forests blow to dust.

And Havik witnesses a great winged beast with curled horns emerge from the Silver Star as an egg cracked in birth.

PRINCE (V.O.)

*Poof.*

Eight Beacons of Light RISE TO THE SKY. Rainbow in color spinning upwards as if in dance.

And all at once they collide and transform into a  
SWIRLING VORTEX OF GOLDEN ENERGY.

The light pulses outward to a great circle... through which:  
A million million points of light emerge to cover the sky.

HAVIK (V.O.)  
*The Gate of Heavens.*

Havik weeps as he sees the Universe for the first time.

HAVIK (V.O.)  
*This is no dream but a vision.*

But there in the Heavens is a patch in the sky.  
The terrible black outline of Isfet's winged form.  
And as he beats his wings... the stars begin to vanish.  
One by one they darken...  
And when the Universe is dead...  
The golden circle shatters to pieces.  
All becomes an endless void of darkness.  
Only Isfet remains.

HAVIK (V.O.)  
*This is the end of all creation.*

**CUT TO:**

**HAVIK WAKES**

to the sight of Jhev's corpse not thirty feet away.

HAVIK (V.O.)  
*There crawls the death of me... No. There  
crawls the death of everything. There may  
be nothing left for me to do but die, but  
I will not do it lying down!*

Havik rises to his feet and aims the spear at Jhev.

HAVIK

I refuse to be afraid. I refuse to accept the fate that has come for me. I am Havik Davenport, and I am an Eldarian! The blood of the Ancients pumps from my heart! I will not let the Mother die! Not while I can still stand! Do you hear me? Isfet! Prince! Whatever the hell you are! I'm the only thing that stands between you and the Kingdom! And if you are abyss of color, then I am the light in the darkness! You don't frighten me! Come on! Do your worst!

Havik CHARGES and PLUNGES THE SPEAR deep into Jhev's heart.

Jhev falls backwards, the spear RISING TO THE SKY! His deathly hands wrap round it, and BREAKS IT TO PIECES!

HAVIK'S UNCLE (V.O.)

*Do not hesitate!*

Havik grabs a shard of the frozen ice, leaps upon Jhev's struggling corpse, and starts to STAB HIM AGAIN AND AGAIN!

HAVIK

Jhev!!! Ah!!! Die! Die! Jhev!! Jhev!!!

Havik lays Jhev's head to bloody ruin as black seed wafts up from his corpse and lingers in the air around them.

Havik looks down at Jhev's motionless dead body... pockets the frozen knife in his belt... and runs...

**CUT TO:**

### **THE BEACON FIRE**

a great bonfire set on the shore where snow meets rock.

A ROWBOAT has been launched from the ship and is making its way towards the rocky coast.

Havik strips down to nothing and tosses his clothes to flame.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*No seed must remain.*

As he watches the boat and its three occupants approach, Havik uses the frozen knife to cut away his ragged hair.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*This knife's a marvel in itself, if truth  
be told. It will never melt and give  
credence to my tale. Without it men might  
think I've gone mad.*

One of the men in the boat has a SPY GLASS.

It's NILES (60) alongside TWO BOATMEN.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*Niles. My stalwart old crow's man. Coming  
to my rescue. Bless him.*

Havik walks to the sand and they come ashore.

NILES

M'lord Davenport, is that you?

HAVIK

Yes. It is I.

Niles removes his cloak to wrap Havik with it, but Havik shrugs it away and steps onto the boat.

HAVIK

I've been without warmth since beyond the  
gate. I can stand a trip in this boat.

NILES

M'lord. Where is the rest of your party?

HAVIK

Dead. They're all dead. Take me back to  
the ship at once.

NILES

Aye m'lord.

They row towards...

## **THE SHIP**

anchored in the icy waters. GREEN ALGAE covers its hull.

HAVIK

That algae. Did it grow very quickly?

NILES

No... It has grown since we first took  
anchor.

HAVIK  
Good... Good.

Havik looks back to shore... No black cloud can be seen.

HAVIK (V.O.)  
*One of the eight winds has been  
corrupted. How long til the others turn  
black with the seed?*

Havik CLIMBS ABOARD THE SHIP alongside the others.

A CREW OF SEVEN appears on deck before him.

JON (20s) steps forward with a cloak that Havik dons.

JON  
What happened to you, m'lord? Where is  
everyone?

HAVIK (V.O.)  
*What's this man's name? Jon? Is it Jon?*

HAVIK  
Everyone else is dead. Lift anchor and  
set sails for Astermount.

JON  
What of the star metal! What of our share  
of the profits promised?

HAVIK  
You'll all be paid the same sum of gold  
as if our holds were filled to the brim  
with the wicked stuff. And a twenty  
percent bonus if we make it back by the  
Rat's Moon.

JON  
What of our Captain?

HAVIK  
When this cursed shore is beyond my  
sight, I will tell you all of what  
transpired. For now, let us make for home  
with all the speed we can muster. Niles.  
You were in command of the ship and crew  
while we were on the range, is that  
correct?

NILES  
Yes, m'lord.

HAVIK

Then you are Captain now.

NILES

Yes, m'lord. I understand.

HAVIK

And Captain. I want a man in the crow's nest at all times. They are to keep an eye out for a black cloud in the sky.

NILES

A storm cloud?

HAVIK

No. Something much, much worse. A black curse that corrupts the very wind itself. All will be explained soon. See to your men, Captain. I'll be below decks.

**CUT TO:**

**HAVIK'S CABIN**

where he locks the frozen blade in a cabinet.

Havik fills a jar with equal parts of wine and honey.

**CUT TO:**

**A WOODEN SAUNA**

where Havik shaves his face amongst heat and steam.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*I must look the part of a noble Davenport when I sing my song to the sailors and set my quill to scroll. The Realm must know the truth of what transpired here.*

**CUT TO:**

**THE CAPTAIN'S STATEROOM**

where Havik readies scrolls on the desk. His face and hair are clean, and he wears a fresh woolen suit.

Niles enters with a pall on his face.

NILES

Shore will be gone to us soon, m'lord. You are feeling better? Yes?

HAVIK

Good, Captain. Yes. I feel much better.  
Thank you. Could you kindly get me some  
gruel? I have much to do and I would  
break my fast.

NILES

Gruel?

HAVIK

You heard me. Gruel. And quickly please,  
I have a terrible hunger.

NILES

As you wish.

HAVIK

Bring it hot!

Niles leaves and Havik sets to writing on a scroll...

**FADE TO:**

Havik puts his name on a document labeled:

DEED TO THE WANDERING TURTLE

HAVIK

Jhev... If your wife will not have your  
bones, your sons will have your ship.

Niles walks back in and sets a steaming bowl on the table.

His eyes fall upon the ship's deed, and he stares...

NILES

What's that? The deed to the ship?

HAVIK

Yes. I mean to give it to Jhev's sons, in  
fulfillment of a promise I once made.

NILES

There's something I need to ask you.

HAVIK

Go ahead. Ask.

NILES

I saw you through the spyglass. I saw you  
kill a man that was crawling in the snow.



HAVIK

It was no man, but a demon.

NILES

I heard you yell Jhev's name.

HAVIK

A battle cry against the cursed thing,  
for it took our good Captain away from  
us. That and the wolves killed every last  
man of our ranging. I meant to tell  
everyone together, but first there is  
something you must see.

NILES

What's that?

HAVIK

Go to my quarters, and open the cabinet  
by the porthole. Inside you'll find a  
blade of ice. Fetch it, and come back  
straightaway.

Niles nods and leaves...

Havik pushes the Gruel aside... dips a quill in ink...

and scrawls on fresh paper: For Davenport Eyes Alone

HAVIK (V.O.)

*These realizations and this testimony may  
seem strange uncle, but as you read of  
the events which took place, you will  
come to understand that gods walk among  
us, and magic has been reborn. Even now  
Isfet and his minions threaten all of  
creation. All members of my ranging team  
have been lost, including my wizards, my  
squire, my Captain...*

Niles re-enters the stateroom. His face cold. Voice stern.

NILES

M'lord... We're no longer in sight of  
land, and the crew would have words.

HAVIK

Excellent.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*It will be a hard tale to tell, and a  
harder tale to hear.*

HAVIK

Get out a keg of rum. And Captain! The blade. Did you retrieve it?

NILES

The crew would have their words.

Something in his voice unsettles Havik.

He freezes as Niles turns and leaves...

### **FLASHBACK**

#### **A SEEDY BAR SOMEWHERE**

Where Jhev and Havik share conversation over mugs of ale.

JHEV

Gulgari men are my folk. They're the only ones I'd trust with such precious cargo. The only ones I'll take to be my crew.

HAVIK

But how can you be certain? How can you truly tell the measure of these men?

JHEV

The Sailor's Law is written in their blood. Know the law and you know the man.

### **END FLASHBACK**

#### **HAVIK STEPS OUT ONTO THE DECK OF THE SHIP**

and spots the keg of rum.

Untapped, and upstanding. Underneath a rope noose.

The Crew all turn to face him.

HAVIK

You can't mean to!

JON

Oh, but we *do*, m'lord. We *do* mean to.

HAVIK

But I chartered this voyage and I *bought* this ship! Without me you'll never get your gold.

JON

Ah, but there's a mouthful m'lord. Seems we won't be needing gold where we're going.

HAVIK

What are you talking about?

NILES

It's my brother. He told us about a pirate fleet out past Blackport, and any that turns over their ship voluntarily like, gets honored position and rank.

HAVIK

Those are Kefka's shores! Piracy wouldn't be tolerated. Your brother's sold you a false bill of goods. Go there and you'll be hanged.

JON

You'll be the one doing the hanging.

NILES

Sad to say m'lord, it's Lord Kefka himself sitting Admiral to the fleet. He means some mad merchant's war, and without the star metal to stave us, the plunder to be had puts the pittance of Davenport consolations to shame.

HAVIK

Lord Kefka is my uncle's friend. When he hears of this -

JON

He'll never hear a word, m'lord. Shame you were half mad when we found you in the cold.

THE BOATMAN

And not half a league from the shore.

THE SECOND BOATMAN

A tragedy you died soon after.

NILES

Just enough time to write your last words.

JON

And eat your last meal.

HAVIK

The gold *and* the pirate's ranks!

Havik struggles in weak futility as the Boatmen grab him by the arm and walk him towards the upturned barrel.

HAVIK (CONT'D)

You can have them both! Deliver me to Astermount and I'll shower you with riches! Take that with you to the fleets!

NILES

They take gold too I'm afraid. Wood and wealth together's the price.

HAVIK

Then bury it somewhere! Or give it to someone you trust to keep it for you!

JON

Neither map nor men can be trusted. But we all trust the dead to say silent.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*If only that were true.*

HAVIK

Why be a pirate when you can be rich? What's the point!

JON

You're not Gulgari. You wouldn't understand.

HAVIK

Yes! You're Gulgari! And I invoke the Sailor's Law! It's written in your blood, or have you meant to betray me all along.

NILES

We'd never betray our own, it's true. We'd have sailed all eight seas beneath Captain Jhev. He was a good Gulgari man... But you ain't.

HAVIK

You cannot kill your commanding officer!

THE BOATMAN

You don't command us! Niles is Captain now. You promoted him yourself!

NILES

You returned without the Captain m'lord.  
Might even be that he's the man you  
killed before you reached the shore.  
After all. You called out his name.

HAVIK

He was a demon! I told you!

NILES

Maybe he was, and maybe he wasn't. Either  
way he's dead, and soon you'll be too.  
Lift him up.

Havik's hoisted up onto the barrel.

HAVIK

But I bought this ship! It's mine! You  
can't hang the man who gives you leave to  
sail his ship! I have the owner's right!  
Make me walk the plank by some shore near  
the Realm and I'll swim for it. I won't  
seek revenge, I swear! By the House of  
Davenport I swear it!

The Boatmen pull the noose over his head and round his neck.

NILES

You signed over the ship and your owner's  
rights along with it.

HAVIK

That's just a technicality! I could have  
waited until we reached Astermount to  
sign it!

NILES

You could have... But you didn't. And  
thanks to that our consciences will ever  
be cleaner for it... I'm sorry m'lord.  
It's a matter of principles and Gulgari  
tradition. We even voted on it, we did.  
It was unanimous. Things were a bit dodgy  
at first, but the transfer of title, that  
was the final nail in your coffin.

HAVIK

Wait. Wait. Just wait. What of the blade  
from my cabinet? Did you get it? That  
stone out there was a frozen djinni. The  
dead ice broke and I took a piece of it.  
It will prove -

NILES

Sad to say I did m'lord. But all that were inside was a puddle of water and blood. Our Captain's blood, most like.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*The dead ice melted. Of course. Why wouldn't it? It was already broken.*

NILES

Best leave all this talk of demons and curses as the fevered words of a dying man.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*They did give me my words.*

NILES

Madness... and nothing more.

HAVIK (V.O.)

*I pray they mean to send them.*

The barrel gets kicked away, and Havik's neck snaps beneath the weight of his falling body.

**CUT TO BLACK:**

NILES (O.S.)

Jon... Go get his trunk for the body. His father should get his son's bones. That's the noble thing to do.

JON (O.S.)

*Uncle, I think it was. He was always going on about his uncle.*

**FADE TO:**

# **BLACK DREAMSCAPE**

Where Havik looks out upon an endless void...

And there in the shadows of his death... All that he sees...

Is the onyx outline of Isfet and his terrible flapping wings.

Havik feels the fear flow through him.

**FADE OUT.**