

SPEAR-SCREENPLAY

by

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EXT. VALLEY FLOOR - DAY

VAI (18) is coquettish against her copper tipped spear.

VAI  
Do you think he'll be handsome?

AYN (28) carries the sickle bladed BONE SPEAR. This is a special day. Red streaks are painted on her face like a claw mark, a string of blue lapis shells braided in her hair.

KYK (23) shoulders a heavy bag of barter, also carries a copper tipped spear.

KYK  
Just handsome enough he won't want anything to do with you.

SYJI (36) carries a copper tipped spear, bow and arrows.

SYJI  
You are sure of the prophecy?

Ayn looks at a copper dagger, appears uncertain.

EXT. SVARD CAMP, RAMP - DAY

The pride of four Huntresses ascend a well broken path towards a wooden palisade wall. They wear bear-fur cloaks.

EXT. SVARD GATE - DAY

OUIX (42) is stout of chest and limited of teeth. Guards flank him. Ayn holds the bone spear in front of her.

AYN  
The boy.

EXT. SVARD CAMP - DAY

Oupix strides, Ayn pursues, the rest of the pride bristle.

OUIX  
We've trained him well! Skilled with swords, axes, bow, spear...

INT. SVARD LONGHOUSE - DAY

Ayn leads with the bone spear as she ducks through the low doorway. A single hearth burns. Warriors loiter. Pelts of bear, lion, and elk cover the floor. Kyk enters, drops a bag that clinks and clatters from metal contents. She intimidates with her spear. Ayn watches the warriors. Oupix enters.

OUPIX  
Bring forth Iiro!

A YOUNG WARRIOR steps from the crowd. He has a pink scar at his neck. He is tall, muscular, looks like a champion.

OUPIX  
Young still.

AYN  
It is time.

She steps for a closer look.

OUPIX  
Come boy, speak!

YOUNG WARRIOR  
My huntress.

Ayn crinkles her nose and sniffs the boy. For an instant her face reveals reluctance. She reaches into her cloak and flicks the copper dagger. It strikes the young warrior in the chest and he falls over dead.

Ayn's face reveals regret, sadness, fear, and loss. She sets her jaw and looks to Oupix who holds his breath and flicks his eyes between the bone spear and the pack of barter.

AYN  
Sixteen winters with the Svard.  
The killing blade will not strike  
him.

Oupix glances to the entrance, then back to the bone spear. Ayn steps closer to the chief, bares her teeth. The loitering warriors back away. Kyk settles into a fighting stance.

AYN  
This is not the boy.

OUPIX  
He was our finest warrior...

AYN  
Useless. And dead. The boy I left  
here. Now!

OUPIX  
The river.

He points to the entrance. Ayn kneels at the dead young warrior and retrieves the copper dagger from his chest.

AYN  
(whispered to the dead)  
May spirits guide you on the hunt  
to come.  
(to Kyk)  
Bring the copper.

EXT. SVARD CAMP - DAY

The pride falls in around Ayn. Vai glances to the longhouse.

EXT. SVARD CAMP, RAMP - DAY

OUPIX and his guards lead the pride of four huntresses.

EXT. RIVER BEND - DAY

The first glimpse of a figure in the river is obscured by leaves and branches. He thrusts a wooden spear and violently plucks a fish from the water.

At the riverbank he's seen as a WILLOWY BOY (16).

OUPIX  
Boy!

The willowy boy bounds from rock to rock.

AYN  
Do you take me for a fool?  
Distract me with this whelp?

Ayn points through the trees to the distant palisade wall.

AYN  
Already your archers nock arrows.  
There. There. There.

She holds the gleaming bone spear so it is unmistakeable.

AYN  
 You have failed. Now you seek to  
 steal copper?

The bone spear touches Oupix's shoulder. He bends a knee.

OUPIX  
 This is the boy! The useless boy!  
 Every day we starve him. We beat  
 him. Pit him against champions. He  
 does not fight. All he does is  
 gather berries -- hunt fish.

Ayn's rage keeps any sign of reluctance from her face this time, and she hurtles the still bloody dagger for the willowy boy.

Sunlight glints on the river. The boy appears to stand in two places the instant the dagger would have penetrated his heart. The blade plunks into the river.

Ayn stalks the willowy boy. We'll call him IIRO.

AYN  
 You can fight?

IIRO  
 No.

AYN  
 A lifetime with the Svard. You do  
 not fight?

IIRO  
 It does no good.

AYN  
 Coward!

She crinkles her nose and sniffs him, grabs his face, turns it to the side and sees the pale pink scar across his neck. She shoves the boy who flails but does not fall into the water.

OUPIX  
 You have your boy. Our duty is  
 done.

AYN  
 (to Oupix)  
 Bury your dead.  
 (to Iiro)  
 At least I will not want for fish.

OUPIX  
The copper.

AYN  
Leave half.

Kyk opens the hide pack and tosses copper DAGGER-BLADES and AXE-HEADS to the damp soil at Oupix's feet. She grins and counts out a dozen.

OUPIX  
That was not the arrangement!

Kyk points one last dagger at the willowy boy.

KYK  
Where's the rest of him?

She tosses the dagger, Oupix jumps out of the way.

EXT. VALLEY FLOOR - EVENING

Vai hikes close to Ayn.

VAI  
Not so ugly.

AYN  
He hunts fish.

Ayn looks East to where an eight spoked wheel, THE CHARIOT OF THE DIGIR, rises above the horizon. It glows brighter than the moon.

EXT. FOOTHILLS - EVENING

IIRO  
There is a good place to camp,  
higher up.

He points to:

EXT. OUTCROP - EVENING

A good vantage over the valley.

IIRO  
I can start a fire.

AYN  
No.

Bonfires blaze across the valley at the Svard Camp.

IIRO  
It will keep the wolves away.

Ayn tosses him a small pouch.

AYN  
Spread this.

Iiro opens the pouch, sniffs, and coughs.

IIRO  
Bear urine?

Kyk grins. Ayn remains stoic. Sounds of distant thunder, a crackle-hiss like forest fire, and the slur of air through a narrow opening.

IIRO  
What is--

AYN  
--dragonsign.

The dragon is oblong, red-burning, obscured by thick black smoke. Blue glows where a mouth would be. It descends on the Svard Camp and lightning-breath incinerates several houses in a single pass.

Ayn starts for the path to the valley. Iiro grabs her shoulder. She shoves him away.

IIRO  
They're already dead.

The central hillock burns bright in the night. The distant screams die out. The dragon languidly circles the valley then flies away.

EXT. BURNED VILLAGE - DAY

Longhouses have been reduced to ash filled holes in the ground.

IIRO  
There's nothing left...

Wind gusts. Ayn sniffs.

SYJI  
I smell it too.

Ayn moves towards a ruined longhouse. The half charred leg of a man drags out of sight. Ragged, beastly panting. Ayn turns the corner. A massive stripped tan and black cave lion eats the dead.

Ayn lifts the spear. The lion snorts and sniffs the air. Golden eyes fix on Ayn, Fangs, white and sharp bare. It roars loudly. Ayn roars savagely. She charges.

The lion rakes with massive claws but Ayn is faster and the scalloped tip of the bone spear splits the lion's flank to its ribs.

The lion bounds away from Ayn, towards Iiro and Vai. Ayn pursues, but the lion is much faster.

AYN

RUN!

Vai shields the boy with her body. The lion pounces. Kyk's distant spear toss misses. The lion's shadow covers Vai but Iiro shoves her out of the way. He is lost under tan and black striped fur.

Ayn reaches the lion. It is dead. She rolls it off Iiro. He is covered in blood, holds the shattered remains of Vai's spear, the tip lodged in the lion.

EXT. CAVE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

A fire burns inside the cave. Lion meat hangs over the flames to smoke cure with the stretched hide.

AYN

Be known as Iiro.

She spreads lion blood on Iiro's freshly scrubbed cheeks.

IIRO

(echoes)

Iiro.

AYN

Your mother's choosing, before  
your birth.

IIRO

Tell me of her.

AYN

Strong. Loving. Brave.



She has too much emotion to continue. Vai sits next to Iiro. Their legs brush against each other, her head rests on his shoulder, and she looks up at him with smitten eyes.

EXT. CAVE ENTRANCE - MORNING

Iiro wears the lion's pelt as a head-dress and cloak. Vai stalks around Iiro, lets her eyes roam.

VAI  
You owe me a spear.

She bares her teeth playfully and steps away.

AYN  
Carry the bones.

Iiro carries smoked bones and lion's claws. They clink as he walks. Kyk and Syji shoulder an olive branch that is heavy with smoked lion meat. Vai carries their spears. Ayn leads.

EXT. PLATEAU MOUNTAIN CAMP - DAY

Vai runs to camp with a leather wrapped bundle.

VAI  
I got most of them out!

She shakes the bundle. A bee-hive falls to the ground. A half-dozen agitated honeybees fly out. The huntresses swat the bees.

Vai breaks the hive open. They eat the honey and melt the combs on flat stones in the fire. With the combs boiled down to a waxy consistency, Ayn takes the stones from the fire and applies the still hot wax to the outer layer of her leather boots. Iiro watches.

VAI  
She's waterproofing them.

Ayn finishes her work.

AYN  
I will not be long.

EXT. CYPRESS FRINGE - DAY

Ayn passes through close packed trees.

EXT. INNER SANCTUM - DAY

A series of clearings hide among the trees. Each features a shallow pond fed by an intricate maze of slow running streams. Some ponds are clear and show rock underneath, others pinkish green, and some deep red.

The sound of shifting rock. Ayn sniffs.

AYN

Boy, come out. Now!

Iiro steps from behind a tree.

AYN

Clumsy. Foolish.

IIRO

I wanted to see.

AYN

The ponds are dangerous.

EXT. BONE CHIME'S POND - DAY

From a distance it appears to be a large grey boulder. Closer and reliefs appear, like a carved monolith. Closer still and arms and legs, grey as stone, and a great hunched back reveal themselves. From the back sprouts a small oak tree. Chimes carved from bird bones hang from the branches and tink in the wind.

Ayn hands Iiro her cloak.

AYN

Do not follow.

She wades into the pond, to touching distance. The twelve foot tall giant's skin is revealed to be not rock at all, but clay-mud, layers thick, cracked and dry and hinting at pink flesh underneath. The stooped face of the giant hangs low from the hunched back, an exaggeration of a man's face, bloated in places, twisted and stretched in others. The giant's eyes are deep set in cave-like sockets.

AYN

Bone Chimes!

She raps the giant's head with the knobby base of the bone spear. The giant recoils, sniffs the air. Wildness keeps the giant's eyes searching until they find the huntress.

BONE CHIMES

Ayn.

He stoops eye-level with her.

AYN

Old friend.

She grasps the giant on the back of the neck. Bone Chimes narrows his eyes and draws another rush of air through his nose. He looks left, right, then sees Iiro at the edge of the clearing.

BONE CHIMES

Defiler!

He scampers quickly on all fours, the tree on his back sways as if caught in a violent storm. Ayn dashes at full sprint for the boy. Urgency drives her feet, splashing pinkish water with every step.

The boy does not move.

Bone Chime's massive grey fist opens -- its span is as big as Iiro's chest -- and swipes down. Ayn dashes, lunges, her body like a spear as she tackles the boy out of the way. Bone Chimes howls, his hand striking the ground.

Ayn shields Iiro with her body and the Bone Spear.

AYN

The boy belongs to the Dragon Queen.

Bone Chimes snorts, a puff of grey dust swirls. He rears on his haunches and slaps his chest with a massive hand before settling to all fours to pace. The tree on his back sways.

BONE CHIMES

He is not welcome here.

AYN

He carries no blame in what happened.

BONE CHIMES

You think me that trifling? It is the forest that fears him.

He settles into a squat with a hand to the ground for balance.

AYN

He hunts fish.

BONE CHIMES  
He is of unnatural spawn!

Ayn's face shows her curiosity.

IIRO  
That's not what they said. They  
said: manna born.

BONE CHIMES  
Do not pretend to speak for them!

Spittle wets the clay at his lips.

IIRO  
These ponds, they're manna?

BONE CHIMES  
Take him from here and begone!

AYN  
After council.

BONE CHIMES  
What need do you have of council?

AYN  
The secrets of dragon slaying--I  
seek the King of the Recast.

BONE CHIMES  
I may not begrudge the boy, but  
Ukko will!

IIRO  
Who's Ukko?

AYN  
(to Bone Chimes)  
Old friend, you are a fool.

Bone Chimes snorts out a nose full of grey dust.

BONE CHIMES  
You may find the dragon swallowed  
more of Ukko than you remember.

He sighs and bows his head to doze.

BONE CHIMES  
They agree to council.

He hunches over in the pond, asleep.

IIRO  
You are going to speak to the  
lights?

AYN  
Keep out of the water!

IIRO  
I didn't touch it!

Ayn does not appear to believe him.

Ayn plies a length of bark from one of the trees. She uses a dagger to hollow it for drinking. She squats at the manna pond and dips the bark like a spoon. She drinks the manna.

She backs away from the pond and squats. She closes her eyes. When she opens them, little lights dance in the wind.

Blue, red, violet, gold, green, like a rainbow shattered into drifting motes. The lights dart between branches, come and go from the tree-palace on Bone Chimes's back.

AYN  
Spirits.

The FOREST WISPS come together to form an outline of a woman. More wisps come to solidify the glowing ghost of KUU. Wisps continuously come and go from the glowing ghost body, subtly changing the color over time.

WISPS  
Bloomed you are child.

The voice comes as whispers in the absence of sound.

AYN  
It is time to slay dragons.

WISPS  
The magic of fire, stolen of a  
mountain's soul, births the  
dragons. Forever to us, hidden by  
unworldly veil, they roost in  
secret.

Ayn scowls.

AYN  
Tell me of Ukko. Does he live?

WISPS

King of the Recast, alive for the  
help of himself, hiding in gold  
fields.

(beat)

Open your eyes child, to see the  
danger is near, not those of the  
sky. Ukko and Kuu, king and queen  
of all men, left the boy to you.

Ayn glances over her shoulder to Iiro. He looks at her with  
confusion and curiosity. Ayn looks back to the wisps.

AYN

I don't understand.

WISPS

Let the boy live, to bring about  
the great end, the death of us  
all. Or kill the boy, and the  
world will be yours, forever the  
hunt.

AYN

And what of the dragons? Which  
path brings their destruction?

WISPS

Fate of the dragons, is hidden by  
magic, blind to them are we. They  
choice I give you, the path you  
must find alone, farewell great  
huntress.

More wisps fly away that join. Gaps form in the ghost's  
face and body. An entire arm reduces to just a few points  
of light.

Ayn leaps to her feet. She holds the bone spear.

AYN

You filled Kuu's ears with lies!  
Feast of the manna! Slay the  
dragons! She died for you!

The remaining wisps scatter like the wind.

AYN

You ask me to kill the last of her  
legacy! You are liars! I should  
burn this grove to the ground!  
Worthless! Liars!

Ayn spits into the manna pond.

AYN

Come boy!

She strides away. Iiro looks at her with mistrust.

EXT. PLATEAU MOUNTAIN CAMP - DAY

Kyk greets Ayn.

AYN

We're going to need a ship.

EXT. TRADING VILLAGE, OVERLOOK - DAY

Several straw-roof houses, fringed with mudbrick walls, overlook a rocky harbor. In the distance, a galley is beached.

Nearby, women gather berries. They see Ayn and the bone spear and run back to the village gate.

IIRO

We're not welcome?

AYN

Seafarers trade here. All are welcome. None are trusted.

EXT. ROCKY SHORE - DAY

Purplish-black henna lines pattern MALAH's (28) bald head in swirls and scallops.

MALAH

Call me Malah.

He showcases the single-masted beached galley that features two dozen oar ports.

AYN

Medhaba [Hello].

She nods her head in a slight bow.

AYN

You know of the fields of gold?

MALAH

This place I have been.

AYN  
We have copper.

Kyk jingles the heavy barter sack.

EXT. AT SEA, THE GALLEY - DAY

Slicing through wave crests.

MALAH  
Sebba! [Pull/Row]

The whip cracks. The slaves pull. The pride huddles in the bow of the ship. At the bigger crests, water splashes over the low gunwales.

VAI  
We should have hiked.

TWO PIGS squeal as they shat and piss.

EXT. AT SEA, THE GALLEY - DAY

The single sail unfurls. Malah descends from the oar-master's plank.

MALAH  
By night we cross the narrows.

AYN  
Good.

His smile becomes a leer.

MALAH  
Should you be lonely.

He winks and heads aft.

KYK  
You could do worse. He has his own ship.

Ayn looks back to Malah. Her face reveals the seeds of interest.

EXT. SANDY BEACH - NIGHT

Three dozen crewmen beach the ship.



EXT. BEACH CAMP - NIGHT

In the sky is the eight spoked Chariot of the Digir. Malah points to it.

MALAH  
Those of the sky see all.

IIRO  
Those of the sky?

MALAH  
Gods say some. Terrible is their  
hunger for manna, dragons their  
pets.

IIRO  
They're dragon lords?

MALAH  
(indicates Ayn)  
The north calling her Dragon  
Queen. On the shores they laugh.  
Dragons just terrible beasts.  
Can't be Queen of beasts, can you  
jameel [beautiful]?

Ayn grunts and walks away. Kyk follows.

KYK  
Does that look mean he's all mine?

AYN  
He is not for you.

KYK  
One of us should mate him. All of  
us of age, none to replace us.

Ayn's face reveals lust as she watches Malah.

EXT. MARSHY HARBOR - DAY

Ayn rigs her bear cloak so it will hang at waist height  
before she goes over the gunwale into the thigh-deep marsh.

AYN  
Do not leave.

MALAH  
Barter be met.

Kyk takes the pack of barter over the gunwale with her.

AYN  
But not given. Yet.

EXT. MARSH - DAY

Ayn, Kyk, Syji, Vai and Iiro wade ashore.

EXT. WHEAT FIELD - DAY

The pride re-fix their cloaks for the hunt. Olive-skinned villagers fell wheat with sickles. Some carry sheafs to the citadel atop the acropolis.

EXT. BASE OF THE ACROPOLIS - DAY

Syji holds her spear in approximation of the rock's sides.

SYJI  
Too steep to climb.

Vai leans on her back.

VAI  
Maybe they'll give us a ride, too.

She watches villagers carry wheat up the ramp.

EXT. RAMP TO ACROPOLIS - DAY

As Ayn ascends, nervous villagers drop their sheafs of wheat, turn around, and run back to the base.

EXT. ACROPOLIS - DAY

A few untended children run to shelter within the stone-walled longhouses.

The Citadel is built from blocks of granite that are a dozen feet square.

The door is a single slab of granite hung from pivots at top and bottom. Ayn pushes the door, it does not move. Kyk and Syji join to grind it open.

INT. CITADEL - DAY

Cavernous, stone walls, ceiling crossed by straight timbers and covered by a patchy thatched roof. Light shafts through gaps in the thatch. Four dozen raised chairs line the room.

Seated on each is a hulking warrior who is an amalgam of blackened flesh and dulled dragon-scale. At the far end, UKKO (45) loiters on a shadowed throne.

AYN

Ukko!

UKKO

Kuu...its you.

AYN

No. It is Ayn.

UKKO

Ayn...leave me.

Iiro steps into Ayn's field of view.

IIRO

Are the rest dead?

Ayn pushes the boy back towards Vai and points to the door. Vai tugs his arm and leads him away.

Ayn strides towards Ukko.

AYN

Help me slay dragons.

UKKO

You? You were never worthy of Kuu's spear.

AYN

We must finish what we started.

UKKO

No good can come. Kuu is gone.

AYN

No, she is here.

Ayn holds the Dragon Queen so it gleams in a light shaft.

UKKO

Defiler!

Ukko leaps the length of the room in a single bound and lands with a smashing strike from his lead and copper studded wooden club.

Ayn and Ukko battle. Ukko is powerful, Ayn is nimble. He can't hit her with his club, she pulls several strikes to avoid killing him.

To break the stalemate, Ukko charges Ayn full speed. She runs and kicks off the wall to change direction. Ukko tackles through the wall, shattering several large stones.

AYN  
(to self)  
Don't be dead old man.

Ukko stands from the rubble. Blood smears his face.

AYN  
We don't need to fight.

He charges and they trade near misses again. His club causes massive damage to the citadel.

AYN  
Ukko...

He pauses long enough for a good look at him: a mech-cyborg body and the face of a man.

Syji charges Ukko from behind, Ayn from the front. He dodges Syji's strike, pulls her spear to get her close enough to fling her by the throat at one of the recast mummies lining the room.

Ayn rakes Ukko's back with the bone spear, but his dragonscale does not split. His club drives Ayn away.

Ukko slaps his chest and roars. Kyk pelts him with thrown daggers. They bounce from his back. He hurtles a hunk of limestone at Kyk.

AYN  
Ukko!

She's back on her feet.

Ukko chases Ayn again. She zig-zags to keep away from him.

AYN  
Ukko! Talk!

UKKO  
Her bones need rest!

AYN  
Not her will!

They reach the end of the room and Ayn kicks off the wall again. Ukko attempts to stop this time and Ayn swings low to sweep his feet. He smashes head first into the stone wall.

Spidery fissures cross the entire wall. The crack of breaking stone.

Ukko stands and swings his club into the wall over and over. The wall collapses. The timbers begin to fall from the ceiling.

Ayn dives through the first hole Ukko made as the citadel collapses behind her.

EXT. CITADEL - DAY

Ayn stands. She is weaponless. Dust everywhere. She coughs. Kyk runs her way.

KYK

Huntress!

Ayn glances, sees Syji limping from the rubble and the bone spear amid a pile of broken stone. A boulder flies their way.

AYN

Move!

She shoves Kyk and dives. The boulder smashes the earth. Another boulder flies and they dodge again. Ukko leaps high enough to block the sun. Golden red light glows around him. His return to the ground shockwaves debris.

Kyk charges Ukko. Her copper spear-tip glints in sunlight. She lunges and sticks the spear deep into Ukko's side. Ukko splinters the haft with his hand and backhands Kyk.

Ayn runs for the bone spear. Ukko intercepts her at one of the longhouses. He smashes the wall open. Inside, Vai and Iiro huddle with the children from earlier.

Ayn jumps on Ukko's back. She uses her knee to drive the broken-off spear-tip deeper into his side. He reaches for her head but she jerks and twists to keep out of the way. He stumbles like he's about to fall. He grabs Ayn's leg and flings her like a toy.

Ayn falls gracefully and rolls to a four point stance. She dashes for the bone spear, retrieves it.

AYN

Ukko, this ends.

UKKO

Good.

He charges and swings wildly. Ayn dodges, brings the bone spear's sickle blade around to reap Ukko's hand. The club falls with it to the dirt. Ukko stumbles. Oil dribbles from his severed wrist.

UKKO

End me.

AYN

I need you.

UKKO

They are too many. Too strong.  
Without Kuu...

He falls to a knee.

UKKO

What did you do to her?

AYN

(about the spear)  
She did this to herself.

UKKO

Let her rest.

AYN

It is not her will.

Ukko spits.

IIRO (OS)

The spear is my mother, isn't it?

Ayn faces him.

IIRO

I felt her just now, when she  
struck.

He reaches for the spear. Ayn lets him touch it. His eyes roll back in his head. He releases the spear, stumbles back a couple steps, and when he looks up, his eyes are normal again.

UKKO

Who is this boy?

AYN

This is Iiro, son of the Dragon  
Queen, son of the King of the  
Recast, born of manna.

UKKO  
 So you're the one who killed my  
 dear Kuu. You're the damn child  
 that consumed her from the inside.

EXT. COLLAPSED LONGHOUSE - DAY

Ukko sits against rubble.

AYN  
 Let me bind the wound.

Ayn inspects his wound, brings away a finger smeared with  
 oil to sniff.

UKKO  
 No use. I've drank all the  
 dragon's blood.

SYJI (OS)  
 (shouted, distant)  
 Dragonsign!

EXT. ACROPOLIS EDGE - DAY

Ayn and Kyk scramble to Syji. On the horizon they see a  
 black smudge of smoke.

KYK  
 And here I thought the day was  
 starting to like us.

Ayn leaves, frantic.

EXT. COLLAPSED LONGHOUSE - DAY

She dashes back to Ukko's side.

AYN  
 Ukko, the secrets of dragon  
 slaying! Tell me now!

UKKO  
 Manna.

AYN  
 Yes, manna drove Kuu mad.

He strokes the curve of the bone spear.

UKKO

Here.

AYN

On the blade?

She squats, dumbstruck.

KYK

Where are we going to find manna?

AYN

Bone Chimes, the Manna Addicts,  
The Spirit Thieves, all too  
distant...

Iiro holds out the bear-urine pouch.

IIRO

Ayn.

KYK

Going to need more than piss to  
keep a dragon away.

IIRO

It's manna.

Ayn opens the pouch, sniffs.

AYN

You stole this.

IIRO

The giant had plenty.

Ukko laughs.

UKKO

You took the boy to Bone Chimes?  
You've been busy, Ayn.

Ayn sprinkles manna on the tip of the bone spear. The  
sickle blade glows red. Kyk takes Syji's spear and holds it  
out. Manna dissolves the metal spear tip. Kyk drops the  
weapon.

KYK

I'm going to need a better spear!

Ayn looks at the bone spear -- it keeps glowing.

UKKO

Best drink up.



Ayn glares at him, sniffs the pouch.

AYN

You should have rinsed it, boy.

She drinks a splash of manna. Her eyes close and for a moment she rocks dizzily. Then her eyes open. Focused fury lives in them.

EXT. FAR OVERHEAD - DAY

Orange and red flames was over the skin of the Dragon. It looks like a giant fireball hurtling through the sky. Spasming blue flame leaps from its mouth.

EXT. ACROPOLIS - DAY

Ayn ducks behind a stone wall as searing flame burns past the other side. She looks distant to see Vai escorting the children to safety.

The dragon turns for a second pass. Ayn sees a flicker-vision of where the flame will go.

AYN

Everyone move!

She and Kyk grab Ukko, pull him behind a boulder. The dragon's flame burns the air above them.

The dragon flies into a languid orbit of the acropolis, its long spines rake the black smoke into swirling eddies.

IIRO

Why did it stop?

KYK

Maybe your bear piss actually worked.

Pustules bulge the dragon's skin. Inner blue teases among the flames and smoke. Four objects fall, once clear of the smoke they are revealed as mechs, flying by six flaming wings.

KYK

What span of dragon is this?

AYN

Guard the boy.

Ayn climbs one of the few untouched longhouses.

The first of the mechs points a gun-sword at Ukko. Ayn sprints along the roof of the longhouse and lunges...dragon-scale burns away as the bone spear punctures the mech. Ayn's shoulder smashes into it and they crash to the ground. Ayn yanks the spear free.

Three mechs hover over the village. Ayn dashes to one. Its gun-sword swings towards her. She leaps. Blue-flame crackles from the gun -- a near miss! The bone spear splits the side. The mech falls from the air.

Ayn lands, rolls to a crouch. She feels her shoulder, rolls it, and winces.

Black blood pours from the rising mech. The shoulders open. Inside: rows of mini-missiles. Flicker-vision of flame. Ayn dives into the nearest longhouse. The place she vacates becomes a fire-storm.

INT. LONGHOUSE - DAY

The doorway explodes behind AYN. She slams her back to the stone wall, panting. The sound of thudding mech footsteps. Black smoke outside. Ayn gut-checks, turns, and dashes into the smoke.

EXT. COLLAPSED CITADEL - DAY

The mech leaks blood. It searches. Ayn bursts through the cloud of black smoke, skids, twists, spins the bone spear and severs the mech's leg. It's six wings burn and it flies skyward.

AYN

Coward!

EXT. COLLAPSED LONGHOUSE - DAY

A mech descends on Iiro and Ukko.

EXT. ACROPOLIS EDGE - DAY

Another mech fires blue-flame at Kyk and Syji.

EXT. COLLAPSED CITADEL - DAY

In the distance Syji falls.

AYN

No!

She dashes.

EXT. COLLAPSED LONGHOUSE - DAY

The mech swings its gun-sword from Ukko to Ayn. She runs towards it. She sees flicker-visions of where the beams will strike and dodges them. Missiles join the blue-flame. From further away come the strikes of the other remaining mech.

Ayn continues to dodge as the world goes to hell around her. She jumps, cuts a gun-sword in half, and lands. She's sweaty, sickly looking. The sound of her heart racing. She swings the spear in a wild arc. The world goes red as an energy wave pushes away from Ayn.

The two mechs spark, and fall. Everything goes dark.

EXT. COLLAPSED LONGHOUSE - DAY

Black. Breathing. Everything is red. Ayn blinks her eyes. Colors return to normal.

KYK (OS)

It didn't tear you apart!

IIRO (OS)

What was that?

The sound of static. Ayn coughs. Sits.

AYN

Always questions.

IIRO

Was it the manna?

AYN

Dragon?

KYK

Fled. After you backlashed, it turned and fled. I've never seen such a sight! A dragon running in fear!

AYN

Syji?

EXT. ACROPOLIS EDGE - DAY

Ayn brushes Syji's dead eyes open.

AYN  
Forever the hunt.

KYK  
Forever the hunt.

Iiro bounds over.

IIRO  
You should see this.

EXT. COLLAPSED LONGHOUSE - DAY

A mech fizzles next to Ukko. Iiro pulls at the chest, opens it to reveal a pale-blue man inside.

KYK  
Disgusting looking snack.

Iiro wrenches the mech's hand free at the elbow. He puts his own arm inside, holds up the hand and wiggles the mech's fingers. Oil drips from the severed portion.

IIRO  
They wear dragons like hide!

Ayn stops leaning on Kyk's shoulder and cuts the corpse with the tip of the bone spear so silvery blue blood spills out.

KYK  
Demon blood!

AYN  
Fetch Malah. Quickly.

Kyk runs off. Iiro opens the shoulder panels.

AYN  
Don't touch the quills.

IIRO  
Why?

AYN  
Boom.

Ayn sits and looks at Ukko.

AYN  
Spirits.

IIRO  
Ukko! Dragon blood!

He pulls out a thick dragon vein. Oil leaks from it. Ukko crawls to it. He sticks the vein in his navel and grins.

EXT. RAMP TO ACROPOLIS - DAY

Kyk leads Malah up the ramp.

EXT. COLLAPSED LONGHOUSE - DAY

Malah looks mortified.

MALAH  
That be fallen.

IIRO  
Fallen?

Malah paces.

MALAH  
Lahnut! [Fuck] Very bad to kill a fallen.

He rubs his bald head.

MALAH  
Black spot for all of us.

He taps his thumb against his heart.

KYK  
No. Ayn can slay them all.

MALAH  
We must fleeing. Before they return.

Ukko stands and casts the dragon vein aside. Ayn stands too, mirroring his resolve.

AYN  
Bring Syji. We will honor her.

As the others turn away, Ayn grips her side, pained.

EXT. MOUNTAIN SLOPE - DAY

Kyk and Vai carry Syji's corpse. Ayn hobbles.

EXT. OLIVE TREE - DAY

Tiny white and green flowers cover the branches. The soil surrenders to Vai's stone adze.

EXT. OLIVE TREE - DAY

They lay Syji's corpse into the hole. River clay packs the hole dragon flame had burned through her.

Ayn uses a copper knife to open Syji's sides. Blood seeps into the soil. Ayn carves a bear profile into the tree.

AYN

The tree will drink your blood.  
Protect you as you grow strong in  
death. When the hawks come, you  
will be tempted to ride them.  
Resist. Deer will come to graze  
the short grasses. Resist them as  
well. Only when the great brown  
bear comes to eat of the olive  
fruit do you act. Jump swiftly.  
Ride the bear to your rebirth.

Ayn crouches. Vai's hands push dirt over Syji's body.

AYN

May spirits guide you on the hunt  
to come.

EXT. MARSH BEACH - DAY

The solemn huntresses return. Malah paces.

MALAH

Buried your friend? We pull for  
sea? Crack the whip through the  
night? Leagues we need to cross.

AYN

No.

She pulls a squealing hog from the ship.

MALAH  
Give back the pig. And what your  
meaning no?

EXT. FIRESIDE - NIGHT

A pig roasts on a spit.

KYK  
It seems a little bright.

AYN  
We do not hide from dragons  
tonight. We feast for Syji.

EXT. FIRESIDE - NIGHT

Iiro drinks wine and eats roast-pig with the crewmen.

The huntresses sit to the side.

KYK  
Remember the boar? With Vai still  
suckling and wrapped to Syji's  
chest? Jumped out of the bushes  
with tusks the size of my arm!

VAI  
(accusing)  
She saved you.

KYK  
And good she did! I rather like  
being alive. With my mother so  
sick when Syji found us...remember  
when Syji used to bath us freezing  
white-waters?

VAI  
Our pride outcast us!

KYK  
Vai, sister.

VAI  
We could be with them now. Me and  
mother. Alive!  
(to Ayn)  
Then you showed up carrying that  
wicked spear!

Ayn watches.

VAI  
Because you're Kyk's blood we were  
to follow you! This is about your  
glory!

(on Ayn's reaction)  
You killed her. Not with your  
spear but with your ego.

KYK  
Syji was like a mother to me.

VAI  
She was my mother!

An awkward silence with all eyes on Vai.

VAI  
(to Ayn)  
Why don't you turn her into a  
spear? Put her skull on your other  
leg? Take her around so she won't  
be forgotten?  
(on Ayn's reaction)  
She's not even in her ancestral  
lands. No! You buried her here on  
some island that we're never going  
to return to.

Iiro stumbles over.

IIRO  
Vai...

She pulls away from his reach and walks into the night.

EXT. MOUNTAIN SIDE - MORNING

Ayn hikes.

EXT. OLIVE TREE - MORNING

Vai lays on Syji's grave. Ayn squats.

AYN  
She was good. Kind. I make poor  
replacement.

VAI  
Yes.



AYN  
We are pride. Not by blood. By  
deed. By choice.

VAI  
Pride.

Vai helps Ayn to stand.

AYN  
(hushed)  
Look!

A bear ambles their way.

VAI  
Fat with cub...

AYN  
Leave Syji her guide...

They back away from the olive tree. Vai smiles.

EXT. MARSH BEACH - DAY

Kyk runs up to Ayn.

KYK  
Malah leaves.

Ayn stalks through the surf with bone spear in hand.

AYN  
Malah!

He lowers his shoulder to the bow and pushes with the  
crewmen. They dislodge the ship and climb aboard.

AYN  
Malah!

He leers down at her from the gunwale.

MALAH  
Good time this be to run.

AYN  
Your barter stays.

MALAH  
What good be barter without breath  
to spend it?

Ayn grips his ankle, twists, judos him from the boat to the surf. She holds his head under the water. crewmen run to the gunwales. She lets him up.

MALAH  
(coughing water)  
Shelmotha! [Bitch]

He coils his whip.

AYN  
You are coward!

MALAH  
En emushara del um handra el-see!  
[They will have my head for this]

AYN  
I'll take your head myself.

MALAH  
You be very wicked, Ayn of  
huntress.

AYN  
You will take us to the Shores of  
the Sun.

KYK (OS)  
No!

Ayn turns to face her.

KYK  
We should go north! Hide! Make  
babies! Strengthen the pride!

MALAH  
With this me help. Seed giver.

He spits and menaces with a laugh.

AYN  
Flee where? Dragons burn our  
cities!

KYK  
Just a range to hunt...

AYN  
In time, dragons eat everything.

MALAH  
Mosdahiel [madness] world be too  
big.

Vai wades out.

KYK  
And Syji?

VAI  
Ayn speaks for her. We have to  
kill them all.

KYK  
(incredulous)  
All of them?

IIRO  
They're right. We must go to the  
Shores of the Sun.

KYK  
Killing one lion gave you quite  
the blood-lust, boy.

IIRO  
Not to kill them.

KYK  
Then what? To prostrate and beg  
for a foot to kiss?

IIRO  
To study them. Learn their  
weaknesses.

Iiro holds up a bone dagger.

IIRO  
We know one. Let's learn more.

MALAH  
All of you, meznuin! [Crazy]

He splashes towards the galley.

AYN  
You'll take us. Barter is yours.  
And the pillage.  
(on Malah's reaction)  
You can die now. You can die  
later. Not many slaves get that  
choice.

(MORE)

AYN (CONT'D)  
 (on Malah's reaction)  
 Ukko! We hunt dragons!

Ukko leaves the shade of a palm tree and walks into the water. He splashes past Ayn.

UKKO  
 About damn time.

EXT. OPEN SEA, THE GALLEY - NIGHT

Iiro sits next to Ayn in the bow.

IIRO  
 At the acropolis, I saw you in two places at once.

AYN  
 Yes.

IIRO  
 I do that sometimes. Like at the river...that thing you did. The red light. Will that happen to me as well?

AYN  
 I don't know.

IIRO  
 It would tear me apart, wouldn't it? I'm born of manna. Manna is my flesh. If I ever burnt like that, there wouldn't be anything left of me, would there?

AYN  
 It is how your mother died.

Before Iiro can ask more...

KYK  
 Spirits!

EXT. SHORES OF THE SUN - NIGHT

Three pillars of light reach to the heavens.

EXT. OPEN SEA, THE GALLEY - NIGHT

VAI  
So vast...

The sound of a dragon. She looks aft. A burning dragon crosses overhead.

EXT. SHORES OF THE SUN - NIGHT

The dragon circles a ziggurat and settles to roost.

EXT. OPEN SEA - NIGHT

Ayn watches the dragon with determined purpose.

EXT. ARTIFICIAL HARBOR - PRE-DAWN

Ayn holds her wrists together. Malah lusts and binds her with thick rope.

MALAH  
Worry not, jameel. This is as a  
slaver does.

He cinches the knot. Ayn reacts.

EXT. THE CLIFFS - PRE-DAWN

Huntresses, roped to Iiro and Ukko, ascend steps that hug the cliffside. Malah and four men escort, carrying the pride's weapons. Cliffs lead to city walls.

EXT. HARBOR GATE - PRE-DAWN

The silver-light from the three ziggurats is bright.

Three human guards wear red-dyed flax with leather strips and wield small bronze swords. Behind them loiters a mech. The mech THUDS forward.

MECH  
Uzuzz. [Inspection/Identity Check]

The voice is blown-speaker quality. It holds a cube that flashes lights and creates a holographic replica of Malah's face, fronted with green glyphs.

The mech THUDS to Ukko. Grey glyphs accompany his face. The mech lifts Ukko's stump and shines a bright light on it. It laughs in a coughing way.

From behind Ayn:

IIRO  
(whispered)  
It will take us to the ziggurat.

Red-glowing glyphs flash over Ayn's projected visage. The mech drops the cube and draws its gun-sword. Faster, Ayn kneels, grabs a stone dagger from her boot, rises and saws herself free of the slave-line (her wrists remain bound). The gun-sword targets Ayn, she flicks the manna pouch. It pops against the mech's chest. Ayn stabs the bone dagger through the sputtering dragonscale. The mech falls over.

Ayn faces the guards at the door. They are frozen in shock. Ayn charges one, leaps, drives him back to the bronze gates with her knee and stabs his shoulder with the dagger.

She kicks the knee out of the next guard and brings her dagger down into his body on the ground. The third guard runs towards Ayn with sword high. Ukko shoulders him into the door with the crunch of breaking bones.

AYN  
Throw me!

She runs onto Ukko's one good hand and he boosts her airborne. After apogee she turns sideways.

EXT. ATOP THE CITY GATES - PRE-DAWN

Ayn rolls to a crouch. Three jittery archers nock arrows. Ayn leaps, and with her wrists still bound, slashes the nearest archer across the chest.

One archer looses an arrow, Ayn ducks. She shoulders him into his comrade.

EXT. THE CLIFFS - PRE-DAWN

Two archers fall.

EXT. ATOP THE CITY GATES - PRE-DAWN

Ayn dashes across the thick bronze door towards three waiting archers. Their hurried arrows miss her. Ayn two-hand heaves the dagger and strikes one in the chest.

EXT. HARBOR GATES - PRE-DAWN

Kyk, untied, throws a dagger.

EXT. ATOP THE CITY GATES - PRE-DAWN

Kyk's thrown dagger strikes the second of two still standing archers. Ayn races towards the last standing archer who turns and flees along the wall. Ayn lets him run.

EXT. INSIDE THE CITY GATES - PRE-DAWN

Ayn drops from the wall, shoulders free the heavy cross-bar securing the door, and opens the doors. Kyk steps past, frees Ayn's wrists. Vai hands Ayn the bone spear.

EXT. CITY ROOFTOPS - DAWN

Sprawling buildings abut each other to make a contiguous rooftop. The three massive ziggurats dominate the city.

AYN

Where do they harvest manna?

Malah points to the far side of the city. Ayn glances at their force: three huntresses, Ukko and Iiro, Malah, four of his men.

AYN

You may go.

Malah and his men run for their freedom.

AYN

Stay low, follow.

She runs in a low crouched. They follow. A low pitched alert horn sounds. Red and orange flame flicker at the ziggurat as mech leap to flight. Ayn points to one of the squared holes in the roof. Kyk and Vai go first, Iiro follows them. Ukko looks dubious.

AYN

In you go, old man.

He grips the edge with his one good hand and drops inside. Ayn follows.

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT - DAWN

Four walls, a recessed space for people to sleep, some empty vases. No windows or doors. The only light comes from the hole in the roof.

KYK

We just made their work easy.

IIRO

Surrender is the best way to get into the ziggurat!

Ayn pushes Iiro out of her view.

AYN

Boost me.

Kyk holds her hands together, lifts Ayn.

EXT. CITY ROOFTOPS - DAWN

Ayn peeks out the top of a rooftop opening. Three six-winged mech approach from the ziggurat. From below: a crash of shattering mudbrick. Ayn drops.

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT - DAWN

Ukko tears a hole in the wall.

UKKO

We move forward.

He passes through the hole. Ayn follows.

INT. OCCUPIED APARTMENT - DAWN

A man and two women have been startled from sleep. Ayn aims the bone spear at them. Iiro stumbles through the hole in the wall.

IIRO

Don't kill them!

Ayn shows annoyance at Iiro. Growls at the locals and they huddle away from her. A clothesline crosses the room.

AYN

Dress as them.



They pull garments and dress. Ayn and Kyk have to tear theirs to fit. Ukko doesn't bother. Ayn sniffs the green-clay vases. She dips her hands into one and pulls out oil. She rubs it into her hair.

AYN  
Smell as them.

Everyone except Ukko follows her example. Ayn points:

AYN  
Ukko...

He grins and smashes a hole in the next wall.

AYN  
Kyk, Vai, take the weapons. Hide  
in the crowds. Meet at the  
ziggurat at high sun.

She grabs Iiro by the shoulder.

AYN  
We gather manna.

Ayn and Iiro start up the ladder.

EXT. CITY ROOFTOPS - MORNING

Ayn peeks at the rooftops. Locals climb out of their houses, growing into a crowd. Ayn heaves herself to the rooftop, bone spear in hand. Iiro joins her.

They pull the ladder up and brace the bone spear against it. It is a poor hiding place.

EXT. EAST GATE - DAY

Ayn and Iiro blend with the herd of slaves.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE CITY - DAY

At a confluence of footpaths, slaves hold a mobile tent. Within its shade is TAMIA (22), a woman with pale blue skin. She's decorated in gold, red shells, blue pearls, and an ethereal silver-blue dress. Iiro gawks.

IIRO  
I need to see.

He drops the ladder and pushes into the growing crowd. Ayn, irritated, glances between him and the manna paddies. Ayn hides the bone spear in tall grass...

EXT. SHADED BY THE TENT - DAY

A husband bows deeply before Tamia.

TAMIA  
Gud wardum. Igigi damiq.

His wife weeps with joy.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF THE TENT - DAY

Ayn grabs Iiro by the elbow.

AYN  
Come, boy.

She pulls him through the crowd.

IIRO  
Wait...let me...she's beautiful.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE CITY - DAY

Two guards investigate the bone spear. One touches it and jumps back, shakes his hand in the air like it was burned. Ayn rushes them. Viper fast she punches one in the neck, then elbows the second in the temple. Both guards sprawl on the ground. She hefts the bone spear.

AYN  
No more distractions.

Iiro points to the tent.

IIRO  
The man's family was starving. She gave him a second chance to learn to farm manna.

AYN  
When did you learn their speech?

IIRO  
I just understand.

Ayn looks at him curiously, then hardens.

AYN  
Understand this: they made that  
man a slave.

EXT. MANNA SLABS - DAY

Manna dries to powder on large granite slabs. Small pouches are stacked neatly. Ayn takes one, peers inside, sees its full of reddish dust. She ties the pouch to her belt. Her and Iiro continue.

EXT. MANNA PADIES - DAY

Ayn dips the bearskin pouch into the pink manna pool. Her fingers shake as she ties the pouch shut.

IIRO  
Why would they need so much manna?

There are thousands of manna paddies.

Ayn sees a GUARD charging from the corner of her eye. She stands, swings the bone spear, hits him once in the chest, spins in a circle and strikes him in the back to send him into the manna pool. He thrashes and screams until dead.

She looks up. Iiro holds a clay pot with both arms. It brims with manna. Ayn points to the blistering corpse.

AYN  
You see manna's effect.

Iiro wobbles while holding the pot.

IIRO  
Yes.

Ayn grunts.

AYN  
We hunt dragons.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE CITY - DAY

Ayn and Iiro approach Tamia's moving tent.

IIRO  
We should wait.

AYN  
She leads them. She has value.

Ayn charges the tent. Two guards challenge her. Their flake axes lack the bone spear's reach. They are slow and cautious, she is fast and ravenous. They fall.

IIRO  
Don't kill them!

Ayn leaves them alive and stalks the shaded Tamia.

EXT. SHADE OF THE TENT - DAY

Ayn holds the bone spear's blade to Tamia's neck.

AYN  
We go to the dragon.

Iiro stumbles into the tent and places himself between the two, forcing Ayn to lift her spear.

IIRO  
Not like this!

As Iiro turns to face Ayn, Tamia slips a golden dagger to his neck. Ayn bares her teeth.

IIRO  
She will not harm me.

Ayn grunts, uses the knobby base of the spear to knock the dagger from Tamia's hand.

IIRO  
Are you ok?

TAMIA  
(to Ayn)  
Renounce your savagery. Kneel to the Digir.

AYN  
The dragon. Now.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF THE TENT - DAY

Tamia's pale skin shows veins under her diaphanous dress. She makes herself small.

AYN  
You fear the sun?

Tamia does not react.

IIRO  
It hurts her.

Tamia's pure violet eyes reveal he's right.

IIRO  
We have to be fast or she'll burn.  
(to Tamia)  
It's what you're thinking.

Ayn prods Tamia with the tip of the spear.

AYN  
Move.

TAMIA  
Your primitive brain can not  
comprehend what you are up  
against.

EXT. ZIGGURAT LANDING - DAY

Four mechs leap to the sky. Their six-wings burn the air  
and propel them forward.

EXT. THE EAST GATE - DAY

Three mechs float on burning air. Below them, fifty slaves  
lock arms in front of the city gates. Archers cluster on  
the walls. VELZEV (30) is with them. His right leg is  
recast in dragonscale. He points to the slaves.

VELZEV  
Youhwill slaugh'er so many of  
yourhkind? Lahydown or die.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE EAST GATE - DAY

IIRO  
This is the time to surrender.

TAMIA  
A merciful end if you do.

While they talk, Ayn rips off the stolen linen dress, pours  
manna on the blade edge of the bone spear, and drinks from  
the manna pouch. The spear glows.

Her battle scream precedes her. Flicker-vision of a wall of  
flame. Ayn skips backwards to dodge missiles. Another  
volley flies over her head and strikes near Iiro.

Shrapnel ruptures his clay pot. He cries out and falls over. A wall of fire burns between them. Ayn faces the mech, hefts the bone spear like she means to throw it.

She glances: the gate blockaded with slaves, Iiro likely dead, and the roosting dragon. She throws the ghostly glowing bone spear. It strikes the mech's chest. Red scale and sloppy blue innards explode out and the mech falls to the ground.

Ayn wrenches the bone spear from the corpse. Arrows land around her. The archers at the wall. Kyk and Vai loose arrows into them from behind. Bodies falling from the wall land among panicking slaves. Mechs flee to the Ziggurat.

AYN

Cowards!

She clutches the bone spear. Iiro coughs, he trembles and sits. Ayn vaults the low burning wall of flame, kneels, feels his head, and looks confused.

AYN

So much manna. Are you dying?

IIRO

Everything's the same. The manna.  
It didn't change anything.

Ayn wipes a trickle of blood from her nose, glances:

EXT. EAST GATE - DAY

Tamia runs into the city. Kyk and Vai drop from the wall to stop her with nocked arrows.

VAI

You want her...or should I?

Kyk grins.

TAMIA

Be swift with the end.

Iiro steps in front of Tamia.

IIRO

She will know their traps!

Ayn menaces with the bone spear.

AYN  
 And lead us into them.  
                   (beat)  
 Ukko?

Kyk points to the Ziggurat.

EXT. CITY ROOFTOPS - DAY

Mobs of slaves stampede and feast. Ayn and Kyk see the dragon still roosts at the Ziggurat.

EXT. BASE OF THE ZIGGURAT - DAY

The pride approaches.

                  VELZEV (OS)  
 Ah-hostage for ah-hostage.

EXT. ZIGGURAT BALONY - INTERCUT

Velzev pulls Ukko forward.

                  AYN  
                   (to self)  
 Forgive me old man.  
                   (shouted)  
 No trade!

Ukko nods. Velzev shoves him. Ukko falls a dozen feet before the rope snaps taut. Ukko's body spasms.

                  AYN  
 Bow.

Kyk hands hers over. Ayn nocks an arrow. The feather tickles her cheek. She looses the arrow. Ukko thrashes and the rope wiggles out of the way of the arrow.

                  AYN  
 Arrow!  
                   (to self)  
 Ukko, be still...

Ayn draws the bow. The jagged edge of Ukko's stump catches the rope, tears it and he falls to the city.

EXT. COLLAPSED HOUSE - DAY

Ukko is immobile in a mess of rubble. Ayn drops and loosens the noose from his neck. She slaps his chest.

AYN  
Breathe! Breathe old man! Breathe!

He coughs. Blood on his teeth.

UKKO  
You let them hang me.

AYN  
Yes.

She can't budge him. Kyk and Iiro peer into the hole.

IIRO  
They recast him once. They can  
recast him again.

On Ayn's reaction.

KYK  
Now all we have to do is wake the  
dragon and entice it to swallow  
Ukko. At every turn we seem  
destined to make things harder on  
ourselves.

EXT. DOOR OF THE ZIGGURAT - DAY

Ayn pushes Tamia.

AYN  
Open it.

Tamia crosses her arms.

IIRO (OS)  
Look at this!

A glowing hand hovers in front of Iiro.

IIRO  
We just need her hand.

Ayn raises the bone spear.

IIRO  
Attached!



INT. ZIGGURAT HALLWAYS - INDETERMINATE

The door snaps shut. Light comes from bio-luminescent jellyfish swimming along a horizontal wall-inset.

VAI

She glows!

Tamia also luminesces. She pulls violet coverings from her eyes to reveal golden-owl-like eyes.

AYN

We find the heart.

INT. ZIGGURAT HALLWAYS - INDETERMINATE

They reach a T-intersection with etched glyphs.

VAI

What do they mean?

Tamia says nothing, Ayn grunts. Continuing to move against the current of the jellies, they reach:

INT. ZIGGURAT TEMPLE - INDETERMINATE

Blackness hides the ceiling. Squid-shaped stone tendrils descend from the gloom, detailed in iridescent nacre. Luminescent jellyfish rain into a central pool. Enclosed aqueducts flush the bell-pulsing jellies into the wall-strips. Relief murals depict people with flame swords, sickles, or tablets walking among the stars.

Ayn plucks a jellyfish, lifts it to her nose, sniffs.

TAMIA

Put it back.

Ayn flicks the jellyfish back.

AYN

We change our scent.

She dips her head into the pool. Tamia rushes her.

TAMIA

Stop!

Ayn pulls from the tank, water droplets flying from her hair, turns and catches Tamia by the neck.

TAMIA  
(strangled)  
You foul their water.

Ayn plucks another jellyfish from the tank. She drops it to the floor and steps on it. Pop. Tamia screams.

TAMIA  
Eluash! [Defiler]

AYN  
Men you hang. This you mourn.

Ayn plucks another jellyfish from the tank. Tamia's eyes don't leave the glowing jelly.

AYN  
The dragon. Now.

INT. ZIGGURAT HALLWAYS - INDETERMINATE

A black door snaps open: an elevator within.

TAMIA  
Get in.

KYK  
Only the hog waddles into a cage unprovoked.

TAMIA  
It will lift us to the dragon's roost. I'll show you its safe.

Ayn blocks her with the spear.

AYN  
Another way.

INT. ZIGGURAT STAIRWAY - INDETERMINATE

A tight spiral. They ascend single file.

INT. ZIGGURAT HALLWAYS - INDETERMINATE

Atop the stairs Tamia breathes hard. Ayn sniffs the air, pushes Tamia into Iiro, and holds a finger to her lips. Iiro clamps his hand over Tamia's mouth.

Ayn creeps to the nearby intersection. She listens. A chordant style of speech; a vibrating base overlaid with clicks and trills. Two voices harmonize.

Ayn peeks. Two fallen guards. She returns to the pride, uses hand gestures to assign tasks. They apply manna to their bone arrows. They glow along with the bone spear. The pride moves. At the intersection Ayn counts with her fingers 5...4...3...implied...implied.

Ayn turns the corner at full sprint. Fallen aim guns at her. Two gunshots. Ayn's leg is struck. She falls to the ground and skids. Arrows fly over her head.

Ayn looks up. Each guard has an arrow in their chest. They collapse to the ground. Ayn limps over and kicks their guns away. Ayn knocks out the living one.

VAI

Something happened to Iiro!

Iiro clutches his leg and screams in pain.

AYN

Boy, you are hurt?

IIRO

The bangs. The flashes. It felt like something struck me.

Ayn inspects his thigh.

AYN

I see no wound.

Iiro traces along the outside of his thigh, marks where Ayn's is split open.

IIRO

Burns so much.

AYN

You feel my pain?

Iiro squeezes his thigh and nods.

AYN

Be silent then.

VAI

Huntress, your leg.

Vai kneels at Ayn's side. She uses her fingers to paint tar onto Ayn's wound. At every touch, Iiro winces on the ground. Ayn's face twitches from contained pain.

Kyk approaches with a fired-bullet and a gun.

KYK  
 Their wands throw pebbles!  
 (to the gun)  
 Shoot your magic!

She swings the gun around, smacks it with her other hand, and there is a loud bang and several pings as the bullet ricochets around the hallway.

TAMIA  
 Savage! Put that down before you  
 get someone killed.

KYK  
 You do care! I always wanted a  
 friend that glowed in the dark.

Kyk peers down the smoking barrel. Iiro takes the gun from Kyk. He inspects it, touches it here and there, finds a release for the magazine. He catches it, slaps it back in, points the barrel down the hall and shoots.

TAMIA  
 Fools!

AYN  
 You understand their magic?

IIRO  
 (pointing)  
 Keep away from this end.

AYN  
 The boy will keep the magic.

KYK  
 Give him a couple years and he'll  
 be a regular warlock -- maybe even  
 a manna addict.

IIRO  
 I'll be no such thing!

KYK  
 My mistake. No such thing.

INT. ZIGGURAT HALLWAYS - INDETERMINATE

TAMIA

The dragon is through that door.

Ayn uses hand gestures, Vai and Kyk flank the door.

AYN

Open it.

Tamia places her hand on the glowing image. The door snaps open. Brilliant sunlight bleeds in.

EXT. ZIGGURAT ROOST - DAY

The dragon roosts in the open. Without flame, it's recognizable as a bio-organic-space-ship: flanges, engine vents, its side opens to a ramp.

AYN

Why is it already gutted!?

TAMIA

You really don't comprehend, do you?

IIRO

A ship for the air. Not all the way alive.

AYN

It is a ship? It can swallow Ukko?

IIRO

The same as before.

TAMIA

Whose going to ride it savage?  
You?

Tamia trills. Ayn looks between Iiro and Tamia.

AYN

We link your minds.

She takes the manna pouch from her belt. Tamia shies away.

TAMIA

No. No!

Ayn forces her to drink. Tamia's bio-luminescent glow becomes greater than before.

AYN  
Do you feel it? Does it burn you  
from the inside?

Ayn releases Tamia.

AYN  
Boy, can you see?

Iiro falls to the ground, clutching his head.

IIRO  
They were born to eat flesh.  
Cloaked in false skin. Home among  
the heavens.

Ayn kneels at his side.

AYN  
You can ride the dragon?

IIRO  
With her mind, yes.

Kyk and Vai roughly carry Tamia to the dragon.

INT. DRAGON HALLWAYS - INDETERMINATE

The ramp snaps shut. The pride stands in a hexagonal hallway. Faint strips of blue glow at the seams. Iiro opens a hexagonal hatch in the wall and climbs into a small room. He tosses out flight suits.

IIRO  
These are sky-clothes.

Ayn inspects one. Iiro and Tamia strip and dress. Partially transparent panels luminesce on Tamia. Ayn drops the flight suit and kicks the rest aside.

INT. DRAGON HALLWAYS - INDETERMINATE

Iiro uses his hands on the wall so he can walk diagonally in the hexagonal hall. Tamia staggers.

INT. DRAGON HALLWAYS - INDETERMINATE

Iiro hovers his hand over a glowing palm.

IIRO  
The reigns are inside.

A hatch snaps open.

INT. DRAGON BRIDGE - INDETERMINATE

Two Fallen flight crew work at consoles. They look up, one trills softly. Ayn vaults into the room and runs them down. Batters them with the spear.

IIRO  
Don't kill them!

Ayn looks at the two on the ground.

AYN  
They breathe. Bind them.

Kyk and Vai withdraw leather straps from their cloaks. The walls disappear, reveal the external surroundings. Ayn, Kyk, and Vai grab handholds. No fall comes. Glowing glyphs orbit Iiro at a raised platform.

IIRO  
I didn't realize it would do that.

VAI  
We've been inside long enough for  
the sun to finish it's work?

IIRO  
No. Let me see if this works.

He rearranges the glyphs. The world shifts from night to day. Ayn becomes prone on the floor: A view-screen.

AYN  
Magic.

VAI  
I see Ukko!

Ayn cautions over to Vai. They see an arial view of Ukko's body amid the rubble of the collapsed house.

VAI  
Does he walk in Tuonela?--

AYN  
--make it fly.

IIRO  
Ok.

He rearranges more glyphs. Tamia cringes. The floor rocks. The dragon pitches past the front of the Ziggurat. They fall. Iiro blurs the glyphs. The dragon stops feet from the ground, one of the Fallen is slow to grab a handhold and crunches against the fore-wall.

IIRO

I think I have him.

A claw descends from the dragon, it grips Ukko and pulls him up towards them. Tamia looks dejected.

AYN

Take me to the belly. I will see him with my own eyes.

INT. DRAGON HALLWAYS - INDETERMINATE

Ayn and Kyk follow Tamia.

TAMIA

Even now you need two to bully me?

The point of Ayn's spear expresses her intent.

INT. DRAGON HANGAR - INDETERMINATE

Ukko's body floats in milky blue fluid. Spindly robot-arms cut away the mangled parts, bring fresh metallic bones, attach black muscles and red dragonscale. Ukko sits up, whole. He removes tubes from his body.

AYN

Old man.

UKKO

My right to kill you.

Ayn hefts the bone spear. Ukko jumps from the pool.

UKKO

You. Fallen. Make me stronger.

Tamia hides behind Kyk.

UKKO

Make...me...stronger!

He pushes Kyk to the side and grabs Tamia, drags her by the neck to the back of the hangar.



TAMIA

No.

Spare limbs, wings, and swords are stored along with a complete mech. Ukko pushes Tamia to it.

UKKO

Make me dragon-kin.

He hits it and the front creases open. Ayn uses the tip of the bone spear to caution it wider. Mech-type seat and controls inside.

The dragon lurches violently and rolls. Ayn skips from floor to wall. Kyk lands next to her, points to Ukko.

KYK

Maybe the dragon didn't like what it swallowed.

AYN

She escapes.

Tamia climbs the wall. Ayn chases, using the bone spear to perforate handholds in the wall.

The dragon rocks violently again and the orientation changes. The ceiling is now the floor.

Tamia reaches the exit hatch. Ayn tackles her into the wall. Again the orientation changes.

TAMIA

My people come.

Her split-lip bleeds glowing blood.

AYN

Good.

An external hatch opens. Smoke curls in. A mech enters. Blue dragon-fire leaps from its gun-sword, burns a hole in the wall behind Ayn.

The dragon rolls. Ayn pounces from floor to wall to ceiling, avoiding dragon-fire. As she applies manna to the bone spear, a near miss causes her to spill manna on her hand. A final lunge and the bone spear pierces the mech. She wrenches the spear free and sucks manna from her blistering hand.

Ayn glances to the open inner hatch. Tamia is gone.

Another mech enters. Ayn prepares to strike. The sound of opening shoulder panels. Ukko wears the mech hide. Missiles leap from his shoulders, mostly miss the mech. The firestorm is brilliant. The wall of the dragon pustules and bulges. With a groan, it rips outwards, taking a giant rush of air and Kyk with it.

AYN

Kyk!

EXT. DRAGON - INTERCUT

Kyk hangs onto a loose hose. Smoke surrounds her. Her feet are nearly in the flames of the dragon's hull.

Ayn stabs the bone spear into the deck and swings through the hole, grabbing Kyk, holding to the spear.

Dragon hull crumbles away, the spear becomes unstuck.

Ayn and Kyk pinwheel away.

EXT. FREE-FALL OVER WATER - DAY

Ayn and Kyk keep grip on each other's arms.

AYN

Forever the hunt!

KYK

Forever the hunt!

Kyk lurches away from Ayn. Tumbling free, Ayn sees the six-flame-wings of Ukko's dragon skin.

The water rushes up towards Ayn alone. She angles to dive. At this speed she'll be pulverized.

She comes to a wrenching stop a few feet from the water. She looks up at her feet. Ukko holds her. He grins and lets go. Ayn falls.

EXT. OPEN SEA - DAY

Ayn plunges with a splash. Water fizzles against her manna burned hand and the tip of the bone spear. She drapes on the bone spear, her face barely above water.

Distant, chunks of detritus rain from the dragon's smoke trail. The dragon smashes into the desert. A plume of smoke marks the place of demise.

MALAH (OS, DISTANT)  
 Sehba. Sehba. Sehba.

Ayn slides off the buoyant bone spear. Water rushes over her head. She's drowning.

EXT. OPEN SEA, THE GALLEY - DAY

Ayn is pulled from the water, hoisted over the gunwale and dropped on the floorboards. Malah's hands pump her stomach. She coughs out water.

MALAH  
 Baraket! Still of the world!

Ayn touches his curly beard. Her manna-blistered hand is now scale-like with salt. Kyk pushes him away, hugs Ayn.

AYN  
 Water.

It comes and she drinks, rinses her eyes. Ayn flakes the salt-scales from her hand--pink flesh underneath. The bone spear is crusted with hardened salt-rock.

KYK  
 Could Vai survive?

Behind her is the plume of smoke.

EXT. DESERT RIVER BANK - NIGHT

Crewmen beach the galley. Ayn limps inland. The smoke plume ever present.

EXT. DESERT RIVER BANK - NIGHT

Ayn and Kyk eat date palms and raw fish.

MALAH  
 You never say the taste of dragon  
 flesh, jameel.

AYN  
 They are of magic.

MALAH  
 Magic! Rotten of taste! Ha!

AYN  
 Pelts.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

Ayn and Kyk hike across the hardpan, covered against the sun in lion skin and goatskin respectively. The smoke plume is thinner now, more burned out.

KYK  
If Vai is dead--

AYN  
--she cannot be dead.

KYK  
...if Vai is dead. It's you and me. One of us has to bear children or the pride dies out! There should be a dozen of us!

AYN  
The manna born ripped Kuu apart. Our matron! Turned from flesh to wind!

KYK  
Because of her madness! Even now she pollutes you.  
(indicates the spear)  
Sometimes at night, you speak like her. The spear is eating your soul.

Ayn shoves Kyk. Kyk shoves Ayn in return.

KYK  
We will die out to the dragons.

AYN  
Not to this one.

Ayn points:

EXT. DRAGON REMAINS - DAY

The tubular hulk extends from the desert floor. It's the innards of a space ship, not a physical beast. Ayn and Kyk walk among the smoldering wreckage.

KYK  
There!

EXT. DRAGON EGG - DAY

An egg-shaped escape pod. Kyk opens the door.

KYK  
It appears to have hatched.

INT. DRAGON EGG - DAY

Ayn and Kyk squeeze inside. There are benches for eight people. Ayn sniffs, finds a patch of still-wet red blood.

AYN  
At least one of them lives.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

They squat and track for spoor. Ayn points.

AYN  
Footprints.

She looks up. In the distance is the river.

EXT. NEAR THE DESERT RIVER - DAY

A cluster of mudbrick houses hide among palm trees.

KYK  
We might as well yell now, they'll  
not miss our approach.

Ayn does not slow.

KYK  
So now you're too big and powerful  
to even talk?

EXT. DESERT RIVER - DAY

Six spear wielding fishermen protect Tamia.

AYN  
(shouted)  
I bring death!

She holds the bone spear high.

TAMIA  
We will give you your wounded  
savage if you leave us.

EXT. RIVER HOUSE - DAY

TAMIA  
In here.

River houses are built with openings on the upper level. A wooden ladder rests against the side. Ayn climbs the ladder with the bone spear in hand.

INT. RIVER HOUSE - DAY

Vai's body is half-blackened. Iiro sits at her side, uninjured. Ayn inspects the blistered arm.

VAI  
(whispered)  
Forever the hunt.

AYN  
An easy crossing.

She draws a bone dagger from her boot.

IIRO  
Tamia's people can fix her.

AYN  
You would be recast?

Ayn wipes tears from Vai's cheek.

EXT. RIVER HOUSE - DAY

Ayn pulls Vai's mostly unconscious body out of the house. Kyk guards the base of the ladder.

KYK  
Vai!

At the bottom of the ladder, Kyk holds Vai.

TAMIA  
You have your wounded.

Tamia holds a gun. Ayn lashes out with the bone spear and knocks the gun from Tamia's hand.

IIRO  
Huntress! Ayn...she saved us. The  
dragon was dead and she got me and  
Vai to safety.

Ayn points the spear at Tamia.

AYN  
You live as Vai does.

EXT. DESERT RIVER - DAY

Ayn and Tamia in one boat, Iiro, Vai and Kyk in the other.

TAMIA  
Your tool is zucaum. [Broken] Try  
sour wine.

AYN  
Your tricks do no good.

TAMIA  
Ah, savages. You probably mistrust  
the sun will rise tomorrow.

They float down the river. Tamia looks across to Iiro. Her  
lips pull in a smile. Ayn looks annoyed at this.

EXT. DESERT RIVER - DAY

The galley mast is seen around the bend.

EXT. DESERT RIVER, THE GALLEY - DAY

IIRO  
We could have peace with them--we  
can't kill them all.

Ayn grunts. She looks at the mangled Vai.

EXT. HARBOR - DAY

Several columns of smoke rise from the Shores of the Sun.  
Only one of the three Ziggurats still shines light to the  
heavens. The galley rows into harbor.

EXT. THE CLIFFS - DAY

The stairs have been decorated by spears topped with the severed heads of fallen. Tamia recoils from the sight. Ayn's bone spear prods her on.

EXT. HARBOR GATES - DAY

The gates are unhinged. More fallen heads line the walls.

EXT. CITY ROOFTOPS - DAY

The rooftop is in shambles. Men and women loiter and gaze lazily at Ayn, hate filled at Tamia.

AYN  
Stay close, Fallen.

EXT. CITY ROOFTOPS - DAY

A half dozen fallen stumble through the city tied by neck to rope. Their clothes are tatters. The last of them is almost unidentifiable:

VELZEV  
Aku duggae ezeru enkidu!

A rock collides with his face. He falls to one knee. Iiro stumbles between Velzev and the mob.

IIRO  
Batiltu!

KYK  
Somebody should really tell that  
boy the difference between a body  
and a shield.

TAMIA  
Save them or I will not help you.

Ayn looks to Vai, then the crowd. She shoves Iiro out of the way of the stones.

AYN  
Enough!

She uses the bone spear to force the mob back. Her pale eyes glare at the crowd. They slink away.



AYN  
 People of the land I've conquered,  
 ana sepiya maqatu, my property.

The mob disperses.

AYN  
 (to Tamia)  
 They will die by your custom.

She indicates the Ziggurat.

EXT. BASE OF THE ZIGGURAT - DAY

A line of diminutive men waits. Some look to Ayn's parade of fallen with unconcealed hatred. Ayn snarls. They cower.

INT. ZIGGURAT HALLWAYS - INDETERMINATE

Torches now light the ziggurat. Tamia wails in pain. There are hardly any jellyfish now.

INT. ZIGGURAT TEMPLE - INDETERMINATE

Living jellyfish fall from above to splatter on the stalagmite of salt-crusts, manna-drenched jellyfish. Tamia falls prostrate, other Fallen kneel.

AYN  
 You do not kneel?

VELZEV  
 Why 'nheel toha god who make meha  
 mons-ster?

He bows his head to the dead jellyfish.

KYK  
 Huntress!

Vai had gone limp. Ayn grabs Tamia.

AYN  
 Heal her, now.

INT. RECAST POOLS - INDETERMINATE

The room is crowded with the pygmy-like men of the Shores of the Sun. Ayn intercepts one man stepping into a pool.

AYN  
You will wait.

She pushes him aside. Kyk and Iiro haul Vai's unconscious body into the pool. Tamia manipulates the glowing glyphs. Metallic arms descend from the ceiling. One pushes a tube into Vai's chest at her heart. Another goes into her back. Saws cut into her blackened arm and peel away the flesh. The bone lays exposed to the waters of the shallow pool. Lengths of black muscle are attached to her bones.

Recast surround the fallen prisoners. Ayn turns her attention to them. A recast punches one of the prisoners to the ground. Tamia stops her work.

AYN  
You live as she lives.

TAMIA  
Trust a savage to break her promise.

Tamia looks at the growing mob. Ayn steps between the prisoners and recast.

AYN  
These are mine. Makkurum su koru.

The recast advance. Ayn makes space with the bone spear.

AYN  
Back!

Vai spasms in the pool. Her eyes are closed. A mask covers her mouth. Her chest expands in an unnatural forced way.

Ayn points to the fallen.

AYN  
Sunu alalu! [They will be purged]

The crowd cheers, push forward. Ayn batters one.

AYN  
They are my kill.

The mob pauses.

VOICE #1  
Shurpu!

VOICE #2  
Daku!

VOICE #3

Niksum!

A champion separates himself from the crowd. He charges the Fallen. Ayn swings the bone spear, the salt crusted blade strikes his shoulder with an explosion, severing his arm, sending him tumbling.

AYN

Fear me!

They did and backed away. She spins the spear and they back away further. Ayn glances to the bone spear. Something is wrong. There is a crack in the salt-rock that appears to go all the way to the bone.

Vai sits upright in the shallow pool. She looks at her unfinished arm, holds the hand up. She screams. The bones clack and dislocate as her fingers move.

TAMIA

Lay back I can sedate you--

AYN

--She is brave--

TAMIA

--Not what you think--

Ayn vaults into the pool. She crouches at Vai's side and re-sets the fingers.

AYN

Lay. Breathe. Focus.

Vai's chest rises and falls.

AYN

Good.

Vai and Ayn share a look. The metal arms continue to affix dragonscale to Vai.

INT. THORNE ROOM - DAY

Ukko wears a hand-mangled gold crown. His cape is ethereal. The stone tentacles from the jellyfish pool are his throne. Mechs flank him.

Ukko has treasures: a pile of guns, flight suits scattered across the floor, stacks of goat, lamb, pig. A stockpile of vases. Recast loiter.

UKKO

Ayn, you have returned my son.  
 (re: prisoners)  
 And a gift!

AYN

Those of the sky are to be hanged.

UKKO

Too good for them.

Ukko bounds from his elevated throne. The cape flows like a slow motion waterfall.

UKKO

Toss them from the wall. Sometimes they die from the fall. Better when they survive to meet the mob.

AYN

I will hang them.

UKKO

They hanged me! And you let them.

AYN

You dropped me in the sea.

UKKO

Here we stand, reborn of our own wills.

AYN

My will is for them to be hanged.

UKKO

Each demon given as fodder for the mob wakes the lust for vengeance in a dozen men. This army I raise is for Kuu.

Ayn glances to the spear, to Ukko.

IIRO

The mob is yours. They will follow you. Let me give these fallen a mercy. It will show the people your rule will bring law and justice--

UKKO

--they will follow because I am strongest.

(MORE)

UKKO (CONT'D)  
 (returning to the  
 throne)  
 Prove you are a prince. Throw them  
 off.

Ayn reveals shame when she looks to Tamia.

KYK  
 New owner, just as bad.

Anger sieges Ayn's face. She follows Ukko, is interrupted  
 by a scout from the balcony.

SCOUT  
 Drah-gon!

The scout points to the sky: black, oily smoke. Ukko heads  
 to a side passage.

UKKO  
 Prepare the defenses!

Ayn detours to inspect the stockpile of vases: manna.

INT. ANTECHAMBER - DAY

Under guard, Fallen manipulate work stations.

AYN  
 They obey you?

UKKO  
 In jest. They recast my army.  
 Offer seaweed as food. None have  
 revealed the defenses of the  
 Ziggurat.

Ukko's hand clenches.

TAMIA  
 There are none.

UKKO  
 Lies. Dragons burn villages. The  
 power of the dragon-kin I have  
 felt. Now give me the secrets of  
 the Ziggurat!

TAMIA  
 All there is you have seen.

Ukko menaces with raised fist. He points to the wall. The stone glows in a splattering of blue droplets. A desiccated corpse of a Fallen lacks arms and legs.

UKKO

He did not talk so that others  
would.

Tamia steps forward but Ayn grabs her around the mouth and pushes her back to Iiro.

AYN

Take her from here.

Tamia struggles free.

TAMIA

You have no right to slaughter my  
people.

UKKO

Bind this woman.

Ayn pushes Tamia back again.

AYN

She follows me.

UKKO

All the wrong parts of Kuu. The  
rage. The stubbornness. None of  
the love.

He reaches to touch Ayn's face; she slaps his hand away.

AYN

A dragon nears.

UKKO

This one will not be yours.

Ukko exits. Ayn follows.

INT. THRONE ROOM - DAY

Ukko on the stride.

UKKO

I need two jumpers!

Recast scramble to their feet and race to formation before Ukko. He claps one on the shoulders. The recast remains tall and straight.

UKKO

Two of you will have the honor of  
killing a dragon!

Ayn's face reveals jealousy. She looks to the horizon,  
squints. Seven or eight places where the black smoke  
flickers orange and red.

AYN

Old man, they are many.

Ukko strides to her.

UKKO

Good.

(to the recast)

Fetch more demon skins! Today we  
show them the might of Ukko, King  
of the Recast!

INT. THRONE ROOM - DAY

Thudding, steps precede two recast operating mechs.

UKKO

When the first dragon approaches,  
wait. Do not jump. Let them think  
us savages. Not men capable of  
war.

Ukko paces, his long cape trailing.

UKKO

Let them come to us. They will be  
overconfident. Their dragons will  
circle overhead with plump bellies  
exposed. Then we jump! Pluck them  
from the sky! Let your body be the  
arrow. Manna will eat them from  
the inside. Long will live the  
names of Etana and Balih!

Ukko slaps each mech center chest.

EXT. THRONE ROOM BALCONY - DAY

Ukko's mechs huddle near the great archways.

EXT. ABOVE THE CITY - DAY

Lightning arcs between the dragons that burn across the sky. The crackle and roar is loud.

INT. THRONE ROOM - DAY

UKKO  
(whispered)  
Wait.

EXT. ABOVE THE CITY - DAY

One dragon pulls from the pack and settles into a lazy, bobbing flight around the city. Mechs fall from its belly, their wings burning.

INT. THRONE ROOM - DAY

UKKO  
Now!

EXT. THRONE ROOM BALCONY - DAY

The two recast, their mechs heavy with manna pots, jump to the air. Their wings flame.

EXT. ABOVE THE CITY - DAY

Ukko's jumpers fly towards the dragon. Mechs move to intercept. Lances of blue fire cross the sky. One of Ukko's recast is struck. Manna conflagrates him.

EXT. THRONE ROOM BALCONY - DAY

Ayn shields from the brightness. She looks. The other jumper is a sliver in the sky.

EXT. ABOVE THE CITY - DAY

Ukko's last surviving jumper evades lances of blue flame. He slams into the belly of the dragon.

For a moment, nothing.

Paroxysms of flame leap from the dragon's belly before innards spill to the city below. The dragon explodes.



EXT. THRONE ROOM BALCONY - DAY

Assembled recast cheer. Ukko holds a gun-sword. He fans blue flame above himself.

UKKO  
I am Ukko! King of Recast!

EXT. ABOVE THE CITY - DAY

The eight remaining dragons fly away from the city to settle in a lazy orbit on the horizon.

EXT. THRONE ROOM BALCONY - DAY

He smashes his fist to his dragonscale chest.

UKKO  
They fear Ukko!

Another cheer from the men.

EXT. ABOVE THE CITY - DAY

Dozens of mechs spill from dragons, fly to the Ziggurat.

INT. THRONE ROOM - DAY

The pride huddles inside.

TAMIA  
None will survive. These fallen  
are trained in the use of the  
jump-cloaks and fire-swords.  
Ukko's men are farmers and slaves.

AYN  
They fight with passion of free  
men.

TAMIA  
They are fools! Surrender. Your  
fate will be merciful.

AYN  
We fight.

She crosses to the vases of manna. In rage, Ayn shatters one with the knobby base of the bone spear. The base glows.

She attempts to dip the tip, but the salt-rock inhibits the manna.

She kneels at the manna puddle and uses a shard of the pot to lift some to her lips. She drinks greedily and reels. The world vibrates around her. The spear glows.

EXT. THRONE ROOM BALCONY - DAY

Mechs fall to skirmish. Ayn dashes for the nearest, smashes the glowing base of the bone spear. Hundreds of embers burst. Her next swing, for the head, topples the mech. Ayn pants.

Another mech hovers past the balcony's parapet. Flame shoots from its gun-sword. Ayn dashes.

INT. THRONE ROOM - DAY

Ayn backs a pillar. Flame leaps past her.

AYN  
Manna pots!

Kyk and Vai grab vases, run them to Ayn. Ayn hands Kyk the bone spear and takes a vase.

EXT. THRONE ROOM BALCONY - DAY

Ayn dashes. She slides, her foot catches the parapet, pops her up and she hurtles the pot. The mech uses its gun-sword -- ignites the manna into a fireball that consumes the mech.

Mechs slaughter Ukko's recast across the balcony. Kyk tosses the bone spear to Ayn, who holds them off. She lurches, exhausted, her body seeming to teleport instead of move naturally.

UKKO  
Backlash! Jump! Abatu!

He leaps to sky.

Nearby mechs swing gun-swords Ayn's way. She ducks under flame. She swings, knocks one from the sky so it skids across the balcony.

She pants, struggles to her feet. Another swing of the bone spear collides with a gun-sword and deflects its flame away. She bashes the knee, the mech falls.

Ayn winds up for a finishing strike when she screams.

REDNESS.

An air-raid siren continues until this sequence ends. Redness fades. Ayn seems to float. In reality, Kyk and Vai drag her.

IIRO  
Huntress! Come! Hurry!

Ayn struggles to stand. Fallen stare at her with fear and hatred. Ayn straightens her posture and fights pain with every step.

INT. ANTECHAMBER - DAY

Tamia frantically rearranges glyphs.

TAMIA  
They're going to destroy the city!

AYN  
The dragons do not near.

TAMIA  
They send fire and brimstone. Run!

INT. THRONE ROOM - DAY

On the move...

IIRO  
We have to evacuate the city!

TAMIA  
There isn't time! Get to the sea.  
The bluffs will protect us.

AYN  
We stay. Fight.

TAMIA  
You can't fight this.

EXT. CITY ROOFTOPS - DAY

IIRO  
Abatu!

He leads. Tamia is close behind him, flanked by the Fallen prisoners. Vai and Kyk help Ayn along. Around them, the mob panics.

EXT. THE CLIFFS - DAY

Iiro, Tamia, and the Fallen outpace the huntresses.

EXT. HARBOR - DAY

Tamia and the fallen prepare to cast off a boat. Ayn points to Malah's larger galley.

AYN  
Earn your freedom. Row.

EXT. OPEN SEA - DAY

MALAH  
Hakka! Hakka!

The galley turns to move along the coast.

IIRO  
There!

An ICBM trailed by white smoke.

TAMIA  
Destroyer of worlds.

Tamia hides her head in her arms.

IIRO  
Cover your eyes!

A nuclear detonation. The shockwave passes over them and bows away the distant sea. The water level lowers.

AYN  
To sea! Sehba!

Malah looks at her, confused. Ayn points to the receding water, then to the cliffs. Understanding comes to Malah's face.

MALAH  
Sulfa hiaticum! [Profanity]

The crewmen pull for their lives. The galley races down the depression of water. Behind, the fireball and mushroom cloud rise. The wave rushes back at them.

AYN

Grab hold!

The wave sends the galley vertical. Timbers creak. Several crewmen and Fallen tumble to the sea. Ayn hugs the bone spear against the gunwale. Her legs dangle.

The boat pitches forward. It smashes to the water and Ayn falls to the footboards. Cheers. Ayn exhales.

EXT. HARBOR - DAY

The tidal wave dashes the harbor and moored ships to timbers.

EXT. THE CLIFFS - DAY

Flaming debris and title wave collide.

EXT. OPEN SEA - DAY

TAMIA

Row! The cloud is brimstone. It  
will melt your flesh.

Malah cracks the whip.

EXT. NILE RIVER BANK - DAY

Ayn lays in sunlight. Next to her, the tip of the bone spear has been wrapped in bear-hide.

EXT. NILE RIVER - DAY

Iiro and Tamia swim and splash in the yellow-muddy river.

EXT. NILE RIVER BANK - DAY

Vai picks at the tiny gold hexagons latticing her dragonscale arm. The four remaining Fallen prisoners huddle in the shade of a palm tree, Velzev among them. Distant: Kyk and Malah entwine.

EXT. NILE RIVER - DAY

Vai tentatively places her hand in the water, splashes with crimson fingers.

Iiro and Tamia swim in the current. He's a capable swimmer, but Tamia seems unnaturally gifted even if she stays to the shaded sections of river.

Kyk swaggers to Ayn's side. Ayn crinkles her nose.

AYN  
You should bathe.

Kyk drops to the sand, writhes.

KYK  
Yes, but more mating first. You should try it. Like...when the seed takes I can be as Kuu was.

AYN  
Remember Kuu's fate.

KYK  
All the more reason to enjoy the planting!

She laughs and splay to the sun. Ayn leaves.

EXT. NILE RIVER BANK - DAY

Ayn and Malah cross paths.

AYN  
You did not leave.

MALAH  
(indicates Tamia)  
She promising freedom. Reward of saving her and men.

EXT. NILE RIVER BANK - DAY

Ayn sits, offers Tamia a fish.

AYN  
Demon, could none survive the firestorm.

Tamia shakes her head, flushes blue. Ayn guts the fish, eats its flesh raw.

AYN  
Your kind murders entire cities.

TAMIA  
The blame is mine.

She looks to the sky, then away from Ayn to wipe tears from her face.

AYN  
I will have vengeance.

TAMIA  
Better to pretend to be dead. Or  
you will be hunted until there are  
no more of your kind outside of  
slavery.

EXT. NILE FLOODPLAIN - DAY

The floodplain is vast. Occasional strips of high ground  
are anchored by palms and sycamores.

Ayn points to a heron.

AYN  
Does it flock with fish?

IIRO  
No, it eats them.

AYN  
You wear the skin of the demon.

IIRO  
It protected me from fire! Vai  
would be whole if she wore one--

Ayn slaps him.

AYN  
You wish to be one of them?

IIRO  
No.

AYN  
You swim with the demon-woman.

IIRO

She's not a demon.

(beat)

I saw Tamia's thoughts. They own  
the stars.

AYN

We learn their magic.

Ayn opens the pouch of dried manna. Some salt water had  
leaked in and turned half the dust to salt-rock.

EXT. NILE PALM GROVE - DAY

Four Fallen prisoners remain. They huddle in the shade,  
their skin covered in dried mud. Velzev stands at Ayn's  
approach.

VELZEV

Now you will be executioner.

She saws the rope that binds his wrists.

AYN

You earned your freedom.

Velzev's wrists bleed, the mud wets blue.

EXT. NILE RIVER BANK - DAY

The freed Fallen surround Tamia.

AYN

You are free. She is not.

VELZEV

We will guard her. She is kishar  
dayyanum [speaker of the gods]. I  
am etluargal [warrior].

AYN

They are warriors too?

VELZEV

They are kalum [priests]. If  
she will, she will. If she will, she will.  
They will go to death for her.

AYN

You would give up freedom to stay  
near her?



VELZEV

Yes.

AYN

Malah! Lash these slaves to oars!

EXT. NILE RIVER, THE GALLEY - DAY

At times the river widens enough that the banks disappear on the horizon. In the stern, Tamia uses a reed filter to strain water into clay vases. In the bow, Kyk tilts her head to the four Fallen amidship.

KYK

Better to kill them now than let them sneak a blade in our sleep.

Ayn remains stoic.

AYN

The woman-demon is a high priestess.

KYK

Ransom?

AYN

A guide. The cowards are her priests. Watch Dragon-leg. When he touches a weapon, kill him.

Ayn watches the fallen row. She looks up:

EXT. NILE RIVER, OVERHEAD - DAY

A half-dozen mechs fly.

EXT. NILE RIVER, THE GALLEY - DAY

The galley stops its pursuit.

AYN

Malah! Do not let them flee!

MALAH

The marsh too shallow!

Ayn takes a long spear from the deck. She stabs it into the muddy water.

AYN  
We will part the reeds. Find the  
channel.

VAI  
Huntress! More boats--dozens of  
them.

Vai acts as lookout on the mast.

EXT. NILE REED SEA - DAY

Several small river boats cross the reeds.

EXT. NILE REED SEA, THE GALLEY - DAY

Kyk is at the bow, Vai at the aft, each with bow and  
arrows. The oars row without Malah's cadence.

KYK  
Our speed is lost to the winding  
channel.

EXT. NILE REED SEA - DAY

A small boat sees the galley between the reeds.

NILE WARRIOR  
Ahaela!

EXT. NILE REED SEA, THE GALLEY - DAY

Ayn looks to Malah. He nods, uncoils, and cracks his whip.  
The galley gains speed. Ayn continues to test the mud.

AYN  
Hakka!

She stabs the other side.

AYN  
Mhina! Stop! Back!

They hit a sand bar at high speed and glide to a stop on  
it. Through the reeds: blue. Ayn climbs hand-over-hand up  
the ship's bow and perches. The higher vantage reveals a  
deep blue lake of water. She returns to the deck.

AYN  
Malah! Get us forward.

MALAH  
We be aground!

AYN  
Then get out and push. A lake!

She points.

MALAH  
A lake? Aye. A lake.

AYN  
Vai! Kyk!

Ayn points to the sand bar, retrieves javelins.

EXT. NILE SANDBAR - DAY

The three huntresses ready.

KYK  
Let's just hope the boat doesn't  
leave without us.

AYN  
Did your mating scare him away?

Kyk laughs, nocks an arrow.

AYN  
Have you practiced with the arm?

VAI  
The draw seems too easy now.

A river boat pushes through the reeds. Two archers on the boat aim at the huntresses. Arrows exchange. The archers die. Kyk is shot in the thigh.

Two more boats push through the reeds. Ayn hurtles a javelin that knocks a commanding Fallen from his boat. More arrows exchange. The archers and Fallen die.

VAI  
The ship!

The galley moves towards the lake.

AYN  
Kyk!

Kyk pulls at the arrow, screams.

KYK

It grips.

Ayn puts her shoulder under Kyk's to help her to the galley. Malah leaps the gunwale and splashes to them. He cradles Kyk in his arms.

EXT. NILE REED SEA, THE GALLEY - DAY

The huntresses and Malah board the galley.

EXT. NILE LAKE - DAY

The galley bursts from the reed sea and gains speed on the open water.

EXT. NILE LAKE, THE GALLEY - DAY

Ayn breaks the arrow that's in Kyk's thigh, leaving a small amount of the arrow in her.

AYN

It will keep till shore.

IIRO

How many will you kill?

AYN

They came after us.

IIRO

No. Not you.

(indicates Tamia)

Us.

AYN

You? You are of them now?

IIRO

I am my own man--

AYN

--You are of my tribe!

Iiro claws at the flight-suit to peel an arm out of it. He shows the scars on his back.

IIRO

This is what it means to be your tribe?

AYN  
A mistake.

IIRO  
That's all? Just a mistake? My  
whole life--one of pain. Just a  
mistake to you?

Ayn's outrage masks her guilt.

EXT. NILE LAKE - DAY

The galley moves swift across the lake. Two dozen small  
river boats enter the lake behind.

EXT. NILE LAKE, THE GALLEY - DAY

AYN  
Can you still draw?

Kyk stands, tries the draw of a bow, nods.

AYN  
Good.

Ayn points to the far shore.

AYN  
We set ambush.

EXT. NILE LAKE SHORE - DAY

Ayn, submerged to the chin, waits amidst tall reeds.  
Smeared mud colors her the same as the water.

The distant sound of dragonsign.

A river boat rows past Ayn.

NILE SCOUT (OS)  
Em-depet!

Another rows past her.

EXT. NILE LAKE SHORE, OVERHEAD - DAY

From the sky, its easy to see a third of the fleet has  
ventured into the trap.

EXT. NILE LAKE SHORE - DAY

Ayn warbles like a crane.

EXT. NILE LAKE SHORE, SANDBAR - DAY

Kyk looses a flaming arrow...

EXT. NILE LAKE - DAY

...which explodes a cluster of manna-bombs on a river boat.  
The sound of Malah's whip cracking:

EXT. NILE LAKE SHORE, THE GALLEY - DAY

MALAH

Tahazu!

Two dozen crewmen splash from the water, overwhelm the three man scout boat. The crewmen shove the galley back to the water, board, and grab oars. The galley bursts and crushes a pair of river-boats.

One boat retreats towards Ayn and Vai. The huntresses spring from the reeds and capsize the boat. They stab the crew with bone daggers.

One last trapped boat turns in circles. A fallen commands. One of the men throws a lit pottery grenade. Flame erupts in front of Ayn's face. She flinches. Vai has caught the grenade in her dragonscale hand. Oily flames burn down the length.

Vai races to the boat, grabs it with her flaming hand, and overturns it.

EXT. NILE LAKE - DAY

Ten more river boats cluster, in command, NARMER (35), a human with a pale painted face and eye-liner to look like a Fallen. The boats row towards Kyk.

EXT. NILE LAKE SHORE - DAY

Ayn splash-wades after the flotilla. She watches as dozens of arrows cross the sky. Vai sees as well.

VAI

Kyk!

Narmer's flotilla rows for the galley.

AYN  
Get the fire arrows.

EXT. OVER THE SAVANNA - DAY

Mechs scrum. Gouts of dragon-flame fill the sky. A mech explodes.

EXT. NILE LAKE SHORE, GALLEY - DAY

A fierce fight between crewmen and river people. Malah wields his whip as a weapon.

Ayn nears. A mech crashes through a reed boat. Sun-glinting water drips off its bulky shoulders. It faces Ayn. The head is open. Ukko grins.

An archer shoots. Ukko catches and crushes the arrow. He strides to the archer's boat, pulls it from the water like a toy, tumbling its occupants to the marsh. Ukko uses the boat as a club to attack nearby boats.

Missiles monsoon from the sky. Ukko leaps. Explosions shred the galley. Amid the wreckage: the bone spear.

Narmer's river boat blocks Ayn from the spear. Ayn screams, charges, the water slows her. Narmer aims a recursive bow. He misses. Two Warriors jump from a nearby boat and splash to intercept Ayn.

The first swings a copper sword at Ayn. She arches away from the strike, her hair drags in the water, and when she leaps to counter, muddy strands of hair plaster to her face. Her bone dagger stabs his neck.

Another arrow from Narmer; Ayn pulls the other warrior in its path. Ayn flicks the bone dagger. It strikes Narmer's shoulder. He drops the bow and falls from the boat.

Ayn sloshes to the bone spear. She grabs it, thrusts it into the water. It steams. She pulls it out, inspects it. Manna-stone still crusts the blade.

EXT. OVER THE SAVANNA - DAY

Ukko splits the heavens with crackling blue flame and a mech explodes and rains detritus.

EXT. THE SAVANNA - DAY

Ayn runs up the bank to the desert.

EXT. OVER THE SAVANNA - DAY

Two mechs remain. An airborne cross and exchange of blue flames. They race back together, smash together and fall as two pinwheels.

EXT. THE SAVANNA - DAY

Twin plumes of smoke mark the crashed mechs. The nearer struggles to its feet: Ukko. The two dash towards each other. Dragon-flame lances, grasses burn.

Gun-swords clang together. Mech feet kick up dust. They melee. One mech loses its gun-sword, kicks the other away. Ukko aims his gun-sword. The other fires missiles. Ukko's mech collapses. He falls out, shrouded in smoke. He stands, wrenches the gun-sword from the wreckage.

Ukko leaps. The other mech catches him by the chest. Its other knobby hand grabs him by both legs and wrenches Ukko in two with a wet pop. Ayn's eyes widen.

AYN  
(whispered)  
Ukko.

Ayn charges the mech, bone spear ready. A flame arrow arcs over Ayn and bounces harmlessly off the mech.

Ayn glances. Vai. The mech launches missiles. The swirl of explosive flame conceals Vai.

Ayn sprints. Her breath and footfalls are fast and urgent. She screams. The mech turns. She lunges, stabs the manna-rock tip into the chest of the mech.

A powerful explosion throws Ayn backwards.

She lands, skids, rolls to her feet. A ringing noise. The mech's chest is blackened, a gap has opened. Ayn runs, leaps onto the mech, rips at the wound. Metal hands grab for her. She is nimble on the mech's back. She pulls at the opening again, tears it wider. Inside, Velzev's face is shiny with blue blood.

Ayn's hand shoots the gap, grips his trachea, digs fingernails into the soft connective tissues, and yanks once. A gush of blood wets his flight-suit.



The mech stands immobile. Velzev gurgles and dies.

EXT. THE SAVANNA - DAY

Ayn kneels at Ukko's side. He's been torn in two -- he should be dead. Flicker-visions make it hard to tell if Ayn is imagining this:

UKKO  
Kuu, it's you.

AYN  
Shh. Just rest.

She strokes his cheek. His spine and entrails wet the ground with fluids that roil crimson and black.

UKKO  
Give me your love. One last time.

Ayn kisses his forehead, his cheeks, then his lips.

AYN  
Forever the hunt.

EXT. THE SAVANNA - DAY

Vai coughs. She is a mess of mud, blood, dust, and smoke.

VAI  
My huntress.

She squats next to Ayn. She puts her human arm around Ayn's shoulders and leans her head to the sobbing huntress's head.

EXT. NILE LAKE SHORE - DAY

Vai and Ayn limp together. Blood flows down Ayn's shoulder, and down the side of her head.

EXT. LIME GROVE - DAY

Ayn and Vai limp together. Ayn is bloody.

VAI  
Where did Iiro go...

Ayn looks:

EXT. THE SAVANNA - DAY

Iiro and Tamia flee. Ayn chases.

AYN

Iiro!

He turns to face her, wields a gun.

IIRO

Goodbye Ayn.

AYN

Iiro -- your father is dead.

IIRO

No more my father than that spear  
is my mother. Can't you see my  
place is with them?

Ayn slows, holds the bone spear behind her back, and holds  
out a blood soaked hand towards him.

AYN

Boy, your place is with me.

IIRO

Come no closer.

His body tenses. She stops.

AYN

Iiro.

IIRO

Ayn.

AYN

Your destiny is to stop them.

IIRO

I know what the wisps told you.  
Kill the boy and the world is  
yours. Spare him and it will bring  
about the death of us all.

AYN

They are liars!

IIRO

You hear the words, not the  
meaning. With or without those of  
the sky, you've already lost. The  
world doesn't need you anymore.

Ayn is silent.

IIRO  
I have to make a deal with them. I  
have to save us all.

AYN  
Betrayer! You will sell us all to  
slavery!

IIRO  
We will learn much from them. This  
isn't the time to rebel.

AYN  
Learn to be as oxen? Clever  
animals to do their field work?

He backs away from her.

AYN  
Iiro!

Tamia runs towards the approaching dragon.

AYN  
Enough! You come with--

Iiro shoots. The bullet spins Ayn around to one knee. She  
staggers to her feet.

IIRO  
Ayn. Don't make me kill you.

AYN  
You! You? You kill me?

IIRO  
Go north. Mate. Hunt. And die out.

AYN  
Iiro...the old ways...

IIRO  
The old ways? You rule the pride  
like a Queen.

Again she coils to charge. Iiro shoots her in the thigh.  
She falls to her knees.

AYN  
Boy...boy.

A ringing gives way to the sucking sound of the dragon. The blue mouth of the dragon froths. A claw extends to grip Tamia. Iiro joins her.

AYN

Boy!

She grips her thigh, fails to stand. The claw takes Tamia and Iiro into the dragon's belly. The dragon rises and flies away. Ayn rages.

EXT. SAVANNA DUEL SITE - DAY

Ayn pulls Velzev's corpse from the wrecked mech. With her thumbs she gouges the eyes. She cuts the belly and exposes entrails.

AYN

You should have burned with your city.

EXT. SAVANNA LIME TREE - DAY

Ayn digs a grave. Ayn and Vai drag Ukko's upper body to the grave. Ayn carves the sigil of the bear into the tree. She looks up. Limps.

EXT. SAVANNA - DAY

Malah carries Kyk. Arrows protrude from her back.

MALAH

Beletseri scibing her name.

EXT. SAVANNA CAMP - DAY

Ayn cuts the barbed arrowheads from Kyk, rinses the wounds with lime oil, packs them with a charcoal poultice. Kyk's unconscious body soaks in sweat.

EXT. SAVANNA CAMP - EVENING

Ayn awakes. Her wounds have been packed with poultice. A pile of manna-bombs are stacked away from the fire.

VAI

Foul?

She holds out a fire roasted carcass. Ayn eats. Vai picks char from her arm. Underneath, it has transmuted from red dragonscale to a goldenscale.

AYN  
Ukko dead. Iiro gone. I have  
killed no dragons.

VAI  
Yet.  
(beat)  
I don't mind the new arm. At first  
it reeked of dragon magic. Now it  
smells right. My mother would  
approve.

She holds the golden arm to the light.

AYN  
The arm is my fault.

VAI  
This arm will wrestle the biggest  
of the northmen to the ground--and  
my thighs will hold him there.

Vai laughs prettily, Ayn reacts with longing.

AYN  
Do not believe Kyk's stories.

VAI  
Malah was the one who told me  
about the thighs.

AYN  
Do not believe his either.

Ayn half-smiles.

EXT. SAVANNA CAMP - MORNING

Ayn stares at the smoldering fire.

KYK  
No fish for days--where is the  
boy? Or has he already hunted them  
all?

AYN  
Gone. Fled by dragon.

KYK  
No doubt he fancies himself a  
dragon tamer.

One of the long timers splits in two and collapses, causing  
a momentary burst of flame and stirred embers.

AYN  
The wisps told me to kill him.

KYK  
(disbelief)  
No.

AYN  
Kill him and the world is  
mine...or spare him and all die.  
(beat)  
Kuu called him a god-killer. He is  
of them. No more of our tribe. He  
wears their skin. Iiro the Fallen.  
(beat)  
The sky turned a city to ash. Who  
can stand against that? Who?

KYK  
No one.

AYN  
Us. We hunt gods of the sky.

EXT. SAVANNA - DAY

Vai and Kyk wrangle a wild goat. They lead it back to a  
small flock that Ayn and Malah supervise.

EXT. SAVANNA - DAY

Vai and Ayn prepare deer carcasses.

EXT. CONFLUENCE OF TIGRIS AND EUPHRATES - DAY

The heroes hike along the shoreline. Vai and Kyk herd  
goats. crewmen carry deer carcasses.

A Ziggurat overlooks galleys entering the straight  
Euphrates to be pulled upstream by yoked slaves. Other  
galleys float down the Tigris to return to the sea.

EXT. MANNA PADDIES - DAY

Shallow irrigation ditches feed a vast network of manna paddies that covers all the land between the twin rivers.

VAI

They have no trees. No reeds. No bushes. Nothing.

MALAH

Manna and ziggurats. All that those of the sky love.

Dozens of ziggurats line the horizon, each with a column of silvery blue light extending to the heavens where the Chariot of the Digir spins.

EXT. MUDBRICK CITY, GATES - DAY

FOUR SUMERIAN MEN stand guard.

AYN

No dragon-kin?

Malah shrugs. They approach the guards.

SUMERIAN GUARD #1

Anazu ala?

Ayn points to the gazelle meat.

He rubs two fingers together. The guards open the gates. Ayn, Malah, and the crewmen enter.

Vai and Kyk keep watch over the weapons. The guards's eyes find Vai often.

EXT. MUDBRICK CITY, BAZZAR - DAY

Like the shores of the sun, this is a city of rooftops.

Men and women barter dried manna vases for small metal rings.

AYN

What are those?

MALAH

Guskin. Each ring be barter for a loaf of bread, a jug of ale.

EXT. MUDBRICK CITY, ANIMAL MONGER - DAY

Malah barter the wild goats.

EXT. MUDBRICK CITY, MEAT MONGER - DAY

Malah barter the remains of the gazelles.

Malah hands Ayn a necklace with over two hundred copper guskin. Ayn pushes it away.

AYN

They will jingle when I walk.

MALAH

Shows you too be respected.

He puts the necklace on her. Ayn counts the rings.

EXT. MUDBRICK CITY, ALE MONGER - DAY

Laborers trade guskin for green potted jugs. Ayn redeems guskin for a dozen jugs of ale and as many loaves of bread.

EXT. NEAR THE RIVER - DAY

The pride and crewmen drink from jugs of ale.

AYN

Empty them. Let them dry. Fill them with white manna.

Malah points at the large round vases from the Manna Addicts.

MALAH

What be wrong with these vases?

AYN

They stand out.

crewmen and the pride drink and eat. Ayn sees in the distance:

EXT. RIVER'S EDGE - DAY

A long line of yoked slaves pulls a galley. One slave collapses. The slave master whips the slave repeatedly. When he fails to rise, the slave master pulls him to his feet.



He inspects him, cuts the slave free, helps him to the side of the bank, then slits his throat and pushes him to the ground. The line of slaves continues on.

EXT. NEAR THE RIVER - DAY

Ayn points to the dead slave, jingles her necklace.

AYN  
How many guskin for a slave?

MALAH  
A north man? Strong and broad?  
Twenty. For others, ten or less.

Ayn stands, walks...

EXT. RIVER'S EDGE - DAY

Ayn kneels at the dead slave. His skin has been whipped extensively. Swollen black lumps on his neck; sighs of the black plague.

EXT. MANNA PADDIES - DAY

Men and women tend the expanses of manna paddies.

They pride hikes.

EXT. CLUSTER OF HUTS - DAY

A MAN and WOMAN work at a large flat stone.

AYN  
Mannaza ba guskinga.

She jangles her necklace of guskin, points at their jugs of dried manna.

EXT. MANNA PADDIES - DAY

Ayn mixes dried manna with white manna in ale jugs.

EXT. RIVER'S EDGE, CAMP - NIGHT

Ayn watches a distant smoldering mound. She stands and leaves camp.

EXT. RIVER'S EDGE, SMOLDERING MOUND - NIGHT

A twisted heap of bodies. Arms, legs, torsos all visible. Some are infants. The pile burns slowly.

Ayn stares in controlled horror. Above, a flaming dragon flies from the Chariot of the Digir to a nearby Ziggurat.

EXT. THE GRAND ZIGGURAT - DAY

Four smaller ziggurats connect to the grand ziggurat by ramps. Before the ziggurat sprawls a mudbrick city.

EXT. BASE OF THE GRAND ZIGGURAT - DAY

Ayn points to a dragon roosting at a smaller ziggurat.

AYN

We will feed them manna. When they  
wake they will choke--burn from  
the inside.

EXT. MUDBRICK CITY, TOOL CRAFTER - DAY

Malah barter for a length of linen rope. He brings it to Ayn, who uses it to bound his wrists.

KYK

Known as we were before I doubt  
they will be eager to let us feed  
their pets.

AYN

We are huntresses--slavers. Malah  
escaped the City of Ash.

She nods to the river.

KYK

And?

AYN

We are savages. We hide our faces.

EXT. THE GRAND ZIGGURAT, STAIRS - DAY

The pride, their faces painted in clumps of mud, join the line of slaves carrying manna. Malah and his men are tied to hafts of spears.

EXT. THE GRAND ZIGGURAT, THE GATES - DAY

Four guards and a mech patrol the door. The slave in front of them steps to the mech. His face appears with green glyphs that shift to yellow.

MECH  
Ikkibu basi alaku.

Two human guards drag the slave to the edge of the ziggurat. They slit his throat and toss his body off the side.

MECH  
Uzuzzu.

It waits for Ayn. Mud faced, she walks with a broken posture to the mech. It creates a spinning copy of her face, mud and all.

MECH  
Alazu?

Ayn holds up the necklace of guskin and rattles it.

AYN  
Barter for these runaways.

The mech points a bulky finger at Malah.

MECH  
Uzuzzu.

Malah and the slaves shuffle forward, tied to the bone spear. Malah's likeness appears with flashing black glyphs. Ayn tenses. The mech steps. Thud. Ayn's hand hovers over the dagger in her boot. The mech inspects the next man. Black glyphs. Thud.

Ayn's fingers touch the strings holding the manna pouch to her belt. The mech turns and sweeps its massive hand to the gates.

MECH  
Alaku.

Ayn slinks. The pride follows.

EXT. THE GRAND ZIGGURAT, BALCONY - DAY

Each of the four gated bridges leading to the smaller Ziggurats are guarded by a mech and four guards. A crowd fills the balcony, looks to the mezzanine.

EXT. THE GRAND ZIGGURAT, MEZZANINE - DAY

Iiro, dressed in Fallen formal, addresses the crowds. He's amplified by speakers.

IIRO  
...ikkibu mitu subur...

EXT. THE GRAND ZIGGURAT, BALCONY - DAY

The pride pushes through the crowd.

KYK  
The lion pelt was a better look on him.

VAI  
What does he say?

AYN  
The dead cannot be buried.

CROWD  
(whispered, repeated)  
...mursu...

EXT. THE GRAND ZIGGURAT, MEZZANINE - DAY

IIRO  
Kalum gabu zini nam usella mituti!

EXT. THE GRAND ZIGGURAT, BALCONY - DAY

AYN  
Priests beg the dead to spare the living.

CROWD  
Alame shurpu! Alame shurpu!

AYN  
Purity by fire.

IIRO (OS)  
Ezeru dabdume!

Ayn shakes her head.

AYN  
He speaks of a curse.

The crowd pushes against one another.

CROWD VOICE #1 (OS)  
...akalume...

CROWD VOICE #2 (OS)  
...ebebume...

CROWD VOICE #3 (OS)  
...salamume...

The crowd begins a transformation to mob.

EXT. THE GRAND ZIGGURAT, MEZZANINE - DAY

Tamia's dress floats like a translucent shimmer in the sky.  
She touches Iiro's arm.

EXT. THE GRAND ZIGGURAT, BALCONY - DAY

Ayn recoils in disgust. The mob pushes into her. She bares her teeth and shoves back against the mob. A man tries to punch her, she slides out of the way.

AYN  
Be still!

WOMAN  
Dabdumu!

She pokes Ayn with a stick. Ayn grabs the stick, pokes the woman back.

Ayn pushes her way to the crewmen, who are being jostled violently. She cuts them free with her bone dagger.

A thrown rock strikes Ayn in the head. She screams. She unwraps the bear-hide from the blade of the bone spear, sees that it is now unbroken, a pink scar on the spear where it was previously damaged. She swings the spear above her head to make the crowd back away.

EXT. THE GRAND ZIGGURAT, MEZZANINE - DAY

Tamia pulls Iiro with her to an open door.

IIRO  
Subarruru! Kanasu! [Quiet, submit]

EXT. THE GRAND ZIGGURAT, BALCONY - DAY

A mech walks through the mob, its voice rasps.

MECH  
Subarruru! Kanasu!

It closes on Ayn. She pushes through the crowd, uses the bone spear to make space.

The sound of shattering pottery. Red dust flies into the air. The screams of the crowd. A man falls down in paroxysms, his skin blistering.

Ayn holds the bone spear high above her head.

AYN  
STOP!

MAN  
Nansharur...

WOMAN  
(echoing)  
Nansharur...

The crowd begins to chant. They aren't looking at Ayn, they're looking past her. Ayn turns. Vai stands with her golden arm gleaming.

CROWD  
(chanting)  
...nansharur...

One MAN prostrates. Ayn walks to Vai.

AYN  
We must go.

VAI  
But Iiro.

KYK  
The dragons.

The THUD of approaching mech.

AYN  
We draw too much attention. Too many will die.

They push and shove their way back to the gates.

EXT. THE GRAND ZIGGURAT, GATES - DAY

The pride joins the flow of mob rushing from the broken open gates.

EXT. THE RIVER'S EDGE - DAY

The huntresses crumble mud from their faces and rinse with the clear river water.

KYK

We run--with Ukko on our side we would take on whole armies of them.

Ayn looks to the swift moving current.

AYN

We follow the river.

VAI

All this way to give up?

KYK

(not dissuaded)

Could I not be as Kuu? How many dragons did she slay?

AYN

Kuu did not win. Think of the boy. He would find their weakness. Strike only once. Remember the river people?

KYK

Flat teeth and all?

AYN

They worship the fallen. Want to be them. They turn the river to control the flood.

Ayn makes a mound of dirt to trap an eddy of water.

AYN

Manna only grows in shallow pools.

Downstream of the mound, Ayn makes several small impressions that seep full of water.

AYN

We flood the river.

She kicks over the mound of dirt. The trapped water pours over and washes out the small impressions.

AYN

Wipe out the manna. Starving dragons will be easier to slay.

Kyk joins Ayn in the stream. They gaze at the horizon.

KYK

The source of the river...we have a long walk ahead of us.

EXT. RIVER'S EDGE - DAY

The pride and crewmen hike.

EXT. END OF THE RIVER - DAY

Water froths from the base of sheer cliffs.

EXT. RIVERSIDE CLIFFS - DAY

Ayn, Vai, and Kyk climb the cliffs.

EXT. RESERVOIR LAKE - DAY

Deep, blue. A fish jumps.

KYK

Leave it to fish to remind me how much I miss the boy.

Ayn scrutinizes the rocky dam. The edges are natural boulders, but the middle is smoother, nearly concrete.

AYN

They made these cliffs.

VAI

A wall to hold back water?

Ayn points.

EXT. RIVER VALLEY - DAY

Below them, the rivers of the Tigris and Euphrates flow to the sea. A line of ziggurats between the rivers.



A line of galleys is pulled up one river, across their shared headwaters, and then the boats float down the other river.

AYN (OS)  
To control the river.

EXT. RESERVOIR LAKE - DAY

AYN  
We will drown the manna.

EXT. MOUNTAIN FOOTHILLS, CAMP - NIGHT

A boar roasts over fire.

One of the crewmem leers at Vai. She discourages him with a single flex of her golden fingers.

KYK  
Will it be enough?

The stockpile of manna.

AYN  
Place it where the cliff and large rocks meet. From elevation, light it by arrow. I return to the heart. Six days from now, at dawn, burn the manna.

VAI  
I will go with you.

AYN  
I go alone.

KYK  
Against dragons and demons we should stay together. Malah and his men can burn manna as easily as we can.

AYN  
Kyk. My friend--my sister. You bear child. Travel north. Beyond the pridelands. Take Vai, find her a good northman, strong and virile. Breed. Hunt. Prosper.

VAI  
Huntress!

At the edge of the fire her golden arm glows almost orange.

KYK  
Mating and babies then.

AYN  
Forever the hunt.

KYK  
Forever the hunt.

They share a moment of emotion.

EXT. RIVER'S EDGE - MORNING

Ayn hikes.

EXT. RIVER'S EDGE - DAY

Ayn stops for water. She looks at the horizon. Vai follows her. Ayn waits for her.

AYN  
Turn back.

VAI  
I meant it, I am a goddess. I go  
where I wish.

She flexes her golden arm.

AYN  
You are no goddess. Do not follow.

Ayn resumes hiking. Vai follows. Ayn stops, turns.

VAI  
I lost my mother. I lost my arm.  
Don't make me lose my huntress  
queen.

They hike together. They have the bone spear, bow and arrows, one manna-jug, and a couple guskin that remain on Ayn's necklace.

EXT. RIVER'S EDGE - DAY

Ayn and Vai paint their faces with mud until smooth. They unstring the bow and secure it and two arrows to the bone spear. The sickle blade of the bone spear is hidden under wraps of the bear-hide. Ale and goat hang from the spear.

EXT. THE GRAND ZIGGURAT, STAIRS - DAY

Ayn and Vai ascend in line with the slaves.

VAI  
It took us six days. How long will  
the water be?

AYN  
Water is swift.

EXT. THE GRAND ZIGGURAT, GATES - DAY

Mech on guard duty again.

MECH  
Uzuzzu.

Ayn and Vai stoop under the weight of the butchered goat  
and ale jug. The glyphs below their faces are grey.

MECH  
Alazu?

A massive finger points to the jug.

AYN  
Gifts for Digir.

She bows her head.

EXT. THE GRAND ZIGGURAT, BALCONY - DAY

There are few slaves this time, in an orderly line to  
deposit manna jugs. They carry the carcass of the goat to  
the altar.

GUARD #3 (OS)  
Batiltu!

Ayn looks up. A guard runs towards her. His hand grips the  
sword scabbarded at his hip. His other hand extends towards  
Ayn, fingers spread wide.

GUARD #3  
Batiltu!

The bone spear is still encumbered with hunks of goat meat,  
the tip still wrapped and hidden. She reaches for the  
dagger in her boot...

GUARD #3  
Ikul, hakka!

He points to the right. Ayn sees a second, smaller altar. Ayn and Vai take the goat carcass to the second altar while the guard watches.

Ayn nods towards the mech at the ramps to the dragons.

AYN  
They are still.

VAI  
Empty? No demon inside?

Ayn slips the carry rope of the manna jug over her head. They shoulder the still disguised bone spear.

AYN  
Distract the men.

VAI  
How? I don't speak their tongue.

AYN  
Be a goddess.

Vai approaches the guards.

EXT. THE GRAND ZIGGURAT, PARAPET - DAY

Ayn rolls over the edge of the parapet and hand-over-hand climbs with her legs dangling over open air.

GUARD #3 (OS)  
Sinnis wardatu gi gaba?

VAI (OS)  
Such shiny swords.

Ayn climbs up...

EXT. THE GRAND ZIGGURAT, RAMP TO DRAGON ROOST - DAY

Ayn dashes down the ramp to the dragon. Its mouth is a dark pit. Ayn unloops the the manna-jug and places it in the waiting maw. She returns down the ramp.

EXT. THE GRAND ZIGGURAT, PARAPET - DAY

Ayn climbs the other way, rolls back to...

EXT. THE GRAND ZIGGURAT, BALCONY - DAY

Ayn returns as a guard strokes Vai's shoulder. Ayn slaps his hand away.

AYN

Come!

The guards's eyes follow Vai with lust. Ayn and Vai blend with the growing crowd of slaves. Vai re-strings the recursive bow while Ayn inspects the arrows.

VAI

Where is the water?

AYN

Kyk will succeed.

Ayn rips the covering from the bone spear. She unties the manna pouch from her belt and is liberal with applying manna to the razor sharp bone spear. It glows red. She takes the pouch to her lips and drinks.

EXT. THE GRAND ZIGGURAT, GATES - DAY

Ayn charges the mech that guards the gates. She strikes it from behind, the bone spear opening it, spilling its guts across the ground. The mech falls over in a dead heap.

Screams. Ayn turns and dashes again.

EXT. THE GRAND ZIGGURAT, BALCONY - DAY

The crowd flees. Ayn slides to a knee at Vai's side. Vai strikes flint rocks to start a flame. She lights an arrow.

On the horizon, a blue band grows. Ayn glances up:

EXT. THE GRAND ZIGGURAT, MEZZANINE - DAY

A mech, with wings aflame, lands. Its shoulders open to reveal rows of missiles.

EXT. THE GRAND ZIGGURAT, BALCONY - DAY

Ayn runs through the crowd as missiles crash around her. Vai nocks an arrow.

EXT. THE GRAND ZIGGURAT, MEZZANINE STEPS - DAY

Ayn takes the steps four at a time. She has a flicker-vision of missiles impaling, and skips back to avoid them. More missiles come. Ayn dives from the steps...

EXT. THE GRAND ZIGGURAT, BALCONY - DAY

Ayn rolls. The missiles strike around her. She's sweaty, charred, weaponless. The mech leaps over her head. She dives for the bone spear.

Ayn comes up with the bone spear as the mech aims its gun-sword. She charges, screams, swings the bone spear to slice through the shoulder, chest, and hip of the mech. It topples in a heap to the ground.

IIRO (OS)

Huntress!

Iiro and Tamia are at the top of the stairs.

EXT. THE GRAND ZIGGURAT, BALCONY - DAY

AYN

Boy!

She takes the stairs slower this time. Halfway up the stairs she turns to the crowd.

AYN

The fallen are no more! Sharur  
ebebu nise matati kisitti qatiya!  
The great huntress cleanses the  
conquered people!

The crowd huddles in masses, run in fright and trample one another. They are directionless.

AYN

Slaves no more! Nawardum!  
Nawardum!

She points with two pressed fingers towards the sleeping dragon.

Vai looses her arrow. It flies high.

EXT. THE GRAND ZIGGURAT, DRAGON ROOST - DAY

The arrow impacts the manna pot. There is a great explosion.

EXT. THE GRAND ZIGGURAT, BALCONY - DAY

AYN  
Even their dragons are weak  
against me!

EXT. THE GRAND ZIGGURAT, MEZZANINE - DAY

IIRO  
Huntress! Huntress!

Ayn enters the mezzanine.

AYN  
Boy.

IIRO  
What did you do?

AYN  
Today the fallen run from the  
Dragon Queen.

IIRO  
What did you do!

She looks. A wall of water crashes over a distant ziggurat. Cities and huts alike are wiped from the earth under the water's unstoppable power.

TAMIA  
We must get the people inside...

Vai joins them, panting.

VAI  
We should go.

AYN  
I must see this for myself.

Ayn walks up the steps to the high gate. Vai follows.

EXT. THE GRAND ZIGGURAT, THE HIGH GATE - DAY

Ayn thrusts the bone spear into the top of the ziggurat.  
She twists until the tip seats deep and well.

VAI  
You will not flee?

AYN  
If we are guilty we will die.

They hug around the bone spear.

VAI  
Will Syji guide us to Tuonela?

AYN  
Perhaps.

The wave breaks against the ziggurat. Its violence strikes  
Ayn and Vai. For a moment everything is churning water.  
Then it breaks.

Sky.

Ayn chokes and spits water out of her lungs. Vai laughs.  
Ayn's look questions the laughter.

VAI  
We have been long without fish.

A silver and blue fish flops.

EXT. THE GRAND ZIGGURAT, THE HIGH GATE - DAY

Ayn and Vai dry in the sun, underneath the Chariot of the  
Digir. Below them, the brown sea of flood covers the earth.  
Wind stirs white caps.

VAI  
How many do you think drowned?

AYN  
Too many.

IIRO  
Ayn! Huntress!

Ayn does not respond. Iiro runs to the huntresses.

IIRO  
The Digir wish to meet you.



AYN  
I do not wish to meet them.

IIRO  
It is a great honor to meet the  
Digir. They've sent a dragon.

The blaze of a single dragon crosses the sky.

INT. DRAGON HALLWAYS - DAY

Iiro and Tamia dress in white-striped demons skins. Iiro holds one out to each huntress. Ayn tosses the clothes to the floor.

TAMIA  
It will protect you from  
fire...and from worse--

AYN  
--we are not demons.

INT. DRAGON BRIDGE - DAY

The dragon pitches its mouth towards the sky. The ground recedes. The ziggurat becomes a black spec. Golden-tan flood water covers the entire fertile crescent. Elevation increases. The middle east, the mediterranean, this is Earth we've been on.

They enter space, surrounded by radiant stars. As the dragon slows, they float in the air.

VAI  
The gods steal our weight!

Vai laughs and swings, tumbling shoulder over shoulder.

IIRO  
How did my mother die?

AYN  
I found her. Drunk on manna. You inside. It made her strong. Gave her visions. When you came manna tore her apart.

IIRO  
What did she see in her visions?

AYN  
You.

INT. CHARIOT OF DIGIR, HANGAR - DAY

The walls are view-screen/windows showing stars. The walls facing the sun are dimmed, the others at normal opacity. Stars are brighter here than planet-side.

Ayn steps. There is almost no centrifugal gravity here, and she skips high into the air. Her and Vai adopt Tamia's and Iiro's shuffle steps that keep them grounded.

At the edge of the hangar, one of the spokes of the space station extends for several hundred feet. Tamia directs them to a break in the parapet.

                  AYN  
What's this?

She tests the small platform with her foot.

                  TAMIA  
A lift. Get on.

She steps on, Iiro follows her.

                  VAI  
          (whispered to Ayn)  
Her mood worsens the farther we  
travel.

Ayn and Vai step onto the platform.

INT. CHARIOT OF DIGIR, SPOKE - DAY

The lift descends.

INT. CHARIOT OF DIGIR, WATER TUNNEL - DAY

A pair of stacked bridges follow the space station's curved outer ring. Water and jellyfish rain from the edges of the top bridge and pools against the outer wall.

Tamia crosses the lower bridge. Ayn sniffs the air.

                  IIRO  
It's perfectly safe.

He follows Tamia. Ayn sets herself and does as well. Vai stays close to Ayn. The arc of the bridges limits how far ahead they can see.

INT. CHARIOT OF DIGIR, THE DIGIR - DAY

Tamia prostrates with the bone spear before her in offering. Another tank filled with jellyfish is beside her.

Beyond her is a glass wall holding back water and a Digir. Vaguely squid-like, the Digir has a head the size of Ayn, two giant owl-like eyes, a small beak, and six back-side membranous tentacle-wings that are narrow where they connect to the head before flaring wide and tapering again to points. Within each wing is a golden sac that mimics the appearance of the creature's eyes.

VAI

(awed)

What is it?

AYN

The Digir.

They creep closer. Iiro, stands beside Tamia, awestruck.

AYN

This is your kind?

Tamia rises to a knee. Her white painted lips are a thin line.

TAMIA

In a way. My form comes from  
mixing their body with yours.

Ayn inspects her own body.

IIRO

She means a woman, not you.

AYN

They bring dragons, yoke the  
slaves.

TAMIA

In a way.

Ayn snarls.

TAMIA

Yes.

AYN

Why bring me here?

Tamia hides her jealousy with a smile.

TAMIA  
They wish to speak to you.

AYN  
I cannot speak to a fish.

TAMIA  
They will speak through me.

AYN  
They seek surrender?

Tamia strips nude and eases into the pool. Jellyfish cover her naked flesh with their glowing bells.

DIGIR/TAMIA  
HUMAN.

It is Tamia's voice, but devoid of emotion.

DIGIR/TAMIA  
WE DEMAND YOUR COOPERATION.

Tamia's eyes remain open and unfocused. Ayn sniffs at the tank, steps back.

IIRO  
She speaks as the Digir.

VAI  
They hear us?

IIRO  
Yes, through her ears.

Vai steps in front of Ayn and puffs her chest. She bangs her heel into the deck twice and points to Ayn.

VAI  
Ayn. Queen of Huntresses.

Ayn reveals appreciation at this appellation. She steps to the wall of water and scrapes a fingernail across the glass-like surface.

IIRO  
You shouldn't do that.

DIGIR/TAMIA  
WE DEMAND YOUR COOPERATION.

Ayn returns to the open tank and squats. She swirls a finger in the water. A jellyfish grabs on.

She stands and the jellyfish clings to her finger like a glowing blister. She flicks the jellyfish back into the tank.

AYN  
Tell them to surrender.

DIGIR/TAMIA  
NO SURRENDER. FURTHER MANNA DELAY  
CANNOT BE TOLERATED.

AYN  
You stack the dead in piles and  
burn them.

IIRO  
I already told you--

She cuts Iiro off with a click.

DIGIR/TAMIA  
WE PROVIDE MANNA-FUEL TO FOUR  
SPIRALS OF THE HEAVENS.

AYN  
Not anymore.

DIGIR/TAMIA  
PRODUCTION WILL RESUME. YOUR  
COLLABORATORS WILL SUBMIT TO  
DEATH.

AYN  
They hide. They breed.

IIRO  
(whispered)  
Kyk...

VAI  
With child already!

Ayn glares at her.

DIGIR/TAMIA  
OUR DRAGONS WILL HUNT ALL  
COLLABORATORS.

Ayn lifts the bone spear from its place of offering, drags the sickle blade against the star facing wall.

IIRO  
(warning)  
Ayn...

Ayn faces the Digir.

AYN  
Unlike dumb animals, we learn.

She scratches the bone spear down the wall.

DIGIR/TAMIA  
WE OFFER TRUCE.

Ayn stops scratching the spear.

IIRO  
A truce!

AYN  
No truce.

Ayn returns to the pool. She dips another finger in.

IIRO  
There is much we can learn from  
them! Even now they show us  
everything! We could learn to  
carve dragons!

AYN  
Do not trust their promises, boy.

A jellyfish wraps around her finger. She has a flicker-  
vision of a dark ocean.

AYN  
You make my kind slaves. Whip  
them. Feed them a diet of bread.  
Make them hide their knowledge.  
Kill those who disagree!

DIGIR/TAMIA  
YOUR WAYS, NOT OURS.

Another jellyfish latches to Ayn's finger and she has a  
flicker-vision of herself.

AYN  
Lies!

She pulls her hand from the water.

DIGIR/TAMIA  
WE CAN TEACH YOU MUCH.

IIRO  
Listen to them!

Iiro clutches her arm. She shakes him off. Ayn plunges her hand back into the water, grabs Tamia's wrist and pulls her from the tank, pushing her jellyfish covered body to the hard floor. Ayn steps into the tank.

IIRO  
You can't!

She pushes Iiro aside.

AYN  
It will feel my rage.

The jellyfish latch to her body.

IIRO  
Ayn, huntress, you must get out!

AYN  
They will know I am no animal to domesticate.

She closes her eyes. She has flicker visions of the dark ocean, but it is an unclear vision. She sits in the tank, unties the manna pouch from her belt, takes it to her lips, drinks. She lays back and her world changes.

INT. CHARIOT OF DIGIR, UNDERWATER TANK - DAY

The stars as ten times more luminous than before. Iiro and Vai look down on the tank where Ayn's body floats. The jellyfish RADIATE light.

A constant chorus. It is alien, beautiful. Sharp trills punctuate the chorus.

Ayn sees rapid flicker visions:

EXT. ALIEN MESA - DAY

Giant three legged creatures topped with disks stride.

EXT. ALIEN GAS GIANT - DAY

Plump spiked-spears drift among cotton candy clouds.

EXT. ENDLESS OCEAN - DAY

An infinity of luminescent jellyfish. Thousands of Digir float. The chorus is powerful, dominant.

DIGIR  
IN TIME WE WILL GIVE YOU THE STARS

AYN (OS)  
No dream of mine.

She hears herself talk through the wall and water.

DIGIR  
TELL US YOUR WANT.

AYN (OS)  
You must leave.

DIGIR  
YOUR PLANET IS PERFECT FOR  
CULTIVATION OF MANNA. THE CLIMATE  
IS RIGHT, THE INDIGENOUS  
POPULATION IS CLEVER ENOUGH FOR  
THE WORK--

Ayn, floating in the tank talks.

AYN  
--We are no clever animals. We  
know your secrets. Manna is  
fragile. You will harvest it no  
more.

PTSD images flash rapidly: The River King's death at the hand of an old one; Ukko battling in dragon skin; the explosion in the manna addict cave; Kuu's body torn apart by backlash.

Ayn gasps for air. She is on all fours on the bridge. The jellyfish clinging to her are blackened. She coughs, vomits yellow slime.

VAI  
You backlashed--the water boiled.

In the Digir tank, all the jellyfish are on the bottom, dead. Tamia laments and wails. The jellyfish on Tamia's body still glow. An accusing finger points at Ayn.

TAMIA  
You killed them! You murdered  
them!

Ayn looks. The Digir writhes in the tank. Burns and pustules cover its flesh. Its six wing-like tendrils bloat.

IIRO  
She didn't mean to--



Tamia charges Ayn. Ayn, still weak from the backlash, is nearly overwhelmed by the fallen woman. They struggle, Ayn drives Tamia into the wall with a thud.

IIRO

(lies)

--She didn't know the backlash  
would boil the water!

Ayn squats next to Tamia.

AYN

Next time I start with the  
backlash.

TAMIA

Destruction and chaos seem your  
only gifts, savage.

AYN

We have traveled together. Know my  
nature better than that.

Tamia appears ready to attack Ayn again. Then she relaxes.

AYN

This is the only Digir?

She points to the blackened corpse.

IIRO

There are more. Dozens here alone.

AYN

Have they died as well?

Iiro and Tamia exchange a look.

AYN

They may still surrender.

TAMIA

There will be no--

AYN

--I will backlash again.

Tamia snarls.

AYN

Return to your midnight ocean.

TAMIA  
You heard the Digir. They are  
responsible for providing manna to  
four spirals of the heavens!

AYN  
I will not stop.

TAMIA  
An easy fix. We kill you here and  
throw your body into the heavens.

Ayn points to Iiro.

AYN  
See the boy? He feels too much--  
your pain, mine. Boy, you felt the  
Digir die?

Iiro nods.

AYN  
You think us clever animals. Too  
clever. We learn too fast. You  
offer magic of the Digir. We will  
know it too easy. Then what? Your  
only choice is to keep us  
ignorant--to keep us slaves. That  
is not our way. That is your way.  
I burn all manna. You leave.

IIRO  
We should go, while we still can.

Ayn rises.

AYN  
Do not forget me demon.

TAMIA  
Who could forget a savage like  
you.

Ayn drags the tip of the bone spear along the outer window  
of the space station as she leaves. Iiro applies pressure  
to move the spear away.

INT. CHARIOT OF DIGIR, SPOKE - DAY

The lift is unresponsive. Ayn, Vai, and Iiro climb a  
ladder.

INT. CHARIOT OF DIGIR, HANGAR - DAY

Klaxons sound. Lights flash. They reach the hatch to an escape pod. Vai jumps into Iiro's arms, kisses him. She slips into the escape pod. Ayn nods to Iiro.

INT. ESCAPE POD - DAY

Out the porthole, several dragons burn past on the way back to the Chariot. The egg begins to shake and fire burns outside the window. Ayn and Vai hold tight.

EXT. FLOODED RIVER VALLEY, ABOVE - DAY

The escape pod burns earthward.

EXT. MOUNTAIN FOOTHILLS - DAY

Ayn and Vai wade out of the water onto dry land. Survivors pull what they can from the wreckage: oxen, lumber, stalks of wheat. Ayn fights tears.

EXT. GRASSY HILLOCK - DAY

Ayn and Vai recline out of the mud. Above, the Chariot of the Digir has only five spokes still illuminated. It wavers like a heat mirage and is gone.

AYN  
(whispered)  
Goodbye, Iiro.

EXT. NORWEGIAN FJORD - DAY

Ayn and Vai hike across a coastal ridge. Their breath swirls around their faces.

VAI  
This will be the one.

AYN  
The two dozen before?

VAI  
My feet like optimism.

Ayn grunts.

EXT. NORWEGIAN FJORD, BEACH - DAY

A crew of men pull a narrow galley onto the sand. Vai lopes across the beach. Ayn trudges after. Vai embraces the master of the ship. He turns, covered in brown pelt furs and white wolfskins. It's Malah.

EXT. NORWEGIAN LONGHOUSE - DAY

Walls of close rowed timber, the cracks packed with mud. Sod covers the low roof. Some comes from a stone chimney. Ayn, Vai, and Malah approach.

INT. NORWEGIAN LONGHOUSE - DAY

A very pregnant Kyk rises from the darkened middle of the longhouse. She waddles to greet them. Ayn enters first, Vai follows. Kyk glances over Ayn's shoulder to the empty doorway.

AYN

He left with the Digir.

The otter-pelt wrapped infant has hearty pink skin and a head of dark hair. Kyk holds the baby out, Vai takes it in her still natural arm. It screams. Vai rocks the baby making hushing noises.

VAI

What is her name?

KYK

Syji.

Vai's smile widens.

KYK

Before you get jealous and hot,  
the next one will be Ayn.

Kyk rubs her swollen stomach.

KYK

You said repopulate the pride.  
(beat)  
I see that look. You miss the boy.

AYN

I miss a great many things.

EXT. NORWEGIAN LONGHOUSE - NIGHT

A thunderstorm rages. Arcs of cerulean lightning strike the ground. Ayn sits in the rain.

INT. NORWEGIAN LONGHOUSE - NIGHT

Deer roasts in the hearth. The baby cries with every boom of thunder. Ayn sits next to Kyk. The child won't soothe. Ayn takes the baby.

AYN

(whispered to baby)

It won't hurt you. It's just Ukko  
slaying dragons. When he's  
finished, he will shroud Kuu no  
longer and her light will see you  
through many dark hunts to come.

The baby coos.