

Gatekeeper to the Worlds

by
Kari Ciardi

Ksciardi@hotmail.com

FADE IN:

EXT. FARETH - ROYAL CLEARING - NIGHT

Brightly lit up by two full moons, the large clearing is surrounded by enormous trees hundreds of feet around.

Yellow light spills from the doorways and windows cut into the trunks of the great trees.

An OLD MAN and YOUNG BOY sit on a bench carved from a single piece of wood.

JORIL (60), short man, pointed ears, a long green beard coiled neatly in his lap, three piece rustic suit. Emerald eyes dance merrily around the clearing - searching.

PHELAN (fay-lan)(6), human looking, blond hair, solemn blue eyes, slender, half pants, leather boots. He fidgets and glances at the large dwelling behind them.

Housed inside the largest tree, the Royal Home encircles the entire base. Every window ablaze with light.

PHELAN

Do you think... maybe this time?

JORIL

We will know soon enough.

INT. ROYAL HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Provincial decor and several vases bursting with yellow and purple flowers infuse the large room with warmth.

A woman MOANS and thrashes in a bed lit up by dozens of candles. Her swollen belly visible through the night dress.

QUEEN ETAIN (23), human-looking, striking beauty, long golden hair, alabaster skin. Violet eyes roll back as another contraction seizes control of her tiny frame.

THREE SMALL WOMEN surround her, all with green hair and emerald eyes. MIDWIFE (50s), tenderly wipes Etain's forehead.

MIDWIFE

Soon, my lady, very soon now.

HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Lined with six doors and illuminated with oil lamps, several chairs line the walls. A MAN, WOMAN and GIRL wait.

KING LORCAN (26), human-looking, tall, dark, aristocratic, athletic build, long sleeved shirt. Bottom of pants and scuffed boots caked with mud. Frantic, he paces.

LORCAN

Please, let me go to her.

BROWEN (24) exotic, long black hair, grey eyes. A purple gown, embroidered with silvery moons, clings to her curves. Watchful eyes never stray from her brother.

BROWEN

Your worry will only upset her.

SAMARA (5), daughter of Etain and Lorcan, plays with her red-haired doll. Pretty, with golden hair and dark eyes.

LORCAN

What if --

ETAIN CRIES OUT. Lorcan races to the door and reaches for the knob. Browen touches his arm. He hesitates.

Samara looks up at her father, curious.

BROWEN

Have patience, my brother. It will not be long now.

He closes his eyes. Rests his forehead on the door.

EXT. ROYAL CLEARING - MOMENTS LATER

A LOUD WAIL ECHOES, followed by a newborn's CRIES.

The gateway shimmers into sight in front of Joril and Phelan. It glows green with pillars shaped like tree trunks and the archway carved with intertwined branches.

(NOTE: Each gateway has it's own unique appearance and all are eight feet tall and five feet wide.)

PHELAN

The gatekeeper is here!

Elated, Phelan jumps off the bench and dances. Joril's worried look brings him up short.

PHELAN
What's wrong, father?

JORIL
Melfet won't rest until he possesses
the gatekeeper for himself.

PHELAN
Then I pledge my whole life to
keeping her safe.

Joril smiles.

JORIL
She is indeed a very lucky little
girl to have such a brave young man
watching over her.

Phelan throws his arms around Joril and hugs him.

INT. ROYAL HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lorcan sits on the bed beside Etain. He beams with relief.
Samara lies on the other side holding her doll.

Etain cradles newborn daughter AURIYA (ah-rye-ah) in her arms.

LORCAN
Auriya. A beautiful name for a
beautiful daughter.

Lorcan tenderly strokes Etain's face.

Browen leans over her brother's shoulder and studies the baby.

A LIGHT KNOCK on the door.

JORIL (O.S.)
Your Majesties, I have word.

Etain and Lorcan lock eyes, worried. Browen straightens up.

LORCAN
Please enter.

Joril enters.

Phelan hovers just outside. Samara sees him, smiles and
waves. Phelan shyly waves back.

JORIL

Your Majesties, it gives me great pleasure to announce the gatekeeper has arrived.

BROWEN

You are certain?

JORIL

Yes. We have heard from other worlds; their gateways opened at the precise moment of her birth.

Lorcan holds a candle close to the baby. Her red hair in stark contrast to her mother's.

He pulls down the swaddling clothes and reveals a BIRTHMARK in the shape of a gateway on her right arm. He looks at Brown and nods.

Brown places her fingers on Auriya's forehead. The adults bow their heads.

BROWEN

The gatekeeper comes forth every 500 years to the royal line on Fareth, with hair red, the mark upon her, and at the moment of her birth, the gateways to all the worlds will open in exultation. May the Goddess of the Trees watch over Auriya, and keep her safe.

Samara glares at her baby sister.

SAMARA

I'm the gatekeeper. Not her.

Brown lifts Samara off the bed, hugs her and sets her down.

BROWEN

No, Samara, I'm afraid you are not.

Samara throws down her doll and storms from the room. Brown spots Phelan and smiles. She beckons him in.

BROWEN

Phelan, come meet your gatekeeper.

Phelan races in and climbs on the bed. He touches Auriya's tiny fist. Her fingers open and curl around his finger.

Joril smiles.

INT. FARETH - ROYAL HOME - CELLAR - NIGHT

A scary place, lit by a single candle. Barrels are stacked in the middle. Shelves packed with food line the perimeter.

Etain huddles in a dark corner and holds Auriya (3), her copper red hair cascades down her back.

ETAIN

Shhh, Auriya. Everything's going to be alright.

SHORT MAN (24), sturdy, pocked face. He waits at the foot of the stairs. A sword in one hand, a knife in the other.

PLUMP WOMAN (22), his pretty wife, stands behind him. She wrings her hands.

A POUNDING NOISE and SHOUTS from above. Plump Woman jumps.

SHORT MAN

Someone's coming.

Phelan (9), appears at the top of the stairs and races down.

PHELAN

Your Majesty, the Dacarrians are almost through the door.

With Auriya in her arms, Etain appears out of the gloom.

Phelan skids to a halt.

ETAIN

What of my husband?

PHELAN

He stands with the soldiers.

ETAIN

Samara?

PHELAN

Browen and Joril took her deep into the woods.

Short Man and Plump Woman join Etain and Phelan. POUNDING NOISE REVERBERATES in the cellar.

ETAIN

Quick, go back to your hiding place.

PHELAN

Please, your Majesty I must stay --

ETAIN

Auriya will need you one day, but
that day is not today.

PHELAN

I swore an oath to protect her.

ETAIN

Promise your Queen you will stay
hidden until danger has passed.

Tears fill his eyes.

PHELAN

I... I swear.

Etain places her hand on top of Phelan's head.

ETAIN

May the Goddess of the Trees watch
over you and all on Fareth. Now go.

Auriya holds out her hand to Phelan, but he's already
sprinting up the stairs two at a time.

Etain takes a NECKLACE, with a tree carved out of golden
amber, from around her neck and puts it on Auriya.

ETAIN

The amber from our world will keep
you safe, my precious daughter, and
remind you every day how much we
love you.

Auriya grabs hold of the necklace.

RECEPTION FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

Phelan races down the enormous room. Tapestries hang on the
walls. A massive fireplace dominates one wall.

At the other end, a large pile of furniture block an immense
wooden door.

TWENTY SOLDIERS with swords, face the door. EIGHT MALE
SERVANTS holding sticks and knives, stand behind them.

King Lorcan, sword drawn, his long blue robes swirl around
him as he paces amid the soldiers.

LORCAN

Melfet can not, must not take my ...
Take the gatekeeper.

A GREAT POUNDING and the door begins to give way.
King Lorcan studies the faces of his fearful men.

LORCAN
I am proud to fight beside you, as
your King and as your friend.

Phelan ducks behind a large tapestry farthest from the door.

LORCAN
Show them no mercy, for you will
get none in return.

UNDERGROUND PASSAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Jaspar, Plump Woman and Etain, who holds Auriya, flee. They
dodge curtains of tree roots. Short Man carries a torch.

A LOUD CRASH, followed by CLASHING SWORDS. The three adults
stop and glance back.

ETAIN
Just ahead is the way out. Take
her before I lose my will.

Short Man takes Auriya.

ETAIN
Get her off Fareth. Wait ten
cycles of the sun before letting us
know what world you are on. We
will send for you when it is safe.

SHORT MAN
Yes, your Majesty.

Etain SOBS as Short Man, Auriya and Plump Woman race away.

TAPESTRY - MOMENTS LATER

Phelan peers out of a cleverly camouflaged hole in the
tapestry, at --

RECEPTION FOYER

A BATTLE OF LIFE AND DEATH. Lorcan and his men fight
fiercely, outnumbered three to one.

NINETY DACARIANS, human-looking, armed with fierce swords with curved tips, their lank hair loose and long. All wear black tunics that hit mid-calf and wide red belts.

LORCAN
(yells)
Stay strong.

FOUR DACARIANS surround Lorcan. Crazy, he swings his sword and takes out two. One Dacarian stabs Lorcan in his leg.

Lorcan wobbles. He takes another strike to his shoulder. He drops to one knee.

Only three of Lorcan's soldiers remain standing.

MELFET (40s), elegantly dressed, enters with a sword encrusted with jewels. His aura malevolent and brutal - eyes cold.

TAPESTRY

Phelan clenches his fists, unable to look away.

PHELAN
(whispers)
Melfet.

RECEPTION FOYER

The last of Lorcan's men have fallen.

A YOUNG DACARIAN rushes Lorcan, his sword raised.

YOUNG DACARIAN
King, your head's my trophy.

Melfet races toward him and thrusts his sword into Young Dacarian's chest. The man collapses, dead. Melfet withdraws his sword.

MELFET
(shouts)
I said keep the Royals alive.

LORCAN
(to Melfet)
You took an oath before the Council. You swore you would leave the gatekeeper alone.

MELFET

I simply told them what they wanted
to hear.

Lorcan lies down in a puddle of his blood.

LORCAN

You will never possess my daughter.

Melfet scowls with disgust at the blood on his sword.

NESPAR (17), slight of build and ostentatiously dressed,
strolls in the front door. Dull eyes take in the carnage.
He approaches Melfet.

NESPAR

Well done, father.

The Dacarian soldiers gather around Melfet.

Melfet wipes his sword on the Young Dacarian's shirt.

MELFET

Find the gatekeeper and her mother.
Bring them to me. Alive.

The Dacarians scatter in all directions.

TAPESTRY

Tears stream down Phelan's face as he sinks to the floor.

INT. FARETH - COUNCIL CHAMBERS - DAY

Carved into the largest tree on Fareth, sunlight pours in and
illuminates the detailed carvings of every day life that
cover the chamber walls.

The FIVE LEADERS, to the Council of the Worlds, sit on a dais
behind a crescent shaped table carved from golden wood.

The Leaders: Browen of Fareth; DARQUIN (60s) of Petra, obese
fussy man; CASET (60s) of Nizan, jovial well-dressed man;
RIZANNA (50s) of Vincotha, beautiful amphibian woman; and TAE
(40s) of Altex, imposing black woman.

The remaining THIRTY COUNCIL MEMBERS sit on risers behind the
leaders - some human-looking and others, not so much.

Phelan (25), tall and handsome, short blond hair, confident
blue eyes, buff body, rustic clothing, high leather boots.
Relaxed, he waits for the Council to begin.

CASET

Phelan, please tell us you have finally found the gatekeeper.

PHELAN

I have. On the world called Earth.

MURMURS break out.

RIZANNA

Not a moment too soon.

TAE

Why would the guardians pick such an uncivilized and dangerous world?

PHELAN

Perhaps that was the idea.

TAE

The better question would be, why did he not tell us where she was?

DARQUIN

Where exactly on Earth is she?

Phelan glances at Browen who shakes her head.

BROWEN

Are you certain it is her?

PHELAN

I am.

Barely contained silence settles on the Council.

RIZANNA

What of the guardians?

PHELAN

I saw no sign of them. She lives with an old woman.

TAE

Her day of birth was nineteen years ago yesterday.

BROWEN

Only five days remain for Auriya to complete the Lynerian ceremony, or --

CASET

The gateways close and seal off the worlds from one another for five hundred years. This can not happen.

BROWEN

The Council requests you make immediate contact.

Phelan bows his head in acceptance.

PHELAN

I will leave straightaway.

DARQUIN

Where exactly on Earth did you say you found her?

PHELAN

I did not say.

ANGRY WHISPERS from the back rows.

BROWEN

Need I remind everyone, Melfet has eyes and ears everywhere. Go now and return the gatekeeper to us.

Phelan bows.

INT. SEATTLE - APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Clothes drape every available surface of a comfortable and eclectic mix of thrift store furniture.

Auriya (19), asleep, moves restlessly in bed. Her long red hair flows around her.

AURIYA

Momma. Momma.

She sits up disoriented. A gateway sparkles in silver light at the foot of her bed. The faces of a hundred women are carved into the Grecian pillars and archway.

Auriya leaps from bed and races for the gateway. It disappears just as she is about to enter.

Auriya feels the air where the gateway was. Nothing.

Frustrated, Auriya turns away and enters --

BATHROOM

Auriya turns on the light. The vanity's covered with hair and facial products.

She splashes water on her face and grabs a towel. She pats her face dry.

Auriya stares at her reflection. A natural beauty with brilliant green eyes and wavy red hair. She fingers the amber necklace around her neck.

HEAVY SIGH, she turns off the light and walks out.

EXT. SEATTLE - CITY STREET - MOMENTS LATER

The rain falls softly on the street outside Auriya's apartment building. The Space Needle towers above.

Phelan, dressed in the clothing of Fareth, stands under a tree across the street.

INT. SEATTLE - APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

Sunny yellow walls create a backdrop for the many porcelain roosters scattered over the counter and shelves on the walls.

Auriya pours cereal into a bowl. She wears a green waitress uniform. Her unruly hair pulled back in a band.

An OLD WOMAN enters in a flowered muumuu and leans heavily on her cane. MAI (80s), Asian, kind eyes, a bright smile, her white hair worn short.

MAI
Good morning, my dear.

Auriya kisses her cheek.

AURIYA
How are you feeling?

MAI
Old!

Auriya LAUGHS and pours milk into her cereal.

Mai pours a cup of coffee and makes her way to the --

DINING ROOM/LIVING ROOM

The furniture's comfortable and worn. Atop the TV is a picture of Auriya in her graduation cap and gown.

MAI

You saw the doorway again.

Auriya follows Mai to the dining table with the bowl of cereal and plops down.

AURIYA

I woke you up again. I'm sorry.

MAI

It's of no matter. Sleep eludes me most nights anyway.

AURIYA

First time I've had this intense desire to walk through it.

MAI

Why didn't you?

AURIYA

It disappeared before I could.

Auriya glances at the clock. Shocked, she jumps up.

AURIYA

I'm gonna be late.

MAI

Go, I'll take care of the dishes.

Auriya kisses Mai's cheek, and races to the coat rack by the front door. She grabs her purse and coat.

Auriya yanks open the door.

AURIYA

Love you. See you around five.

She dashes out the door.

MAI

Love you more.

The door SLAMS SHUT.

INT. SEATTLE - JOE'S DINER - DAY

Fifties decor in green and white. Every table's crammed full of breakfast PATRONS. Auriya clears a table.

JANICE (20), a feisty black waitress, approaches and locks arms with Auriya. They step behind the counter.

JANICE
Come shopping with me tonight.

AURIYA
What are we buying?

JANICE
My mom's making me go to my aunt's wedding this weekend. This is her third marriage and I say enough already, but she says I have to go. So I said to her, you want me to go, then buy me a new dress.

AURIYA
You didn't!

JANICE
Maybe I can get her to spring for shoes too.

A COUPLE strolls into the diner. Auriya grabs menus and heads their way.

EXT. SEATTLE - BUS STOP - DAY

Auriya sits on a bench by herself. She looks at her watch.

Phelan, now in jeans and a sweater, approaches Auriya and stops a few feet away. He struggles with his emotions.

Auriya looks up at Phelan and smiles. She scoots down and makes room.

Phelan breathes deeply. His eyes locked on her as he sits.

PHELAN
Hello, Auriya.

Startled, Auriya pulls away. Mesmerized, Phelan reaches out to her and she moves further away.

AURIYA
Ah... Do I know you?

PHELAN
When you were very young.

Auriya searches his face.

PHELAN
I have been searching for you ...
 (struggles)
For a very long time.

 AURIYA
Why? Who are you?

 PHELAN
My name is Phelan.

Auriya moves further down the bench.

 PHELAN
Your guardians never told us where
they had taken you. I've been --

 AURIYA
You mixed me up with someone else.

Phelan stares at her necklace

 PHELAN
That belonged to your mother.

Auriya instinctively touches it.

 PHELAN
And I know you have a birthmark on
your right arm.

Auriya jumps off the bench and faces him.

He leaps up and tries to take her hand. Auriya pulls back.

 PHELAN
I'm sorry I've frightened you. It's
just ... your parents have been
searching for you for sixteen years.

 AURIYA
You have the wrong person. My
parents died a long time ago.

 PHELAN
They are very much ... Wait, they
are dead?

Auriya hesitates and then nods.

 PHELAN
How long ago?

AURIYA

They were hit by a car and killed when I was three. I don't know how you know my name, or other things about me.

PHELAN

That explains a lot. Look we are almost out of time. We need to --

Janice runs up out of breath.

JANICE

Thank god I made it.

Auriya grabs Janice's arm and pulls her close.

PHELAN

The Dacarians know where you are. You are in grave danger.

Janice looks Phelan up and down.

JANICE

What's this fool talking about?

The bus arrives.

AURIYA

Nothing that makes sense. Let's go.

Auriya drags Janice aboard.

INT. BUS - CONTINUOUS

Auriya and Janice find an empty seat and sit. Auriya peers out the window at Phelan as the bus drives away.

JANICE

What was that all about?

AURIYA

He knew things about me. Things he shouldn't know.

JANICE

That's creepy.

AURIYA

He knew my parents. What if he knows where I can find my family?

Janice hugs Auriya.

JANICE

Talk to Mai. She'll know what to do.

INT. SEATTLE - APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM/DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Mai and Auriya sit at the table with mugs of tea.

MAI

Did he seem familiar to you?

AURIYA

Yeah. Sort of.

MAI

Did you feel you were in danger?

Auriya studies Mai.

AURIYA

No.

MAI

Talk to him, but not alone. And meet him in a public place.

AURIYA

So, you think he knows something about my family?

MAI

Maybe.

EXT. DACARA - DAY

SUPER: "DACARA"

The dirty city, medieval meets 1940's industrial era, sprawls in every direction from the hill which dominates the area.

On the hilltop, MELFET'S CASTLE, heavily fortified and guarded. A large, ugly stone structure put together in a haphazard way.

INT. DACARA - CASTLE - GREAT ROOM - DAY

Melfet (50s), meticulously dressed, stands in front of the fireplace. The opulent room's full of priceless treasures.

TWENTY MEN sit around a table loaded with platters of food. No one eats. FIVE SERVANTS hover nearby.

At the head of the table, a unoccupied plush chair. Next to it sits Nespar (33), his garish purple velvet jacket covered in large shiny buttons and red satin trim.

NESPAR

Father, we have confirmation. The gatekeeper's on Earth.

MELFET

She should have been mine long ago.

NESPAR

With so many worlds to search ...

Melfet shoots Nespar a venomous look.

NESPAR

We will have her in a day, two at the most.

Melfet seizes the empty chair and wrenches it back. He settles in. His eyes search out a WOMAN SERVANT.

Woman Servant darts to the table. Trembling, she pours Melfet a mug of ale and spills some on his sleeve.

Melfet backhands her. She sprawls on the floor unconscious.

NESPAR

Get her out of here.

TWO MALE SERVANTS scurry to the woman. They grab her arms and drag her away.

Melfet dabs at his sleeve with a cloth napkin.

MELFET

I want her tomorrow.

NESPAR

We don't know exactly --

Melfet cold eyes find Nespar, who recoils in fear.

NESPAR

Yes, father. Tomorrow.

INT. SEATTLE - JOE'S DINER - DAY

Auriya sets food down in front of FOUR CONSTRUCTION WORKERS.

Janice saunters by with a pile of dirty dishes.

JANICE

Notice who's waiting outside?

Auriya looks out the window at Phelan, who leans against the light pole.

AURIYA

He's been there a while now.

JANICE

For a stalker, he's damn fine looking. What are you going to do?

AURIYA

Mai said I should talk to him. Will you come with me after work?

JANICE

You need to even ask?

Auriya hugs Janice.

EXT. SEATTLE - PARK BENCH - DAY

The heavily wooded city park is full of PEOPLE. Janice sits between Phelan and Auriya on a bench.

Phelan looks over Janice's head at Auriya.

PHELAN

I should be talking to you alone.

JANICE

Not a chance, mister.

PHELAN

What happened to you after your ah ... family died?

AURIYA

I was placed in foster care and bounced from home to home until Mai took me in when I was eight. How do you know me and my parents?

PHELAN

They were your guardians. Your parents are very much alive.

Auriya leaps off the bench and faces Phelan.

AURIYA

My parents aren't dead?

Phelan nods. Stunned, Auriya paces.

JANICE
So where are her parents? Why
aren't they here?

PHELAN
Good questions, which I will answer
when I can speak to Auriya alone.

Janice glares at Phelan.

JANICE
I'm not leaving her alone with you.

AURIYA
Look, you can sit over there.

Auriya points to an empty bench across the park.

JANICE
I don't like this one bit. Not one
little bit. Wave your arms and
scream if you need me.

Janice plasters Phelan with a withering look.

JANICE
You do anything I think is even the
slightest bit inappropriate and I'll
be on the phone to the police before
you take your next breath.

PHELAN
I'd never do anything to hurt her.

Janice hugs Auriya. She stalks to the empty bench.

PHELAN
She really cares about you.

AURIYA
I'm alone, so talk.

PHELAN
You are very important to a great
many people.

AURIYA
(snorts)
Right.

Phelan goes rigid. He stares in Janice's direction.

AURIYA
What's wrong?

NESPAR AND FIVE DACARIANS skulk across the park behind Janice. They wear long black overcoats.

Phelan jumps up and grabs Auriya's arm.

PHELAN
I need to get you out of here.

AURIYA
What? Why? No!

Janice races toward them and dials her phone.

Auriya tears her arm away.

AURIYA
I'm not going anywhere with you.

Janice approaches.

JANICE
(into her cell)
She's being assaulted by a crazy man. We're in Discovery Park.

PHELAN
You're in terrible danger. I have to get you out of here.

JANICE
Yes, he's still here... Wearing?
Oh, jeans and a brown sweater.

Auriya doesn't budge.

PHELAN
You have to trust me.

AURIYA
Why should I?

Janice uses her hand to measure Phelan's height.

JANICE
Over 6 feet, I guess. I don't know ... Medium build.

PHELAN
You knew me once and I believe somewhere deep down, you still do.

JANICE

No, he hasn't hit her. Why you asking me so many damn questions? Just get the police here.

Auriya touches her necklace.

AURIYA

I've had this one dream many times. What color hair does my mother have?

PHELAN

Long golden hair to her waist.

Auriya sucks in a sharp BREATH.

AURIYA

She's my mother?

Phelan nods and looks back at the Dacarians.

Nespar and Phelan make eye contact. Nespar points at Phelan and sprints toward them. His men on his heels.

SIRENS BLARE.

PHELAN

They are the ones you need to be afraid of, not me.

Janice and Auriya turn around. Nespar and his thugs race toward them.

Two police cars pull up and TWO OFFICERS jump out. Janice runs toward them.

JANICE

(yells)

Hey, over here! Over here!

Nespar and his men race for the woods.

Janice spins around. Auriya and Phelan are gone.

EXT. PARK WOODS - A SHORT TIME LATER

Phelan and Auriya run up behind a large tree and stop. Auriya bends over and tries to catch her breath.

AURIYA

What can they possibly want with me?

PHELAN
 I promise, I will tell you
 everything when you are safe.

Phelan moves a few feet away.

 PHELAN
 Ech Soo Mayin Tos Fareth.

A gateway shimmers into sight. It's composed of two white Grecian pillars topped with a curved arch with an intricate design of whirls and flowers.

Riveted, Auriya reaches out to the gateway. She hesitates, and pulls her hand back. She moves closer and extends her hand - fingers brush the pillar.

Phelan peers around the tree and pulls back.

NESPAR AND HIS MEN approach.

 PHELAN
 They're here. We have to go now.

 AURIYA
 This goes...
 (struggles to remember)
 Where?

 PHELAN
 To your home world, Fareth.

 AURIYA
 I can't leave Mai. She needs --

Phelan grabs her arm and starts into the gateway.

Auriya yanks her arm away.

 AURIYA
 I'm not leaving Mai.

RUNNING FOOTSTEPS draw near.

Phelan picks up Auriya and throws her over his shoulder.

 AURIYA
 Hey! You big jerk. Put me down.

As she enters the gateway, Auriya looks up. The Dacarians race toward her.

INT. GATEWAY TRANSITION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Bathed in red light, Phelan stands in the center with Auriya over his shoulder. Five doorways slowly spin around.

Each doorway looks out on a different location on Fareth. The Royal Compound; a dark forest; a clearing; a village carved into trees; and the last shows several enormous trees.

Phelan taps the last one three times and it stops. He darts through it with Auriya.

EXT. SEATTLE - PARK WOODS - MOMENTS LATER

Two Dacarians scurry into the gateway as it disappears. The remaining three men stop next to Nespar.

Nespar points to two of the men.

NESPAR
Find and follow that woman who was
with the gatekeeper.

The men race back through the trees. One man remains.

NESPAR
(to himself)
I'm going to kill Phelan one day.

Nespar moves a few feet away.

NESPAR
Ech Soo Mayin Tos Dacara.

The gateway shimmers open again. Nespar enters, followed by the soldier.

INT. FARETH - TREE FOLD - DAY

Phelan's pressed back in the fold of the tree. He has one hand over Auriya's mouth, the other wrapped around her waist.

PHELAN
(whispers)
I will remove my hand, if you
promise you will be quiet.

Auriya nods. Phelan slowly releases her. She spins around and confronts him in a LOUD WHISPER.

AURIYA
Don't ever do that again. Got it?

Auriya rubs her face.

AURIYA
I feel funny, like I walked through
a spider web.

PHELAN
It will pass.

AURIYA
Are we on my, ah, my world?

PHELAN
Yes. But, we can't stay. Melfet
knows we are here.

Phelan steps out of the fold.

PHELAN (O.S.)
Do not come out until I tell you it
is safe.

EXT. LARGE CLEARING - MOMENTS LATER

Auriya strolls out behind Phelan.

AURIYA
Hey, who's ... Melfet?

She freezes in shock. Bit by bit she looks up.

Three trees, hundreds of feet tall and a hundred feet around,
encircle the clearing. The trunks a riot of flowering vines.

PHELAN
I told you to stay put.

AURIYA
Oh, my god!

Auriya fingers her necklace, as she spins around.

AURIYA
They're so big.

Phelan grabs a large stick and swings it like a sword.

AURIYA
When can I meet my parents?

PHELAN
I will get word to them once I'm
sure we have shaken the Dacarians.

AURIYA

Who?

UGLY DACARIAN barrels into the clearing, a large sword in his hand. He stops ten feet from Phelan.

Auriya backs away.

Ugly takes a menacing step toward Phelan who stands firm.

UGLY

Hand over the gatekeeper, and I may
let you live.

Auriya reaches the tree. She sidesteps along the trunk feeling for the hiding place.

PHELAN

Never.

Ugly springs and lashes out at Phelan with the sword. Phelan ducks and WHACKS him hard on his head. Ugly doesn't flinch.

Auriya freezes.

UGLY

(laughs)
I'm going to enjoy killing you.

They circle each other. Ugly rushes and swings his sword with both hands. Phelan swoops down and twists away. The sword skims past his head with an inch to spare.

While down, Phelan strikes Ugly on his knee cap.

Ugly HOWLS. Enraged, Ugly backhands Phelan with his sword. A gash appears on his cheek.

Ugly CHORTLES as he limps away.

Blood trickles down Phelan's face.

PHELAN

Put down your sword. I really do
not want to hurt you.

Ugly springs again.

Phelan spins around and ends up behind Ugly. He whacks Ugly hard on his head.

Ugly sways. His eyes roll back and he hits the ground hard.

Phelan prods him with his foot. Ugly doesn't move.

Shaken, Auriya remains pressed up against the tree.

AURIYA
Is he ... dead?

PHELAN
No.

AURIYA
He hurt you.

Phelan touches the superficial cut.

PHELAN
We need to get moving.

AURIYA
What was he talking about when he
said hand over the gatekeeper?

PHELAN
I will tell you everything, once we
are through the gateway.

AURIYA
I'm not budging. Not until you
start answering my questions.

Phelan SIGHS, picks up Ugly's sword, and strides away.

Ugly GROANS and moves his arm. She flinches and backs up.

AURIYA
Ah, ah. Hey, mister. He's moving.

Phelan disappears around one of the trees.

PHELAN (O.S.)
Then I suggest you run.

Auriya sprints after Phelan.

INT. FARETH - CABIN - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Small and sparsely furnished with rustic furniture. A stone fireplace, with a blazing fire, takes up one entire wall.

Lorcan (40s), grey haired, leans on a cane as he limps around.

Etain (40s), rocks in a chair. Her beauty heightened with age. Golden hair flows to her waist. On a table beside her a vase of wilting purple and yellow flowers.

Samara (24), stands beside her mother. Long white gold hair, dark luminous eyes, a red-hot beauty cooled by a waspish pout.

Browen (40s), waits by the door. Her purple gown covered in silver stars - wrinkled and muddy, clings to her youthful figure. A few grey hairs and weary eyes betray her age.

BROWEN

The Council and their staff left
Fareth today for their home worlds.

ETAIN

No one wants to be stranded, just
in case Auriya ...

Samara smirks and flips her hair back.

SAMARA

Fails. Just say it mother.

Lorcan glares a warning at his daughter.

LORCAN

Auriya will succeed. Browen will
see to it.

BROWEN

Phelan chose the security detail
himself. You will be safe here.

SAMARA

Why isn't he here protecting us from
Melfet and his creepy son?

LORCAN

He is where he is needed most.

Face flushed, Samara clenches her fists in a tight ball.

Browen stares out the window at the darkening sky.

BROWEN

It's time.

LORCAN

Keep her safe, dear sister. Please.

ETAIN

May the Goddess of the Trees watch
over you and our daughter.

Tight smile that doesn't reach Samara's eyes.

SAMARA

Yes, dear aunt. May the Goddess
keep you and Phelan safe.

Browen opens the door. She hesitates a moment then steps out.

INT. DACARA - CASTLE - GREAT ROOM - DAY

Melfet paces near the fireplace. Nespar stands to the side.

FOUR SOLDIERS wait nearby. Two of them hold up PRIEST
(70s), barely conscious, emaciated, with a bloody nose and
lip. He is dressed in a filthy, tattered red robe.

MELFET

You let Phelan take her?

NESPAR

Father, he was too fast and --

Melfet grabs a crystal vase from the mantel and throws it. It
SHATTERS against the wall and just misses a SERVANT.

Nespar jumps, hand goes to his chest.

Priest stirs and then slumps.

Melfet unsheathes the jeweled sword. He runs his finger
along the blade.

MELFET

You never cease to disappoint me.

Nespar backs away from his father.

NESPAR

He's taken her to Fareth.

Melfet sheathes his sword. Nespar relaxes.

MELFET

Send thirty men through the gateway
after them. Now. And I want
twenty men guarding each of
Fareth's five gateways.

Nespar signals and two soldiers run from the room.

Melfet steps to a glass case, which contains an ANCIENT BOOK.
He reverently lifts the glass lid. The writing is mostly
symbols combined with tiny, exquisite pictures.

Nespar eases up next to his father. Melfet caresses the book.

Melfet flips to the back and stops on a page with a painting of a glass and metal cylinder wrapped around a large crystal. Six crystal buttons surround the base.

Nespar glances at the Priest who is now conscious. The old man glares back - unflinching. Nespar turns away.

NESPAR

Has the priest said where on Lyneria the vadan is hidden?

MELFET

Not yet, but he will.

Priest stiffens - jaw set, eyes hard.

NESPAR

Find it and you will be more powerful than the gatekeeper.

Priest's eyes close when Melfet's fingers caress the picture.

EXT. FARETH - SMALL CLEARING - DAY

Phelan and Auriya hide behind thick bushes and watch TWENTY DACARIANS mill around a small clearing.

AURIYA

(whispers)

What should we do?

PHELAN

Hide until help arrives. Stay low and follow me.

Phelan runs into the woods. Auriya follows.

BRISSI (20s), jumps out in front of them. Five feet tall and almost human, with emerald green hair and sharply pointed ears. Her bubbly nature masks a formidable warrior.

Phelan pulls up short. Auriya runs into him and almost knocks him over.

Auriya peers around him.

BRISSI

Are you the ones they search for?

PHELAN

Yes.

BRISSI
Then you'd better follow me.

She darts down a path.

AURIYA
Is she an elf?

PHELAN
Huh?

MENS VOICES sound close by.

Phelan grabs Auriya's hand and they race after Brissi.

EXT. NIZAN - VILLAGE - DAY

SUPER: "NIZAN"

Set in a clearing next to the ocean, the tropical forest surrounds thirty thatched huts and numerous cooking fires. A large Saturn like planet looms overhead.

FIFTY-TWO NIZIANS mend nets, prepare food and carve spears. Several CHILDREN race around playing a tag-like game.

A beautiful warrior people with powerful physiques. The men wear only the briefest of loin cloths and the women dress in barely there toga-style dresses.

HENCHA (80s), the village elder, old but spry, exits her hut. She CLAPS her hands.

HENCHA
Come to me.

As they all gather, Hencha looks around her - frowns.

HENCHA
Where's Ki?

KI bounds from the forest and races to her.

Ki (20s), unusually tall, even for his people. He has long brown hair that flows to his shoulders. He's magnificent.

KI
I'm here.

HENCHA
I can see that. Phelan has found the gatekeeper.

The people APPLAUD and CHEER.

HENCHA

Ki has been called on to protect the gatekeeper until she can perform the Lynerian ceremony. This quest brings great honor to Nizan and to our village.

Everyone SLAPS Ki on his back in congratulations.

KI

I knew he'd find her in time.

QUIET settles on the people.

Ki kneels down on one knee in front of Hencha and closes his eyes. Everyone lays a hand on him, or on those closest to him. They all look to the heavens.

HENCHA

May the spirits of our elders watch over you on this perilous journey and give you the strength and courage you need to succeed and come back to us alive.

Ki rises and faces Hencha.

HENCHA

You know where to find Phelan?

KI

I do.

HENCHA

Go then. Ready yourself.

Ki takes off at a dead run across the village.

HENCHA

(turns to her people)
Melfet will most certainly have the gateways guarded. I need my ten strongest warriors.

SIX MEN AND FOUR WOMEN step forward.

HENCHA

You will accompany Ki and eliminate any Dacarians at the gateway. When you are done, return to Nizan.
(studies them)
None can survive. You understand?

The Warriors nod.

EXT. FARETH - TANAL VILLAGE - DAY

Brissi waits for Phelan and Auriya beside one of the many immense trees clustered together.

When they appear, she taps the tree three times. A door springs open. Brissi dashes inside. Auriya stops.

AURIYA

There's a door in a tree.

Phelan smiles.

PHELAN

And an entire village. Come on.

Phelan and Auriya enter and the door closes.

INT. STAIRWAY - MINUTES LATER

They trudge up a spiral staircase. Brissi holds a torch and leads the way. Auriya touches the rough walls.

AURIYA

I can't believe I'm inside a tree.

Auriya rounds a corner and finds Brissi and Phelan stopped in front of a door. A intricate carving of a tree is etched into the entire length and breadth of the door.

Brissi taps four times, and the door springs open. She motions for them to follow her into --

CORRIDOR

The hallway curves with the tree and has doors spaced every ten feet. Sunlight streams in through dormers cut high above.

Each door has a small carving etched on the surface that depicts an animal, plant or bird.

Brissi stops in front of a door with a carving of flowers.

She taps twice, and the door opens. She enters --

BRISSI'S ROOM

A small room with a bed carved into the wall. A quiver of arrows propped against a small table with two chairs.

Brissi leans out the window. Phelan backs up - breaths quick and ragged.

Auriya approaches the window and looks down.

Phelan grips the back of the chair with one hand - sweat beads up on his forehead.

Auriya looks back at Phelan and notices his discomfort.

AURIYA

You okay?

PHELAN

Just come away from the window.

The women move to the middle of the room.

Phelan relaxes - lets go of the chair.

AURIYA

Will they find us?

PHELAN

The Tanal build high in the trees to avoid discovery. It is unlikely.

Brissi studies Phelan.

BRISSI

You're the adopted son of Joril.

Phelan nods.

BRISSI

Joril was revered by my clan. I'm very sorry for your loss.

PHELAN

Thank you.

BRISSI

The elders need to know you're here.

PHELAN

It would be a great honor if they will grant me an audience.

Brissi nods and leaves.

Auriya crosses her arms, then uncrosses them.

AURIYA

Hey, I'm real sorry about your dad.

PHELAN

His greatest wish was to reunite you with your family.

Phelan and Auriya sit down at the small table.

AURIYA

Why did he call me a gatekeeper?

PHELAN

Every five hundred years a gatekeeper is born to the royal family on Fareth. Your father's family line.

AURIYA

Wait, my father's a king?

PHELAN

Yes. The gatekeeper must perform the Lynarian Ceremony within six days of her nineteenth birthday.

AURIYA

Why?

PHELAN

Without the ceremony, the gateways to all worlds seal up until the birth of the next gatekeeper, five hundred years from now.

AURIYA

Whoa, there are other worlds?

PHELAN

Thirty four.

Auriya jumps up and paces.

AURIYA

This is all ... so crazy. Unreal, like I'm dreaming or something.

She walks to the window and looks down.

AURIYA

My birthday's in two months. So, we're ... Everything is okay.

PHELAN

By the Fareth calendar, it was three days ago. We have three days to perform the ceremony.

AURIYA

I'm already nineteen?

Brissi darts in.

BRISSI

The Dacarians followed one of our young hunters. They're here, in the stairwell.

Phelan jumps up and heads for the door. Brissi grabs her bow and arrows.

BRISSI

We'll use the back stairs.

Brissi dashes out the door.

AURIYA

Why do they want me so badly?

HEAVY BANGING SOUNDS from the corridor.

Phelan and Auriya dash out into the --

CORRIDOR

And join a throng of TANAL PEOPLE - all with emerald green hair and pointy ears.

A LOUD SPLINTERING SOUND ECHOES throughout, followed by the THUD OF RUNNING FEET.

PHELAN

I need a weapon.
(to Auriya)
Stick close to Brissi. She will keep you safe.

A YOUNG TANAL MAN thrusts a sword into Phelan's hand.

Phelan turns and races down the corridor.

AURIYA

Phelan! Wait!

Phelan disappears from sight. He is followed by FOUR TANAL MEN who carry bows and arrows.

BRISSI

Come.

Brissi heads in the opposite direction.

AURIYA

Can I have a weapon too?

A YOUNG TANAL GIRL hands her a spear and races away.

AURIYA

I'd rather have a sword.

The corridor empties of Tanal as they enter the stairway.

Auriya and Brissi face each other - alone.

BRISSI

We need to hurry.

Auriya spins around and runs in the direction Phelan took.

Brissi sprints behind her.

BRISSI

You're going the wrong way.

They round the bend and Auriya abruptly halts. At her feet lay three TANAL MEN, all gravely wounded.

BRISSI

Go back. Please. They can not possess the gatekeeper. Ever.

Impaled with arrows, six dead Dacarians litter the corridor.

SEVEN DACARIAN SOLDIERS still stand. Phelan blocks their way and fights off three with his sword.

One TANAL MAN remains. He aims, then release his last arrow and kills a soldier.

AURIYA

He needs our help.

Phelan whips his head around - spots Auriya.

PHELAN

Get out of here.

One of the assailants shoves past Phelan and sprints to her.

BRISSI

Stay behind me.

Brissi grabs an arrow and inserts it in her bow.

Phelan throws himself in front of the five attackers who try to join their comrade. They hurl him to the ground.

Two of the soldiers jump on him and pin him down.

The other three men race for Auriya.

Brissi raises her bow and kills one.

The soldiers are almost to Auriya.

Phelan throws off the two Dacarians and leaps up. He engages them in a fierce sword fight.

Auriya remains and holds her spear out in front of her.

AURIYA

Come any closer and I'll stick you
with this thing.

Brissi releases an arrow and hits lead soldier in the arm. He pulls out the arrow and tosses it. He's almost to Auriya.

PHELAN

Auriya, run!

Phelan battles the two Dacarians in a life and death match.

Phelan kills one with a thrust to the chest. The remaining soldier blocks Phelan's way to Auriya.

The three assailants reach Auriya.

She thrusts her spear at one who bats it away.

Brissi brings down one man with an arrow to the heart.

Two of the soldiers grab Auriya, who kicks and SCREAMS as they drag her down the corridor.

AURIYA

Let me go. Let... me... go.

Auriya and Phelan locks eyes, as she's wrenched through the damaged door and down the stairway.

Phelan fights the last Dacarian as if possessed.

An ARROW suddenly protrudes from the soldier's neck. Brissi steps from behind the dead man.

Phelan throws the attacker down and races through the door --

STAIRWELL

Phelan takes the stairs two at a time. Brissi's behind him.

PHELAN
They will take her to the gateway.

BRISSI
I know a short cut.

EXT. CABIN - DAY

Dark, forboding woods surround the cabin. Sunlight filters through the thick foliage.

TEN SOLDIERS dash around and gather weapons and gear.

Etain gazes into the forest.

Lorcan and CAPTAIN (30s), a handsome man, stand together.

CAPTAIN
I can't figure out how Samara got past us. Several of my men have much to answer for over this.

ETAIN
They did not see her because she did not want to be seen.

LORCAN
(to Etain)
Why would Samara go into the forest alone when she knows the danger?

Apprehensive, Lorcan studies his wife who remains silent.

CAPTAIN
My men found her trail. She may be heading for the gateway.

Tears in her eyes, Etain turns away.

EXT. FOREST TRAIL - DAY

The Two Dacarians drag Auriya down a well worn path.

AURIYA
Let me go, you big goons.

She struggles to no avail.

AURIYA

When Phelan gets a hold of you,
he's going to break you in two.

The Dacarians LAUGH.

WHIZZING SOUND and an arrow pierces one of the soldier's neck. He drops to the ground dead.

The Dacarian pulls Auriya in front of him.

Auriya kicks him and attempts to yank her arm free. He keeps a lock grip.

Phelan enters the clearing with his sword at his side.

The soldier pulls Auriya tight against him as a shield.

Auriya slams her head back into the man's face. He lets go of her and HOWLS. Blood pours from his broken nose.

Auriya races away as Phelan charges the soldier who gets his sword up just as Phelan bring his down in a LOUD CLANG.

Auriya slows when she reaches the trees. Brissi rushes past with her bow in one hand. Her quiver's empty of arrows.

Brissi stops when she sees her arrow in the dead man's neck. She yanks it out.

Auriya covers her mouth and tries not to puke.

Phelan and the soldier thrust and slash with their swords intent on killing the other.

Dacarian whips his sword and connects with Phelan's arm. Blood pours from a deep gash.

Phelan throws the sword to his other hand and attacks. He swings downward and a wound opens on the man's leg.

Brissi fires the arrow and strikes the Dacarian in the back. Phelan plunges his sword into the his chest.

The assailant slumps to the ground - dead.

Phelan whirls on Auriya and storms over. Blood streams down his arm.

PHELAN

You fool. Do you realize what
almost happened here?

Auriya backs up.

AURIYA

I was just trying to help.

PHELAN

If you do not start listening, then all is lost. All of this would be for nothing. Do you understand?

Auriya puffs up.

AURIYA

No, I don't understand. Not any of it. You've barely told me anything.

Phelan unclenches his fists. Deep BREATHEs - nods.

PHELAN

You are right. I am sorry.

Brissi watches from several feet away.

AURIYA

Who are you anyway?

PHELAN

Someone who has searched all the worlds for you.

AURIYA

Why would you do that and why me?

PHELAN

Because you are the gatekeeper. And I took a vow to protect you.

AURIYA

Then, I release you from this vow. Go pick another gatekeeper. Someone who knows what they're doing.

PHELAN

There is only one and you are her.

AURIYA

That can't be. No. You've made a big mistake.

Auriya's lower lip trembles.

AURIYA

You will see. I'm not her.

Phelan shakes his head. He turns to Brissi.

PHELAN

Thank you for your help.

Brissi smiles and bows.

BRISSI

My people are honored to be of service to the gatekeeper.

PHELAN

Can you lead us to Kastem village?

BRISSI

Yes. We must stay vigilant. The night creatures will be hunting soon.

Phelan grabs the dead man's sword and sticks it in his belt.

Brissi steps off the trail and enters the forest.

Phelan turns toward Auriya and waits. She storms past him and follows Brissi.

INT. KASTEM VILLAGE - TAVERN - NIGHT

Carved into a tree, the large room is packed with PATRONS, some human-like and some Tanal.

The walls and furniture are stained a rich brown from pipe smoke. Several groups huddle together.

The bar runs the length of the room and Ki leans on one end with a mug of ale. Two swords and several knives are stuck into his belt.

Browen sits beside him.

KI

What's taking him so long?

BROWEN

I sense them. They are close.

SHIN (she-in)(30s), a black woman with long pink hair, enters. Petite and slight of build, she ripples with raw power.

Ki spots Shin - looks her up and down. Browen smiles.

BROWEN

I am grateful you came.

SHIN

I am honored to have been asked.

Shin and Browen embrace.

KI

You invited her?

BROWEN

We are in need of her unique fighting skills.

Ki SNORTS.

SHIN

Is there a problem?

KI

The gatekeeper has me to pro --

Shin whirls on Ki and in a split second, has him on his knees with a knife to his throat.

SHIN

Like I said, is there a problem?

KI

No, no, we're good.

Shin releases Ki. He rubs his throat and checks his hand for blood. He gets to his feet.

Everyone stares at them.

KI

That ridiculous pink hair is drawing attention to us.

Shin smiles and holds out the knife. Ki checks his belt and finds an empty sheath. He grabs it from her.

Browen CHUCKLES.

INT. DACARA - CASTLE - GREAT ROOM - NIGHT

A roaring fire casts shadows on the walls.

A GIANT MAN (40s), leans against the wall. He's dressed in leather and has several sharp knives stuck into his belt.

Melfet and Priest stand before the ancient book. Priest leans heavily on the case - eyes and face bruised.

Priest glances back at Giant.

PRIEST

The location has been guarded by my people for thousands of years.
Kill me, I don't care.

Melfet flips the pages to the picture of the vadan.

MELFET

You will tell me where to find the vadan, or --

PRIEST

What? Give me to your torturer over there? Go ahead. I'm not afraid to die.

Melfet pulls a silver necklace with a large amber pendent from his pocket. He drapes it over the book.

Priest slumps against the case.

MELFET

It was clever to hide your niece with the mountain people on Cassita.

PRIEST

She is only twelve seasons.

MELFET

Tell me where to find the vadan, and I will allow her to live.

PRIEST

Why? Only the gatekeeper can open the gateway to Lyneria. And last I heard, she continues to elude you.

Melfet tenses, then signals to Giant who approaches - his eyes dead - smile ice cold.

MELFET

Would you like to know what this man is famous for?

Giant invades Priest's space - causes him to back up.

MELFET

His ability to flay the skin from a living person in one continuous sheet. Shall I send him to Cassita?

Tears roll down Priest's face.

PRIEST

It's in a crystal cave, below the platform where the gatekeeper performs the Lynerian Ceremony.

MELFET

Kill him.

Melfet smiles as Giant pulls Priest from the room.

EXT. FARETH - DARK FOREST - NIGHT

Brissi carries a torch and leads Auriya and Phelan along a trail surrounded by thick vegetation.

AURIYA

Why will the gateways seal up if the ceremony isn't performed?

PHELAN

The system needs to be charged, or it runs out of power. Only the gatekeeper can do that.

AURIYA

Well, I don't know the ceremony.

PHELAN

We are meeting up with your father's sister, Brown. She will teach you what you need to know.

AURIYA

I have an aunt? Wow.

Phelan turns and studies Auriya.

PHELAN

This is a lot to take in.

AURIYA

Yeah, it's just ... I never thought I would find my family. Ever.

RUSTLING SOUNDS just ahead of them on the path.

Phelan, sword in hand, gives the second sword to Brissi.

AURIYA

Can I have one?

PHELAN

Shhh.

BRISSI
 (whispers)
 Many people approach.

Brissi hands Auriya the torch.

PHELAN
 (quietly)
 Stay behind me.

His eyes bore into her. Auriya nods.

Phelan and Brissi creep forward.

Auriya holds the torch high so they can see.

FIFTY MEN, WOMEN and CHILDREN walk toward them. They are tall, and human-looking. Everyone wears an oversized pack.

MASERN (40s), long shaggy hair and beard, leads the way.

The people fan out and surround Phelan, Brissi and Auriya.

Auriya sidles up behind Phelan.

TWO MEN lead several pack animals roped together. The animals resemble a bear and have long fur, and squashed pug faces.

PHELAN
 Masern! I thought you were --

MASERN
 Dacarians?
 (spits on the ground)
 Those dregs are everywhere. Use
 care my friend.

Masern grabs Phelan's upper arms and squeezes. Phelan returns the greeting.

MASERN
 Tell me, is it true? You found her?

Auriya steps out from behind Phelan. Masern and his people drops to their knees and bows their head.

MASERN
 We are humbled to be in your
 presence, my lady.

AURIYA
 Ah ... thanks. Please, stand up.

Masern and his people rise.

PHELAN

What brings you into the woods
after dark?

MASERN

We head to our home world. We lost
hope you would find ... I should
never have doubted you.

PHELAN

She is not yet safe.

Masern grabs Phelan's arm and leads him a short distance away.

MASERN

Dacarians guard every gateway. How
will you get off Fareth?

PHELAN

We have no choice but to try.

MASERN

May the Goddess of the Trees watch
over your every step my friend and
that of the gatekeeper.

Phelan and Masern head back to the group.

MASERN

(to his people)
To the gateway and then home.

Phelan, Auriya and Brissi watch as Masern and his people head
down the path and disappear around the bend.

AURIYA

Why are they leaving Fareth?

PHELAN

They want to be with home with their
families should we fail.

Auriya turns away - worried.

INT. KASTEM VILLAGE - TAVERN - NIGHT

Phelan walks in and scopes out the patrons.

Ki spots him and saunters over.

KI

Took your time, brother.

Phelan gives Ki the once over.

PHELAN
Bring enough weapons?

KI
Let's hope so.

Ki grabs Phelan in a bear hug.

KI
I knew you'd find her.

They separate, LAUGHING.

KI
Where is she? You lose her already?

Phelan pushes open the door - Auriya and Brissi enter.

Browen shoves past Phelan, and grabs Auriya in a hug.

BROWEN
After all these years, we thought
we would never find you.

Auriya tears up.

AURIYA
You're my aunt?

She nods and hugs Auriya again.

BROWEN
We have missed you so much.

Ki puts his arm around Phelan. Shin walks up.

KI
You did good, brother.

Browen heads to an empty table.

BROWEN
Come, we have much to discuss.

INT. CABIN - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Lorcan paces, while Etain sits in a chair by the fireplace.

The cabin door bursts open. Captain, enters with Samara who carries a handful of purple and yellow flowers.

Lorcan rushes to Samara and hugs her. Etain remains sitting and studies her daughter.

LORCAN
Thank the Goddess you are safe.

Lorcan releases his daughter.

ETAIN
Where did you go?

SAMARA
I got lost looking for the flowers
you love so much.

CAPTAIN
We found her quite a distance from
here. She must have been walking
in circles.

Samara smiles sweetly at Captain, who blushes.

SAMARA
Thank you for rescuing me.

Etain smiles - relaxes, as Samara hands the flowers to her.

INT. KASTEM VILLAGE - TAVERN - NIGHT

Phelan, Auriya, Browen, Brissi, Shin and Ki sit around a table with platters of food and mugs of ale.

AURIYA
How come Earth doesn't know about
the gateways?

BROWEN
Earth's gateways were once very
active. People moved freely between
the worlds populating them as they
went. Three-thousand years ago, a
gatekeeper died before she could
perform the ceremony and they closed
up for five-hundred years. Some of
the worlds lost their memory of the
gateways and stopped using them.

AURIYA
Why don't we tell Earth about them?

BROWEN

The Council believes there are powerful people on Earth who would not hesitate to exploit the gateway worlds for their own profit.

AURIYA

And they would be right. Who built the gateways?

BROWEN

The Lynerians.

PHELAN

They built the gateways to ensure the survival of their people. Lyneria could no longer support the growing population. You and your family are their progeny.

AURIYA

So, what's the big deal if they close up for five hundred years?

SHIN

The worlds have become dependent on one another for everything from food, medicines and fuel. Some worlds would be okay and survive, but others would suffer terrible consequences if the gateways closed.

People APPLAUD as two men lift a TANAL BOY (10), onto the bar. He smiles and then bursts into a BEAUTIFUL, HAUNTING SONG.

PHELAN

(to Shin)

Your fighting skills are legendary on many worlds. I'm glad you are here.

Ki SNORTS.

AURIYA

Are you famous?

SHIN

I compete in the Sentean each year. That is why I am known.

BROWEN

And because you always place first.

BRISSI

You are the one called Pink Slayer.

Shin nods.

BRISSI

You're a hero among the Tanal girls. I can't believe I'm actually sitting here with you.

Shin smiles at Brissi. She grabs a blue fruit and peels it.

KI

A competition doesn't make you a warrior like me.

Shin pops a slice into her mouth.

SHIN

I seem to remember you on your knees with a knife at your throat.

KI

Your hair distracted me.

Phelan looks at Browen who smiles and nods.

PHELAN

I missed the great Ki bested by a woman half his size?

KI

Thank you, brother.

BROWEN

I will teach Auriya the ceremony first thing in the morning. We will leave for Lyneria by midday.

Auriya fidgets, plays with her food. Phelan watches her.

PHELAN

You can do this.

Auriya goes still.

AURIYA

I hope so.

EXT. DARK FOREST - DAWN

THIRTY DACARIANS SOLDIERS skulk through the trees with swords drawn. Melfet and Nespar follow close behind.

EXT. KASTEM VILLAGE - DAWN

At the edge of the village, Ki and Shin stand together and search the forest. Shin has a leather pouch slung across her.

KI
Did you hear that?

SHIN
Yes.

Ki pulls out his swords. Shin grabs a MADRA from the pouch. It's similar to a small hand gun, but has a larger barrel and a bulge behind the trigger.

KI
Stay behind me.

Shin steps out in front of Ki. Ki immediately moves out in front of her. Shin SIGHS.

SHIN
We will do this together.

KI
Fine.

They move side by side into the woods.

A BABY KRONGALL, small pig like animal with furry hair, scurries SQUEALING from the bush in front of them.

EXT. CABIN - DAWN

Captain and SEVERAL GUARDS huddle around a fire.

TALL GUARD strides from the woods and joins the others.

TALL GUARD
I can't shake this uneasy feeling.

CAPTAIN
(searches forest)
I want everyone alert and weapons
at the ready.

Swords out, the men take up positions around the cabin.

A SHOUT and Dacarian soldiers charge from the woods.

CAPTAIN
Hold your ground!

The guards attack the Dacarrians, but they're outnumbered three to one. Their end is swift and violent.

Two Dacarrians walk among the wounded guards and dispatch the three that still live. Captain is the last to die.

Melfet and Nespar enter the clearing.

MELFET
Bring me the Royals.

Four men dart into the cabin.

MELFET
By nightfall, the gatekeeper will
be mine.

The soldiers drag Lorcan and Etain from the cabin.

NESPAR
Where's Samara?

Lorcan and Etain share a quick look - both stay silent.

MELFET
No matter. Bring them.

Melfet enters the woods. The rest follow.

Samara peers out from behind a tree and scans the area. Her eyes land on Captain. She flinches and turns away.

EXT. KASTEM RIVER - DAY

The brilliant green river flows gently between grassy banks covered in wildflowers. Browen sits on a bench and watches Auriya who stands a few feet away.

BROWEN
One more time.

Auriya raises her arms up and out to her sides - her palms face down. She closes her eyes and concentrates.

AURIYA
Gicati Ech San Mayin Ven Dace
Remysis Sy Fera Azuua.

Relieved, Auriya opens her eyes and smiles at Browen.

BROWEN

Excellent! The incantation will activate the platform and you will become the channel through which the energy flows to the gateways. You must remain completely still during the ceremony.

AURIYA

What if ... I'm not the gatekeeper? Maybe you've made a mistake?

Browen pats the bench next to her. Auriya sits down and Browen hugs her.

BROWEN

I feel the power in you. There is no doubt. You are the gatekeeper.

Auriya relaxes and looks out over the river.

AURIYA

Why does Melfet want me so badly?

BROWEN

He found the Kata several years before you were born. It's an ancient book written by the Lynerian people. Let's walk.

KASTEM RIVER PATH - MOMENTS LATER

Auriya and Browen stroll arm in arm along the river bank.

AURIYA

What does it have to do with me?

BROWEN

It describes a device called the vadan. Melfet's obsessed with it.

AURIYA

A what?

BROWEN

Better if I show you. Take my hands.

Auriya takes Browen's hands and they face each other.

BROWEN

A vision has been handed down from one generation to the next in our family. Now close your eyes.

A translucent PURPLE MIST swirls around Auriya and Browen as they stand together, eyes closed. It swirls faster and faster until it engulfs the women.

EXT. VISION - LYNERIA - EMER/GRASSY KNOLL - DAY

Auriya and Browen stand on a grassy knoll in the middle of a beautiful crystal city that sparkles in the sun.

AURIYA

Wow! Where are we?

BROWEN

Emer, Lyneria's greatest city.

Auriya spins around. DOZENS OF PEOPLE, who look human and wear silver jumpsuits, hurry along walkways.

Four silver space-age vehicles fly over the city. They are cigar-shaped and vary in size.

AURIYA

It feels like I'm really here.

BROWEN

The vadan was created here.

Purple mist swirls around them again and they end up in --

INT. EMER/LABORATORY - NIGHT

A sleek, futuristic lab with SEVEN SCIENTISTS who work on a variety of gadgets and machines.

Auriya puts her arm through Browen's arm.

KARYAN (70s), hurries into the lab with a pronounced limp. He carries a large box and heads to the table against the wall.

BROWEN

That is Karyan. He devoted his whole life to building the vadan.

Furtive, Karyan looks around. No one notices him. He sets down the box and lifts the vadan out and onto the table.

AURIYA

What does it do?

BROWEN

Whoever activates the vadan, will have eternal life and absolute power over any world connected by the gateways.

AURIYA

That's frightening.

BROWEN

The council warned Karyan many times to stop working on the vadan. He persisted, convinced it was the right course of action.

Purple mist surrounds the women and they end up on a --

INT. EMER/COURTROOM - DAY

Balcony that overlooks an ornate room with a large window overlooking the vast city. EMERIANS are packed into every available space.

THREE MEN AND TWO WOMEN (60s), sit high up on a dais. Karyan stands before them. He is flanked by TWO GUARDS.

BROWEN

A plague ravaged Emer for two generations, decimating their numbers. Most of the survivors were unable to conceive a child. They were a dying race.

The silent crowd watches as the two guards grab Karyan by the arms and remove him from the courtroom.

BROWEN

Karyan wanted to be the one to activate the vadan, thus ensuring the gateways would remain open. Already viewed as unstable, the idea that he would be in possession of such power terrified the council.

Engulfed in purple mist, the women find themselves --

EXT. EMER/GRASSY KNOLL - DAY

Back on the grassy knoll. The vast city is empty of life.

AURIYA

Where is everyone?

BROWEN

The decision was made to abandon their world with the hopes that those who could still bear children would commingle with other worlds and eventually rebuild their race. They hid the vadan on Lyneria and sealed up the gateway.

Purple mist surrounds the women and they end up --

EXT. FARETH - ROYAL CLEARING - DAY

In the Royal Clearing outside the royal home.

AURIYA

Fareth!

BROWEN

The Emerians split into two groups. One group was tasked with keeping the location of the vadan a secret. The second group came here and created a way for a gatekeeper to be born every 500 years, ensuring the gateways always remained open. We are their descendants.

AURIYA

Why did Melfet try to take me when I was so young?

BROWEN

Impatience. Even at three, you could have opened the gateway to Lyneria for him.

AURIYA

What happens if he gets the vadan?

BROWEN

He will rule over all the worlds and ... he will kill you.

AURIYA

Why?

BROWEN

Only the gatekeeper is powerful enough to challenge Melfet.

They are engulfed again in purple mist and --

KASTEM RIVER PATH

Auriya and Browen stand on the path.

AURIYA
I didn't realize what was at stake.

Browen grab's Auriya's hand - squeezes.

BROWEN
You are not alone in this.

AURIYA
What if ... what if I fail?

Auriya pulls away and staggers to the rivers edge.
Trembling, she takes deep breaths.

AURIYA
The people on thirty-four worlds
depend on me to do this.
(lips tremble)
On me.

BROWEN
We are here to help you in anyway we
can. You will succeed.

Auriya shakes her head.

AURIYA
Let's hope you're right.

INT. SEATTLE - APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM/DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Mai and Janice sit on the couch. Janice wipes tears away.

JANICE
I should never have turned my back
on her. Stupid, stupid thing to do.

MAI
I feel her. She's still alive.

The door EXPLODES open and SIX DACARIANS rush in. Nespar follows behind them.

Mai and Janice leap up.

NESPAR
Seize them.

The Dacarians grab Mai and Janice and put cloth hoods over the women's heads.

JANICE
Get this damn thing off of me or
you're gonna be very, very sorry.

NESPAR
Get them to the gateway.

Janice and Mai are manhandled out of the apartment.

EXT. FARETH - WATERFALL - DAY

Auriya walks to the edge of a steep slope over looking an idyllic pool with a small waterfall.

Phelan stands under the waterfall - eyes closed as the water flows over him.

Ki swims in lazy circles nearby. Both men are naked.

Auriya takes a step and loses her balance.

AURIYA
Oh my god.

She slides down the bank - arms flailing and lands in the pool with a splash.

Auriya surfaces. Her wet hair hangs over her eyes. She claws it away and sees Phelan and Ki in front of her.

Auriya quickly looks anywhere but at the two men.

AURIYA
Ah ... I, ah ... sorry.

Auriya stares down at the water - fidgets.

PHELAN
Did you hurt yourself?

AURIYA
No, I'm ah ... good.

Auriya looks up at Phelan. Her eyes start downward - she shakes her head and looks up. Phelan smiles.

KI
You taking a bath, too?

AURIYA

No. I didn't intend ... I fell.

Auriya turns and makes her way to the edge. Ki and Phelan watch her climb out and start up the slope.

Partway up, she loses her footing. She slides back down and lands in front of them.

Phelan reaches down and helps her up.

They stand face to face. Phelan still holds her hand. Their eyes lock, something deep and intense passes between them.

Ki CLEARS his throat. Flushed, Auriya pulls her hand away.

Phelan reaches out to Auriya, hesitates - drops his hand.

PHELAN

Just up the river is a place where you can climb out.

AURIYA

Thanks. Brown says we leave for Lyneria soon.

Auriya heads up the river and disappears around the bend.

INT. DACARA - CASTLE - ARMORY - DAY

Dark, hot and dusty, FIVE MEN sharpen sword blades and THREE MEN make arrows.

Melfet strolls along shelves stacked high with weapons of war.

The men look up in fear as Melfet pulls a sword from the shelf.

Stock still, the men watch as he runs finger along the blade. A thin line of blood appears. He nods and sucks his finger.

The men visibly exhale and go back to work.

Nespar races into the Armory.

NESPAR

We found the gatekeeper!

Melfet carefully replaces the sword.

MELFET

What took you so long?

Nespar slows, then stops.

NESPAR

I've been Others have joined --

Melfet pulls out another sword and looks down the blade.

MELFET

Browen?

Nespar fidgets.

NESPAR

Yes.

Melfet throws the sword onto the shelf with a CLANG. The men look up - curious.

MELFET

Gather a full contingent of men and meet me at the gateway.

Nespar runs from the Armory. Melfet notes the men's interest. They quickly focus back on their work.

INT. TAVERN - CONTINUOUS

Browen, Brissi and Shin huddle in conversation at a table.

Samara stumbles in - hot, dirty and irritated.

Browen frowns when she sees Samara.

BROWEN

Why are you not at the cabin?

SAMARA

Nice to see you too, Browen.

Samara plops down and grabs Brissi's mug. Drinks deeply. She sets the mug down. Brissi glares at her.

SAMARA

Melfet showed up with his thugs.

Browen goes rigid. Brissi's hand flies to her mouth and Shin lean in.

BROWEN

What? He has your parents?

SAMARA

Yes. I barely escaped, alive.

Browen takes a moment to compose herself.

BROWEN
Auriya must not be told.

Eyes narrow, jaw tight, Samara fixes Browen with an icy stare.

BROWEN
Did you hear me?

Phelan enters the tavern and Samara brightens. She leaps up and drapes herself around his neck.

SAMARA
Phelan! I've missed you so much.

Phelan removes Samara's hands from his neck.

PHELAN
What are you doing here?

Samara's smile falters. She backs up a step.

SAMARA
Aren't you happy to see me?

Phelan turns to Browen.

BROWEN
(to Phelan)
You better sit. We have bad news.

EXT. KASTEM VILLAGE - DAY

Auriya strolls through the village. She spots Phelan and Ki deep in conversation, their backs to her.

A NOISY group of children play tag nearby.

Auriya quietly approaches them. She reaches out to tap Phelan on the shoulder - freezes.

KI
... he has her parents?

She quickly pulls her hand back.

PHELAN
Browen feels it will distract her.
I agree with her.

KI
Any idea how he found them?

Auriya backs up.

PHELAN

I personally picked every member on the security detail.

KI

Trying to stop Melfet is like trying to dam up the ocean.

PHELAN

After the ceremony, I will do what should have been done a long time ago. I will kill Melfet.

Auriya turns and races out of the village.

EXT. FARETH - KASTEM RIVER - DAY

Auriya sits on a grassy bank near the water's edge. The location is hidden away by bushes bursting with flowers.

Samara approaches Auriya.

SAMARA

Hello, sister.

AURIYA

You are Samara?

Auriya hungrily searches Samara's face.

SAMARA

I was looking for Phelan and found you instead.

Auriya lights up with a joyful smile, as Samara plops down.

AURIYA

My aunt ... Our aunt told me I had a sister.

SAMARA

You don't remember me?

Auriya shakes her head.

AURIYA

I'm so happy you are safe. I thought Melfet took you too.

Samara studies her.

SAMARA

You know then?

AURIYA

Will he --

SAMARA

Kill them? No. Not until he has
the vadan.

Worried, Auriya looks out over the river.

SAMARA

Why were you holding Phelan's hand?

AURIYA

What?

SAMARA

At the river. I saw you.

Auriya blushes and looks away.

Furtive, Shin makes her way to a bush behind Auriya. She
crouches down, hidden.

SAMARA

I know something about Phelan that
you don't.

Auriya stares at her, curious.

SAMARA

He's Melfet's son.

Auriya jumps up and glares down at Samara.

AURIYA

You're wrong.

SAMARA

I'm not surprised Phelan hasn't
told you. He keeps his dirty
little secret from most people. Of
course, he told me.

AURIYA

I don't believe you.

SAMARA

Ask Browen. She knows.

AURIYA

Why didn't he tell me?

SAMARA

You are a stranger and mean nothing
to him. Why would he?

Auriya darts past Samara and runs down the trail.

Samara LAUGHS and throws a rock into the river.

Shin quietly follows Auriya.

EXT. KASTEM VILLAGE - DAY

Ki and Brissi sit on a log in the center of the village. Ki sharpens one of his swords, and Brissi checks her bow.

Nearby, a line of CHILDREN stand in front of Browen. She bandages a wound on the arm of a TANAL BOY.

BROWEN

You need to keep this dry for two
days, okay?

The boy nods and scurries away.

A HUMAN-LOOKING GIRL steps up and holds out her hand. One of her fingers is broken.

Phelan walks up to Browen, Ki and Brissi.

PHELAN

Have you seen Auriya?

BROWEN

Shin is watching over her.

An OLD TANAL MAN races into the village, deeply winded.

OLD TANAL MAN

(gasps)
Dacarians! Dacarians are coming!

Ki and Brissi leap up.

BRISSI

I must sound the alarm.

Brissi sprints across the village.

BROWEN

(to the children)
Quickly, go find your families.

The children scatter.

A HORN ECHOES throughout the village.

 PHELAN
The nearest gateway is an hour away.

 KI
And heavily guarded.

EXT. KASTEM VILLAGE - MINUTES LATER

VILLAGERS bolt in many directions.

Auriya and Shin dash into the village. They spot Phelan, Brown, Brissi and Ki, and run to them.

 BRISSI
Over two hundred Dacarians are
headed this way.

 PHELAN
We have to get Auriya off of Fareth.

 BRISSI
We can take the high line, but it
will be dangerous if they spot us.

 PHELAN
Take us there.

Auriya looks around.

 AURIYA
Wait. Where's my sister?

 BROWEN
You met her?

Auriya nods.

 BRISSI
We've not seen her in some time.

 BROWEN
She will be fine. She is very
resourceful. Where is the high line?

 BRISSI
Follow me.

Brissi flees the village and the others follow.

EXT. KASTEM VILLAGE - DAY

The Dacarians methodically search the dwellings. FIVE VILLAGERS and THREE TANAL huddle together.

FOUR DACARIANS rough up a VILLAGE WOMAN (29). She bleeds from her nose and mouth. A FEARSOME DACARIAN hovers over her.

Melfet and Nespar approach them.

MELFET

Where's the gatekeeper?

Fearsome grabs Village Woman's hair and pulls her head back until she stares up at him.

FEARSOME

Tell him.

He twists her hair around his hand. She CRIES OUT in pain.

VILLAGE WOMAN

(tears up)

The high line.

Fearsome shoves her away as she SOBS. She's comforted by the other villagers.

Melfet looks up at the trees around him.

MELFET

(shouts)

All archers to me.

INT. KASTEM VILLAGE - TREE - DAY

Brissi stands inside an opening, high in the tree. A taut line stretches far into the distance.

KI

(leans out)

Wow, brother, you going to be okay?

Phelan sucks in his breath and backs up. Auriya studies him.

AURIYA

You don't look like brothers.

PHELAN

Best friends. Not --

Browen and Shin lean out as well. Phelan leans against the back wall, his breaths ragged. Ki glances back at him.

PHELAN
Just ... give me ... a minute.

AURIYA
I'm worried about Samara.

BROWEN
The Tanal will keep her safe.

BRISSI
The line ends in a tree next to the gateway. If we're seen --

PHELAN
One problem at a time.

Phelan pushes away from the wall.

PHELAN
Four t-bars means two of us will have to double up. Brissi, Browen, then Ki and Shin. Auriya and I will go last. Melfet would not risk harming Auriya, but he will not hesitate to kill the rest of you.

Brissi jumps on the t-bar and pushes off. She flies down the line. Ki snags the next t-bar and motions to Browen.

BROWEN
Keep her safe.

She sits down and Ki shoves her. She soars down the line.

SHOUTING from below. ARROWS FLY PAST THE OPENING.

Ki grabs a t-bar and motions Shin over.

KI
(to Phelan)
We could fight our way out of here.

PHELAN
I'll be fine. Now, go.

AURIYA
You got a problem with heights?

Ashamed, Phelan can't meet her eyes. Auriya takes hold of Phelan's hand and squeezes it.

AURIYA
You're not alone. I'll be with you.

Phelan looks out and see the line passes through a small opening in a tree ahead. Large faces the wrong way.

Phelan kicks out at Large and pummels his knees. He lets out a HOWL of pain, but still hangs on.

AURIYA

Good job! Do it again.

Phelan kicks again as the speed toward the tree. Large pulls his legs up in time and LAUGHS.

Phelan looks up at Auriya and then in front of him. She sees the tree and nods.

The tree approaches fast. Auriya wraps one arm around the rope and reaches down with the other. Phelan grabs her hand.

Twenty feet from the tree, Auriya pulls Phelan up and he grabs the rope. He climbs on the bar as they enter the tree.

Large is knocked from the t-bar and falls.

Phelan sits down on the opposite side of Auriya. His legs draped over hers.

AURIYA

You okay?

He looks into her eyes and smiles.

PHELAN

I am now.

Auriya smiles back and puts her arms around his neck. He hugs her close as they fly down the line.

EXT. KASTEM VILLAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Melfet seethes under the High Line.

MELFET

I want all the archers who fired on the gatekeeper, now.

SEVEN ARCHERS reluctantly come forward.

MELFET

Take these imbeciles back to Dacara and throw them into the dungeon.

Twenty soldiers grab the archers and lead them away.

Melfet looks down and sees dust on his boots. Disgusted, he takes a glove from his pocket and wipes them clean.

NESPAR

What do we do now?

MELFET

Patience, my son. I didn't set just one plan into motion.

INT. END OF HIGH LINE - DAY

Brissi, Shin and Browen hover around the opening, and look down. Phelan hangs back and peers over them. THIRTY DACARIANS stand guard around the gateway.

Auriya stands apart, troubled.

BRISSI

We will never be able to take on so many by ourselves.

AURIYA

He's already won, don't you see? He won't stop until he has me. And killed all of you and my parents.

Auriya hugs her arms tight around her. Shin approaches her.

SHIN

When I am fighting in the Sentean, it's often at the point when I feel all is lost that something unexpected happens. I gain the upper hand back. Melfet's not infallible. He has and will continue to make mistakes. It's then we push our advantage.

BROWEN

Shin's right. So far, we have managed to stay one step ahead.

Auriya focuses on Phelan's leg. His wound bleeds freely.

AURIYA

You're hurt.

Browen squats down and pulls his pant leg back and exposes a deep gash.

BROWEN
I need to bind your wound before
you lose more blood.

PHELAN
Later. We need to get Auriya off
of Fareth before it is too late. I
have an idea.

Browen stands up.

INT. DACARA - DUNGEON - DAY

Dimly lit and carved into solid rock, bars line the front of
five cells. SEVERAL GUARDS mill around.

Melfet and Nespar descend the stairs. TEN GUARDS follow.

Janice moves to the front of her cell and spots Melfet.

JANICE
Is that him?

Lorcan and Etain step to the front of their cell.

LORCAN
Yes.

JANICE
Listen here, spawn of Satan. You
better let us go right now.

Nespar LAUGHS.

JANICE
You think this is funny. Just you
wait. I'll give you funny when I
get my hands on you.

Melfet stands in front of Janice.

MELFET
When the time comes, convince your
friend to do what I wish. Then you
may go home.

Mai limps up. Janice puts her arms around her.

JANICE
Keep me, and let Mai go.

ETAIN

The cold and damp is no place for an old woman.

MELFET

On the contrary, I believe the old woman is the key to everything.

MAI

Auriya has an uncommon inner strength for someone so young. In the end she will do what's right, no matter the consequences.

JANICE

That's right. Our girl's gonna kick this buffoon's ass. I, for one, can't wait to see her do it!

MELFET

Chain them and move them to the gateway. I want to leave at a moment's notice.

Melfet ascends the stairs.

EXT. FARETH - HIGH LINE GATEWAY - DUSK

Phelan, Ki, Brissi, Shin, Browen and Auriya crouch behind bushes fifty feet away. The DACARIANS mill around.

PHELAN

Hold your breath until you are through the gateway.

Brissi picks up an arrow with a small brown bag strapped to the tip. She notches it in her bow and nods.

Browen pulls out flint and steel from her pocket. She strikes them together. The spark starts the packet on fire.

Brissi aims the arrow up in the air and releases. The arrow soars away and --

GATEWAY

Hits an OLD DACARIAN in the chest. He falls over dead. His clothes erupt in flames.

The remaining Dacarians come together - ready to do battle. The smoke drifts their way and one by one, the Dacarians fall to the ground.

Phelan and Ki dash into the clearing, swords drawn. Both have an arm over their mouths.

 PHELAN
 (muffled)
 Ech Soo Mayin Tos Altex.

A gateway shimmers in front of them and radiates a soft blue light. The pillars and arch are covered in carvings of vines with brightly colored flowers.

Browen, Brissi, Shin and Auriya approach the gateway, hands over their mouths.

Phelan waves them through. Ki follows the women. Just as Phelan enters the gateway --

Samara enters the clearing.

 SAMARA
 Going somewhere without me?

Phelan spins around.

 PHELAN
 Don't breath in the --

Samara collapses on the ground. Phelan shoves his sword into his belt and races to her. He scoops her up in his arms and heads into the gateway.

EXT. ALTEX - GLASS BUILDING - NIGHT

SUPER: "ALTEX"

The all glass structure surrounds the gateway and looks out onto a futuristic city.

A LONG LINE OF PEOPLE wait to enter the building, all weighed down with possessions.

TWO ALTEX SECURITY GUARDS, have Shin and Browen pulled aside.

Ki and Phelan have a woozy Samara propped between them.

 AURIYA
 (whispers)
 Will she be okay?

 PHELAN
 The effects will wear off shortly.

Shin pulls papers from a hidden pocket in her coat and hands them to the guards.

SHIN
They're all with me.

The guards refuse to take the papers.

OLDER SOLDIER
You bring great honor to Altex,
Pink Slayer. Your party may enter.

Impressed, Ki steals a look at Shin.

SHIN
Thank you.

Samara leans into Phelan and smiles up at him.

Auriya stiffens and turns away. She focuses on the people in line. She SIGHS, troubled.

Brown waves them over and they step down into the crowd.

STREETS - MOMENTS LATER

The buildings of Altex tower above them. All sport enormous TV screens advertising everything from food, clothes, weapons, alcohol and TV shows.

The group is swept along by a DIVERSE CROWD OF ALTEXANS.

Auriya gawks at the sights. Stores, lit up with neon lights, whose PROPRIETORS stand in doorways and SHOUT THEIR WARES.

STREET VENDORS aggressively peddle a variety of merchandise.

Open air restaurants line the street, jammed packed with PATRONS and serve every kind of food imaginable.

Shin points to a side street and they turn down it.

Shin enters a brightly lit bar.

INT. BAR - MOMENTS LATER

The decor, post modern and filled with a boisterous group of HUMAN-LOOKING AND NOT QUITE HUMAN-LOOKING PATRONS. A BAND plays TECHNO MUSIC, the beat is infectious and many dance.

Shin enters and heads toward an open area at the bar. Ki, Brown and Brissi follow her.

Auriya touches Phelan on his arm and he stops. Samara sidles up next to Phelan and leans on him.

AURIYA
I'm worried about my parents.

SAMARA
And I'm tired and hungry, if anyone wants to know.

Phelan takes a step away from Samara and moves closer to Auriya. Samara's face tightens and hands ball up into fists.

PHELAN
We will get them back. I promise.

Samara shoves past Auriya and heads for the bar.

AURIYA
Are you really Melfet's son?

Phelan flinches.

PHELAN
Samara told you?

Auriya nods.

PHELAN
I am his son and Nespar is my half-brother. It's complicated.

AURIYA
I didn't want to believe her.

Phelan steps closer to Auriya and leans in.

PHELAN
My mother was one of Melfet's slaves and when I was four, she escaped with me. He finally tracked her down and he ... he killed her. She had hidden me with Joril, who kept me safe.

AURIYA
I am so sorry.

PHELAN
With only two surviving children, Melfet has tried many times to reach out to me. He is not and never will be a part of my life. Joril is my only father.

AURIYA

I understand. I really do.

Auriya smiles and Phelan reaches out, strokes her face.
Auriya leans into his hand.

EXT. DACARA - CASTLE GATEWAY - DAWN

Chained together, Lorcan, Etain, Mai and Janice huddle on the ground. THIRTY GUARDS surround them.

The gateway shimmers into sight in front of them. It glows grey and the pillars and archway are fashioned from black granite. There are no carvings or adornment.

FAT DACARIAN walks out of the gateway just as it flickers and emits a LOUD SCREECHING sound.

Fat whirls around and stares at the gateway.

ETAIN

The gateways are running out of power. We are almost out of time.

Fat sprints for the door.

INT. ALTEX - TUNNELS - DAWN

Dark, dank, and full of the debris. The only light comes from a torch carried by Shin who leads the way.

Phelan, Ki, Brissi, Browen, Samara and Auriya follow.

Auriya smiles at Brissi.

AURIYA

When this is all done, can you teach me how to use the bow?

BRISSI

It would be my honor.

Auriya trips on a branch and Phelan catches her before she falls. He pulls her back up.

AURIYA

Oh, that was close.

Phelan smiles at Auriya. His hand lingers on her arm.

PHELAN

You okay?

Auriya nods and smiles back. Phelan reluctantly lets go.
Samara fixes Auriya with a white-hot stare.

SAMARA
A bit clumsy, aren't we?

Auriya turns to Samara and wilts under her glare.

AURIYA
I ... ah, yes a bit.

Samara flounces after Browen.

SAMARA
This place is disgusting. Why come down here when there are so many gateways on the surface?

BROWEN
The gateway we seek is very secluded. By using the tunnels, we arrive unseen.

AURIYA
Why didn't we just go to Lyneria from Fareth?

BROWEN
We couldn't risk it. If any of his men were still awake and nearby, they could have forced the gateway to stay open until he arrived.

A GROWL ECHOES behind them.

Everyone stops. Ki and Phelan take up protective positions. Shin shines the torch into the tunnel.

SHIN
Frage! It's tobats.

Browen, Auriya and Samara stay where they are.

MORE GROWLS ECHO IN THE SMALL SPACE.

Shin moves further along the tunnel.

KI
See them?

Shin throws the torch to Browen, who catches it.

SHIN
They're coming.

Shin pulls her madra out of it's holster.

Ki has both swords out.

Phelan, sword in hand, stands next to Brissi, her bow primed. Auriya stares down at her empty hands.

AURIYA
Anyone got an extra sword?

A LOUD SCREECHING and FIVE TOBATS launch into view.

They're large rodents the size of small ponies with long, jagged teeth, five-inch claws and red eyes that glow.

PHELAN
(yells)
Brown, get Auriya out of here.

Shin shoots her madra, which EMITS A BRIGHT GREEN STREAM OF LIGHT, and takes out the first tobat.

Brissi fires off an arrow, but it bounces off the thick hide of another tobat.

Samara SCREAMS and darts down the tunnel, away from the group.

Brown grabs Auriya's arm. She resists.

AURIYA
I'm staying to help.

Brown sees her determination and relents.

BROWEN
Stay back, then.

Brown sticks the torch in a crack in the wall. Auriya watches Brown take a knife from a sheath on her thigh.

AURIYA
I need one of those.

Auriya grabs a SHARP METAL STICK sticking out of the muck.

A tobat lunges and Phelan thrusts his sword into it's chest. It flails around, but he stands firm.

PHELAN
Go for their chests.

Brissi fires an arrow at Phelan's tobat and hits it in the chest. The animal kicks out and then dies. It crashes on top of Phelan and knocks him down. He struggles to push it off.

Ki battles two tobats. He wounds one. The other slinks around behind him. It leaps into the air, eyes on Ki's neck.

BROWEN
(shouts)
Ki, behind you.

In a flying leap, Shin shoots the tobat mid-air and it lands directly behind Ki - dead.

Ki engages the second animal - backs it down the tunnel.

KI
Die, you mangy beast.

Brissi runs to Phelan and tries to push the beast off of him - it doesn't budge.

The last tobat circles Browen, who has her knife in her hand.

The creature rushes her and knocks her down. She stabs up with her knife and sinks it into the animal's chest - it doesn't slow down.

The tobat spots Auriya and slinks toward her.

AURIYA
Uh, someone ... A little help.

The beast leaps and Auriya rams the metal stick into its chest near Browen's knife. The animal lands at her feet - dead.

AURIYA
Hey, I killed one!

Everyone's too busy to pay attention.

Auriya watches Ki kill the wounded creature with a well placed sword thrust.

AURIYA
I really need to get me a sword.

Browen slowly stands and brushes dirt from her skirt. She pulls her knife out of the dead tobat's chest.

Ki and Brissi pull, while Phelan pushes and they get the creature off of him.

Brissi helps Phelan to his feet and then picks up her bow.

PHELAN
 Anyone hurt?

They shake their heads, as they hear --

RUSTLING SOUNDS.

 PHELAN
 Time to go.

The group sprints down the tunnel.

EXT. DACARA - CASTLE GATEWAY - DAY

The prisoners, bound and gagged, stand behind Melfet and Nespar. THIRTY SOLDIERS hover nearby.

The shimmering gateway SCREECHES as if in terrible pain.

 MELFET
 I've dreamed of this day since I
 was a boy.

 NESPAR
 You did it, father. I never
 doubted you.

 MELFET
 Let's move.

Melfet enters, then Nespar. Soldiers and prisoners follow.

EXT. ALTEX - OVERGROWN CLEARING - DAY

Phelan and Ki crouch at the edge. The City's giant skyscrapers loom behind them.

 KI
 Very quiet.

 PHELAN
 Too quiet.

Phelan and Ki dash back to the group hidden behind bushes.

 AURIYA
 We're almost out of time, aren't we?

 BROWEN
 By dusk, it will be too late.

PHELAN

I suggest we get moving. Auriya?

Auriya steps out from behind the bush. Phelan and Browen stand beside her.

AURIYA

Ech Soo... Ech Soo... Damn, I forgot the ... Wait! Ech Soo Mayin Tos Lyneria.

The gateway appears. It sparkles as if infused with hundreds of diamonds. The pillars and archway are carved with stars and moons. The gateway flashes on and off.

BROWEN

The gateways struggle. Quickly, we must not delay.

Auriya goes first. The rest follow.

Melfet and Nespar creep into the clearing.

MELFET

I will signal when all is clear on the Lyneria side.

Melfet darts into the gateway. Nespar whistles, and the soldiers drag the prisoners into the clearing.

EXT. LYNERIA - MEADOW - DAY

Snow-covered mountains in every direction. Three large moons dominate the eastern sky. A beautiful and pristine world, it is eerily QUIET.

Auriya, Phelan, Browen, Ki, Shin, Brissi and Samara stand in a grassy meadow at the edge of a vast, dark forest.

AURIYA

I feel like I'm electrically charged or something. I'm getting these visions ...
(realizes)
I know the way.

Auriya leads the group into the forest, followed by Phelan, Browen, Samara and Brissi. Ki and Shin bring up the rear.

Melfet and Nespar exit the gateway, followed by the soldiers and prisoners. Everyone speaks in HUSHED TONES.

NESPAR
 (to the prisoners)
 Not a sound. Clear?

Janice stamps her foot down on the boot of a soldier. He HOWLS with pain.

Melfet backhands Janice across her face.

MELFET
 Do that again and you will die.

Defiant, Janice glares at him.

Lorcan and Etain eyes find each other another. Lorcan nods encouragement to his wife.

LYNERIA FOREST - MOMENTS LATER

Ki and Shin stop.

SHIN
 I swear I heard something.

KI
 Me too.

SHIN
 There are no inhabitants. Right?

KI
 No, but there are animals.

Phelan hurries to them.

PHELAN
 Problem?

SHIN
 What are the odds the Dacarrians figured out the gateway we used?

PHELAN
 Thirty-four worlds and hundreds of gateways. Impossible.

KI
 It could have been an animal.

Shin looks away troubled. Phelan lets out a long EXHALE.

PHELAN
 There is one way.

Shin and Ki lean in.

PHELAN
Someone betrayed us.

KI
One of us?

Phelan stares off in the direction of the gateway.

PHELAN
Double back, but be careful.

Phelan races up the mountain. Ki and Shin head back down.

LYNERIA FOREST - LATER

Deep in the forest, Melfet and Nespar walk together. Lorcan and Janice support Mai between them and help her up the path. Etain carries Mai's cane.

MELFET
Once she performs the ceremony, her powers will be too great to overcome. Even with the vadan.

NESPAR
The platform has to be nearby.

Melfet nods at the snow-covered mountain looming over above the trees.

MELFET
At the foot of the mountain.

Melfet turns to the soldiers who are spread out around them.

MELFET
Prepare for battle.

Soldiers pull out their swords and move out in front.

EDGE OF FOREST - LATER

Auriya, Phelan, Brissi, Samara and Browen walk into a large, overgrown clearing.

THE PLATFORM, carved from a massive crystal, rises high above the vegetation - it shimmers and sparkles.

Auriya walks ahead in the sunlight - she radiates a white light. Everyone stops and stares.

AURIYA

What?

PHELAN

Not important. How do we get to the platform?

Auriya ponders a moment, then heads around the clearing and out of view.

AURIYA (O.S.)

Over here.

Browen and Brissi rush after her.

Phelan looks back into the forest. Samara throws her arms around him.

SAMARA

I've missed you so much.

Phelan removes her arms, and steps away. Samara simmers.

SAMARA

Don't you love me?

PHELAN

Why do we have to keep doing this? You and me will never happen.

Phelan heads into the forest.

SAMARA

(under breath)

We'll just see about that.

INT. STONE WALKWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Auriya, Browen and Brissi hurry past intricate carvings on the walls depicting scenes from Lynerian society.

They stop when they reach stairs carved into the platform.

AURIYA

I know exactly what to do. It's like I'm tap into a computer and I'm being fed the information.

BROWEN

When you complete the ceremony, your powers will be fully intact.

They ascend. Auriya stops.

AURIYA
Something isn't right.

Auriya flinches violently.

AURIYA
Melfet's here. On Lyneria.

BROWEN
Quick, begin the ceremony. We will
hold him off as long as we can.

Auriya darts up the stairs.

LYNERIA FOREST - MOMENTS LATER

Phelan squats behind Ki and Shin.

PHELAN
How many?

SHIN
Thirty soldiers.

KI
And four prisoners.

PHELAN
The King and Queen?

Ki nods.

PHELAN
We make our stand near the platform.

Phelan, Ki and Shin race through the forest.

PLATFORM - MOMENTS LATER

Auriya dashes to the center of the platform. The view is
breathtaking from every direction.

Phelan, Ki and Shin rush from the forest.

Brissi climbs up a tree.

Browen hurries to the walkway, dragging a reluctant Samara.

Auriya raises her arms out to the side, palms down. She
closes her eyes.

The white light around Auriya sparkles and shimmers.

AURIYA
 (confident)
 Digiti Each San Mayin Ven Dace
 Remysis Sy Fera Azuua.

EDGE OF FOREST

Phelan glances up at Auriya just as INTENSE WHITE LIGHT shoots up from the platform and connects with Auriya's palms. It flows from her fingers and spreads out toward the forest.

Dacarian soldiers race out of the forest YELLING.

Shin fires her madra and strikes Two Dacarians. They drop dead as smoke rises from their wounds.

Ki and Phelan each fight off several Dacarians.

PHELAN
 Hold your ground.

Arrows rain down from Brissi and she kills three.

Four soldiers surround Shin. She moves incredibly fast, dropping one, two and three - dead.

Three more assailants jump on her and pin her to the ground.

Melfet and TWO ARCHERS breach the opening created by the soldiers whose fighting has driven Ki and Phelan apart.

Melfet points up in the tree and an archer releases an arrow.

Brissi falls to the ground, an arrow protrudes from her chest.

KI
 Brissi!

Phelan's besieged by four swordsmen.

Melfet points to the platform, and the archer brings up his bow and aims for Auriya.

BROWEN
 No! Ki, behind you!

Ki fights his way free and throws a knife and --

Hits the archer in the throat. He drops to the dirt, dead.

Five Dacarians surround Ki - he fights for his life.

Three soldiers jump on Browen and wrestle her to the ground.

The remaining archer steps forward.

Phelan fights like a madman. He takes out two Dacarians, then runs at the archer.

He's tackled from behind by three soldiers, who dog pile on and hold him down.

MELFET
(soothes)
Just as I taught you.

Phelan fights to get loose - no luck. He looks at Auriya as --

The archer releases. The arrow hits Auriya in her left shoulder. She collapses and the light goes out.

Phelan and Brown eyes connect in despair.

Seven assailants lay dead at Ki's feet. More approach.

Ki methodically swings his swords. Takes out one, then another. He's struck in the right arm, rendering it useless.

Ki fights with his left hand.

A soldier rams his sword into Ki's back and pulls it out.

Ki drops his sword. He looks at Phelan - eyes connect.

PHELAN
Ki! Ki ...

KI
Brother.

Ki falls to the ground.

Phelan struggles to throw off the Dacarians - no success.

Phelan eyes find Melfet - face hardens.

PHELAN
I will kill you.

MELFET
My dear son, when this day's over
with, you will be sealed up here
along with anyone still left alive.

Phelan radiates hatred, as he's pushed down into the dirt.

NESPAR
Bind them.

Fat kicks Brissi over on her back. He then leans over Ki.

FAT
Both dead.

ON THE PLATFORM

Samara approaches Auriya, who stirs.

AURIYA
What happened?

SAMARA
You don't get to be gatekeeper.

Auriya looks down at the arrow and then struggles to sit up.

AURIYA
Where is everyone?

SAMARA
Dead or captured.

Samara turns her back on Auriya and looks out over the vista.

Auriya sits up. She grabs the arrow, four deep breathes and then pulls it out. She falters, but remains upright.

AURIYA
I need to finish the ceremony.

Auriya struggles to get up. She collapses back onto the platform, as Melfet approaches Samara and stop beside her.

SAMARA
Beautiful, isn't it?

Auriya looks from Melfet to Samara.

AURIYA
What have you done?

Nespar saunters onto the platform.

SAMARA
I should have been the gatekeeper.
Not you. Then Phelan would have ...
With you out of the way, he's mine.

Four soldiers bring Etain and Lorcan onto the platform - their gags removed.

Auriya makes it to her feet and sways.

ETAIN
Auriya!

AURIYA
Mother?

Etain smiles and nods, tears in her eyes.

Auriya regains her balance and looks at her father.

LORCAN
We have missed you so much.

AURIYA
(tears up)
Papa.

Nespar steps in front of Auriya.

NESPAR
No time for family reunions.

Melfet puts his arm around Samara.

ETAIN
(to Samara)
You betrayed your own people?

Samara leans into Melfet and smiles at him. Etain weeps and turns away. Lorcan slumps against the two soldiers.

MELFET
Bring her to me.

Nespar grabs Auriya's arm and drags her to Melfet.

MELFET
Take me to the crystal cave.

AURIYA
What crystal ...

Auriya startles - her eyes dart to a the side of the platform opposite the stairs.

MELFET
Priest said you would know.

AURIYA
I will not help you.

Two soldiers bring Mai and Janice onto the platform.

JANICE
Get your damn hands off of me you
lowest of the lowest possible scum
that ever existed.

AURIYA
No, it can't be. How?

Janice wrenches her arm away and kicks the soldier between
the legs. He collapses on the platform.

AURIYA
I'm so sorry.

JANICE
Not your fault. None of this is.

AURIYA
Oh, Mai, are you alright?

MAI
We're fine, both of us.

MELFET
Now, who will die first?

Janice glares at him.

AURIYA
You will not harm them.

MELFET
I grow tired of threats. Bring me
the old woman.

AURIYA
Wait!

MAI
Don't give in to him.

Auriya shakes her head.

AURIYA
I won't let him hurt you.

MELFET
Open the crystal cave. Now.

Auriya heads across the platform. Melfet, Samara, and Nespar
follow her.

AURIYA
Ech Soo Mayin Tos ... Vadan.

A gateway appears at their feet. The pillars and archway are black as night and reflect no light.

Auriya descends into the gateway.

MELFET

(to Nespar)

Stay here with the prisoners.

NESPAR

Please, father, may I come?

Melfet ignores him and steps down into the gateway.

NESPAR

You're letting her go with you?

Melfet descends from sight.

SAMARA

If it wasn't for me, neither one of you would be standing here now.

Samara pushes past Nespar and enters the gateway.

Nespar stalks across the platform.

AT THE EDGE OF FOREST

Phelan and Shin, bound together, sit back to back. Brown lies bound nearby. Three soldiers watch over them.

SHIN

I am so sorry about Ki.

Phelan nods - his breaths ragged.

BROWEN

Brissi?

Phelan shakes his head.

BROWEN

What can you see?

Phelan deep breathes, then focuses on the platform.

PHELAN

Auriya, Melfet and Samara have disappeared from the platform.

BROWEN

They've entered the crystal chamber.

INT. CRYSTAL CAVE - FIRST CHAMBER - MOMENTS LATER

Auriya steps into the middle of an empty crystal room. The walls twinkle with hundreds of tiny points of light.

Samara and Melfet stroll around and examine the walls.

SAMARA
See anything?

MELFET
No.

Auriya holds her injured arm close to her chest.

MELFET
Is there more?

Auriya remains silent.

SAMARA
Nespar has orders to kill that old woman if we're down here too long.

Auriya moves to the far side of the chamber and taps the wall three times.

A doorway appears, and she enters.

Melfet and Samara hurry after her, into --

A SECOND CHAMBER

Lights come on and illuminate alcoves full of treasure.

Melfet darts from alcove to alcove. Samara follows slowly. Auriya watches them.

Melfet holds up a spectacular necklace made from large emeralds. It sparkles in the light. He pockets it.

MELFET
All of this is mine.

SAMARA
You're getting distracted, as I am sure the Lynerians intended when they placed the treasure here.

Melfet moves swiftly around the chamber - searches.

MELFET
Show me the vadan.

Auriya steps to the far wall and taps four times.

A doorway opens. Melfet and Samara push past her, into --

A THIRD CHAMBER

The VADAN, twelve inches high and six inches wide, sits on a pedestal in the center of the room. It looks exactly like the picture in the book.

Auriya enters.

Melfet grabs the vadan from the pedestal and hugs it to him.

MELFET

Finally.

Samara reaches out to touch it. Melfet yanks it away and races from the chamber.

Samara and Auriya remain where they are.

AURIYA

It isn't too late to fix this.

SAMARA

Why would I want to?

AURIYA

We're your family.

SAMARA

Not anymore.

Samara bolts from the chamber.

AT THE EDGE OF FOREST

Browen tries to sit up, but the bindings limit her movement.

Twenty feet away, three soldiers watch the platform. Phelan and Shin are focused on Auriya.

PHELAN

Melfet came out. He carries the vadan. Auriya's out. She's okay.

BROWEN

The minute he activates it, he will kill her.

The sun drops behind the tree line and casts them in shadows.

SHIN
We are almost out of time.

PHELAN
(quietly)
My bindings, they are loosening.

PLATFORM

Etain, Lorcan, Mai, and Janice huddle together.

MELFET
Why won't it turn on?

Nespar drags Auriya to them.

MELFET
Tell me.

AURIYA
I will not.

MELFET
Bring the old woman.

Two soldiers drag Mai to them.

AURIYA
Please, no.

MAI
(to Auriya)
Do not give him what he wants.

AURIYA
Too many lives have been lost
because of me.

MAI
He is the worst kind of evil.
Stand your ground, child.

AURIYA
I won't let him hurt you.

Melfet flings Mai across the platform. She lands hard and goes still.

AURIYA
No!

JANICE
Oh my, god.

Auriya races to Mai, kneels down and pulls her into her arms.

MAI
I always knew you were special.

AURIYA
Mai.

MAI
Thank you for bringing such joy to
an old woman.

AURIYA
(crying)
I love you so much.

MAI
I love you more.

Mai dies in Auriya's arms. Auriya SOBS and buries her head into Mai's neck.

SAMARA
Look.
(points to setting sun)
If you can't get that thing turned
on, we will be stuck here.

HOWLING ECHOES throughout the land.

BLACK CLOUDS build in the distance around the gateway, then
ROIL AND CHURN as they race toward the platform.

THUNDEROUS SCREECHING.

SAMARA
The gateways are shutting down.

Melfet grabs Auriya and wrenches her up.

MELFET
Perform the Lynerian Ceremony. Now.

Auriya yanks her arm from his grasp. She watches the black
clouds hurtle toward them - then looks down and spots Phelan.

AURIYA
Get everyone off the platform.

MELFET
(to Nespar)
Do it.

The black clouds have reached them and churn overhead.

LIGHTNING STRIKES a few feet from Melfet.

Nespar herds Etain, Lorcan, and Janice down the stairs. Seven soldiers follow.

Auriya, Melfet, Samara and the body of Mai remain.

Auriya wipes away her tears and marches to the center of the platform. She puts her hands out, palms down.

AURIYA
Are you staying?

MELFET
Of course we are.

Melfet drags Samara to the edge and fiddles with the vadan.

AURIYA
Gicati Ech San Mayin Ven Dace
Remysis Sy Fera Azuua.

Light surrounds Auriya and swirls around her.

Samara watches Auriya - fists clenched.

SAMARA
It should have been me.

Samara zeros in on the vadan and --

Rips it from Melfet's hands.

Samara clinches it tight against her and closes her eyes.

Melfet grabs it. Samara has a lock grip on it.

MELFET
Give it to me, you wretched woman.

As they fight over it, a convergence of light swirls the body of Mai and lifts her into the air.

Samara yanks it away and pushes three buttons on the base. Nothing. She pushes all the buttons in a row, then --

The device lights up and wraps Samara in purple light.

MELFET
No!

Melfet seizes the vadan and immediately lets go. He holds up his badly burned hands and backs away.

The light from Auriya swirls out across the overgrown area.

AT THE FOREST EDGE

Mesmerized by the activity on the platform, the three soldiers have their backs to the prisoners.

Phelan crouches next to Shin and saws through her bindings.

BROWEN

Quick, close your eyes.

Phelan and Shin close their eyes as the INTENSE LIGHT hits them. The soldiers CRY OUT and grab their faces. They stumble around - temporarily blinded.

The light engulfs the bodies of Ki and Brissi and lifts them several feet into the air for a beat, then their bodies sink to the ground.

The white light dims and heads down through the forest - illuminating everything in its path.

Phelan and Shin open their eyes. Phelan saws through her bindings and she springs to her feet.

Shin looks around her and spots a sword. She grabs it.

Phelan goes to work on Browen's bindings, as Shin sprints to the soldiers and strikes them all down - dead.

Phelan helps Browen to her feet just as Nespar exits the walkway with Lorcan, Etain, and Janice.

NESPAR

Seize them!

The seven remaining soldiers attack.

Shin throws her sword to Phelan and picks up another.

An arrow WHIZZES past them and takes out the first soldier.

Phelan, Shin and Browen spin around in surprise. Brissi runs up to them.

PHELAN

I thought --

BRISSI

I was dead? So did I.

She primes her bow, shoots an arrow and takes out another soldier. Five assailants remain alive.

Lorcan herds Etain and Janice off to the side.

Ki appears with two swords.

KI

Why you just standing there,
brother? Let's kick some ass.

Phelan LAUGHS, and they race for the five soldiers. Shin sprints after them.

Phelan and Ki each engage two soldiers and Shin, the fifth.

Browen gives Brissi a hug.

NESPAR

Kill them! Kill them now!

Janice picks up a large stick and whacks Nespar on his head. Stunned, Nespar swings around, sword in hand.

JANICE

Okay, that didn't go as planned.

Nespar approaches her. She backs up.

NESPAR

I'm going to have fun killing you.

LORCAN

You have to get past us first.

Lorcan and Etain stand on each side of Janice. They hold large sticks.

JANICE

Three against one.

Nespar drops his sword. Lorcan pushes him down on his knees. Etain picks up Nespar's sword and hands it to her husband.

The platform is engulfed in white light - Auriya and Samara barely visible. Melfet's hunched over on the edge.

Janice spots Ki and Brissi.

JANICE

I thought --

ETAIN

During the ceremony, the gatekeeper's powers are intensified many times over. She is capable of anything, including giving back life.

Janice dashes to the walkway.

JANICE

(shouts)

Mai? Mai!

ETAIN

She was quite old and sick. We will have to wait and see.

Phelan and Ki have each eliminated two soldiers.

Twice her size, Shin has met her match in the one soldier who remains. The fight is fierce and savage.

KI

Will you let me help you?

SHIN

No.

Shin kicks out and connects with the soldier's knee. He loses balance, but comes back and swings his sword. He narrowly misses Shin.

KI

How about now?

SHIN

No.

Shin kicks and smashes the soldier's jaw. He staggers backwards, catches himself. He comes back with a vengeance.

KI

Now?

SHIN

Together.

Ki thrusts his sword into the soldier's back and Shin thrusts hers into his chest. The man falls to the ground - dead.

SHIN

He was a worthy opponent. Thanks.

KI

Anytime.

BROWEN

Look.

Auriya and Samara face one another on the platform. A WHITE LIGHT surrounds Auriya and a PURPLE LIGHT glows around Samara.

Melfet straightens up and watches.

Phelan dashes for the walkway. Browen grabs his arm.

BROWEN

No one can help her now.

Phelan shoulders sag and he goes still.

PLATFORM

The black clouds disappear as the sun sets. Darkness descends - the only light emanates from the two women and the platform, which is infused with a dazzling white light.

Auriya and Samara stand twenty feet apart.

AURIYA

I don't want to hurt you, Samara.
Please stop this madness.

SAMARA

I'm taking what's rightfully mine.

PURPLE LIGHT shoots from Samara's fingertips and knocks Auriya off her feet. She lands hard on her back.

Samara moves toward her.

SAMARA

I will control everything. All the people, all the worlds. And Phelan will be mine. All mine.

Auriya stands up.

AURIYA

Stop, Samara. I beg of you.

SAMARA

I should have been the gatekeeper.
Not you.

LIGHT FLASHES from Samara's fingers. Auriya's ready. She easily deflects the light with a flick of her hand.

Surprised, Samara holds up both hands. LIGHT EXPLODES FROM HER FINGERTIPS. Auriya easily shunts it away.

SAMARA

This can't be. My powers should be equal to yours.

Samara throws up her hand and brings it down quickly. A LIGHTENING BOLT hits Auriya and flings her several feet. She lands on her side.

Samara cavorts in a dance tinged with madness.

Auriya stands up, her back to Melfet. He has his jeweled sword in hand and advances on Auriya.

Samara stops dancing and stalks Auriya.

SAMARA

It's a shame we will never get to know one another.

AURIYA

Yes, it is.

Auriya raises her arms.

Melfet, closes in. Ten feet away.

WHITE LIGHT SWIRLS AROUND AURIYA.

Melfet hastens toward her when --

WHITE LIGHT swirls around him and lifts him up, carrying him across the overgrown area.

MELFET

Nespar, do something you idiot.

Nespar watches as Melfet struggles but can't break free.

AURIYA

(to Samara)

Your turn.

Intense white light swirls around Samara. She races for the stairs and makes it to the edge as the LIGHT picks her up. Samara SCREAMS.

SAMARA

Let me go. Let me go.

Light surrounds Nespar. Lorcan steps back as Nespar's raised in the air.

The light carries all three out over the tree tops and they disappear from sight.

Auriya staggers over to Mai and falls down on her knees. She takes Mai's hand and presses it against her cheek.

Phelan races onto the platform and comes to a stop next to Auriya. He sits next to her and pulls Auriya to him.

AURIYA
I couldn't save her.

She buries her head in his chest and SOBS. Phelan holds her tight and kisses the top of her head.

INT. EMER - COURTROOM - MINUTES LATER

Samara, Melfet and Nespar stand in the same courtroom where Karyan received his punishment, thousands of years ago.

The lights are on and the room's remarkably preserved.

They dash to the window and are greeted by a dark, empty city.

Melfet sinks to the floor.

MELFET
We're trapped for all eternity.

NESPAR
This can't be.

SAMARA
I need to get out of here.

Samara races for the doorway.

MELFET
When Auriya leaves, the gateway will seal up for five hundred years.

Samara attempts to shoot light from her fingers - nothing.

SAMARA
(screams)
She stole my powers.

EXT. FARETH - MEADOW OF WILD FLOWERS - DAY

Two graves, one fresh, sit side by side beneath one of Fareth's great trees. Both are marked with large stones.

A box beside her, Auriya kneels before the new grave. She pulls out a rooster and places it on top of the stone.

Phelan approaches. He touches his heart, then the top of the stone marker on the other grave. His fingers linger.

PHELAN

I love you, father.

Auriya looks up and smiles.

PHELAN

They took us in when we had no one else. They gave us a home.

AURIYA

They gave us family.

Phelan squats down next to Auriya and gazes into her eyes.

PHELAN

How are you doing?

AURIYA

I miss her so much.

Auriya pulls another rooster from the box and places it on the stone.

AURIYA

She didn't have any family. I hope she doesn't mind that I buried her on Fareth.

PHELAN

I think she would be very pleased.

AURIYA

Were you able to get Melfet's book?

PHELAN

Your father and his troops stormed his castle and took it.

Auriya looks away, pensive.

AURIYA

I hope I made the right decision.

PHELAN

Ordering the vadan to be destroyed?

AURIYA

No, I feel good about that. My sister. I left her there, trapped with that monster.

Auriya grabs the last rooster and places it beside the others.

AURIYA

My parents, they've been so understanding.

PHELAN

Samara left you with no choice. You did the right thing.

Auriya smiles at Phelan. He helps her to her feet. They look shyly into each other's eyes.

AURIYA

You saved my life in so many ways. Thank you.

PHELAN

You are most welcome. I have something for you.

He reaches behind him and pulls from his belt a sword with a crystal handle. He hands it to her.

AURIYA

Is this for me?

Phelan smiles and nods. She lovingly caresses the handle.

AURIYA

It's so beautiful. Will you teach me how to use it?

PHELAN

It would be my pleasure.

She sticks it in her belt.

PHELAN

Your people await the gatekeeper.

Phelan holds out his hand and Auriya takes it.

EXT. ROYAL CLEARING - MINUTES LATER

The LARGE AND DIVERSE CROWD is made up of people from all the worlds. They fill the clearing to capacity and overflow among the trees.

Masern and his people occupy the front row. Directly behind them is HENCHA and most of Ki's tribe.

The Council of the Worlds members wait to one side, wearing their ceremonial robes. Browen stands in front.

On a raised platform - Etain, Lorcan, Ki, Shin, Brissi and Janice wait.

Auriya and Phelan walk out of the woods.

The crowd goes wild SHOUTING - LONG LIVE OUR GATEKEEPER! CLAPS and CHEERS are mixed in.

Auriya runs up on the platform and hugs Etain and Lorcan. They hold her close, before releasing her.

Auriya smiles at Ki, Brissi and Shin and waves to Browen. She turns to Janice.

AURIYA

I'm so glad you could make it.

JANICE

Did you think I was going to let you have all this fun without me.

Auriya LAUGHS and gives Janice a hug.

Auriya faces her people. The crowd goes wild with CHEERING.

She looks at Phelan and holds out her hand. He takes it.

They stand hand in hand and look out over the crowd.

FADE OUT.