

THE OUTPOST

Created by

Jason Faller and Kynan Griffin

PILOT EPISODE

Written by

Jason Faller and Kynan Griffin

Revised 02/16/17

Copyright 2016 Arrowstorm Entertainment LLC
2757 Oneida Lane
Provo, UT 84604
Tel. (801)318-8446

TEASER

EXT. BLACKBLOOD VILLAGE - DAY

WIDE on the Blackblood village: a peaceful, idyllic vision of tranquility - brightly dressed FARMERS tending neat fields interspersed with zen-like gardens and simple medieval yurts.

EXT. BLACKBLOOD VILLAGE - STREAM - DAY

YOUNG TALON (7) crouches in the underbrush, her eyes wide with excitement. She's a wiry little scamp, bold and clever. Her brother EREMUS (11) squats behind her nervously, almost her complete opposite in temperament.

They are both simply dressed, grubby, and have pointed ears, blackened at the tips...

EREMUS

Don't get too close, Remmicks are dangerous.

YOUNG TALON

It's just a drake, doesn't have its full horns yet...

A short distance away, A LARGE CREATURE feeds on grubs out of a hollowed rotting log. Like an oversized camel, but with scales, a spine along its back and a reptilian head.

Young Talon smiles and creeps forward.

EREMUS

(warning)

Talon, don't.

She approaches the big animal and it stops eating, staring at her. She smiles excitedly and moves closer. The creature skitters a little, ready for fight or flight...

She reaches out her hand to pet its scaly hide. Suddenly AN ARROW PUNCHES RIGHT THROUGH ITS NECK.

Talon scrambles back, nearly trampled to death as the huge creature REARS UP and to one side, bucking furiously. It collapses right in front of her, kicking once more in its death throes, and finally goes still, dead.

EREMUS (CONT'D)

Are you alright?

Talon looks to where the arrow came from.

THREE VILLAGE BOYS (12, 13, 14), dressed in a different style but just as grubby, with regular human ears. One Village Boy holds a bow, still humming from the shot.

VILLAGE BOY
(to the other boys)
You see that?!

YOUNG TALON
Idiot!

VILLAGE BOY
Get out of here, skags!

VILLAGE BOY 2
This is our land, filthy
blackbloods!

Talon picks up a stone and THROWS it at the boys, hitting the lead boy, who flinches, YELPING.

EREMUS
Talon! No fighting!

The boy quickly draws an arrow, furious and in pain.

VILLAGE BOY
You're gonna get it now, skag.

But Talon runs at him.

EREMUS
Talon, no!

Eremus runs after her. The Village Boy is surprised, and angry. He SHOOTS an arrow at Talon as she runs at him.

Incredibly, she ducks under the shot, and tackles the boy, punching and kicking wildly. The two roll about on the ground - biting, punching, kicking.

Eremus arrives and tries to break up the fight, but the other boys hold him back, pushing him down and KICKING HIM while he lies on the ground, curled up.

Talon, her nose bleeding BLACK BLOOD, rolls on top of the boy, pounding him in the head, splitting his lip which bleeds RED BLOOD.

One of the other boys steps over, trying to pull Talon off, but she punches him too, dropping him to the dirt.

TALON'S MOTHER (O.S.)
Stop!

The children all freeze, looking up at the adult now standing on the bank over them. She is an adult (35) version of Talon, complete with pointed black-tipped ears.

TALON'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

Go on. Clear off!

The boys scatter, one of them bleeding and limping, leaving Talon and Eremus looking sheepishly up at their mother.

INT. BLACKBLOOD VILLAGE - TALON'S HUT - EVENING

Eremus lies in his bed, bruised and sullen. Young Talon sits on the edge of her bed while her mother washes her black-bloody face with a cloth.

YOUNG TALON

Ow!

TALON'S MOTHER

Well, this is what you get from fighting.

YOUNG TALON

He killed a Remmick--

TALON'S MOTHER

Talon! You could put our whole village at risk. We do not fight. Ever.

YOUNG TALON

Why not? I can beat those boys.

TALON'S MOTHER

That's not the point.

YOUNG TALON

Why do they hate us?

TALON'S MOTHER

They don't hate us. At least not all of them.

Her mother takes Talon's face in her hands, and kisses her forehead tenderly.

TALON'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

Go to sleep now.

Talon's mother leaves. Young Talon lies down, frustrated.

EXT. OVERLOOK RIDGE - NIGHT

The hour before dawn. The Blackblood village sleeps. Nothing moves but a few wisps of smoke from the night's cooking. The moon is just over half dark, a large portion of the surface cracked with spidery red and black lines where the molten moon core shows through. Clearly THIS IS NOT EARTH.

On a ridge overlooking the village, SEVEN MERCENARIES stand in the light of the partial moon. These are THE BONES.

The leader is TIBERION SHEK, cunning and harsh, a true professional at his craft. Beside Shek is TORU MAGMOOR, a giant of a man, mean and ugly. The others wear black masks, with the mouth cut in a distinctive shape: a triple-cross made of bones. The same shape is TATTOOED IN DARK INK ON ALL OF THEIR FOREARMS.

EVERIT DRED, ambassador of a fanatical religious order - "The Prime Order", sits on his horse behind them. He wears pristine white robes overlaid with steel armor.

DRED

Nothing left alive. If even one
Blackblood escapes, it was all for
nothing.

SHEK

Should be simple enough. They won't
fight back.

Shek and Magmoor pull their masks over their faces.

INT. BLACKBLOOD VILLAGE - TALON'S HUT - NIGHT

Young Talon's eyes open. Something is wrong.

EXT. BLACKBLOOD VILLAGE - NIGHT

Shek and Magmoor toss bags of lit oil onto each of the roofs of the sleeping village huts as they walk through. The oil bags burst and set all the huts instantly ablaze.

As the village burns, Shek and Magmoor draw their swords.

EXT. BLACKBLOOD VILLAGE - PERIMETER - NIGHT

The other five mercenaries crouch along the village perimeter. Each with a longbow and arrows set in the ground for convenience.

EXT. BLACKBLOOD VILLAGE - NIGHT

Figures start to emerge from doorways in the village, coughing and staggering from the thick smoke.

A BLACKBLOOD VILLAGER leans against a wood post, coughing violently. An arrow hits her in the chest, silencing her mid-cough.

INT. BLACKBLOOD VILLAGE - TALON'S HUT - NIGHT

The window burns brightly behind Talon as she yanks Eremus from his bed, still half asleep.

Talon's Mother bursts in and rushes her children out of the room. From under a mattress, she pulls a sheathed dagger, looks at it desperately, and rushes out after her children.

EXT. BLACKBLOOD VILLAGE - NIGHT

Eremus emerges from the smoke-filled hut, coughing and squinting in the light.

A ruthless masked mercenary, we'll call him BLUE EYES, fires an arrow, hitting a BLACKBLOOD PEASANT in the back...

Eremus sees what's happening and RUNS AROUND the back of his hut, disappearing from sight.

OUTCRY AND COUGHING increases as more Blackbloods emerge. Arrows fly from the perimeter, killing them as they appear. Shek and Magmoor walk through the burning village, stabbing and slicing Blackbloods as they go. True to their name - inky bluish-black blood spills from the Blackblood victims and soaks the ground where they fall.

Talon's Mother carries Young Talon out in her arms. Talon's eyes are wide, paralyzed with fear and anguish at the horror as her Mother turns and runs. Talon looks back over her mother's shoulder, spots Blue Eyes as he DRAWS AN ARROW AND LETS IT FLY...

Talon gasps as the arrow drills her Mother in the back, right next to Talon's chin resting on her shoulder. As her mother collapses to her knees, unable to stand, she drops Talon. They stare into each others' eyes.

TALON

This is my fault.

TALON'S MOTHER

No, it's not.

Talon's Mother places her hand on Talon's face. A short PULSE OF DIM PURPLE LIGHT starts in Talon's Mother's left temple, travels quickly down her neck, down her arm, into her finger and disappears into Talon's forehead.

TALON'S MOTHER

Run.

Her mother falls sideways, leaving Talon staring again at Toru Magmoor, striding toward her, sword in hand, ready to cut the child down. Talon gets a good look at the arm holding the sword and sees THE BONES TATTOO WITH THE BLACK TRIPLE CROSS. It sears into her memory.

Talon skitters back, trying to get to her feet. Magmoor keeps coming. But as he passes Talon's mother lying in the dirt, she STRIKES OUT with her DAGGER, slashing his leg. Barely flinching, Magmoor turns and brutally stabs her, killing her for certain.

But when he turns back toward Young Talon, SHE IS GONE.

ANOTHER PART OF THE VILLAGE

Talon RUNS around a burning hut as fast as she can.

EXT. BLACKBLOOD VILLAGE - PERIMETER - NIGHT

Blue Eyes and the other archers draw and fire arrows in smooth, rapid succession with deadly accuracy. A Blackblood dies with each arrow released.

Then everything falls silent. No Blackbloods are left alive, nothing left to shoot... the assault was brutal and quick. Blue Eyes and the archers stand and walk into the village.

MAGMOOR

(to Shek)

A little girl. Not sure I got her.

Shek nods. He and Magmoor search for Young Talon, checking the dead, looking for signs of life through the thick smoke.

EXT. BLACKBLOOD VILLAGE - WELL - NIGHT

Blue Eyes spots Talon from a distance as she looks down into a well. He moves toward her, nocking an arrow to his longbow.

Across the square, Shek also spots the child climbing into the well. He speeds toward her.

INT. WELL - NIGHT

Young Talon climbs down nimbly on the slick stones of the inside of the well.

Blue Eyes appears looming over the edge of the well above her. He draws his bow and aims.

Young Talon looks up and sees his blue eyes through the mask as he aims down at her from high above, his bow fully drawn. She gasps, helplessly awaiting her fate...

Blue Eyes looses his arrow, and it flies precisely at Young Talon's head. But as the arrow flies towards the girl, a freakish CREATURE ARM TEARS through the fabric of space/time through a wavering portal, and CATCHES THE ARROW an inch from Talon's face. What the hell?!

EXT. BLACKBLOOD VILLAGE - NIGHT

Shek is nearly at the well as Talon's scream echoing from the well is suddenly SILENCED. Shek smiles and stops walking.

INT. WELL - NIGHT

Talon watches wide eyed as the strange hand, inches from her face, releases the arrow which drops to the depths of the well clanking off the walls. Then, just as suddenly as it appeared, the hand withdraws and the portal closes behind it.

Young Talon stares up at Blue Eyes wondering what he'll do. Blue Eyes stares back, confusion in his eyes. Then he makes a decision... He slowly relaxes his bow arm to his side.

EXT. BLACKBLOOD VILLAGE - WELL - CONTINUOUS

Blue eyes looks over to Shek. Shek nods. Blue Eyes nods back, falsely confirming the kill.

EXT. OVERLOOK RIDGE - NIGHT

Everit Dred observes the scene, satisfied that all Blackbloods are dead. He turns his horse away and rides off.

DISSOLVE THROUGH - NIGHT TURNS TO DAY:

EXT. BLACKBLOOD VILLAGE - WELL - MORNING

The sun rises on the smoking village. Young Talon, shivering and blue, climbs shakily out of the well.

She staggers through the village, the dead bodies littering the ground, smoke drifting from the last smoldering embers of the destroyed village. She stops cold when she finds...

HER MOTHER, lying dead in the dirt. Talon picks up her mother's dagger and its sheath and stares at the blade with a blank expression.

After a long moment, she continues to walk among the dead. She stops again only when she finds...

EREMUS, her brother, lying dead in a pool of black blood.

Young Talon wipes a tear, puts the knife on her belt. Then she stiffens - letting the sorrow give way to anger.

TITLE: "OUTPOST"

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

EXT. HILL CREST - TRAVEL MONTAGE - DAY

Young Talon travels along a hill crest, all alone, the mid-morning sun rising into the sky.

EXT. DRY RIVERBED - TRAVEL MONTAGE- DAY

Young Talon picks her way along the stony banks of a dry gulch. Her expression is empty of emotion, oblivious to a regal herd of Ornithoms - 20-foot-tall beasts that look like a two-legged cross between ostriches and giraffes.

EXT. HIGH RIDGE - TRAVEL MONTAGE - DAY

Young Talon walks along a cliff edge, silhouetted against an evening sky. Exhausted, she stumbles on a rock and falls painfully, nearly falling off the cliff, she stares down at the lethal drop.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - MORNING

Talon trudges along a stony road. She arrives at a horse watering trough and drops to her knees, drinking thirstily.

Young Talon sees A PEASANT MOTHER (40s) approaching, pushing a cart along the road, accompanied by a YOUNG GIRL (6). In passing, they stare at Young Talon, dirty and disheveled standing at the roadside. The Young Girl points at Talon's ears - the dark points stand out clearly through her hair...

YOUNG GIRL

Look at the demon...

The Mother pulls the Young Girl close, shushing her, all the while scowling at Talon.

Talon looks into the trough water at her dark pointed ears and at that moment, she makes a decision...

With the razor edge of the dagger she kept from her mother, she grits her teeth and SLICES THE TOP OFF HER POINTED EAR.

She stares down at her reflection defiantly, as black blood drips into the water, distorting her view. She clinches her face and cuts off the tip of the other ear.

DISSOLVE TO:

TIGHT ON AN ADULT EAR

The ear looks human - but one thing an astute viewer might notice: A thin scar along the upper edge of the ear.

A hand pulls a thick mane of hair over to cover the ear and we PULL OUT TO SEE...

The hair belongs to TALON, now an adult, tying off her hair in a pony that is left loose enough to cover the tops of her ears. Talon is sitting on a stool in a ring in the midst of...

EXT. GYPSY CAMP - NIGHT

A mob of UNWASHED MEN are crowded around an outdoor fighting pit, surrounded by make-shift bleachers in the woods. They clamor around an overwhelmed BOOKIE, placing bets.

Talon has grown into a gorgeous woman, but her hard life has given her a sharp edge, a daring boldness that borders on cynicism. Her jacket and leggings are simple and form fitting, with a roguish flare. She is being warmed up by her promoter - ERIK, a wiry man of 45.

ERIK

Just so you know - this next match
is going to be a little tougher.

The crowd chants "Nanakka! Nanakka!", the name of Talon's next opponent. As he enters the ring, Talon's eyes widen.

NANAKKA is a Greyskin, a hulking creature with pale white eyes, covered in bark-like skin. Humanoid, but much bigger, with vicious fangs and claws.

TALON

Fyke, Erik! A *Greyskin*? Are you
trying to get me killed?

ERIK

It's big money. Five to one odds.
You've taken bigger men down.

TALON

"Men" being the key word there.

Talon looks warily over at the snarling beast as she stands and takes off her jacket, revealing something akin to a sports bra, baring her muscled arms, shoulders and stomach.

The Bookie reaches over and clangs his bell.

Nanakka leaps to his feet, moving towards Talon who WALKS in, trying to act casual.

TALON (CONT'D)

Hey there, big fella. Whadd'ya say
we go easy this round? Give them a
bit of a show. Get the purse up.

Nanakka answers her with a ROAR. The crowd keeps cheering
"Nanakka! Nanakka!" As the two fighters circle each other...

TALON (CONT'D)

Do you even understand what I'm
saying? A show? Give 'em time to
bet more?

With a snarl, Nanakka THROWS his giant fist right at her
face. She ducks with supernatural speed, so his fist whizzes
over her head. While still down low, Talon SPINS and KICKS
Nanakka hard in the stomach.

TALON (CONT'D)

I'll take that... as a 'no'...

Nanakka stumbles back, clearly surprised this girl half his
size can fight. Talon presses the attack with fury. Nanakka
accepts the blows like they are nothing as they bounce off
his bark-like skin.

Then Nanakka strikes out again. Time slows as Talon dodges,
but not enough to evade Nanakka's sudden barrage of blows
from both his hands and feet. The last backhand LAUNCHES
Talon across the ring where she hits the floor like a rag
doll. Talon wipes a bit of black blood away from her mouth,
hiding it from spectators.

Erik looks worried, but the spectators CHEER wildly. More
money changes hands.

Talon pulls herself up and throws several punches, then she
launches into a flying knee. But Nanakka CATCHES her and HUGS
her tight to his chest so they are face to face.

TALON (CONT'D)

Okay, I'm all for a hug. But just
so you know - I never kiss on the
first...

Nanakka crushes the air from her lungs. We hear one of her
RIBS CRACK. Talon struggles, but can't free herself from the
iron grasp of the creature.

But then, at the last moment, Talon HEAD-BUTTS Nanakka in the nose, breaking the bones in his face. He stumbles back, releasing his grip on Talon.

Talon is still breathless, holding her ribcage with one hand, struggling to breathe and in pain.

Nanakka turns and CHARGES at Talon who sidesteps at the last second and then KICKS Nanakka's knee sideways. It SHATTERS with a crunch. Without a breath, Talon grabs Nanakka by the hair and pulls him into her knee with incredible force, breaking Nanakka's already bloody face.

Erik leans forward, eager for victory. Nanakka staggers, confused.

Talon does a flying heel-kick to Nanakka's head. He goes down like a giant tree. Talon stands over him, looking down at him. He looks back at her, fading in and out of consciousness.

TALON (CONT'D)

You don't look so good, big man.
Of course you didn't look so good
before I destroyed you, either.

Nanakka's eyes pull shut, out cold. The bookie rings the bell. Nanakka's trainers run out to tend him.

Erik's eyes are wild with excitement, his face unable to contain his excited grin. He RUNS OUT and holds Talon's hand in the air in victory. It's a fleeting moment of joy because suddenly CHAOS breaks out in the bleachers.

PRIME ORDER OFFICER (O.S.)

This is an unlawful assembly! Kneel
with your hands up!

Six COVENANT SOLDIERS, the dogmatic, Gestapo-like police force of the Prime Order, clad in red armor, muscle through the crowd, bludgeoning the spectators with batons and shields. More soldiers block the exits from the pit area.

Talon grabs her coat and leaps out of the pit. Erik grabs Talon's pack and follows.

Some spectators run for their lives while others kneel in obedience and fear. Talon sees the people kneeling and pleads with them to escape.

TALON

Get up! You have to run!

Erik pulls Talon away toward an exit from the pit area, but it's now blocked by a PRIME ORDER SERGEANT, who smashes a FLEEING WOMAN in the face, knocking her down.

Talon runs at the Sergeant, dodges under his club, and kicks his leg sideways dropping him to his knees.

She pulls off his helmet and whacks him in the head with it, knocking him out cold. He falls face down in the dirt.

TALON (CONT'D)

This way!

Talon herds people toward the now open escape route.

Two Prime Order Soldiers see Talon standing over the fallen Prime Order Sergeant from across the pit. They aim at her with their crossbows.

Erik runs at Talon and tackles her into the woods just as the crossbow bolts slam into the tree behind where she had stood.

Erik pulls Talon to her feet. She resists him, looking back to the pit as people continue to escape by the trail she blazed only to meet their deaths at the hands of the soldiers. Erik pulls her deeper into the trees.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Talon and Erik scramble into a ditch, taking refuge in the hollow of some tree roots. Through the trees behind her, chaos reigns - men shouting, soldiers yelling and smashing.

Talon looks up from behind the roots. She sees men kneeling before the Covenant soldiers who promptly execute them with crossbows.

TALON (CONT'D)

Prime Order Bastards.

ERIK

Nothing else we can do. Come on.

Erik pulls her away from the execution scene and deeper into the forest.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. STREAM BANK - MORNING

Fade in as Talon awakens to the babbling of a stream nearby. Erik is already up, sitting on a rock, watching her.

Talon sits up, groaning, holding her sore ribs. She gingerly feels her badly bruised face.

ERIK
Here, take some.

He offers a vial of greenish powder.

TALON
You know I don't use that stuff.

ERIK
Fine. Enjoy the pain.

She stares at the vial in his hand, tempted. She tries to stand up, but is forced back down by the searing pain of broken ribs. She eyes the vial in his hand and finally snatches it from him. Talon pours a little onto her finger and licks it. The euphoric effect is immediate. She exhales, relaxing, closing her eyes and relishing the sensation as it flows through her. This is COLIPSUM, a powerful narcotic.

TALON
You didn't happen to grab our
winnings on the way out last night
did you?

Erik shakes his head somberly.

ERIK
Too busy trying not to die. Sorry.

TALON
(a shrug)
There'll be other fights.

ERIK
Maybe.

She looks at him...

TALON
What does that mean?

Erik produces a scrap of parchment from his jacket, and after a moment's hesitation, hands it to her. Talon confusedly takes the scrap from him.

TALON (CONT'D)
(reading)
"Gunter Donnelbrow"?

ERIK

That's the ink man you've been
searching for. The one who made
that mark you're obsessed with.

Talon flips the paper over, and on the back, the tattoo mark
of the Bones is sketched crudely in charcoal.

FLASH - TALON REMEMBERS THE TATTOOED ARM OF TORU MAGMOOR.

TALON

(flatly)

How long have you kept it from me?

ERIK

Guildhaven, when we bumped into
that old pit runner.

Talon shakes her head, hurt and angry.

TALON

You know how long I've been looking
for him. Why didn't you tell me?

ERIK

I wanted to protect you. Revenge
never ends well.

TALON

Where is he?

ERIK

He's enlisted. At the war front,
Raven Company.

She reaches into her bag and gets a notebook, a leather bound
packet of drawings and writings. She files the parchment away
carefully, then shoulders her bag, ready to leave. Erik
blocks her with his body. She won't look up at him.

ERIK (CONT'D)

I didn't want to lose you.

Talon sighs and kisses him on the cheek. She walks away.

TALON

You never really had me.

Erik nods - deep down he knew that. Talon disappears off
into the trees. All he can do is watch her go.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. BATTLE OVERLOOK - NIGHT

By the bright light of the burning moon - Talon looks down from a high ridge and observes a terrible battle.

Catapults launch fiery balls of tar, arrows fill the sky, ballistas launch spears. Thousands of men are embattled with a horde of Greyskins, killing and being killed.

Talon watches with amazement at the destruction, and considers her options. She tightens her belts, loosens her dagger in its sheath, and makes her way quickly down the steep mountainside toward the battle.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - NIGHT

The battle rages, greyskins charging at formations of men who stand their ground, shields locked, spears braced. Thick smoke shrouds the entire battlefield.

From within the greyskin ranks, a lumbering HELLHOUND emerges, giant and snarling - a leathery wolf-like creature the size of a rhinoceros.

It knocks aside a soldier who tries to attack with a brush of its head, sending him flying.

Men crouch in a medieval tank, firing crossbow bolts at the advancing beast, as it leaps up against the side of their machine, clawing and biting.

Talon makes her way, dodging arrows and staying low, covering her mouth but still coughing as she goes.

Crude spears zip past and catapult boulders slam into the dirt, throwing showers of debris into the air.

Talon finds a squad of a DOZEN SOLDIERS crouching in a shallow embankment trench, arrows whistling past. She ducks down among them and shouts to a DIRTY SOLDIER.

TALON
Raven Battalion?

SEASONED SOLDIER
Black armbands, a few trenches over
and back.

He gestures in an L shape to indicate the directions. She nods and moves down the trench towards Raven Battalion.

EXT. RAVEN BATTALION EMBANKMENT - NIGHT

Talon passes a catapult crew as they load and fire a catapult which flings fiery projectiles of burning tar that explode amongst greyskins.

In return, a greyskin war tower flings a sheep-bladder that explodes as it hits the trench walls, spewing out a noxious GREEN SMOKE.

Talon belly crawls to the back side of a ditch lined with men, hunkering down to stay out of the path of arrows that whiz constantly past. They have black cloaks and a tattered black banner planted in the ground depicting a raven with wings spread. This must be Raven Battalion.

Talon speaks to an OLD SOLDIER among them.

TALON
Looking for Gunter Donnelbrow.

OLD SOLDIER
You're too late.

The Old Soldier puts a finger up, indicating for her to listen. Out on the battlefield, a man SCREAMS IN PAIN.

GUNTER (O.S.)
...Somebody help me...

TALON
That's him?

GUNTER (O.S.)
...I'm hit! Don't just leave me!

TALON
Is anyone going to go get him?

OLD SOLDIER
(he smirks)
Sure, honey. The greyskins'll "get" him, right quick. And anyone else who goes out there.

Talon looks around, noticing a large body shield.

TALON
Mind if I borrow that?

OLD SOLDIER
Not mine, ask him.

The Old Soldier gestures to a dead man lying half in, half out of the trench near the shield. The other soldiers laugh cynically at his joke.

She grabs the abandoned shield and runs up onto the battlefield. Arrows WHIZZ by, one glancing off the shield. She sidesteps bodies of men and greyskins, following the desperate cries for help until she gets to a rock outcrop.

Behind the outcrop she sees GUNTER DONNELBROW writhing in pain, clutching a bloody wound in his side. He's covered in an assortment of tattoos, on his face, his arms, his neck. He's a military tattoo artist, borderline insane.

Suddenly TWO GREYSKINS appear overhead on the rocks, attracted by Gunter's cries for help and ready to kill. Gunter doesn't have any idea he's about to die...

Talon's eyes go wide as she sees her opportunity evaporating. She grabs a sword from a nearby corpse and flings it at one of the Greyskins. It spirals and hits its mark, imbedding deeply into the greyskin's heart. Talon runs as fast as she can toward him, grabs the sword from his chest as he collapses, spins and takes out the second greyskin right before it attacks Gunter, who is unaware.

Talon drops down next to Gunter as a volley of arrows whiz overhead. When he sees Talon he is surprised and confused...

GUNTER

Whoa! Who the hell...

TALON

You Gunter Donnelbrow?

GUNTER

You a cleric? 'Cause I'd get wounded more often if all the clerics looked like you.

A tar-ball slams into the dirt nearby, and Gunter cowers in fear.

TALON

Are you the skin artist, or not?

GUNTER

(re his many tattoos)
What do you think?

TALON

Is this your work?

Talon shows the a scrap of leathery parchment with the Bones tattoo symbol inked on it.

GUNTER
(pain and disbelief)
Yeah. Why? You want me to do a copy on you?

TALON
No! I don't want this ugly thing on me.

GUNTER
Well you don't have to be a bitch about it.

TALON
I want to know who *did* get it. Who has this symbol on their arm?

GUNTER
That's more'n twenty years back, I did that job.

TALON
For who? Give me his name!

GUNTER
There were seven of 'em, got that mark.

TALON
Who were they?

GUNTER
Wait, I ain't telling you no more 'less you help me.

Talon looks at his wound, still bleeding out his side. She sighs and with her dagger cuts a long strip off his cloak. She sits him up and wraps the long strip around his waist, bandaging his side.

TALON
There. Now -- their names?

GUNTER
The Bones they were called, mercenaries, a rough bunch. You gonna get me out of here, now?

TALON
Their names?

GUNTER
(thinks...)
There was, uh, Toru Magmoor...

He is counting them off on his fingers. Talon writes the names in her notebook.

GUNTER (CONT'D)
...Airk Underwell... Who else?
Bartelas Chann. That's all I
remember. Oh - Tiberion Shek was
the leader.

Talon finishes putting them down.

TALON
That's only four.

GUNTER
Look, we weren't brothers, honey,
just a job. Never knew 'em all by
name.

TALON
These "Bones"... do you know where
any of them are now?

He considers and offers a bargain.

GUNTER
Get me back to the trench first.

An arrow embeds itself in a tree stump inches from Talon.

TALON
Can't risk it, you might die before
we make it. I'll get you out *after*
you tell me. You have my word.

Gunter scoffs, looking down at his wound.

GUNTER
Your "word"?
(bitter laugh)
Hell, I'm probably dead either
way... Only one I know about's Toru
Magmoor. He's turned soldier now.
Rode out of camp just this morning,
for the Outpost.

She hastily scribbles in her notes.

TALON
Gallwood Outpost?

GUNTER

Yeah.

Talon looks out to the battlefield, still raging. She climbs out and scrambles away.

GUNTER (CONT'D)

(shouting after her)

I knew it! You two-penny whore! I
knew you'd leave me here to die...

Then she reappears out of the smoke having retrieved the body shield to block incoming arrows and other debris. She grabs the scrawny man and throws him over her shoulder.

TALON

(handing him the shield)

Hold this, and pray to whatever
gods owe you favors.

She makes a run for it. Gunter holds the shield over himself as well as he can.

Arrows fly by, slamming into the shield. One hits Gunter in his calf that is peeking out from the cover of the shield. He screams like a stuck pig.

A moment later they make it - Talon dumps Gunter into the main trench. The others soldiers are amazed.

TALON (CONT'D)

Get him a cleric.

Gunter cries out in pain as Talon walks away.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. TRAVEL MONTAGE - DAY

Talon traverses various terrains, landscapes and climates, through deserts, mountains, snow and rain.

EXT. GRASSLAND - DAY

A herd of some sort of antlered buffalo stampedes away from Talon over a desert grass landscape, as a wyvern (like a dragon without arms) bears down on the herd.

Talon watches as the buffalo/elk is torn limb from limb by the wyvern who feeds on it, the rest of the herd still charging away across the plains.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS - DUSK

Talon makes her way down a narrow mountain trail in the fading light of sunset. She pauses at an overlook and spies her destination down the trail: GALLWOOD OUTPOST, a borderland outpost, a remote military base guarding the mouth of Gallwood Pass.

It's the final bastion of the civilized world; a walled village fortress at the frontier of the realm, lit with torches and a few lanterns as night falls.

Talon sighs, looking down at the settlement, pausing on the threshold of a long sought destination.

A twig snaps behind her. She WHIPS around, her dagger at the ready, scanning the trees, wide-eyed into the dying light.

The silhouette of a STRANGER stands in the shadows.

TALON

Hail, traveler.

As the Stranger steps out of the shadows, only the lower half of his craggy old face becomes visible in the light.

STRANGER

You travel alone. So fortunate.

Talon sheaths her dagger - it's just an old man.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

Come closer.

TALON

I don't think so.

He sniffs toward her, this is getting freaky.

STRANGER

Come. We can smell it, you're ready to join with us.

TALON

"Us"? I don't think so.

The Stranger steps further into the light. Now Talon can see his eyes - BLOOD RED with NO PUPILS OR CORNEA. He keeps sniffing, like a dog. What the hell?

(We will later learn that the Stranger is a PLAGUELING - a diseased human, infected by a diabolical plague.)

Talon pulls her dagger again, uncertain whether to attack or run away.

TALON (CONT'D)

Are... are you sick, old man?

The Stranger suddenly OPENS HIS MOUTH VERY WIDE, wider than should be possible, dislocating his jaw.

Deep in the recesses of his mouth SOMETHING MOVES. A pale creature is faintly visible in the back of the Stranger's throat. The creature stiffens and SCREECHES the most disturbing sound ever heard.

And what's even more disturbing is that the screech is ANSWERED by another SCREECH from somewhere in the distance. Then another. And another.

Talon barely hesitates before RUNNING down the hill toward Gallwood Keep, dodging past rocks and trees.

The Stranger is in rapid pursuit, indifferent to tree branches which he runs right through, reaching for Talon.

Suddenly A SECOND PLAGUELING LEAPS ONTO THE TRAIL blocking Talon. She skids to a stop. This one is younger and bigger.

Then A THIRD PLAGUELING, a woman, comes out of the brush from Talon's flank. Talon is now effectively SURROUNDED.

Talon turns to face uphill towards the first Stranger, who keeps moving closer, his mouth open wide again. Talon THROWS HER DAGGER with lightning speed and accuracy. The blade impales itself in the Stranger's chest... to no effect whatsoever. It just keeps coming.

She backs up... right into the Second Plagueling who catches her wrist. Talon leans in and FLIPS the creature over her back hard into the ground. But when she turns to run, she finds herself FACE TO FACE with the third Plagueling, it's mouth open too wide.

The Stranger moves to grab her. She ducks, pulls the blade from his chest, and SHOOTs IT into the third Plagueling, imbedding it right between its eyes. Doesn't even slow the creature down.

Talon is stunned. Nothing seems to hurt these things. While Talon stares at the creature moving toward her with a blade imbedded between her eyes, the female Plagueling GRABS Talon's wrists, pinning them fast at her side.

As Talon struggles, the Plagueling at her feet grasps her ankles with impossible strength like immovable steel shackles.

Now the Stranger takes her head between his hands, holding it tight so she can't turn or move her head in any way. She struggles but she is completely immobilized.

Terrified, Talon hyperventilates but doesn't scream.

The creature in the back of the Stranger's throat begins to reach out of his mouth. Its eyeless head has a single fang-like injector, aimed now at Talon's exposed neck... she's done for.

Suddenly an ARROW FLIES RIGHT PAST Talon's head, slams into the MOUTH of the plagueling Stranger, goes through and out the back of his skull. The Stranger goes limp and Talon shakes her head free of his grasp as he drops to the ground.

Another arrow strikes the Second Plagueling through the mouth and it falls away. Talon tries to pull her leg free from the Plaugueling that is still locked onto her ankles, the fang creature protruding from it's mouth. It's just about to inject Tallons shin when a THIRD ARROW ruptures the PLAGUELING'S HEAD FROM ABOVE, STAKING ITS HEAD to the ground.

Talon spins around to see her saviors, THREE SOLDIERS on horseback, still holding long bows. One of them is KELL (45), a veteran ranger, tough and rugged. Their leader is CAPTAIN GARRET SPEARS (28), the picture of a hero in a uniform that fits him perfectly, heavy steel armor and a black cape.

GARRET

You're lucky we came along.

TALON

I had it under control.

GARRET
(smirks)
I can see that.

A Plagueling cry is heard from afar and then another.

GARRET (CONT'D)
Now we should get behind walls.

Garret offers his hand. Talon considers it for a moment, refusing to take it. Then she HEARS another plagueling wail even closer.

Talon takes Garret's hand. He pulls her onto the back of his horse and they gallop off.

GARRET (CONT'D)
You can thank me later.

The other two soldiers fall in behind.

EXT. OUTER WALL - NIGHT

Garret, with Talon riding behind him, charges toward the high wall of Gallwood Outpost, followed by the other two soldiers.

GARRET
Before I can take you behind walls,
I'm going to need some answers.
Like where you're from and your
purpose in coming to this gods-
forsaken Outpost.

She tightens her grip on her dagger.

TALON
I'll answer to the Gate Marshal,
not a common soldier.

They arrive at the giant main gate and stop just outside.

GARRET
You won't see the Gate Marshal
unless you assure this "common
soldier" that you aren't a threat
to the Outpost...

A Plagueling screeches, not far away. Several other Plaguelings howl their response.

TALON
Can we maybe have this conversation
inside?

GARRET
Not until I feel confident you
aren't a threat.

The Plaguelings can be heard CRASHING THROUGH THE UNDERBRUSH.

TALON
(hurriedly)
Do I look like a threat?

GARRET
Beauty can conceal many forms of
evil.

Talon meets his piercing eyes, a bit taken aback by the
sideways compliment.

TALON
Well there you go - I'm clearly *not*
beautiful so I can't be evil.

GARRET
I beg to differ.

TALON
About which part?

But the moment is broken by...

NIGHT GUARD LIEUTENANT (O.S.)
Who goes there?

Talon looks up to see a NIGHT GUARD LIEUTENANT holding a
torch hovering above the wall. Garret yells up.

GARRET
It's Garret Spears. Open the gate!

NIGHT GUARD LIEUTENANT
You're late, Captain.

TALON
"Captain"?

GARRET
(smiles)
Not just a "common soldier."

TALON
I, uh, I didn't mean to...

NIGHT GUARD LIEUTENANT
(re. Talon)
Who's she?

GARRET

Let the Gate Marshall worry about that. Open the gate.

NIGHT GUARD LIEUTENANT

As you are well aware, Captain, the gates are sealed and barricaded at sundown. They open for no one.

GARRET

They open for me, Lieutenant.
Unless you want to be reduced to plagueling clean up.

Suddenly four plaguelings CHARGE the party from out of the shadows.

The soldiers draw their swords as the creatures make a run at them. Each man beheads a plagueling with ease. But the fourth plagueling GRABS Talon's leg. She KICKS him off with great force and he falls back at Kell's horse. The injector creature comes out of it's mouth and just as it reaches for Kell's Calf above his boot, Kell beheads it. When the human part of the head falls, it leaves the creature momentarily attached to Kell's leg, which he kicks off.

KELL

Disgusting creatures.

GARRET

(to gate guard)
Gods be damned, Lieutenant! Open the gate now or face the consequences.

The Lieutenant hesitates. Then he looks off to the tree line and sees FIVE MORE PLAUGUELLINGS running toward them. He makes a decision then and signals someone below. Slowly the gate begins to grind open.

As soon as it's open wide enough, Garret and the other soldiers ride through the opening and the gate is slammed shut behind him just in time to keep out the attacking plaguelings.

EXT. INSIDE GATE AREA - NIGHT

Garret dismounts, then offers his hand to help Talon off the horse. She refuses to take his hand - she can get off the horse by herself, thank you very much.

GARRET

I'm Captain Garret Spears.

TALON

Yes, I got that.

GARRET

That was supposed to cue you to
offer your name in return.

He waits for a name. He doesn't get it. Talon is too
preoccupied with the Plaguelings pounding on the gate.

TALON

What are those things?

GARRET

We call them Plaguelings. They
spread their disease with those
protrusions they tried to stick you
with.

(then...)

Do you have a name?

TALON

It's Talon.

GARRET

And your reason for coming here?

Talon hesitates, considering her answer.

GARRET (CONT'D)

As long as you're making it up, at
least try to make it interesting.

She's got nothing.

GARRET (CONT'D)

Okay, I'll get you started.

(over dramatic)

"You're a nobleman's daughter. Your
father pledged you to be married to
a tyrant so you ran away on your
betrothal day, to the remotest
corner of the Realm--

TALON

(grudgingly)

I'm looking for work.

Garret raises his eyebrows, amused.

GARRET

My story was better.

TALON

Mine is more believable.

GARRET

(amused)

It would be if it weren't for the fact that this outpost is the farthest shytehole of the human world. Most people who live here, who aren't soldiers, are running from something.

TALON

Not me.

GARRET

(doubting her)

Uh-huh.

(starts walking)

Come. If you won't tell this common soldier, maybe you'll tell the Gate Marshal.

She reluctantly follows Garret as he leads her away, past the Gate Guards who stare at her as she goes by.

EXT. PASSAGE - NIGHT

A SCRAWNY MINER lies face down in the street, his wrists bound, with a mute Watchman kneeling into his back.

Standing over them is GATE MARSHAL CEDRIC WYTHERS (55), streetwise and tough, head of the Watch, the Outpost's police force. Wythers examines the contents of a small leather bag. He pinches a bit of colipsum between his fingers and tastes.

WYTHERS

Too much here for your station, caver. You know my rules, no dealing on this side of the wall. Who's your supplier?

Scrawny Miner doesn't say anything.

WYTHERS (CONT'D)

Pick him up.

The Watchman hauls the Guilty Miner to his feet.

Wythers leans his face close to the Miner's and whispers something to him, something that unnerves the man. Then Wythers runs his hand through the Miner's hair and suddenly RIPS OUT A HANDFUL OF HAIR. The Miner yells in pain.

WYTHERS (CONT'D)
Your supplier's name.

The Guilty Miner just whimpers.

WYTHERS (CONT'D)
Put him in the hole. I'll spend
some time on him later.

The Watchman hauls the Miner away, just as Garret and Talon
approach.

GARRET
Marshal Wythers.

WYTHERS
Yes, Captain.

GARRET
We intercepted a traveler on the
North road.

WYTHERS
You know how I feel about comings
and goings after dark, Captain.

GARRET
I do. But you have my word she's no
plagueling.

Wythers takes out a leather bound journal.

WYTHERS
(to Talon)
I'm a busy man, so make it quick.
What's your story?

TALON
My name's Talon. I'm here to find
work.

Wythers looks her up and down, scrutinizing quickly.

WYTHERS
Pigshite you are. Whores, maids,
and washerwomen, that's all the
work here for women.

He grabs her hand and lifts it to look closely at it. The
knuckles are calloused and scarred.

WYTHERS (CONT'D)
You have a fighter's hands. But not
a fighter's face.

TALON

I've worked in taverns, off and on.
My hands keep the peace, and my
face... pays me well in tips.

Wythers pauses, looking at her hard.

WYTHERS

I've seen a lot of good and bad
things come in and out of this
town. I've heard every story, every
excuse, every alibi.

He studies her face. She stares back, unblinking.

WYTHERS (CONT'D)

For now, we'll both pretend you're
here to find work. Cross me or
break my law and I'll lock you out
at night and watch from the turret
as those diseased savages have at
you.

TALON

That's fair enough.

WYTHERS

It is what it is. Captain, I leave
her in your custody.

Wythers and his Watchman depart down the passageway, leaving
Talon and Garret alone again. Talon exhales, to let off some
tension.

TALON

Is he always so friendly?

GARRET

Only because he likes you.

TALON

Lucky me.

(then...)

So you got an inn or something
where I can stay?

GARRET

Just one. Called the Nightshade.
It's not pretty, but it's all we've
got. Come on, I'll take you.

TALON

Just point me in the right
direction.

GARRET

You heard the man - you're still in
my custody.

She goes with him reluctantly.

EXT. OUTER WALL - NIGHT

As Garret and Talon walk along the massive Outer Wall, pale moonlight shines on the lake surface that borders the Outpost on one side. Inside the wall orange fire lights the narrow streets of the Outpost below.

Talon gazes out into the lands beyond the Outer Wall. The moon is bright and the hills and plains and forests can be made out faintly under the stars. The dark land is dotted with FIRES, in clusters near and far.

TALON

Seems you've taken me the long way
round.

GARRET

(with a smile)
Wanted to give you the grand tour.

TALON

So many fires.

GARRET

Greyskin camps. My men count them
each night. More than fifty score
now. More every night.

TALON

Do they ever attack?

GARRET

Once. They came by the hundreds at
night up these walls. But we fought
them back. Killed most of them.
It's been quiet for eleven seasons
now. That's why the 8th army left,
to strengthen the Southern Front.

TALON

I was just there. Days ago.

GARRET

Aye? What news? We've heard nothing
since the half Redmoon.

TALON

I don't know, there was blood. Men were dying... Good times were had by all.

GARRET

Were they in the hills or on the plains?

TALON

The plains.

Garret brightens.

GARRET

Good, we've driven them back a league then.

The wind whips up. It's cold. Talon pulls her cloak tight around her. Garret points...

GARRET (CONT'D)

There, right inside the upper gate, is the Nightshade. It's the beating heart of the city. Everyone who comes into the Outpost ends up in there at some point. But it's also a den of thieves and killers.

TALON

Sounds like the place to be.

GARRET

Why? You a thief or a killer?
(off her "thanks a lot"
look)

Oh. I forgot - You're just going there to find work.

TALON

(she smiles)
You're catching on.

GARRET

Very well, I'll escort you--

TALON

I can take care of myself.

She starts walking. He yells after her...

GARRET

Hey, do me a favor - don't do
anything that would make me look
bad for bringing you in, alright?

Talon doesn't respond, just keeps walking.

EXT. OUTPOST STREET - DAY

Talon walks quickly down a dark street. A man stumbles past, drunk. Talon listens, and hears the sounds of music and tavern life. She follows the noise.

EXT. TAVERN - NIGHT

A wooden arch and heavy wood door are built into the stone walls of the keep's inner buildings. Music and laughter are heard from within. A sign hangs from a post: "Nightshade Inn"

A huge bouncer named MUNT sits on a stool by the door, smoking a pipe, a rack of weapons by his side.

He watches Talon as she approaches.

MUNT

Weapons.

Talon unbuckles her dagger, hooks it over the rack, and goes inside.

INT. NIGHTSHADE INN - NIGHT

Talon enters the tavern, surveying the whole scene...

The Nightshade is busy with soldiers in partial uniforms, drinking, gambling and spending their copper on wine and women. Truly a wretched hive of scum and villainy.

Half-dressed Prostitutes lounge around the men with the most money. Tradesmen, merchants, and blacksmiths congregate in their own groups. The MISTRESS (50), owner of the tavern and the attached brothel, is a buxom, full-bodied woman. She stands behind the bar, barking at rowdy soldiers.

Also behind the bar is a nerdy alchemist named JANZO, pouring ale and wine from kegs and bottles.

A finely-dressed young woman, GWYNN, looks out of place playing cards with some rough MERCHANTS. We'll find out later that she's the daughter of the base commander.

A SPICE MERCHANT stares Gwynn down, trying to read her thoughts... Gwynn holds her cards close to her chest and stares back at him. Then she smiles ever so slightly and raises an eyebrow at him.

SPICE MERCHANT

Bah!

He tosses his cards away, angrily.

Gwynn sets her cards face down on the table, as she laughs and collects the pot, not so humbly. The Merchants are embarrassed and suspicious.

SPICE MERCHANT (CONT'D)

(reaching for her cards)

Go on, show us what you had.

GWYNN

(protecting her cards)

I will not. You folded, and a lady never tells.

She mixes her cards back into the deck. The Spice Merchant leaves the table, angrily.

GWYNN (CONT'D)

(to the room)

Who else has money to lose?

THE SMITH (60), is an old blacksmith with a grizzled, wise face, blue-grey eyes, his features hardened by years of smithing and fighting. He sits at a table in the shadows, drinking alone watching Talon intently as she makes her way through the Tavern.

Talon pushes up to the bar and raises a hand to attract the attention of the Mistress.

MISTRESS

Aye?

TALON

I need a room. And a meal.

The Mistress looks her up and down.

MISTRESS

Room's on the house, honey. Long as you're willing to share the bed some nights and cut me in on the proceeds. That fresh face and body - the line'll be out the door.

TALON
(barely keeping it
together)
I just need... a room. And a meal.

MISTRESS
(disappointed)
Doubt you have the three beads you
need for the room.

Talon slides three bronze coins onto the table, which the
Mistress promptly pockets. She slides back a key.

MISTRESS (CONT'D)
Last one on the right.

She grabs Talon's hand as she takes the key and leans in
close, threatening.

MISTRESS (CONT'D)
If I catch you turning tricks on
the side I'll mess up that fresh
face so your own ma' wouldn't know
you. We clear?

TALON
You treat all your guests this
nice?

MISTRESS
Just the young ones, with tits.
(yelling as she leaves)
Janzo! Platter!

Talon takes a seat at the bar. In a matter of seconds, the
seat next to her is filled by the Smith.

SMITH
(a little drunk)
I've seen you before.

TALON
I doubt that.

SMITH
You're from the capital.

TALON
(truthfully)
Never been there.

Talon ends the conversation by moving down the bar a stool.

Janzo arrives with a plate of potatoes, meat and cheese. When he gets a good look at Talon, his face lights up. He pretty much falls in love right there.

JANZO

Wow. I mean hello, haven't seen you here before, I mean, I haven't seen you anywhere, ever...

He's a stammering idiot, and it pains her to be on the receiving end of it.

JANZO (CONT'D)

Hey, don't move-- wait here...

Janzo steps away to his brewer's mixing station.

Talon takes a sideways glance at the Smith, who is still drilling holes in her with his eyes. She turns back to find Janzo right across the bar from her.

He drips a single drop of something clear and blue from a tiny glass vial into her tankard of ale, draws a grayish swizzle stick from a pouch on his belt, mixes the drink precisely seven rotations, then slides the drink to Talon.

TALON

I'm not thirsty.

JANZO

Just try it. I have a gift.

TALON

I don't want--

JANZO

You like nutty, but not too nutty, touch of alder but absolutely no malt - you hate malt.

Talon stares at him, taken aback... how did he know that?

JANZO (CONT'D)

Plus, at present you could use something to steady your nerves, put some fire in your bones, ice in your veins. Am I right?

(no answer)

Go on, taste it.

Talon hesitates, sighs to show that she's just humoring him, and then sips. Her eyes widen - wow, that's good. She drinks deeply, bottoms up. When she sets down the mug, a look of calm and happiness settles over her face. Janzo smiles.

TALON

You do have a gift, barkeeper.

JANZO

Brewer, actually. Name's Janzo.
Best brewer in the realm. And you
are...?

Talon smiles a little.

TALON

...Not looking for a new friend,
tonight.

Janzo is captivated.

JANZO

Sorry, you're just so--

MISTRESS

Janzo! One of your special brews
for our new esteemed guest!

Janzo reluctantly rushes away to pour a drink for a newly arrived soldier - a big man who has just entered the tavern wearing the prestigious red armor and red cape of a Covenant Officer. His back is turned, we can't see his face. A mutter of mixed respect and disinterest rumbles through the crowd.

Talon glances briefly at the Covenant Officer, his back to her as he talks to a soldier. She glares hatefully a little at his back, and then returns her focus to her food and ignoring the Smith.

SMITH

What brings you here, to the
Outpost?

TALON

(stone cold)

Look. Whatever you're hoping will
happen tonight, is not going to
happen, old man.

Talon hefts her pack and without so much as a glance around the tavern, takes her plate and heads up the back stairs toward her room. The Smith stands up after her as though to follow.

INT. NIGHTSHADE INN - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Talon makes her way up towards her room. As she rounds a corner, she hears a CREAK behind her and sees a shadow in the light - someone is following her.

Talon steps back quietly against the wall, not breathing.

As the shadowy figure rounds the corner...

TALON
I said back off!

Talon grapples and FLIPS the person to the floor with an expert hip toss, landing on top of the person. She looks down, ready to strike. But it's not the Smith.

GWYNN
Ow! Let me go.

It's the young woman who was playing poker, GWYNN, wide-eyed and terrified. Talon climbs off her and Gwynn scrambles back against the corridor wall.

GWYNN (CONT'D)
I have to hide.

TALON
Why?

GWYNN
There's a man, down there. If he sees me, he'll kill me.

TALON
Not my problem.

Talon starts off past her, heading for her door. Gwynn follows.

GWYNN
You have a room. Please. I need your help.

Talon eyes the young woman and sees true horror in her eyes. Finally she sighs, opening her door to let Gwynn in the room. Talon looks down the hall to make sure they are in the clear, then follows Gwynn in and closes the door.

INT. TALON'S ROOM - NIGHT

Talon gives her new room a quick scan.

Gwynn sits on the bed, feeling it. She gives a disdainful little sniff, and stands back up.

GWYNN

I will wait out the night here and leave in the morning.

TALON

Do you work here? Is this man a client of yours?

GWYNN

What? No.
(realizing her implication)
No!

Talon shrugs.

TALON

Well, you're not staying here.

GWYNN

If he sees me, he will kill me!

TALON

Wait, was he an older man, really creepy?

Gwynn nods emphatically.

TALON (CONT'D)

Scruffy? Leather apron?

GWYNN

(looking confused)
No. That's not him at all. He's a Covenant agent, red armor, surely you noticed him.

TALON

Yeah. So?

GWYNN

So they never visit the Outpost. He must have just arrived.

Talon is suddenly aggressively interested.

TALON

Wait - he just arrived? Are you sure?

GWYNN
(nods panicking)
What if he recognized me? He was
looking right at me.

TALON
Do you know his name? Is it Toru
Magmoor?

Gwynn freezes, terrified, looking for a way to get out now.

GWYNN
I... don't know... How do you know
that name? You're with him, aren't
you? You're part of his plan.

TALON
You came into my room, remember?

Talon grabs her jacket, preparing to go after him, heedless
now about Gwynn's plight.

TALON (CONT'D)
Stay here.

Talon hurries out of the room. Gwynn is relieved that she is
gone.

EXT. NIGHTSHADE INN - UPPER LANDING - NIGHT

Talon runs out onto the second floor landing and looks down
into the bustling inn, searching for her man.

The Covenant Officer is just exiting the doors, his red armor
standing out, his face still turned away from her.

Talon hurries down the steps after him, pushing her way
through the inn, causing upset at spilled beers, bumped dice
games, her progress slowed by the busy atmosphere. It takes
her a while to reach the door.

EXT. NIGHTSHADE INN - NIGHT

Talon exits into the street. Looks left and right... no sign
of the Officer.

She runs to the street corner on her right, looking down the
road. It's dark and empty. No sign of her prey. Talon turns
away in frustration. Damn!

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. NIGHTSHADE STAIRS - NIGHT

Talon is heading upstairs back to her room, but sees Gwynn ducking out the back door of the Nightshade...

EXT. BACK STREET - NIGHT

Gwynn, wide-eyed and afraid, walks slowly through a dark back alley. She rounds a corner and comes face to face with... Talon.

Gwynn jumps back and falls onto her ass.

TALON

I told you to stay in my room.

Gwynn finds and throws a rock at Talon, who dodges it.

TALON (CONT'D)

Whoa!

GWYNN

If you hurt me, my father will have you flayed. He commands this entire Outpost.

TALON

(sarcastic)

This *entire* outpost?! Really?!

GWYNN

(offended)

How dare you?!

TALON

Settle down. We're on the same side. My enemy's enemy is my friend.

Talon reaches a hand to help Gwynn up. But Gwynn gets to her feet, without taking Talon's hand.

TALON (CONT'D)

Do you know where he's staying?
Toru Magmoor.

GWYNN

If you help me get home safely, I will tell you.

TALON

Fine. Let's go. I'll walk you home.

GWYNN

No. Send word. I require a military escort.

TALON

I'll protect you.

GWYNN

(laughs)

You?

In an instant Talon reaches for her boot with her left hand and inside her jacket with her right and flings two stiletto knives at lightning speed right past Gwynn. The blades slam into a wooden door inches on either side of Gwynn's head, quivering there like two harp strings. Gwynn gasps in shock, covering her mouth to stifle a scream.

GWYNN (CONT'D)

You could have killed me.

TALON

Could have, but didn't. Now trust me, I'll get you home safe.

EXT. CITY - NIGHT

Talon and Gwynn walk carefully through the city streets, watching for any sign of red armor. Gwynn points the way as they round a corner.

TALON

So, why does Toru want you dead?

GWYNN

It's enough for you to know that he's a killer.

TALON

Oh, I'm well aware.

GWYNN

A better question is why you are so familiar with him?

TALON

I guess we both have our secrets.
But I'll tell you this - as
desperate as you are to avoid him,
that's how desperate I am to face
him.

GWYNN

Then we're opposite.

TALON

We both want him dead and gone,
don't we?

Gwynn is fearful of Talon's words, but also assured. She nods
her head.

TALON (CONT'D)

So where can I find him?

GWYNN

He'll be staying at the Officers
Quarters, though you will never get
to him in there. Wait for him at
the Nightshade. Everyone here ends
up in the Nightshade.

Talon nods and they walk on.

EXT. COMMANDER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Talon and Gwynn approach the imposing stone house of the base
commander. Gwynn spots Garret waiting by the door. His face
lights up when he sees Gwynn who runs to him, throwing her
arms around him.

GWYNN

Thank the heavens.

GARRET

(To Gwynn, mocking scorn)
Gwynn, you've been out gambling
again, I can smell it on you.

Then he notices Talon.

GARRET (CONT'D)

(to Talon)
Oh. Hello. Again. This is
unexpected.

TALON

Captain.

GWYNN
(to Garret)
You know this woman?

GARRET
(to Gwynn)
Well, uh, no, not really, I mean we
just met, tonight--

TALON
(to Gwynn, with a
mischievous smile)
The Captain saved my life. It was
very heroic.

Gwynn looks at the two of them, trying to detect anything
between them. Both are quiet. Gwynn recovers.

GWYNN
Well, now you saved mine. One good
deed leads to another.

Garret grows concerned.

GARRET
Saved your life? What?

GWYNN
A Covenant Agent from the capital,
he may have recognized me.

Garret becomes very serious, looking around.

GARRET
Quickly, get inside.

Garret opens the door for her and Gwynn hurries in. He
starts to follow her in but Talon stops him.

TALON
Five gold coins.

GARRET
What?

TALON
(lying)
She promised me payment upon her
safe arrival. I assume you are the
one who would pay that?

He digs coins from his pocket.

GARRET

What happened, anyway?

TALON

She needed protection walking home.
Apparently a fortress full of
soldiers and a captain for a suitor
weren't enough.

GARRET

She can be quite dramatic.

He drops the coins in her hand. She holds his gaze for a
moment too long.

TALON

She's all yours now. Goodnight
Captain.

Talon turns and departs. Garret watches her go, ill at ease.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CITY - MORNING

Sunrise at the Outpost. The night watch comes down off the
wall, switching with the day watch.

INT. CALKUSSAR'S OFFICE - DAY

GENERAL CALKUSSAR, the stern, intimidating commander of the
Outpost sits in a well-adorned office, behind an impressive
desk, Garret standing at his flank.

The red-armored officer from the tavern paces before them.
He turns, and we see his face. It is indeed Toru Magmoor.
Older, cleaned up a little now that he's joined the Covenant.
But undoubtedly the villain of Talon's childhood.

MAGMOOR

I've walked your walls, I've seen
your mines, your smelters, your
smithies. Your people are
industrious, Calkussar.

CALKUSSAR

Thank you, Captain.

MAGMOOR

So here's what doesn't add up -
where the fyke is my steel?

CALKUSSAR

As I said, they will be slightly delayed.

MAGMOOR

We do all the fighting and dying out on the front, while you cowards sit behind walls, and you have the testicles to tell me my shipments are delayed?

CALKUSSAR

You'd best respect the rank, soldier.

MAGMOOR

No insubordination intended.

(he sits)

But I have my orders. I'm not leaving until I have sixty wagons loaded to the tits with armaments.

He puts his feet up on Calkussar's desk.

MAGMOOR (CONT'D)

Take your time, I'll enjoy the wait lounging in your office by day.

(pointedly)

Consorting with your daughter by night.

Calkussar and Garret stiffen.

MAGMOOR (CONT'D)

I saw her at the brothel, of all places. She looked familiar somehow, had to ask a commoner who she was - a fine thing like her in a shithole like that. Pity she wasn't for sale, is what I thought to myself.

GARRET

You're a pig.

Calkussar places a hand on Garret to shut him up.

MAGMOOR

It's odd, now that I think of it - she saw me and took off like a bird from a cat. Why is that? I'll have to ask her next time I see her.

Calkussar stands up, furious.

CALKUSSAR

If you so much as mention my
daughter again, I'll cut you down
and dump you in the lake.

MAGMOOR

Sixty wagons.

CALKUSSAR

It will be well worth it to be rid
of you. Now get out of my sight.

Magmoor smiles victoriously, and leaves. They wait a beat to
be sure he is gone. Then...

CALKUSSAR (CONT'D)

Do you think he remembers?

GARRET

I suspect if he did, Gwynn would be
dead already.

Calkussar turns to Garret...

CALKUSSAR

You're supposed to be keeping an
eye on her. What's she doing out
gambling?

GARRET

I apologize, sir.

CALKUSSAR

Keep her out of sight until he's
gone.

Garret nods gravely.

GARRET

In the meantime - *sixty* wagons?
That's everything we have. It will
destroy our plan.

CALKUSSAR

Just give him storehouse one and
two. Pad it out - make it look like
more.

GARRET

But if he...

CALKUSSAR

The other two storehouses don't
exist. Do you understand?

GARRET
Perfectly, Sir.

EXT. MOUNTAIN TRAIL - DAY

Garret, Kell, and TWO SCOUTS ride horses along a dusty trail in a narrow mountain pass.

KELL
Sixty wagons? That'll set us back.

GARRET
He left us with no choice.

KELL
No choice? I'll put a knife up his arse, how's that for no choice?

They approach the mouth of a large tunnel through the mountain, a checkpoint manned by four ARMORED GUARDS who salute the approaching riders. Garret salutes back.

ARMORED GUARD
Death to the Order.

GARRET
Hail to the Crown.

The Armored Guards let them pass.

INT. CAMP TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

GARRET
We can't risk showing ourselves yet. We could lose everything we've worked for all these years.

KELL
Bah, I'm just tired of waiting. I want to fight.

EXT. REVOLUTIONARY CAMP - DAY

Garret and Kell ride out the other end of the tunnel, into daylight. Beneath them lies a deep valley, filled with tents and soldiers, THOUSANDS of them. A revolutionary army, hidden away in the mountains.

GARRET

You'll get to fight, soon enough.
War is coming, my friend. War is
most certainly coming.

As they arrive, the massive force stops what they are doing,
turn to face Garret wherever they are in the camp, and yell
in unison...

ARMY

Hail to the Crown!

Off Garret's proud smile...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

EXT. NIGHTSHADE INN - EVENING

INT. NIGHTSHADE INN - CONTINUOUS

The Nightshade is a little quieter tonight. Talon sits at the bar, watching the entry door, waiting for her arch-enemy to arrive. She is better rested, keen and ready.

Janzo approaches her, his tongue already tied in knots.

JANZO

Again hello, uh... Hello again...

Talon doesn't take her eyes off the door. It opens... Talon tenses, leaning forward in her seat... and a GRUBBY MINER walks in. Talon exhales to calm herself and rotates her shoulders, to loosen up and cut the tension.

JANZO (CONT'D)

Everything all right? You seem a little tense...

TALON

(a little snappish)

I'm not tense--

(she takes a calming
breath)

Hey, maybe fix me another one of
your special brews.

JANZO

Coming right up!

He starts fixing her a drink. She watches the door.

JANZO (CONT'D)

Looking for someone in particular?

Talon looks at him, prying her eyes away from the door.

TALON

(sarcastic)

The man of my dreams.

JANZO

What's the man of your dreams look
like?

She stares into his hopeful eyes.

TALON

Blonde hair.
 (his is brown)
Blue eyes.
 (his are brown)
At least six hands tall.
 (he's 5, if that)
Know anyone like that?

Janzo is crushed as he finishes mixing her drink and slides it over to her. She takes a sip. It's amazing.

TALON (CONT'D)

You really are a magician.

Janzo smiles.

JANZO

In more ways than you know. Wait,
that came out wrong. I meant...

A hand slams a coin down on the bar next to Talon. The muscled forearm is bare, and the Bones tattoo symbol stands out clearly on the skin. Talon's heart stops, her mouth turning dry as she stares at the mark.

She's standing next to Toru Magmoor.

MAGMOOR

A drink, barkeep!

MISTRESS (O.S.)

Janzo! Get some of that special red
ale for our Covenant guest!

JANZO

 (to Talon)
I'll be right back.

Janzo sighs, and heads through a door down some stairs to fetch more ale.

Talon doesn't dare look at Magmoor. Her heart is pounding, her knuckles white from clenching the handle of her ale mug.

He looks down at her, leering.

MAGMOOR

Smells like piss in here, don't you
think?

Talon hesitates before responding.

TALON

Come to think of it, yes, it
suddenly does smell like piss.

The Mistress blanches a little, this could go badly.

Magmoor sneers at Talon, and then suddenly laughs, loudly.

MAGMOOR

Ha ha ha, good, I like a girl with
a big mouth.

(to the Mistress)

How much for this hussy?

MISTRESS

She's not on my payroll, yet. But
we have many better options--

MAGMOOR

Don't bother. I've seen the rest.

TALON

So, you're a Covenant Officer.

Magmoor grunts his agreement to the obvious fact.

TALON (CONT'D)

Tell me, have you ever killed
anyone?

MAGMOOR

More than you can count.

TALON

I mean, in battle. Someone who can
defend themself.

Magmoor pauses, the tone in her voice alerting him to a
threat.

MAGMOOR

Ah, you're one of those. Got an axe
to grind with the Prime Order?

TALON

With the Bones.

This surprises him.

TALON (CONT'D)

(quiet, and stone cold)

I'll tell you all about it, but not
here, some place more private.

Talon moves to the tavern exit, and slips out.

Magmoor is aroused and angered, both characteristics giving him a dangerous air about him.

Janzo arrives with Magmoor's drink. He drinks it down, hard and fast.

EXT. NIGHTSHADE INN - NIGHT

Talon grabs her daggers from Munt's rack. She also steals a standard-issue longsword from the pile. Munt is half asleep and barely notices her at all.

She walks briskly to the street corner and waits...

Magmoor steps out of the tavern. As soon as he spots Talon she ducks into the side street, walking quickly away, a game of cat and mouse.

EXT. SIDE STREET - NIGHT

Talon makes her way to the mouth of a dark alley, and waits there for him again, breathing quickly in anticipation, trying to stay calm.

Magmoor appears around the corner just in time to see Talon duck into the Alley.

EXT. DARK ALLEY - NIGHT

She draws the sword from its scabbard and stands in the moonlight at the dead end of the alley.

Magmoor appears at the mouth of the alleyway and strides toward her.

He DRAWS HIS SWORDS - A SHORT SWORD AND A LONG. The weapons ring and gleam in the moonlight.

MAGMOOR

You're not the first to come
seeking vengeance for some wretched
life I've taken. Who was it? Your
father? Your mother?

TALON

A whole village. Fifteen winters
past, the Vale of Galanth.

MAGMOOR

Ah, yes. The Blackbloods. That was a special night - highest kill count I've had in one night. Wiped them all out.

TALON

Not all. You missed one.

MAGMOOR

Impossible.

TALON

Did you check the well?

Magmoor remembers.

MAGMOOR

You were... the girl? But The Wolf took care of you...

TALON

He missed.

MAGMOOR

The Wolf doesn't miss...

TALON

And yet here I am.

Magmoor looks hard at Talon, very serious now.

MAGMOOR

Good thing he's close by. I'll take care of that scum when I'm done with you.

TALON

Close by? Here at the Outpost?

Magmoor laughs.

MAGMOOR

Close enough to spit on.

TALON

Who is he?

MAGMOOR

It will make no difference to you. This is where you die.

TALON

Or maybe you die. You should tell me who he is so I can kill him for you.

MAGMOOR

I'll take my chances.

TALON

Then just tell me this -- why?

Magmoor understands her question immediately.

MAGMOOR

We were mercenaries and he paid us well.

TALON

Who paid you? And why?

Magmoor slowly approaches while he talks, cornering her in the dead end alley.

MAGMOOR

"Kill every Blackblood" is all he said. Now I need to finish the job.

Magmoor ATTACKS, making two precise swings, one with each blade. Talon dodges both, moving back, deeper into the alley.

Magmoor swings another deep cut that would slice through her waist. But Talon crouches into a foot-sweep and the sword whistles over her. Magmoor barely jumps back in time to evade the foot sweep.

With two flicks of her sword, Talon flings pieces of brick at Magmoor's head, from the scattered rubble at the base of the alley wall.

He dodges one with a tilt of his head, slices the other one out of the air with his short sword, and regroups in time to deflect Talon's sword coming at his throat.

MAGMOOR (CONT'D)

At least you won't die without a fight, like the cowards in your village.

Then Magmoor attacks with a barrage of slashing blades, all of which Talon dodges, but she loses ground, becoming backed into a corner. She deflects a hard swing from Magmoor's sword with her dagger, but her dagger is batted from her hand. It clatters away from her across the alley.

Magmoor slashes down at her. She sidesteps and then stomps on the short sword end as it swings to the ground, and with her other foot KICKS HIM IN THE FACE.

The blade snaps out of Magmoor's hand to the ground. Talon snatches it up in a dive-roll past Magmoor who swings at her with his longsword as she passes and cuts her across the back, slitting through her shirt and tearing a bloody black gash across her back. He notices the color of the blood...

MAGMOOR (CONT'D)

You really are her.

He thrusts to finish her off, but she manages to parry the attack with her newly gained short sword.

They face off, circling, each of them weighing the new dynamic of the fight.

TALON

Who paid you? Tell me.

Talon attacks. She swings rapidly in short strokes and stabs, but Magmoor is an elite swordsman, and parries all the attacks easily while circling so that Talon's back is to the dead end of the alley again.

Enraged, Talon swings wildly, fiercely, and it's all Magmoor can do to fend off the blows, when suddenly THEY BOTH STAB AT THE SAME TIME.

Magmoor's blade goes hard through Talon's shoulder, pinning her to the dead end wall of the alley. At the same time, Talon's blade goes right through Magmoor's gut.

Magmoor steps back, shaken, surprised that she got him, looking down at the sword in his gut.

Talon can't reach the hilt of the longsword pinning her to the wall. She tries to pull it out by grasping the blade between her hands, and cuts her hands, still unable.

Magmoor slides the sword from his own body and shakily STABS TALON IN HER GUT, pinning her a second time to the wall. She gasps. It's a killing blow and she knows it.

Talon grasps at the short sword through her stomach and strains to pull it out, but she's weakening fast.

Magmoor falls to his knees, also dying, pale and sweaty, his whole side soaked in blood.

Talon cries out in anguish, a defiant yell of frustration. Her voice echoes off the walls.

Talon's eyes pull closed, her head sags and her hands fall to her sides. She struggles to open her eyes. Her vision is blurred.

Then A SHADOWY FIGURE appears in the moonlight. Talon tries to focus on it.

Magmoor looks up at the figure and shakes his head "no", as he tries to protest, struggling to speak, but only gargling his own blood.

The gloved figure pulls the short sword out of Talon's middle and then the longsword with a hard yank. She falls forward onto the figure, who hoists her up onto its shoulder and carries her away, like she carried the tattoo artist.

Magmoor claws at the ground with a bloody hand, seemingly trying to crawl forward to interfere.

Talon slips in and out of consciousness as she is hauled away. Down a dark alley... Under a burning torch... Through a doorway...

PAN back to the ground - next to Magmoor's dead body and bloody hand, scrawled in red blood are four words

"TELL DRED ONE REMAINS".

FADE OUT:

THE END