

BLACK SCREEN

MOURNFUL MUSIC BEGINS TO PLAY

CREDITS ROLL OVER

FADE IN

EXT. THE VALLEY OF EYES - DAY

We are in a rocky valley - somewhere beautiful, cold, and green.

FLASH: A pair of BARE FEET - filthy and blistered - are making labored steps down the path.

RETURN TO BLACK

CARDINAL MASTER

(V/O)

The Pilgrim shall travel alone-

FLASH ON A WOMAN'S FACE: She is unkempt, worn out, and only nineteen - exhaustion makes her look older.

She has the half-pointed ears of a half-elf, an ocean of curly hair, and eyes that glow with determination.

Her name is MYRIN

RETURN TO BLACK

CARDINAL MASTER

(V/O Cont.)

With naught but a cloak of coarse weaving-

BACK TO MYRIN: Her only clothing is a tattered sheet of fabric which is neither comfortable nor warm, but she hangs onto it for dear life.

CARDINAL MASTER

(V/O Cont.)

And a sword broken before her birth.

She's carrying a rusty, worthless half-sword that looks like it's spent 25 years at the bottom of an ocean.

RETURN TO BLACK

CARDINAL MASTER
(V/O Cont.)
She may drink only thrice; She will
not eat, she will not speak-

BACK TO MYRIN

She's crossing a shallow stream - it's cold, but the water
feels wonderful on her ragged feet.

CARDINAL MASTER
(V/O Cont.)
And she will not rest

Myrin pauses and seriously considers taking a drink, but she
only gets three of those-

- she decides against it.

CREDITS STOP

RETURN TO BLACK

CARDINAL MASTER
(V/O Cont.)
The Pilgrim shall wander the Sacred
Valley-

CUT TO

EXT. THE VALLEY OF EYES - SUNSET

EX. WIDE SHOT: From a distance, we see Myrin cast off her
cloak.

CARDINAL MASTER
(V/O Cont.)
Where the eyes of Fallen Ones
watch-

She grips the broken sword as though it were a legendary
relic, and begins practicing her SWORD FORM.

This is an elaborate choreography which Myrin has repeated
many hundreds of times - the heart of her technique.

CARDINAL MASTER
(V/O Cont.)
Until she can wander no more.

Long beat while Myrin shows her prowess.

CARDINAL MASTER
(V/O)
When the Pilgrim falters-

Myrin's arm siezes

Her hand falls open

The half sword spins stupidly to the ground.

RETURN TO BLACK

CARDINAL MASTER
(V/O Cont.)
the Goddess shall appear.

BACK TO MYRIN

Our Pilgrim's silhouette is superimposed against the setting sun.

She collapses - finally broken by the ordeal.

CARDINAL MASTER
(V/O)
If the Pilgrim is worthy, she shall
be called by name, a Paladin-

BLACK SCREEN FLASHES

FLASH MYRIN: Her eyes strain to keep the faith...

BLACK SCREEN FLASHES

FLASH MYRIN: Eyes drift shut

BLACK SCREEN FLASHES

BACK TO MYRIN

She lies motionless - barely breathing

CARDINAL MASTER
(V/O Cont.)
But if the Pilgrim is not worthy,
she shall surely perish.

Myrin gets further and further away; we're leaving her to die.

FADE TO BLACK

BEAT

WOMAN'S VOICE
 (distorted whisper)
 Myrin!

EX. CLOSE: Myrin's eye bursts open - as if someone
 in *Requiem for a Dream* just saw God.

RETURN TO BLACK

THEME MUSIC SWELLS

SHOW MAIN TITLE

FADE IN

INT. MONASTERY, GREAT SANCTUARY - DAY

This place was built for a congregation of giants;
 everything is oversized and cut from stone. But the MONKS
 who dwell here are our size - dwarfed by their own
 sanctuary.

CREDITS ROLL OVER TO FINISH

MYRIN is at the front, dressed in a weathered shirt of mail,
 canvas trousers, and the proudest smile she's ever worn.

The CARDINAL MASTER - in ceremonial robes - is an ancient
 man with a kindly temperament.

CARDINAL MASTER
 Myrin! We always knew you could do
 it!

Everyone CHEERS!

Myrin struggles to say something but stumbles over the
 words.

CARDINAL MASTER
 (motioning for calm)
 Take your vow

MYRIN
 I, Myrin- a farmer's daughter and
 servant of the Goddess do so make
 an Oath: From this day I foreswear
 What Was and become What Is.

For what is unjust in the world is
 unjust in me, and where famine I am
 hungry. If there is war I too
 bleed, and where any soul suffers I
 cannot rest.

For I am named Paladin from this
day to the day my bones lay bare.

The crowd is predictably enthusiastic as the Cardinal Master
presents her with a sword

Myrin triumphantly UNSHEATHS her new weapon - it's the
broken sword from her vision quest, newly forged

FADE TO BLACK

SUPERIMPOSE "ONE YEAR LATER"

FADE IN

INT. A BARN - DAY

WHAM!

A MAN falls into the frame - beaten horribly

THREE NERVOUS THIEVES are catching their breath in a creaky
barn with a bag of loot and a half-dead hostage.

ANIMALS mill about as though nothing is happening.

FIRST THIEF
(to second)
Fucking stop!!

SECOND THIEF
(bleeding - indicates Man)
This asshole stuck me!

THIRD THIEF
Not lethal.

MAN
groaaaaaan

THIRD THIEF
(to first)
I thought you had a plan!

FIRST THIEF
We did the plan!

THIRD THIEF
Which part!?

FIRST THIEF
Come on - got the jewelry, didn't
we?

SECOND THIEF

OK, but it's less than half a' what you said, and a fucking column of bounty hunters on our ass! We're gonna get done like dogs for a bag that idn't worth its weight in pigeon shit!

MAN

Please....pleeeeeeeeeeease...

SECOND THIEF

Fuck you!

FIRST THIEF

(to second)

Take my share, OK!? Just...don't kill him over something he got nothing to do with.

THIRD THIEF

Nobody got any share of any thing, fuckbrain! ...hear it?

Silence at first

Then a faint cadence of horse hooves

FIRST THIEF

Holy saint mother, I don't wanna die like this!

THIRD THIEF

Then you better figure out how you do wanna die - before they get here.

Second draws a dagger

First starts to weep

Third grabs a coil of rope from the wall

Second lets out a scream and STABS the hostage over and over...the man (mostly dead already) barely reacts

Third is tying a noose

FIRST THIEF

I shouldna taken nothing didn't belong to me...I knew I shouldna...

First notices a MULE nearby

THIRD THIEF

Pfft, people got enough money to wear it on their neck don't get no sympathy from me.

The sound of galloping hooves grows louder

First throws his arms around the mule for comfort. Second is still stabbing the dead man.

THIRD THIEF

(testing noose)

The fuck you doin' with that animal?

First cries into his new friend as though it were his own mother - Mule does not mind. Third is looking around for something...

A VOICE OF AUTHORITY calls from outside:

CAPTAIN

(O.C.)

Alright, ya shits! We're here in the law's name, so get out and face justice...or we'll come in and show it to ya!

Second freezes for a beat...

- Then begins burying himself in straw, dung, and whatever else is around.

Third fetches a BARREL and rolls it underneath a large rafter

CAPTAIN

(O.C.)

Come on now! Don't make me burn you out!

Third is balancing on the barrel, rigging the noose.

Second is not buried very well...but it's as good as it gets.

FIRST THIEF

(to third - quietly)

Should we go?

THIRD THIEF

(tugs the noose)

I'll hang right here, thanks - don't fancy spending a night

gettin' thumbscrewed 'fore I
dangle.

First shrinks into the mule. Third puts the noose around his neck.

CAPTAIN

(O.C.)

I'm startin' a fire, you
mouse-brained fucks!

The voice of a nervous FARMER pipes up

FARMER

(O.C.)

No, no, no! Can't burn my barn,
captain! That's my livelihood!

Third takes a deep breath

CAPTAIN

(O.C. to farmer)

It's the crown's business, ya
dragon shit

Third hops off the barrel

NOOSE TIGHTENS - he's hanging

SCARY BOUNTY HUNTER

(O.C.)

Not bloody necessary! Just go in!

CAPTAIN

Not the point!

WHAM - the doors fly open.

MYRIN is there, sword drawn. Four bounty hunters - call them SCARY, POSH, GINGER, and BABY - are behind her along with the CAPTAIN.

CAPTAIN

Lightin' a fire is safer for us.

FARMER

My animals are in there!

Myrin is CHARGING toward Third - everyone else (excluding Captain) is right behind her.

CAPTAIN

I'm a royal fuckin' guard! You know
what that means!?

Second pops out of the hay - dagger ready - LUNGING at Myrin

FARMER

Don't mean you gotta burn up
innocent livestock!

Myrin dodges the attack easily, and keeps her focus on Third

SLICE - the noose severs

Third is on the ground

Captain and the farmer are still arguing, but we can't make
out what they're saying.

Myrin turns her attention to First. SECOND is already
SURROUNDED-

- The bounty hunters hack him down without hesitation.

FIRST THIEF

(to Myrin)

Back, back back! You...you bitch -
you get back! I have magic! I will
blind you with it!

Second is a meaty pile by now

MYRIN

(shakes her head)

A sin to steal, a sin to kill...and
a sin to lie.

Myrin SLASHES into the side of First's face

Another strike opens his belly

The last pierces his heart

She approaches Third

THIRD THIEF

(weak)

Why!? You kill them, but you gonna
make me suffer!?

MYRIN

The life in your body - it is not
yours to give or to take away.

THIRD THIEF
So it's yours is it?

MYRIN
(shakes her head)
All things under the sky are
Hers...I am but a sword.

SLASH!

CUT

FADE IN

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DUSK

The BOUNTY HUNTERS ride together after a successful day. Most of them are on HORSES, but MYRIN sits on her trusty donkey - a gentle creature called DAMAR.

THREE SEVERED HEADS are tied to the CAPTAIN's saddle.

CAPTAIN
Well then, Paladin - you gonna
celebrate with us?

MYRIN
No money for that.

CAPTAIN
Bullshit! We gettin' fifteen crowns
each for this.

MYRIN
And my vows permit me to keep one.

GINGER BOUNTY HUNTER
Pfft - you can give me the other
fourteen!

MYRIN
The other fourteen are to the
monastery and to the poor.

POSH BOUNTY HUNTER
No wonder you dress like shit.

BABY BOUNTY HUNTER
Sounds fuckin' terrible. I do this
work 'cause it pays...wouldn't have
the heart to show a man his insides
for less'n ten crowns.

There is a giggle of agreement

MYRIN

I didn't choose the world I live in
- just the tool by which I change
it.

CAPTAIN

Mmmm...tool's the sword, is it?

MYRIN

When necessary.

SCARY BOUNTY HUNTER

A troll's arse it's 'necessary'.

CAPTAIN

'course it's necessary! We're the
king's justice.

MYRIN

Whatever it is, I'm not staying.
Plenty of world to mend.

CAPTAIN

So you're not riding with us
tomorrow!?

MYRIN

Captain, you sent for help, and you
received it, but slaughtering horse
thieves in the name of your king is
hardly the vocation of a Paladin.

CAPTAIN

He's your king too! Treaty or no,
that monastery sits in Therix -
makes you Therixine citizens, and
makes these dragon-shit brigands
your neighbors!

MYRIN

(shrug)

I'm meant to be kind to my
neighbors...

POSH BOUNTY HUNTER

Kinder to kill some neighbors,
really....lot of suffering in the
world.

GINGER BOUNTY HUNTER

Who knows - might even make two
crowns this time.

Some laughs

SCARY BOUNTY HUNTER

Most monks have to beg for silver
in the market, and here you're
sending gold up the hill...bet your
master'd appreciate if you rode
with us.

MYRIN

A great threat to justice are
they?...These 'brigands' of yours

CAPTAIN

(smiles)

Like I said a lot of dragon
shits... waitin' for a righteous
sword to set 'em heaven-like.

CUT

FADE IN

EXT. THESPIAN'S CAMP - DAWN

ESTABLISHING SHOT:

In a forest clearing - full bloom of summer - two brightly
painted wagons marked "PLINTZ FAMILY TROUPE" are sitting by
a cluster of make-shift tents

TWO DONKEYS graze and mill about; EIGHT sets of GNOMISH FEET
are sticking out of the tent entrances.

All at once, TEN MASKED FIGURES surround the camp - armed to
the teeth.

They creep closer to the sleeping actors.

FRITZ pulls his mask down: He is 35 and handsome, but a life
of crime has left him frayed around the edges. He walks like
a man who thinks highly of himself.

Fritz puts an animal horn to his lips and takes a deep
breath

HONNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNK - the horn lets out a sour note

The thespians awake with a start - call them MOM, DAD, THE
TRIPLETS, GRANDPA, ROSIE, and ROCKY.

FRITZ

Well good morning! I'm honored to
be in the presence of the legendary
Plintz Family Troupe...

Awkward silence - some of the troupe are shaking. Fritz puts the horn away.

FRITZ

Juggling, singing, drama, and acrobatics - it's really quite a show! Why, the people throw silver at your feet in every county of every kingdom in all the world.that's how the schtick goes, yeah? When you hold out your hats?

More silence - the troupe are huddling close together. Fritz draws a serrated sword.

FRITZ

Gnomes - a people of few words; I respect that. We're here on behalf of the crown - tax collectors, right?

The Bandits all mutter back in approval "Oh yeah" - "tax collectors" and the like.

FRITZ

Officers of the Royal Court!

ROSIE

You don't look like no soldier.

MOM

GRANDPA

SHH!

Quiet.

FRITZ

(to Rosie)

Questioning the crown?

ROSIE

No...it's just-

FRITZ

(to Rosie)

Show me to the silver, girl.

Mom takes a step toward one of the wagons, but Fritz waves his sword menacingly

FRITZ

(indicate Rosie)

I said her

DAD
She doesn't have the key!

FRITZ
Did I ask for a key?

DAD
No, but-

FRITZ
Shh!
(back to Rosie)
Coin.

Rosie walks nervously toward one of the wagons

Fritz' sword follows closely behind.

The girl disappears inside momentarily and returns with a large wooden chest.

FRITZ
Shake it for me.

ROSIE
Wha?

FRITZ
Jingle it around.

Rosie does as instructed - we hear metallic objects clanking inside.

Fritz smiles and seems satisfied for a beat-

His look goes icy

Fritz LUNGES - putting a long, seeping cut on Rosie's arm

She cries out and drops the chest with a *THUNK* - its contents spill everywhere: Stage weapons and armor.

The thespians all start pleading on Rosie's behalf

Fritz motions for silence - they oblige him

PINNNNNNG - Fritz flips a silver coin

He catches it

FRITZ
Hear that? Silver sings - and tin rattles.

(to Rosie)
 ...Test me, I'll cut your fuckin'
 arm off.

MOM
 No!

FRITZ
 Now pay your taxes.

Rosie retreats into the wagon, clutching her wound

ROSIE
 (O.C.)
 OW!

THUNK - she's dropped whatever she was carrying.

ROSIE
 (O.C.)
 Can't carry it! My arm's bleeding!

FRITZ
 It can get a lot bloodier if you
 don't pick up that fucking box and
 bring it here!

SCRAPE, SCRAPE - she's dragging it

FRITZ
 For the love of- MOVE IT! Squalling
 little shitbag.

Rosie drags the box into view - she's bleeding everywhere,
 and is generally a wreck of a person, but Fritz seems
 pleased enough.

FRITZ
 (to his bandits)
 Load it up!
 (to the troupe)
 We're taking the donkeys too.

CUT

FADE IN

EXT. BANDIT CAMP - NIGHT

This is not a permanent hideout; it's a one-night squat for a BAND OF THIEVES and their small FLEET OF PACK ANIMALS.

A large woman named VIOLET is hacking at the loot box with a battle axe while her compatriots share ale around the campfire.

The atmosphere is tense - no one is speaking.

A surly goblin called RUFUS breaks the silence:

RUFUS
I told you I could pick it!

VIOLET
(HACK!)
Mal already tried - lock's weird or
shit.

RUFUS
Ugh, people can hear that hackin'
for miles!

VIOLET
(HACK!)
You got a better plan!?

RUFUS
I said - let me pick it!

A twitchy young woman responds:

MAL
I said the mechanism's weird.

RUFUS
Pfft - to you

MAL
Hey - I'm good with locks, Rufus.

RUFUS
You're shit with locks!

FRITZ
Enough already! You two drink -
it's a fucking celebration.
(to Violet)
Violet, stop that 'til morning,
huh?

VIOLET
 (tossing the axe aside)
 Yeah, yeah - you coulda got the
 keys, Fritz. The man even said
 about keys!

FRITZ
 I didn't think a wagon of mee-maw
 and pee-paw carnie trash could
 afford a lock like that

MAL
 It's a gnomish lock - they're
 gnomes!

FRITZ
 Are we prejudicializing now? Drink!

Violet snatches Fritz' cup and takes a big, defiant gulp

They stare for a moment

Violet finds a seat around the fire - Fritz stands up and
 walks toward the ale keg.

VIOLET
 A song, maybe?

BIRT - the group musician - is only too happy to oblige. He
 readies his instrument.

Fritz finds an empty cup, wipes the dirt off, and fills it
 from the keg

BEGIN BIRT'S SONG

The tension seems to dissipate; the leader rejoins his crew,
 and our merry bandits seem MUCH merrier.

CUT TO

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

BIRT'S SONG PLAYS FAINTLY

The forest is thick around us - a BANDIT CAMP glows faintly
 ahead.

Our BOUNTY HUNTERS slink into the frame

POV MYRIN (NIGHT VISION): Myrin can see in the dark, but not
 terribly well

Everything has a 'shadow play' quality as our hero presses forward.

BACK TO SCENE

GINGER sets down a large bag, opens it, and produces a BEAR TRAP - one of those horrible "mouth-on-a-chain" contraptions.

Ginger begins cranking the trap open

SCARY goes to work loading a group of CROSSBOWS one by one.

BABY is CLIMBING a tree

POSH is busily mixing REACTIVE LIQUIDS in little clay pots

CAPTAIN

(to Myrin - whisper)

They're gonna scare 'em a bit - you n' me mop up.

GINGER BOUNTY HUNTER

(to Myrin - whisper)

Be right behind you - won't know what's fuckin' em 'til they're good n' fucked!

Myrin nods

CUT TO BANDIT CAMP

EVERYONE SINGS the last few bars of Birt's Song.

FRITZ

(raising his glass)

To all of you.

General approval

The bandits drink

POV BABY: We're in the trees, aiming a LONGBOW directly at VIOLET

BACK TO SCENE

MAL

(to Fritz)

So you're takin' first watch, yeah?

Some laughter....but she kind of means it

FRITZ

Yeah yeah...If you'll peek at that lock again.

MAL

Told you, fuckin' thing's weird!

VIOLET

We ain't startin' with this shit.

MAL

I gotta sleep anyhow...somebody gotta be sober if the law crawls up.

POSH BURSTS OUT LAUGHING

A chorus of 'SHHHHHH!'

The bandits FREEZE

A moment of silence

A single ARROW cuts through the quiet, BURROWING into VIOLET'S SHOULDER

VIOLET

(severe agony)

Merciful shiiiiiiiiiiiiittt!!!

PANIC IN THE RANKS

Posh TOSSES a jar -

- it BURSTS and IGNITES, like a molotov cocktail

FIRE IS SPREADING QUICKLY

ANIMALS START TO SCATTER

Baby is FIRING a steady stream of arrows.

Scary's CROSSBOW BOLTS join in the carnage -

- So do more of Posh's concoctions

There is BURNING, BLEEDING, FLEEING, and DYING

SURVIVORS ARE ALL RUNNING (some crawling)

CAPTAIN

Quit it ya lunatics!

Scary, Baby, and Posh cease momentarily

Captain, Ginger, and Myrin CHARGE, and the slaughter continues

Mal, Violet, Birt and Rufus have ESCAPED-

Fritz is RUNNING into the forest - Myrin RIGHT BEHIND

ALL OTHER BANDITS ARE EITHER DYING OR DEAD

CUT TO FOREST

MYRIN CHASES FRITZ

Our brigand gains a little distance -

- He HIDES behind a tree, smooth as a snake

POV MYRIN (night vision): She's looking around, confused

ON MYRIN

Searching for any sign of her foe...but she's a monk, not a huntress.

BACK TO FRITZ

The bandit gives a sly little smile and begins to slip away....then-

SNAP!

Fritz SCREAMS

CLOSE ON FRITZ' LEG: The BEAR TRAP has him all the way up to the knee, and it's literally crushing his bones

FRITZ
(such pain)
AHHHHH!!! AHHHH!!! Mercy! MERCY I
SAY!! Mercyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyy!!!

He's on the ground

Myrin is there now - her eyes go from the trap to Fritz' eyes and back....

She's frozen for a moment

SNAP! - something in Fritz' leg gives (probably a bone)

FRITZ
(may or may not be crying)
Fuck! Ahhhhhhh noooooOoooOooO!!
Saint mother's tits!...You deformed

me!! A fuckin' woman! It's in cold
blood, I say! Cold
bl0o00oo0o00o0o00o0od!!!!!!!

Fritz' HEAD SEPARATES from his body