

AETHER TORRENT #17
"THE NEXUS'S REACH"

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. BERRY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

An OLD MAN in a high-backed chair unrolls a piece of paper at a desk. The single lit bulb of a desk lamp and the angle of the paper prevent us from seeing much of him.

A feathery dragon preens itself on a windowsill. It's one of Karrun's messenger birds.

KIFF and SETH, two slender men, stand just far enough away that the desk lamp doesn't show us more than their outlines. Seth, the one on the right, speaks first.

SETH

What transpires?

KIFF

Yeah, boss, what's up?

The man, MR. BERRY, lowers the paper. The lamplight shines off his thick aviator glasses and bald, wrinkly head.

MR. BERRY

The operation's gonna go down soon. The division head wants a big delivery this time. But more importantly, she wants us to deal with some fugitives.

Mr. Berry lowers his gaze enough for the shine to leave his glasses. He has yellow eyes.

MR. BERRY (CONT'D)

Lady fugitives.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

NAUR's green eyes widen as they look down toward us.

NAUR

Oh.

An assortment of bags and small boxes, Naur's packages from episode 14, litter a queen-sized bed. Naur, in his maroon robe, holds his chin.

AVANI (O.S.)

"Oh" what? Is something missing?

AVANI stands between the bed and a long window in a hotel room with two beds. The window reveals an early morning over a city which has many buildings topping five stories.

NAUR

I... well, that is...

CIRRUS (human) does sit-ups between the two beds, passing in and out of our line of sight.

CIRRUS

Spit it out, kid.

NAUR

Due to Tori's "down time," I am the only one left with money. Our expenses depleted my funds more than I thought. We cannot travel as far North as that "treasure beyond all desire" lies with what I have.

(opens random boxes)

There is not even enough for food.

Avani draws back in horror. The door to the restroom, very near the front door, is ajar.

AVANI

But food is Teizen's holiest gift!

(toward restroom)

How could you not think ahead, Tori?

RESTROOM

Tori, vestless, leans on a sink and stares haggardly into a mirror. Her gray shirt and dark blue jeans are rumpled.

TORI

I was distracted, gimme a break!

(V.O.)

You're so lucky you're not a
mammal, Mom...

Someone KNOCKS HEAVILY on the front door off-screen. Tori's eyes close in annoyance.

HALLWAY

Tori throws open the door.

The hallway is empty. Tori steps out to look around and something CRUMPLES under her footstep.

Tori has stepped on a pamphlet.

Seen from far down the hall, Tori peels the pamphlet off her foot and unfolds it. Kiff, seen now as a pale, skinny blonde in a puffy red and yellow shirt, hides around a corner.

KIFF (V.O.)

What kind of fugitive puts her
own name in a hotel registry?

HOTEL ROOM

Tori closes the door as she reads the pamphlet, titled
"LEDDIMTON DESTINATIONS."

NAUR (O.S.)

All things considered, I will
need to set up a bazaar downtown
for some of my things. I would
love it if you all joined me.

Naur, already cloaked, wraps his red skin with a bandage roll while Cirrus rummages in Naur's big hiking backpack. Avani looks toward Tori.

CIRRUS

Sure.

AVANI

I'd love to. Tori?

TORI

I have a better idea.
 (flaps pamphlet)
 We can go to a museum.

AVANI

More "down time?" Honestly.

Tori's expression suggests a forming plan.

TORI

No, hear me out a sec.

EXT. BUSY STREET - DAY

Naur, cloaked and wrapped and wearing his backpack, rides KLAUSER in a street full of cars, each of which moves with an electric HUM rather than an internal-combustion rumble.

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

Naur, selling things is all
 about location, right?

NAUR (V.O.)

The bulk of it, yes.

An electric bus rolls along ahead of Naur.

BUS

Tori, Avani, and a cloaked and wrapped Cirrus ride in a twenty-seater bus. The floors are hardwood. Tori's duffel bag rests on her lap. Cirrus scratches her wrapped arms.

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

Why not sell to direct to
 tourists? And I can sell my
 antique book to make up for
 going broke last night. Any
 serious curator would love to
 have it.

AVANI (V.O.)

I *suppose* that would be all
 right... but what about admission?

Kiff rides a few seats away from the three ladies, reading a newspaper. The front page has an artist's rendition of Cirrus and Naur with the headline "MONSTERS ATTACK NIGHTCLUB."

TORI (V.O.)

That's the best part. There's a "free family admission" coupon in the back of this pamphlet the hotel just gave us.

Kiff SNICKERS to himself.

EXT. HISTORYLAND - DAY

A roller-coaster train of SCREAMING RIDERS whooshes past us, revealing a large, very busy amusement park. Every building is designed in various ancient styles -- a feudal Japanese castle next to a Greek temple, for instance.

A massive welcome sign reads "HISTORYLAND" in Disney-like font. All sorts of styles of castles adorn the title.

A MASCOT, someone in a cartoonish costume of a red-nosed, slit-eyed white mouse wearing a mortarboard, greets VISITORS.

The bus pulls away. Tori, Avani and Cirrus can see both the sign and the mascot. Tori's jaw hangs slack and she lets her duffel bag slide from her shoulder to the ground.

AVANI

This is the city's *only* museum?

CIRRUS

False advertising. It looks more like an amusement park.

TORI

It's a travesty, that's what!
History is an individual connection to the greatness that came before you. Treating it like a common commodity for flash and profit, with no respect for the details... it's...

Tori improvises a FRUSTRATED GROAN and madly scratches her head with both hands. Avani CHUCKLES a little.

TORI (CONT'D)

What's so funny.

AVANI

Nothing. Just that you remind me
of me when I notice blasphemy. I
see history is your religion.

Tori angrily SNORTS out an exhale as Naur rides up on
Klauser. Tori slings her bag over her shoulder.

TORI

This is *not* the day to piss me
off, Skirt. Come on, let's find
the stupid manager.

Tori strides toward the main entrance. Avani looks back at
Cirrus and Naur, shrugs, and follows.

Kiff follows the party at a safe, inconspicuous distance.

INT. TICKET COUNTER - DAY

Kiff, discretely speaking into an old-fashioned telephone
receiver, has his back turned to the glass wall dividing
TOURISTS from busy ATTENDANTS taking ticket orders.

KIFF

No mistake, boss, they're here.
But they brought somebody else.

MR. BERRY (V.O.)

Then I'll send Seth out to meet
you. Remember what the letter
said: do *not* take them lightly.

Kiff smiles so hard, he squints.

KIFF

Yes sir.

EXT. JUNGLE EXPERIENCE - DAY

BIGGS and WEDGE, human actors in safari gear, stand on an
outdoor stage under a canopy of tall palm trees.

WEDGE

At last, Biggs! A whole new
continent for us to explore!

BIGGS

But what of those reports of
colorful bird-dragons?

WEDGE

Nothing but fisherman's tales!
Why, I doubt we'll even see...

A clearly fake ketzalral "flies" in at the actors via wires.
Biggs pushes Wedge out of the way, catches the prop and
STRUGGLES melodramatically with it.

BIGGS

Look out, sir! *Argh!* It has me!
Run, Dr. Wedge! *Nooo! Aaaagh!*

Numerous TOURISTS in the crowd REACT in fear. Far in the
background across a thoroughfare, Cirrus and Naur sit between
a resting Klauser and a blanket of merchandise.

Cirrus and Naur's bazaar is at the foot of a 10'-long stone
planter box in a jungle-themed area of the park. Tall trees
in the planter shade them as tourists pass.

CIRRUS

(itching arms)
Shouldn't we be waving signs?

NAUR

If we were common salesmen, yes.

For the first time we see all of what Naur has: gems, animal
carvings, colorful thread and whole constellations of spice
jars and bottles of unidentifiable liquid.

NAUR (O.S.) (CONT'D)

True advertisement lies in the
one presenting the product. We
appear mysterious, and so
whatever we have is alluring. Be
patient and rewards will come.

A shadow falls over the blanket. Cirrus and Naur look up.

An upper-teenage GIRL in a plaid pink dress looks over Naur's goods. She has a brunette braid and a flower in her hair.

FLOWER GIRL

Oh my, what have we here?

Cirrus looks up. Naur hurriedly covers her mouth. Klauser rests his head on Tori's duffel bag as he sleeps.

CIRRUS

Buy something, will ya!

NAUR

(hushed)

Stay with the theme or we'll be discovered.

(to Flower Girl)

Here you will find sundries from the far corners of the world!

Among those passing the girl is a scruffy blonde URCHIN BOY in a blue bandanna. He stops at Naur's last three words.

NAUR (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I assure you, all my goods are quite rare and valuable!

The boy looks as shifty as possible before sneaking away.

EXT. DESERT EXPERIENCE - DAY

Tori scowls at a line of glyphs on an obelisk.

TORI

This is all wrong.

She and Avani stand near the exit of an Egyptian-themed roller coaster labeled "SANDWORM." Pyramids and palm trees line the final stretch. Avani holds a black metal box.

AVANI

(sigh)

I knew this would happen....

TORI (CONT'D)

The structure's a ketzalral design, but the glyphs are ancient raizan written upside-down. They just crammed together different civilizations!

Avani slowly backs away from Tori. We've seen the box she holds before -- it contains Tori's antique book.

AVANI

Um, Tori?

TORI

I *hate* when people do that! It makes the rare moments and treasures disappear under dumb cheap mass-market stuff like...

Worm-shaped roller coaster carts SURGE past Tori, causing jets of water to BURST out of the pyramids in all directions including hers. She gets instantly soaked.

Avani, dry, stands behind a yellow line. Human CHILDREN at a nearby balloon cart POINT AND LAUGH. The cart is operated by a LURUTT wearing a hijab.

Tori drips. She stands in a long rectangle on the "S" of the title "SPLASH ZONE."

Tori subtly pulls out her knife and points it at herself under her vest, but nothing happens. She grows visibly angry.

AVANI

I think I see why you're mad at this place. It fixates on only the most superficial parts of a whole at the expense of its more sublime elements. It's like when people assume all Teizenic Elementism does is--

TORI

--Would you shut up a second?!

Tori angrily sweeps her knife back and forth. Water finally accumulates on the blade and her clothes begin drying.

Avani looks concerned as random tourists look at Tori.

AVANI

Tori, put your knife away. Are you feeling all right?

Tori's drying takes far longer than it should.

TORI

No. Sorry I snapped, but I ache like hell, so my focus is shot. It always happens when I start.

AVANI

Start what?

Tori shoots her a look.

AVANI (CONT'D)

Oh.

Kiff THRUSTS a mace studded with blunt spikes toward us.

KIFF

You there with the knife!

Tori, Avani and many of the exiting roller-coaster riders look toward us.

Kiff stands on the lurutt's balloon cart. His mace has a long ring of shiny black obsidian below the round head. The lurutt glares up at Kiff, arms akimbo.

KIFF (CONT'D)

You are in direct violation of Historyland weapons policy 6-F!

(hops off stand)

You and I are going to see the manager this instant!

Tori, still a little damp, sheathes her knife and takes the black metal box from Avani.

TORI

Sweet. I have a book for him.

KIFF

A bomb, you say?

The tourists fearfully retreat from anywhere near Tori.

TORI

A book, I said! To sell!

KIFF

To kill, you say?!

A shadowy figure atop the obelisk LEAPS down.

Seth, now seen as a man with long black hair and a half-unbuttoned white shirt, LANDS behind Tori.

Tori turns her head --

TORI (V.O.)

Another? Where'd he--?!

Seth pokes her in the lower back with a long conical dagger.

AETHER VIEW

A burst of electric-yellow swirls shoot from the cone into Tori's body. (More of an "Aether flash" for how quick it is.)

NORMAL VIEW

Tori STIFFENS and her hair lifts perceptibly. She goes limp and falls.

The box CLATTERS on the ground by Avani's feet.

Avani frantically looks between it and Tori as Seth swiftly handcuffs Tori's wrists.

AVANI

W-wait, sir, you misunderstand!

Kiff, many yards behind Avani, raises his studded mace.

AVANI (CONT'D)

Please, let me explain!

Tori limply looks up at Avani as Seth handcuffs her ankles.

TORI

Nex... us...!

Kiff SMASHES his mace into the ground.

SLOW MOTION:

A SHOCKWAVE flows from Kiff's weapon, races toward Avani --

Seth hefts Tori over his shoulder and turns to run away, extremely fast for slow-motion --

Avani turns her head --

The pavement SWELLS under Avani and the black metal box --

REGULAR SPEED:

And the ground BURSTS with a flash of light into a RUMBLING EXPLOSION of smoke and shrapnel, obscuring Avani instantly.

Tori, horrified, sees it over Seth's back before passing out.

Kiff SNICKERS madly.

KIFF

Evacuate the area, folks! Who knows *what* was in that bomb!

The tourists comply, PANICKING and running away.

The smoke begins to clear, revealing an empty round crater.

Tori's box is blown open and resting on its side by the balloon cart. Her book is inside. Tourists run past it.

EXT. JUNGLE EXPERIENCE - DAY

Many of Naur's goods are already gone.

Cirrus drops a wad of currency bills into a box full of coins by Klauser's claws behind where she sits.

The urchin watches from around the corner of the long planter as Cirrus picks up a carving of a wooly rhinoceros.

CIRRUS

So you made these yourself?

NAUR

Yes. Animal carvings were the very first things I sold, so I always keep a few handy.

Cirrus turns the rhino over in her hand. The urchin dashes toward Klauser. Cirrus notices too late.

The urchin deftly snatches up the moneybox --

LEAPS over the sleeping Klauser without rousing him --

And DASHES into the crowd.

Cirrus and Naur stand up. Cirrus balls her fists and her cloak FLUTTERS.

CIRRUS

Thief! Why I'll--

NAUR

--You'll be seen if you fly off!
Watch the goods, I'll handle it.

Naur runs after the urchin. Cirrus STAMMERS in rage and punctuates her sentence by PUNCHING her fist into her palm.

CIRRUS

But-- I-- the-- *rrgh!*

A uniformed human SECURITY GUARD walks into view with a megaphone.

SECURITY GUARD

Attention, park patrons! There has been a terrorist attack on the premises! Please evacuate in an orderly fashion! I repeat...

Cirrus tensely looks between the blanket of goods and the direction Naur left as the guard REPEATS himself. Tourists begin RUNNING past Cirrus.

Klauser wakes up, lifts his head and GWARKS questioningly.

Cirrus pulls her hood down further.

CIRRUS

They can handle things, big guy.

INT. BERRY'S OFFICE - DAY

TORI'S P.O.V.:

The office has its blinds drawn over tall, arched windows. Various paintings of crowned kings hang on the stone walls.

MR. BERRY (O.S.)

So *this* is Karrun's daughter?

Our view, and Tori's, focuses front and center at Mr. Berry behind his desk. He's a shrunken old man in a brown suit. A plaque on his slick wooden desk names him "THOMAS BERRY."

MR. BERRY (CONT'D)

I was told you'd be tougher.

Tori sits in a stiff-looking chair, still cuffed at the wrists and ankles, with Seth's hands firmly on her shoulders.

TORI

I'm just off my game today.

MR. BERRY

And because of that, your friend is dead. How sad.

Tori clenches her jaw.

Berry stands up and walks over to her. Slowly. Shufflingly.

MR. BERRY (CONT'D)

Karrun didn't write much about your friends. She didn't know them well. But she knows you. She knew you were so clever, you would register at a major hotel under your own name to test her.

Tori's eyes widen.

Berry reaches under Tori's vest, pulls out her knife and points it at her sternum. Tori begins SWEATING.

MR. BERRY (CONT'D)

Fighting someone she sent would be worthwhile to know how far she can reach, right? Well let me tell you: Division One is as wide as the sea. And Kiff and Seth are no common thugs.

QUICK FLASHBACKS:

Seth jolts Tori's body with his conical dagger. Kiff strikes the ground and Avani disappears in the EXPLOSION.

MR. BERRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Air plus Fire makes Lightning magic: electricity. Fire plus Earth makes Atomic magic: chemical bonds.

Tori looks truly scared. A rare look for her.

MR. BERRY (CONT'D)

Are you getting it now?

EXT. ANCIENTS' EXPERIENCE - DAY

The urchin RUNS against the flow of panicking tourists in a "ruins"-themed area. Naur turns a corner and chases him past a tilt-a-whirl centered on a mini-Stonehenge.

MR. BERRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Combined elements aren't like basic-element rookie crap. Your friends are history.

EXT. ISLAND EXPERIENCE - PENDULUM SHIP - DAY

Kiff walks by a pendulum pirate ship ride in a "tropical island" part of the park, swinging his studded mace in idle circles. All tourists have vanished.

Kiff stops in front of a circle of cracked pavement and swings his mace into his other hand with a SLAP. He speaks loud and clear as if calling to someone.

KIFF

You're tougher than advertised.

Up in the pendulum ship, tatters of khaki skirt lay over Avani's bloodied legs.

Avani herself, very much alive, grips her pale green ingot with both hands and breathes unsteadily. Her shirt is in slightly better shape than her skirt.

KIFF (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I'm no fool. Quick thinking
saved your ass. But I wonder,
how many pieces is your leg in?

FLASHBACK:

EXT. DESERT EXPERIENCE - DAY

Kiff's shockwave heads for Avani.

Avani sticks a hand in her pocket.

AETHER VIEW, SLOW-MOTION

A flood of black swirls cause the ground under Avani's feet to swell up.

A cascade of green swirls surges from the ingot in Avani's pocket down her leg, CRACKING it at spans of every inch.

The swirls flow out of her foot and compress the center of the swell, making a donut shape out of it.

The ground EXPLODES with red, green and black swirls and opens up enough for Avani to descend.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. ISLAND EXPERIENCE - DAY

Up in the boat, Avani holds her ingot to her thigh. She grits her teeth and we hear a MUFFLED SNAP.

Kiff's thin lips twist upward.

EXT. ANCIENTS' EXPERIENCE - DAY

The urchin boy runs into a huge ruined building that looks very much like Tintern Abbey, all gray stone and moss.

Naur chases him at a deliberately lagging pace.

NAUR

Stop! I do not want to hurt you!

RUINED ABBEY

The tables and concession windows which the boy and Naur run past suggest this is a picnic area.

URCHIN BOY

(top of his lungs)

Grandpa! Help! I got a mark
chasin' me!

INT. BERRY'S OFFICE - DAY

Seth handcuffs the handcuffs already on Tori's wrists to the back of the chair. Berry holds Tori's knife to her throat.

URCHIN BOY (O.S.)

(distant)

Grandpaaaa!

MR. BERRY

Damn kid. Seth, handle it, I can
hold her.

Seth nods silently and leaves Tori glaring at Berry. Seth's FOOTSTEPS walk away, followed by the sound of the door OPENING and then CLOSING. Tori speaks after the closing.

TORI

Ankles.

MR. BERRY

What?

Tori tilts her head away from the knife and KICKS her cuffed legs upward. Her hiking boots IMPACT Berry's chin and violently KNOCK him backward.

Berry falls at such an angle that he BASHES his head against his desk, dropping the knife. Tori tilts her legs forward and stands, hunched over and cuffed to the chair behind her back.

TORI

Avani isn't dead. She's too tough for that. Too rare. So instead of killing you I'm only going to beat you unconscious.

Berry grabs Tori's knife and leans on his desk to stand up.

MR. BERRY

Your mother said you had a mouth on you. I'd like to see you try!

Tori, bowed at the waist, grabs the back of the chair and shuffles backwards.

TORI

Easy. Not even Mom knows I can do this.

Tori bends even more and lifts her arms in back, rotating the chair forward in a high arc.

Tori CRINGES --

Her shoulders POP out and back in, completing the arc --

And the chair HITS the ground in front of Tori. Since she never let go of it, her wrists are twisted 180 degrees.

Berry also CRINGES. Water accumulates on the knife blade.

Tori flips her wrists around, gets a better grip on the chair and SWINGS it at us.

EXT. ISLAND EXPERIENCE - PENDULUM SHIP - DAY

Kiff PRESSES a large red button on a steel control box.

KIFF

How many fractures can you fix before you fall? Let's find out!

The pendulum ship ride slowly begins SWINGING.

Up in the middle of the ship, Avani squeezes her eyes shut and holds her ingot to her knee.

Another MUFFLED SNAP is heard and she bites her lip with a RESTRAINED YELP.

Kiff stands under the ship as it slowly moves upward and swings back down.

KIFF (CONT'D)

Oh no, another terrorist bomb
was in the pirate ship!

Kiff JUMPS up and SLAMS his mace into the tip of the boat --
BLOWING it off in a FIERY EXPLOSION pointed away from him.

The shortened end of the boat catches fire.

Avani, sweating and PANTING, shakily moves her ingot to her shin. The arc of the swinging ride increases.

AVANI

Great One, give me strength...

Another MUFFLED SNAP. Avani GRITS her teeth and throws her head back.

INT. RUINED ABBEY - DAY

Naur closes in on the urchin. A BOLT OF LIGHTNING suddenly strikes Naur and he SCREAMS OUT, his momentum dropping him.

The urchin stops running, looks up and SNIFFLES.

Seth LEAPS down from the top of a ruined arch and LANDS deftly on his feet and one hand.

The other hand holds his conical dagger. His fingers only partially obscure a handle thickly inlaid with amber.

Naur struggles shakily to his knees. Another LIGHTNING BOLT strikes him and BLASTS him backwards and onto his back.

Seth levels his dagger at Naur. The boy scurries away.

URCHIN BOY

Thanks Seth!

EXT. ISLAND EXPERIENCE - DAY

The pirate boat SWINGS to a high 45-degree angle, fire RAGING at the lower end.

Avani COUGHS in the smoke. She clings one-handed to the underside of a seat while bracing against the back of another seat with her unbroken leg.

Avani holds her ingot to her ankle and bites her lip.

Kiff stands far back and watches the boat edge-on to its arc of swing, balancing his mace on his shoulder. Avani is visible from here.

KIFF

Hurry up, hon! Or you'll be well-done! *Hah-hah-hah-hah!*

The boat swings back down, hiding Avani.

Avani SLAMS her ingot to the floor.

The boat's support beams SNAP OFF as it climbs its arc -- SWINGING the entire boat at Kiff.

Kiff's left eyelid TWITCHES.

He RUNS LIKE HELL out of the way and the boat CRASHES DOWN behind him too close for comfort, BREAKING in half and tossing up chunks of pavement and soil.

Avani isn't in the boat.

Kiff turns around and clutches his heart, PANTING.

AVANI (O.S.)

Atomic magic. Fire plus Earth.

Our viewing angle puts Avani in front of the unburning half of the boat and Kiff in front of the burning half.

Avani plants her foot on her ingot, arms crossed.

AVANI (CONT'D)

Which half can you control best?

Kiff angrily grits his teeth and GROWLS at us.

INT. RUINED ABBEY - DAY

Naur stays on his back. His hood has fallen back.

NAUR (V.O.)

(closes eyes)

That magic... come, let me feel it
in detail!

AETHER VIEW

Red and white swirls in Seth's body mingle in his dagger,
shoot out toward Naur as a straight yellow line --

NORMAL VIEW

And Seth strikes Naur with another BOLT OF LIGHTNING. Naur
arches his back and tail and SCREAMS OUT in pain again.

SETH

Despair.

Naur falls flat. SMOKE wafts out of his loosened bandages.

NAUR (V.O.)

It's Air... and Fire!

EXT. ISLAND EXPERIENCE - DAY

Kiff grips his mace.

Avani's toes clench on her ingot.

INT. RUINED ABBEY - DAY

Seth steps toward Naur and rotates his knife to a downward-
stab position.

Naur struggles to look up at him and tenses his claws.

EXT. ISLAND EXPERIENCE - DAY

Kiff STRIKES the ground with his mace.

INT. RUINED ABBEY - DAY

Seth PLUNGES his dagger down.

EXT. ISLAND EXPERIENCE - AETHER VIEW - DAY

SLOW-MOTION:

Small red and green swirls mingle in Kiff's silhouette, enter his mace, and exit the blunt spikes as large black swirls.

Avani stands on a sea of green swirls. They surge forward and intercept the black ones --

And begin ripping the black swirls into red and green.

INT. RUINED ABBEY - AETHER VIEW - DAY

SLOW-MOTION:

Small red and white swirls mingle in Seth's silhouette, enter his conical dagger and exit the tip as large yellow swirls.

Naur thrusts his claws, flooding the air with red swirls --

Which intercept the yellow and rip them into red and white.

NORMAL VIEW

The air around Seth EXPLODES INTO FIRE with such force that it BLASTS him up and back into the air, his clothes ablaze.

Seth SLAMS HARD back-first into a high stone arch --

EXT. ISLAND EXPERIENCE - DAY

His impact timed perfectly with the ground under Kiff EXPLODING INTO FIRE. Kiff SCREAMS and flails his arms madly.

Avani bows her head.

AVANI

Into your embrace I commend--

Kiff screams what can only be a BATTLE CRY off-screen and Avani JERKS her head up, cutting herself off.

Kiff, COMPLETELY ON FIRE, charges her with his club raised.

KIFF

Hate hate hate hate *hate you!*

Avani DIVES out of the way --

Kiff's mace comes down --

And he disappears in a MASSIVE FIERY EXPLOSION.

Avani ROLLS from the force of it and hurriedly PATS OUT small fires on her shirt once she stops rolling.

Her ingot CLATTERS on the pavement beside her as if dropped from a great height.

INT. BERRY'S OFFICE - DAY

The urchin boy opens the door. The sight of something makes him trail off.

URCHIN BOY

Grandpa! I got more money for
Miss Karr...un...

Tori's hands hold her knife to her handcuffs, from which the second pair hangs. A small ball of water CORRODES the chain.

Tori looks toward us. Mr. Berry lies unconscious yet clearly breathing amid broken pieces of chair. Tori's ankle cuffs are already broken.

TORI

Hey, kid. That box looks
familiar.

Tori's knife SNAPS through the corroded cuff chain and the other cuffs drop to the floor with a RATTLING CLINK.

The urchin's eyes go big.

Suddenly he is hogtied on the floor with the long cord of one of the office's now-open blinds. Tori exits through the now-open window, moneybox under her arm. Berry is still out cold.

URCHIN BOY

Give Grampa back his wallet!

TORI

Make me.

URCHIN BOY
 (struggling)
Heyyy!

EXT. RUINED ABBEY - DAY

Tori hops out the window into an empty thoroughfare. Naur exits through a massive archway right next to her, arms tucked in his cloak.

TORI
 Oh, hi.

NAUR
 The moneybox! Where did you...?

AVANI (O.S.)
Tori!

Avani hurriedly limps down the thoroughfare. A smoke plume from a fire rises from an unseen source behind her.

Tori shoves the moneybox into Naur's exposed hands and rushes out of frame.

Tori and Avani meet in the middle of the road and HUG tight.

TORI
 I knew you were rare, but *damn*.

AVANI
 Thank the gods you're all right.

TORI
 Think I might, just this once.

EXT. HISTORYLAND - DAY

A HUGE CROWD of confused tourists has gathered by the front entrance. POLICEMEN attempt to control the mass.

Across the street, Cirrus stands with Klauser, soliciting passers-by and gesturing to the remaining goods assembled on Naur's blanket. A bearded STRANGER walks by.

CIRRUS

Hey! I got some things I saved
from the explosions, souvenirs
of a terrorist attack!

STRANGER

Really? What're ya sellin'?

The security guard from earlier escorts Tori, Avani and Naur out the guarded front entrance. The three ignore the guard and look across the street at Cirrus.

SECURITY GUARD

(to random officer)

They were near the bombs, call a
medic over.

Tori LAUGHS a few tired breaths.

TORI (V.O.)

Reach and grab all you want,
Mom. We'll always slip out.

EXT. OCEAN AIR SPACE - DAY

The sea spreads out before us, leading to a distant port city. Thirteen airships FLY past us, led by the white and blue one painted like a wind tiger.

INT. LEVANter'S FLAGSHIP - BRIDGE - DAY

LEVANTER in his flight jacket stares over two AIRSHIP PILOTS.

PILOT

Port city Talus dead ahead, sir!

LEVANTER

Not for long.

A massive tidal wave is visible out the bridge windows.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

The tidal wave SURGES toward us.

A long serpentine shape swims at high speed ahead of it.

INT. LEVANTER'S FLAGSHIP - BRIDGE - DAY

Levanter SMILES.

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

So your destination is in the
North, my little party of
fugitives? Let's see you travel
at all with the continent in a
state of war.

The wave continues forward. Unstoppable.

FADE OUT