

AETHER TORRENT #24
"KARRUN'S DEPTH, PART 2"

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

CIRRUS (wind tiger) flies high above the waves.

NAUR and TAT ride on her back. Cirrus flies through a cloud, revealing an air bubble encasing her and her passengers. Tori's bag hangs from her neck.

CIRRUS (V.O.)

It's faint, but I smell wet dire kiwi. Good timing, too, flying's a pain with all this weight.

NAUR

I know you can hold out, Cirrus.

TAT

Yes, you're an amazing specimen.

CIRRUS (V.O.)

Excuse me?

TAT

I'm an elemist by trade. I study magic's effect on biology, so I know your aether concentration must be enormous. Why, you could easily fly straight to Djittor if you called off this search...

Cirrus turns her head to glare past Naur at Tat with one eye.

CIRRUS (V.O.)

I'm *not* leaving them, Tat. Ask again and you can swim there.

Tat shuts his mouth tightly and nervously hunches down.

EXT. DJITTOR - WATERFRONT - DAY

TORI continues SNIFFLING into KARRUN's suit, hugging as much of her as her arms can reach. She looks up.

Karrun angrily bares her teeth at something off-screen.

Tori breaks off the hug, slightly confused. In the background ADDANC grabs YODAI (human)'s shoulders, turns him and KICKS him behind a stack of crates just before Tori turns to look.

Neither Tori nor Karrun look glad to see him.

KARRUN

Addanc! Did I say you could
leave the hotel?!

Addanc closes the distance at a jog.

ADDANC

I, er, sorry ma'am!

TORI

What sort of answer is that? You
told me you were through taking
orders. Or was that all talk, as
usual?

Addanc glances at Karrun before answering.

ADDANC

I used my free will to change my
mind. And save my ass.

Tori looks amazed. She LAUGHS shortly.

Karrun takes Tori's antique book from her suit coat, hands it to her, extends her arms around Tori and Addanc and escorts them away.

KARRUN

I've missed that laughter. Here,
you hold this, and let's retire
to my hotel room. We have much
to talk about.

You dai remains behind his crates, chin in his hand, pouty.

A thick, dark blue ring hangs from his right ear. There's enough of a gap in the ring to cram it through a piercing.

YOUDAI

Delays, delays.

EXT. LAGOON VILLAGE - DAY

AVANI's back bears the T-shaped scar we saw in the last episode. She pulls her shirt off and her hair falls to hide part of the top bar of the T.

Avani holds her shirt close to her chest, glancing nervously around. KLAUSER picks in his feathers with his beak.

AVANI

This is silly. I'm not itching
like he is, there can't be any--

A white TICK the size of a dime crawls out of Avani's shirt.

Avani SHRIEKS, throws her shirt away and crosses her arms tightly. (Hereafter, show however much the TV rating allows.)

AVANI (CONT'D)

Self-defense demands it, so
Teizen does. Okay. One, two...

Avani quickly bends out of frame, a RUSTLE of clothes is heard, and she stands back into frame. She clamps her eyes shut and keeps her arms crossed.

A gentle breeze wafts across the nearest lagoon, RUSTLING the nearby trees. Klauser finds a tree and rubs against it.

The breeze rustles Avani's hair. An uneventful moment passes. She cracks one eye open. Then the other.

A stronger breeze blows in from the sea, past the four RAIZA ISLANDERS cutting up the giant *dunkleosteus* on the sandbar, past all the lagoon huts and the few islanders around them.

Avani INHALES, holds the breath and slowly EXHALES it, closing her eyes softly. Her arms lower.

Her legs step out of her pile of skirt and she scratches the sandy soil with her toes. A sea-tick crawls from her clothes.

The sun glows brightly.

Avani turns her face to the sun and smiles, taking it in. Behind her, Klauser plucks something we can't see from his feathers and beak-juggles it into his mouth.

AVANI (CONT'D)

Well, the gods need no clothing.

Avani stretches her arms out and over her head. Her scar extends to her tailbone if we can see that far.

AVANI (CONT'D)

Teizen below, Degalvyi above,
Sirocco and Fleuve around. You
who provide all life's needs,
dress me in your infinite glory.

GRA, the tattoo-armed islander, suddenly BURSTS from the lagoon and lands on his feet. Avani re-crosses her arms.

GRA

Excuse me! Rvni?

AVANI

My name's *Avani*.

GRA

Not to be inhospitable, Avni,
but where did your boat wreck?

AVANI

Um, at sea? I don't know where.

Gra points at the distant sandbar where the giant fish lies. There's a gaping hole in its belly, visible even from here.

GRA

Come anyway. You need to see.
The blade-tooth has human
remains in its stomach.

Avani GASPS and her hand flies to her mouth.

INT. ASPH HOTEL - SUITE - DAY

Tori's hand holds a stationery pad reading "Asph Hotel" in cursive. Asphodel flowers adorn the title.

The suite has a vaulted roof, arched doorways and white stucco walls. Karrun takes up half a couch. Addanc walks toward her with a teapot and two full cups on a silver tray.

He places the tray on a table by Karrun, shoots a look off-screen in Tori's direction and walks away without another word. Karrun lifts a teacup and gestures to an empty chair.

KARRUN

So. Where to begin?

Tori puts the pad on a table with her antique book.

TORI

This is your last chance, Mom.
If you lie to me, we're through.

Karrun sips her tea and raises her eyebrows expectantly.

Tori takes a seat, but not a cup.

TORI (CONT'D)

First. Where does all your money
come from? Is *any* of it clean?

KARRUN

Actually, most of it is. You
dwell on my black markets and
extortion, but my turbine
practically prints money.

QUICK FLASHBACK:

In episode 10, in East Granbridge's power plant, WORKMEN on and around a tight steel grate point blue-handled curved blades down at a turbine surrounded by SWIRLING water.

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

It was the first of the magic-
driven electric generators. An
obvious invention, really.
Division One markets it widely.

Tori finally takes her teacup and sips from it.

TORI

Doesn't balance common crime.
What else do you do legally?

KARRUN

Oh, lots of things. Stocks.
Contracts. Hotels. Prostitution.

Tori CHOKES and SPUTTERS into her cup, COUGHING for a moment.

KARRUN (CONT'D)

(rolls eyes)

I don't do it *personally*, dear,
I just profit from it -- and
before you speak, it's
spotlessly legal in many places.

(sly smile)

Here, for instance. If you want,
I can give you Addanc.

A CLATTERING comes through an archway by the front door.

Tori SLAMS her teacup on the tray, BLUSHING furiously.

TORI

Forget it, Mom! Next question!

EXT. LAGOON VILLAGE - SANDBAR - DAY

One of the four raiza around the dunkleosteus, a gray one covered in fish gore and wielding a tomahawk, climbs into the fish's gaping stomach.

The monster fish is the size of a school bus. Avani stands by Gra and the three other fish-cutter raiza, keeping her arms over her chest. The fish-cutters carry sharp steel tools.

The stomach-searching raiza slowly emerges, tail first.

Avani looks on the verge of sickness.

The raiza pulls out Naur's big backpack, tattered and half-bleached and stained with gore.

GRA

There it is.

AVANI

Wait, *that's* the "remains?"

GRA

Yes. After shipwrecks, things that humans carry remain. We find things like it often.

Avani LAUGHS in relief and clasps her hands under her chin.

EXT. JRANKRN - AIR SPACE - DAY

Cirrus flies toward the volcanic island on a bearing for the patchwork of lagoons.

Naur squints suspiciously. Tat looks around Naur's shoulder.

CIRRUS (V.O.)

Klauser either swam here or washed here. Let's hope the girls did.

TAT

We're in luck, that's Jrankrn. The raiza there are famously hospitable.

Naur's expression is inscrutable.

EXT. LAGOON VILLAGE - SANDBAR - DAY

Avani washes off Naur's backpack in the ocean tide with abundant SPLASHING.

Gra watches her with his braceleted sister SULV and the four fish-cutters.

SULV

Has someone told the Matron yet?

Sulv looks directly at Gra. Gra sheepishly scratches the fin nub at the back of his head.

Avani WHUMPS the backpack on the sand and takes out a blanket. It's discolored, but in one piece. She wraps it around herself and tucks it in like an over-large bath towel.

AVANI

Well, providing is providing.

She digs in the backpack, removing unserviceably tattered blankets, small intact bags and Rin's well-preserved octopus-headed cane sword.

Finally she pulls out her mesh bag and opens it. She reaches past her ingot and hammer to pull out the baseball-sized mythril tortoise carving from episode 21.

Avani holds it in both hands as carefully as a bird's egg. She smiles distantly at it.

CIRRUS (V.O.)

Avani!

Avani JUMPS to her feet and looks in every direction. She finds the right direction and WAVES ecstatically.

AVANI

Cirrus! Naur! Down here!

Sulv and the four fish-cutters look up.

Cirrus flies for the beach. Naur hugs her neck tightly.

CIRRUS (V.O.)

Easy there, kid.

NAUR

No, no, no, please, Cirrus, fly away! I was born here!

CIRRUS (V.O.)

What?

TAT

Look out!

The raiza HURL their cutting tools directly at Cirrus.

Cirrus BANKS hard to avoid the tools.

A spinning knife CUTS through Tat's lab coat.

Avani, horrified, turns to the islanders.

AVANI

What are you doing?!

SULV

Hide yourself, human, the red
demon returns!

Cirrus hovers above the sandbar. Naur buries his face in the
back of her neck.

CIRRUS (V.O.)

You call this hospitable, Tat?

NAUR

Fly away, fly away, please...

Sulv takes hold of one of the dunkleosteus's sharp shearing
teeth, BREAKS OFF the pointed tip and HURLS it upward.

Cirrus dodges it.

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

Avani! We'll catch up later!

Cirrus SOARS over the island. Avani gapes and watches her go.

INT. ASPH HOTEL - SUITE - DAY

Addanc refills Karrun's teacup. It steams.

KARRUN

I have *many* relatives, in fact,
but you haven't met them.

(sneering)

Tribalists, every last one. Too
busy hunting whales and breeding
like fish to be of use to me.

Tori holds out her empty cup. Addanc grudgingly fills it,
alternating glares at Tori and cautious glances at Karrun.

TORI

Would you ever want to breed?

KARRUN

And be half-incapacitated for
sixteen months? Hell no.

Tori SNICKERS. Karrun CHUCKLES and sips her tea.

KARRUN (CONT'D)

How about you?

Addanc puts the teapot down and hurriedly exits.

TORI

Just drop it, Mom. If I ever
want kids, I'll adopt.

KARRUN

Fine, fine. But Mel would have
asked for grandchildren too.

Tori looks straight at Karrun. She clearly knows who Mel is.

TORI

I want the truth. Is she... is my
birth-mother really dead?

Karrun's expression turns solemn. She lets the question hang.

EXT. LAGOON VILLAGE - SANDBAR - DAY

The MATRON, a 6' 7" raiza, wears fish ribs strung together
like a poncho. The gray and white of her skin are darker than
average and scaly ripples wrinkle her face.

MATRON

Mistake? Sulv does not mistake.
She says you greeted the demon
and the demon it rode in on!

The number of raiza around the sandbar has risen to fourteen,
all male except Sulv and the Matron. Avani and Sulv are the
only ones who stand within ten feet of the Matron.

AVANI

Naur is greatly misunderstood --
and both of them are my friends!

The islanders MUTTER in raizan. The Matron rolls some strung fish-bones in her fingers.

MATRON

That was the wrong thing to say.

The Matron CRUSHES the strung bones.

The other raiza look concerned, but don't dare approach.

GRA

Matron, your blood pressure.

The Matron makes a dismissive gesture at Gra. Her hand opens and tiny bone shards fall out.

MATRON

Years ago, my dead child gave
the demon life. It took her
gift, *and consumed her in fire!*

Avani's brown eyes widen in speechless horror.

INT. ASPH HOTEL - SUITE - DAY

Karrun folds her hands on her knee.

KARRUN

I swear upon my bones that
Melanie Dunlevy is deceased.
What I've told you before is
absolutely true. There were
complications in her pregnancy.

Tori stares a mile into her tea.

EXT. LAGOON VILLAGE - SANDBAR - DAY

The Matron looms over Avani.

MATRON

And now it returns as our
warriors and water-masters are
gone to hunt the song-giants. It
comes in search of you.

The islanders stare at Avani. One by one they bare their teeth in hungry grins.

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

The bringer and the brought are one and the same. The demon must die, and so...

Avani swallows.

AVANI

Hospitality!

MATRON

What?

AVANI

I was offered hospitality by Sulv, and, um, Gra. I ask for one hour to flee with my effects and my bird before you... kill me.

The islanders MUTTER in raizan again. The sound is akin to the bass section of an orchestra.

The Matron shoots a look at Sulv, who shrinks back.

MATRON

We remain hospitality. You have one. Only one. Then we kill the demons and eat your bones.

EXT. JRANKRN - FOREST - DAY

Naur hugs his knees and huddles against a tree.

NAUR

Of every island to land upon, we find the one that hates me most. I really am cursed.

Cirrus remains in wind tiger form. Tat scratches his beard. The three of them are in a tiny open patch of dense forest.

TAT

From all you've told me, that's
a good hypothesis.

CIRRUS (V.O.)

Don't talk like that. Unlikelier
things have happened to us.

Naur rests his nose on his knees. Cirrus nuzzles him.

NAUR

Like me. We would not even be
here if not for me. Tori would
not have seen me, called me
rare, taken me along. It is all
due to me. And now she is gone.

INT. ASPH HOTEL - SUITE - DAY

Tori keeps staring into her tea. Her eyes are watery.

TORI

My stupid treasure hunt. Now
there's nobody left but you,
Mom. It's my fault. She's dead.

Karrun rises, walks the two steps to Tori's chair, kneels
down and hugs her. Tori puts her cup down and SNIFFLES.

KARRUN

Oh, Tori, don't mourn like that,
I need you strong. You did not
kill Mel. I know, I was there.

FLASHBACK

EXT. WATERFRONT - DAY

Karrun follows an angry Tori in the previous episode.

KARRUN (CONT'D)

What you want is impossible.
They are dead. I was there.

END FLASHBACK

INT. ASPH HOTEL - SUITE - DAY

Tori suddenly stops sniffing and SHOVES Karrun away. Karrun looks taken aback.

Tori stands up slowly. Karrun delivers her responses calmly, as if rehearsed. Cut between the two of them as necessary.

TORI

You said you were there. At the wreck. Is that true?

KARRUN

Of course. But if I hadn't seen Youdai's attack from the airship, I might not have arrived in time to defend you from him. What of it?

TORI

You carried me to that beach instead of straight here. Why?

KARRUN

I had laid you down for only a moment before you awoke.

TORI

But your suit was dry. My book was too.

KARRUN

I used your knife to dry them, and then I put it back.

Tori's raises a pinky finger when she mentions Youdai's ring.

TORI

All right. So how did you fight Youdai? He had a carapite ring and the whole ocean to summon.

KARRUN

Don't underestimate my elemental depth. I used your knife to fight him, but he fled when I severed his ring-bearing finger.

Tori stabs an index finger at her right ear and raises her voice damningly.

TORI

He wore it as an ear ring, Mom.

Karrun FLINCHES.

TORI (CONT'D)

You weren't there. *He* took me back. On your orders. Didn't he.

KARRUN

Tori, listen to me, I intend--

Tori WHIPS OUT her knife.

TORI

--*Shut up!*

Addanc's peeking head ducks into the arch close to the door.

Karrun stands unmoved. She smirks faintly.

TORI (CONT'D)

Lying is common. Manipulating is common. Murder is common. Do you know what it's like to see that depth of... of *evil* in you, Mom?!

KARRUN

Don't blame me if you can't face the truth, Tori dear.

Tori LUNGES at Karrun --

Karrun, her arms being longer than Tori's, SLAMS her open palm into Tori's chest --

Tori CRASHES backwards into the chair, rights herself and CHARGES Karrun again --

Karrun reaches out her left hand --

Tori tosses her knife to her left --

Lets Karrun grab her right wrist and SWIPES her knife.

Karrun JERKS back with a GRUNT as the knife slashes once.

Karrun PALM-SLAMMS Tori out of frame and feels her neck.

Karrun pulls her hand away. There's blood on it.

A shallow, slow-bleeding red line crosses Karrun's neck gills at an angle. She stares glassily at the blood on her hand.

Tori snatches up her book and heads for the front door.

Addanc steps out of the kitchen archway, saber in hand.

ADDANC

Hold it right--

Tori swiftly BLUDGEONS him upside the head with the book.

Karrun's hand hovers closer to her face. She INHALES deeply.

Tori SLAMMS the door hard on her way out.

The sound brings Karrun back to her senses. She clenches her fist, PUNCHES herself in the nose with it and looks around.

Addanc holds his head where Tori struck him.

ADDANC (CONT'D)

Sorry, ma'am. Give me a sec and I'll go and -- are you *bleeding*?

Karrun's blood-touched fist trembles a little. Her pupils have dilated. She clearly has trouble controlling herself.

KARRUN

I am... angered, Addanc. It would be unwise for me to exit this room. Call the unit, please.

ADDANC

You sound kinda--

KARRUN

(roaring)
Do it or I rip out your throat!

EXT. JRANKRN - FOREST - DAY

Avani rides Klauser bareback through the woods. Her bag hangs from her elbow, containing her weapons and smaller bags.

AVANI

Maybe Cirrus can fly you out.
No, you'd likely break her back.

Klauser GWARKS indignantly. Cirrus's voice wafts in.

CIRRUS (V.O.)

Damn straight.

AVANI

Cirrus! Where are you?

CIRRUS (V.O.)

Around. Follow my voice. Hurry.

EXT. VOLCANO SLOPE - DAY

Cirrus, Naur, and Tat group at the border of the dormant volcano and the forest. Naur buries his face in his hands. Cirrus faces away from Naur and Tat.

NAUR

Everything is my fault. I
deserve to be hunted.

Tat sits down by Naur and tucks some of his shoulder-length hair behind his ear.

TAT

No you don't. No monster as rare
as you deserves that.

Naur uncovers his face. His hands are covered in misshapen red gravel. He wipes a tiny red stone out of the corner of his eye and SNIFFLES.

NAUR

Rare. Explain.

Tat glances briefly at Cirrus and speaks quietly.

TAT

Elemental potential is all in the aether concentration, but elemental *skill* is all in the psycho-emotional state. The injustices you've suffered, your desire to be accepted... I'd bet you could show some truly rare skill, if the need arose.

Naur smiles crookedly and SNIFFLES again.

Avani and Klauser suddenly emerge from the forest. Avani drops her bag and climbs off Klauser.

AVANI

Cirrus, Naur, I'm so glad!

Avani steps on the hem of her blanket-wrap.

It falls off. She turns and covers her chest quickly enough.

AVANI (CONT'D)

Oh, curse it!

Tat glances away. Naur blinks. Cirrus tilts her head.

NAUR

Your back.

Avani throws the blanket around herself again, covering up most of the T-shaped scar on her back.

AVANI

I'd thank you not to stare. The scar is from my temple. Let me see Tori's bag, I need clothes.

CIRRUS (V.O.)

Um, about that?

Avani, kneeling, opens Tori's duffel bag. There's nothing in it but her violin, closed in its case.

Avani stares hopelessly into it.

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

The clothes were waterlogged and heavy, so I had to dump them before I saved Naur and Tat. I just hope the violin case is waterproof.

Avani closes the bag and shakes her head.

AVANI

Forget it. What's done is done. We have less than an hour before the islanders hunt and eat us.

NAUR

Then we must escape! Quickly!

CIRRUS (V.O.)

How? I'm only rested enough to carry *one* of you very far, and I won't abandon anyone. Even him.

Klauser has curled up and fallen asleep.

Avani keeps kneeling. She picks up a handful of black volcanic soil and lets it crumble through her fingers.

AVANI

I know how. The gods provide.

Tat scratches his beard. It's brown, like his hair.

TAT

Fine, want to pray for a boat?

Avani stands up and surveys the land. This side of the island has trees, rocks, sand, water, and nothing else.

AVANI

No. They already delivered everything we need. Naur!

NAUR

Yes?

AVANI

Our money is in my bag. I'll explain how I got it later, but I need you to melt and bend the coins into metal fasteners.

NAUR

I guess I could do that, but--

AVANI

--Now, Mister Tat!

TAT

Hmm?

AVANI

Do you dehydrate easily?

EXT. NASHTE - STREETS - DAY

Tori storms down a sidewalk, still shoeless, passing PEDESTRIANS and clutching her book.

FLASHBACK

INT. TORI'S NURSERY - DAY

INFANT TORI, months old, reaches upward in a crib and makes grasping motions. Karrun's arm reaches in and hands her a carapite rattle. Infant Tori SHAKES it wildly and GIGGLES.

EXT. CITADEL - DAY

YOUNG TORI, age 10, does sit-ups on the roof of Karrun's citadel in East Granbridge. Karrun holds her feet down.

INT. CONCERT HALL - DAY

Young Tori sits enthralled with Karrun in a private box as the first movement of "Winter" from Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* plays off-screen. Both of them are in formal wear.

YOUNG TORI

I love you, Mom...

EXT. CITADEL - INNER WALL - DAY

Back in episode 11, Karrun faces Tori on the citadel wall.

KARRUN

As long as you worry about
quaint abstractions like "evil,"
Tori dear, you can never
understand me.

INT. HUMANS' WEARHOUSE - DAY

In the same episode, Avani and Cirrus speak to Tori in the clothing store.

AVANI

Despite our differences, we
understand you.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. NASHTE - STREETS - DAY

Tori's face contorts and she clutches her mouth. She SHOVES past a random pedestrian and RUNS down the sidewalk.

EXT. JRANKRN - ROCKY BEACH - DAY

A palm tree FALLS. It makes a sound.

The tree LANDS very near a 12'-by-6' rectangle of rough wooden planks on a rocky beach. Naur and Cirrus (human) tie the planks together with thin ripped strips of Tori's bag. Cirrus wears palm tree leaves.

CIRRUS

Watch where you're dropping!

Avani and Tat walk to the middle of the tree. Avani holds the unsheathed cane sword. Coconut shells litter the sand.

AVANI

This should be easier. Ready?

Avani touches the blade to a spot on the trunk below its coconuts. Tat's hand partially covers hers on the cane head.

AETHER VIEW

Green swirls from Avani's silhouette and blue ones from both hers and Tat's flow into the cane head, shoot down the blade as brown --

NORMAL VIEW

And the tree SNAPS cleanly, instantly cut into a log.
Tat licks his lower lip.

TAT

I think I need another coconut.

AVANI

As do I, but we still need to cut a mast.

NAUR

A mast? Then will we not need a sail?

Cirrus, Naur, and Tat look to Avani. She glances down at her blanket-wrap.

AVANI

Did I say mast? I meant oars!
Oars!

EXT. NASHTE - BACK-ALLEY ESTABLISHMENT - DAY

Youdai holds his arms akimbo.

YOUDAI

You *have* them, don't you? Let me see your *finest!* Don't you know who I *am*?

A male human BOUNCER in loose pants and a tight shirt guards a nondescript door in a windowless building facing the alley.

BOUNCER

Go sink yourself, pal. The ladies don't serve your kind, not for any price.

YOUDAI

Well! They're in luck. And maybe
you are too.

Tori enters the alley. She hears the voices and her misery switches instantly to anger. She drops her book.

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

Ever been part of a royal harem?

BOUNCER (O.S.)

I said get lost!

TORI

You!

Youdai turns his head, which has gotten uncomfortably close to the bouncer's. His smile vanishes.

YOUDAI

Uh-oh.

EXT. LAGOON VILLAGE - DAY

The Matron stares at the sun.

Sulv ties a huge triangular tooth from the dunkleosteus to a wooden haft.

Gra scrapes a stain off a bone knife with one of his claws.

The four fish-cutters from earlier wait expectantly behind the Matron. The Matron tightens her lips.

MATRON

Begin.

EXT. NASHTE - STREETS - DAY

Youdai JUMPS backwards out of the alley and runs backwards, inches away from Tori's furious KNIFE-SLASHING.

Youdai COLLIDES with a pedestrian, falls --

And Tori's knife SLASHES a centimeter away from his nose.

You dai scrambles backwards in a crab walk before righting himself. He keeps backing away from Tori.

YOU DAI

Now hey, hey, *think* about this!

TORI

I have. You killed them.

YOU DAI

Look, it turns out Karrun *really* needed you alive. Think of what would happen if I *failed* her!
Too many boys would miss me!

Tori runs at him with a BATTLE YELL.

SQUARE

Nashte's town square is all stonework. A waist-deep fountain bears a 15' statue of a raiza which SPOUTS water from knives in its hands. Two shallow, plank-bridged canals branch out from the fountain.

You dai SHOVES past some pedestrians and SPLASHES into a canal. It's only a few inches deep.

Tori runs at him --

You dai lifts his arms, the canal water lifts to his waist --

And BLASTS around him in two forking streams at Tori.

Tori SLASHES her knife and the water fork TWISTS sharply before SPLASHING heavily into her --

Which twists You dai, in the middle of it all, 90 degrees and off his feet. He YELPS as his own water blast carries him.

You dai rolls in the canal, stops himself on all fours.

Tori JUMPS on his back and grabs a handful of his silky black hair. He THROWS himself around to get her off, but Tori's grip remains and she SLASHES the right side of his face.

You dai YELLS OUT off-screen as his earring tumbles through the air, attached to a bit of ear. Tori's hand catches it.

You dai whirls around and BATS Tori away with a backhand fist. She takes it in the shoulder and falls to the stone pavement.

You dai kneels in the canal, holding his ear and cheek.

YOU DAI
(pained squeak)
Filthy tramp. How dare you?

Tori rips the earring free of the bit of jade-colored flesh and fits it on her right pinky finger as she stands back up.

TORI
Avani said I had gods using me.
I'll let you take it up with
them.

You dai quickly SLASHES his claws through the water, picking up a basketball-sized water ball --

Which SPLASHES hard and fast into Tori's face. Tori SPUTTERS and COUGHS.

You dai runs to the fountain, jumps in and climbs the statue with quick, lizard-like limb movements. He perches on the raiza's shoulders and lifts his arms over his head.

The entire contents of the fountain lift too. Some coins float around in the water.

Tori stops coughing, SWIPES her knife and her face and hair dry instantly, giving her enough time to look up.

You dai smirks, dripping wet.

The fountain water has formed a single giant sphere overhead.

You dai extends his pinkies and bends his wrists forward.

Tori holds her knife defensively --

As the water ball shoots down and SPLASHES hundreds of gallons directly on her.

Tori, a few pedestrians and two produce carts get SWEPT AWAY.

Tori rights herself, SLASHES her knife and the water around her parts, leaving her on a dry patch of stone.

You dai is gone from the statue.

Tori grits her teeth and RUNS SPLASHING through the square.

EXT. JRANKRN - FOREST - DAY

Sulv leads Gra and the four fish-cutters through the woods. They CHANT in raizan. We don't need to know the words.

EXT. ROCKY BEACH - DAY

Cirrus nudges a groggy Klauser toward a raft on the beach. It's a few wide planks and a short, movable mast on a pair of logs, all bound together with cloth strips and metal hooks.

Avani's blanket wrap is the sail, folded into a triangle on the mast. Avani's bag and Tori's violin case rest below it.

Avani wears Tat's long lab coat, securely buttoned. Tat is shirtless and shoeless -- he has a scrawny scientist build.

TAT

I'm impressed, Miss Lahar.

AVANI

If you'd like, I can explain all the other ways the gods provide... oh, just a moment.

Naur stands off by himself, looking out at the volcano.

Avani approaches him.

AVANI (CONT'D)

Naur? Are you all right?

NAUR

I am familiar with hatred. But why, Avani? If some can not hate me, why was I hated from birth?

Avani hesitates.

Suddenly the islanders' CHANTING drifts in from the forest.

Avani and Naur appear to guess what it means.

Klauser pricks his head up for a second, listening, before jumping on the raft and huddling down.

Avani, Tat and Cirrus rush to the raft and PUSH it into the water.

Naur steps away from the tide. The CHANTING gets louder. A spear WHIZZES over Naur's shoulder and sticks in the sand.

The islanders dash out of the forest and onto the sand.

Naur turns around and takes a step back. His feet SIZZLE.

NAUR

Cirrus!

A bubble of sand EXPLODES under and in front of the islanders with a RUMBLE. The islanders YELL and rub their eyes.

Avani, in the clear shallows, lifts her hammer from the sand. Tat stands on the raft.

Cirrus (wind tiger) lands near Naur. Naur fearfully edges toward her, his gaze fixed on the islanders.

Avani and Tat hang onto the mast --

And Cirrus turns and summons a STIFF WIND over the shallows and into the sail.

The raft JOLTS away from the beach.

Cirrus kneels down to Naur --

CIRRUS (V.O.)

Come on, Naur, get on!

Sulv rubs her eyes and HURLS her axe.

Naur's hands shake and he THRUSTS one out --

SLOW MOTION:

The wood instantly ignites and the tooth-blade chars rapidly. Truly intense temperatures are at work here.

The axe vanishes in a BRIEF, LOUD FIREBALL. Black dust falls.

The islanders draw back, fearful.

Naur trembles angrily.

NAUR
 Brothers. Sisters. Go away.
 Leave us alone.

CIRRUS (V.O.)
 Naur!

Avani clings to the mast as the raft sails away.

AVANI
Naur!

Gra clutches his knife and HURLS it as he shouts.

GRA
Demon!

Naur yells a RAGING CRY and BLASTS FIRE at us.

EXT. NASHTE - PUBLIC BEACH - DAY

You dai runs like a woman through a public beach, ignoring SURPRISED YELLS from numerous BEACH-GOERS he passes.

Tori runs at full stride and knocks over a beach umbrella.

TORI
You dai!

You dai turns, points a finger at a beach-goer's drink cooler and SWIPES his claws, hurling a blob of water and soda cans.

Tori SLASHES her knife and the water BANKS aside, but a trailing can makes it through and HITS her above an eyebrow.

You dai walks backwards to the water. Any beach-goers who haven't noticed him yet get up and run away, YELLING PANICKY.

YOU DAI
 Seriously, Ponytail. Your mother needs you alive.

Tori holds her forehead in one hand and her knife in the other, stalking forth, unstoppable.

TORI

My name is Tori. I have no mother.

YOUDAI

Then the Beast of Water needs you alive. You're her trump card against them, you know.

TORI

(expression softens)

What?

Youdai GIGGLES and points effeminately at Tori. A 40' WAVE rolls close in the background.

YOUDAI

Oh gracious. You didn't think she adopted you out of love? You really don't know the depth of her ambitions, do you?

Tori lowers her hand. There's a red mark above her eyebrow.

The wave rolls closer, faster than any wave should be. It crests dramatically. Youdai swaps his effeminate tone for something low and sinister.

YOUDAI (CONT'D)

I'll let you take it up with her. So long, Ponytail.

Tori looks up.

Youdai smiles toothily and waves goodbye.

The wave bears down on the beach.

The wave CRASHES into the beach, sweeping away everything and everyone in sight.

EXT. JRANKRN - ROCKY BEACH - DAY

The six islanders PANT for breath, sitting or standing at the border of beach and forest.

Half the beach is a lumpy pane of glass. Fallen logs of charcoal mark where any stray trees stood.

Sulv and Gra pant with the four others.

GRA

Shall we pursue, sister?

SULV

They are gone. It is enough.

The tide rolls up to the edge of the glass.

GRA

Shall I tell the Matron, sister?

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

The raft moves on at full tilt.

Cirrus flies behind it, carrying Naur.

AVANI

It's okay, Cirrus, we should still float if you stand on it.

CIRRUS (V.O.)

Don't wanna risk it yet.

Tat sits as close to the middle of the raft as possible, considering Klauser already naps there curled up.

TAT

Wise idea. The sea is deep as time, and as dangerous. Only the rarest monsters can overcome it.

Naur stares at his hands.

Avani stares at the horizon.

AVANI (V.O.)

I know you're there, Tori. Wait
for us.

EXT. NASHTE - PUBLIC BEACH - DAY

The beach has been swept clean.

Tori's legs walk out of the tide.

Tori slogs her way up the beach, knife dangling in her limp
hand.

TORI (V.O.)

They're all gone... Mom's a lost
cause... but goddamnit, there's
something left for me. Something
beyond all desire.

INT. ASPH HOTEL - SUITE - DAY

Karrun's mouth breathes on the dried blood on her hand, then
INHALES an aroma that makes her shudder.

Addanc peeks in from an arch.

ADDANC

L-M unit's on the move, ma'am.
You want me to--

Karrun, lying on the couch with her back to us, rolls half
over and GROWLS through bared teeth.

Addanc raises his hands innocently and ducks out.

Karrun returns to her hand. She SNIFFS the blood with a long,
luxurious inhale and SMILES a very toothy smile.

FADE OUT