

SAGA

Written by

Soren Alf Correia

correiasoren@gmail.com
(518)368-4603

EXT. THE SEA- NIGHT

A great tempest wracks the sea! The clouds roil, winds HOWL, and THUNDER BOOMS in the darkness. Sea spray is thrown by the wind as massive swells and waves tumble and crash.

A small fleet of viking boats battle against the storm, sails whipping and tearing, oars splintering. Entire ships capsize in the tumult.

EXT. VIKING LONGSHIP - CONTINUOUS

VIKINGS scramble across the slippery boards of their ship, tying things down, adjusting the sail, clinging to the sides desperate to keep their feet under them.

They scream above the waves.

Somewhere in the darkness and the rain, a pair of hands grabs the SUN STONE surreptitiously, and slips it into a pocket.

A moment later, WEASEL, the navigator, timid and shy, sees that the latch where the sunstone should be lies open.

WEASEL

The sunstone is gone! The sea has
taken the sunstone! We are lost!

Lightning FLASHES, striking the mast of the ship. The sound of CREAKING GROANING WOOD tears through the darkness as the mast crumbles under the force of the lightning. Thunder BOOMS at the same time:

They're in the heart of the storm.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. VIKING LONGSHIP - DAY

The sea: calm with clear skies. The water swells and rolls lazily as far as the eye can see, and the sun beats down upon the ocean, reflecting and glimmering as it makes its slow descent towards the horizon.

From above, a viking longship drifts haplessly in the currents of this vast empty expanse. The center sail hangs by the very sinews of the mast, dragging in the water behind the boat. It seems but a small toy in the immensity of the sea.

For a moment, it seems as though some dark shadow or creature passes beneath the ship, dwarfing it for a moment before fading again into the depths. Or perhaps this was just a trick of the light, a result of too much time at sea.

FOX slumps against the side of the boat, whole body wracked with scars, hands shaking and mangled from some old torture; his lips chapped with dehydration. He stares with vacant eyes at his reflection. He reaches down and brushes the surface of the water, sending small ripples out. His reflection distorts with the movement.

Around him, the rest of his VIKING CREW, lounge about, conserving energy. They pant and wait for the oppressive sun to dip beneath the waves and the equal cruelty of night's cold to replace it.

CROW, the one-eyed lookout, pulls a water-skin up to his lips and tips his head back: nothing. He squeezes it, shakes it, and finally holds it upside down over the side of the boat.

A single, pitiful drop of water falls from the neck of the skin and into the sea.

Crow spikes the water-skin into the bottom of the boat in frustration.

Fox looks up at the commotion, then scans the faces of the crew:

Their faces are locked in a stern, Norse determination. Grim visages stare off into space. Eyes lazily scan the empty horizon waiting for some kind of change.

FOX

Why are you all contented to be so stern!? Why have we resolved to abandon all mirth and joy at the first sign of misfortune?

CROW

The first sign of misfortune—we are lost, adrift at sea, and you speak of mirth!?

Crow looks to BULL, a massive man in his 40's, with little in his heart for anything but battle.

Bull remains silent, ignoring the commotion.

FOX

Lost?

CROW

Do you have some magical way to create Weasel's sunstone anew? For unless you do, we are fucking lost. Trust me to embark with a useless navigator.

Weasel retreats into himself.

FOX

Ahh the storm took it, you can't blame him!

CROW

I can blame who I want! It certainly wasn't me who got us stranded out here.

Fox turns to RAVEN, the skald, who sits slumped against the side of the boat nearby.

FOX

And you all called me the godless one.

(to: Crow)

Have you no faith in the runes?

Raven pulls back his tunic, revealing a Vegvisir (an Icelandic rune of the traveler) tattooed on his chest.

FOX (CONT'D)

(sarcastic)

Surely if you love the gods you'll believe that Raven's magic will guide us home.

Crow jumps up, towering over Fox.

CROW

You think this is funny, cripple?

(to Bull)

You should've left your brother behind. His time with the Christians has softened his mind.

WOLF, the mercenary, whittles in the corner.

WOLF

(without looking up)

Shut your mouth, Crow. I've heard enough of your whingeing.

CROW

You ought to be careful how you speak, girl. You got a boat full of men with our blood up for a raid, and nothing to fuck or kill. 'Fore long we might start trying to find some-

BEAR, the valiant shieldmaiden, middle-aged, stands up between Crow and Wolf.

BEAR

Aren't you supposed to be on look-out, Crow.

CROW

Looking for what? There's no one out here. If there was we'd all see 'em. I'm not wasting my time-

BEAR

Attend to your duties, boy.

CROW

Now I'll-

BULL

You heard her, Crow. Back to your station.

Crow doesn't move at first, but TURTLE, the boatswaine, steps up next to him and gives him a look.

TURTLE

Come, friend, let us do as we should.

Turtle guides Crow back to their seats.

CROW

(mumbling)

Should've listened to the old man.

BULL

Old man, old man, old man, shut your fucking mouth about the old man! I swear by the gods you all-the old man was a fool, and a cheat. And if you believed him then you are a fool.

Crow sits.

OTTER, the scout, quiet and often overlooked, lounges in the shadow of the broken mast.

OTTER

But has he not spoken sooth? Did his premonitions not come to pass?

Bull spits on the floor of the boat.

BULL

That's what I think about his premonitions! You want someone to blame, blame him. Premonitions, a curse more like!

The sound of a bottle being UNCORKED.

Their heads snap to the sound.

Fox sips from the bottle in his hand.

CROW

What is that? What have you got there?!

FOX

This?

CROW

That-yes-yes that!

Fox shrugs.

FOX

This is some of that mirth I was talking about. Why, do you want some?

Crow stumbles along the bottom of the boat, crawling towards Fox.

CROW

Give it to me, oh please just one gulp, no just a taste, a taste- oh please please won't you let me smell it.

Fox hands Crow the bottle.

Crow smells it.

CROW (CONT'D)

Mead?!

FOX
The wine of poets. Drink, restore
yourself.

Crow gulps from it greedily.

FOX (CONT'D)
I have more.

Fox reaches down and pulls up a board, revealing a compartment where more dusty bottles sit nestled in straw.

The crew swarms to the hatch.

BULL
Why have you kept these hidden from
us? You meant to keep them for
yourself?!

FOX
I was saving them for hard times.
Seems we could use a last
celebration before we all really go
mad.

He hands Bull a bottle.

Bull begrudgingly accepts, ripping the cork out with his teeth and spitting it into the boat before returning to his resting spot at the bow.

Raven holds up a bottle to Fox, they smile at each other.

EXT. VIKING LONGSHIP - NIGHT

The sun has drifted beneath the waves and night has fallen across the sea. Sounds of SINGING and LAUGHING echo across the waves. In such an expanse, even the singing and laughing seem empty and hollow.

The moon shines down on the helpless ship.

The Vikings dance sloppily and slosh their drinking horns as they SING along and hammer a beat into the wooden benches of the ship.

Fox leans against the side of the boat, he stretches his arms over the side and surreptitiously dumps his drink into the ocean.

Bear plops down next to him.

BEAR
You're allowed to drink with the
rest of us, you know.

FOX
Someone has to make sure Crow
doesn't try to fuck anything. He's
like to put a hole in the boat just
to have something to thrust at.

Bear laughs. She offers him her drinking horn.

BEAR
Oh, be merry with us. Only the gods
know how long till we have another
night like this.

Fox pushes the horn back.

BEAR (CONT'D)
(joking)
Had I known you'd be so grim, I'd
have left you in that prison.

FOX
Trapped in a cell, or trapped at
sea, at least in the cell I had
food and water.

BEAR
But you like the sea more anyway.

Raven stumbles over.

RAVEN
Drink with me!

Fox shows Raven his empty mug apologetically.

RAVEN (CONT'D)
Oh a disgrace! Your mug is broken!

BEAR
Broken?

RAVEN
There must be a hole in it, here
let me remedy that.

Raven grabs a nearby bottle and goes to pour some for Fox,
but Fox pulls his mug away.

BEAR
He isn't drinking.

RAVEN

Not drinking?! What has become of you! When you renounced battle-when you spoke against the raids, I thought, what have they done to our Fox, what have they done to him, he can get no worse, but now you have forsaken drink too?!

FOX

Oh please, I am not so changed.

RAVEN

Then drink with us!

Fox hesitates.

RAVEN (CONT'D)

Oh please won't you drink with us!
Oh Fox the bloody, Fox the shipwright, oh legend of the northmen-

FOX

Flatterer.

They spar wits speaking rapidly and almost over each other, growing in speed and intensity.

RAVEN

Hero.

FOX

Cur.

RAVEN

Sage.

FOX

Drunkard.

RAVEN

Best of all men.

FOX

Pestilence of-

RAVEN

Paragon.

FOX

Half-wit.

RAVEN
Paramore.

FOX
Fool

RAVEN
Mythical man of most monstrous
merriment.

FOX
You...you...Damn it

Raven CHEERS.

RAVEN
Ha! And now you must drink

Raven pushes the mug into Fox's hands and slumps down next to him.

Fox sips. The three survey the crew.

FOX
Otter is holding up well.

RAVEN
Have you spoken with her?

FOX
No. But considering...

BEAR
She still clings to hope that he is
alive.

FOX
He may yet be.

RAVEN
Stag is a strong man-

BEAR
Strong enough to be wed to Otter at
least.

RAVEN
-so very strong indeed. It will
take more than some storm to tear
him away from her. Or her from him.

Fox eyes Otter. Bear watches Fox.

FOX

She is in pain, deeply, but she
will never show that to anyone.

RAVEN

What poetry, Fox! We'll make a
storyteller of you yet. The mead
has done its work upon your tongue
my friend!

They laugh and drink.

Wolf comes and sits next to Bear. Wolf and Bear share a warm,
drunken look that only Fox notices.

Bull hammers his fist on a bench, keeping a BOOMING beat. The
song ends in a chorus of cheers.

Bull hoists himself up and stumbles back to his place at the
front of the ship, slumping into the crook of the iconic
arcing dragon's head.

BULL

To Fox: the keeper of the mead!

CHEERS!

RAVEN

And to the gods! May they bring us
out of this danger and back to our
homes!

CHEERS!

They drink. The festivities continue.

Bull sips from his mug; eyes lazily scanning the endless
horizon.

He gazes at the stars, looking for some kind of sign. His
eyes droop with sleep.

The stars twinkle, cold and distant.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. VIKING LONGSHIP - DAY

The sun replaces the stars, burning bright in a cloudless
sky.

The light glances off the water shining directly into Bull's
eyes. He shifts.

A MUFFLED COMMOTION can be heard through the blanket of sleep.

Bull opens his eyes, confused.

Raven kneels, hands bloody, eyes vacant in shock.

Fox cries as he stares at Raven, pain in his eyes. He fidgets with the side of the boat in anguish.

Bull looks over at Wolf as she starts to stir.

Wolf looks up. Her eyes stop, seeing what Raven kneels over. Color drains from her face.

The other Vikings wake up. Screams ring out. Chaos erupts.

From above, the boat swarms with motion, still a tiny speck on an enormous unfeeling ocean. As we move closer, we see one unmoving figure laying at the bottom of the boat.

Bear lays motionless in a pool of crimson, no color in her cheeks, nor breath on her lips, and where her heart should beat in her breast there is a terrible gash instead.

Wolf pounces on Raven, shoving him away from Bear and slamming him into the side of the boat. They scramble clumsily before Bull and Otter are able to pull her off.

Fox rushes to Raven to makes sure he's alright.

Crow sidles up to Bear's body and looks at it with curiosity.

Wolf breaks free and throws Crow away from Bear. Turtle steps between them as Crow jumps to his feet.

BULL

Enough!

Everyone stops.

Wolf crouches defensively over Bear's body. She inspects her face tenderly.

BULL (CONT'D)

Step aside, let me have a look.

He pulls Wolf away. She stumbles over to the other side of the boat and throws up into the sea.

Bull looks down at the wound.

OTTER

Where is the weapon?

BULL
Must've been cast into the sea.
Which of you has done this!? Speak!
I charge you, speak and defend
yourself, or die as a coward!

No one says anything. Eyes dart from person to person. A sudden suspicion hangs over the whole crew. Tense silence.

Turtle trudges past Bull.

BULL (CONT'D)
Where are you going?

Turtle bends down, pulling open a compartment.

Inside, the glint of steel: swords and other weapons.

TURTLE
I'm arming myself! Bull, for fuck's sake, Bear has been killed.

Bull slams the compartment closed.

BULL
No! No one gets a weapon until we sort truth from malice.

OTTER
We have a right to defend ourselves.

RAVEN
If everyone is armed then the murderer will be too.

CROW
Well I'd rather be murdered with a weapon in my hand then. Give me my knife back Bull.

BULL
Your knife?

CROW
The one your brother took from me and gave to you. We have a right to die like men. Do you not remember?

BULL
No one gets a weapon.

TURTLE
We'll be slaughtered!

FOX
Not if we keep calm heads and
figure this out.

WEASEL
It must be the changling!

RAVEN
The changling-

WEASEL
It walks among us! "A monster with
the face of a friend."

Otter shoots Fox a "did you catch that" look when she hears
Weasel mention the Changeling. Fox doesn't notice her.

RAVEN
This is nonsense! The changeling is
a story!

WOLF
Bear is-

CROW
-Well if there's a monster then I
definitely want my knife back, Bull-

WOLF
Listen-

BULL
Changeling? Are you mad? Fairytales
and-

TURTLE
The old man was right about
everything else, "it will speak
small truths and simple lies-"

CROW
"-to make you turn on each other
like dogs."

FOX
Well what are you doing, if not
turning on each other-

WOLF
Bear is dead!

Silence.

WOLF (CONT'D)

And you want to bicker about your knives, your weapons. One of you did this to her. Someone here, right now. Whoever you are, hear this now, and hear it well: I will find you, and when I do, I won't need Crow's little butterknife to kill you.

She sits next to Bear's body, cradling its head.

Fox watches with mournful eyes, frozen in place, hunched over clutching his stomach. He crawls over next to Wolf and touches Bear's wound. His eyes look through her to somewhere far away.

TURTLE

(to Bull)

Sir, I know you don't want to believe it, but look at what has happened. Every other portent that he foretold has come to pass. The storms came, and now we are lost, all as he said. One thing yet remains unfulfilled: The chiefest of calamities. It's here. The changling is here.

Suspicion mounts.

RAVEN

This is madness! You want to spend your time hunting some imagined monster you're welcome to, but there is a-

CROW

(re:Raven)

You were by the body, were you not, Raven?

RAVEN

What?

TURTLE

Why are you so quick to point us in other directions?

RAVEN

You can't honestly believe I did this, when I have been nothing but loyal.

CROW

Exactly the person a changeling would want to be, the perfect advisor, whispering rumors in our chieftains ear!

WEASEL

He does! I've seen it. He whispers in Bull's ear, strange things too.

OTTER

No you haven't!

WEASEL

I have! He is always talking to the Chieftain when no one is looking.

RAVEN

I am his Skald, that is my duty!

BULL

Raven, why were you the only one that was awake, why were you already over Bear when we awoke?

RAVEN

I woke up and found her only moments before you yourself arose!

Wolf stands and stalks toward Raven.

WOLF

And why did you not wake us, Skald?

She grabs him by his tunic, lifting him to his feet.

WOLF (CONT'D)

You stood over Bear's bleeding corpse and you made no sound, nor alarm, nor any attempt to stir us from our slumber, you murderous dog! You either killed her yourself, or watched her die. The difference matters little to me!

She throws him against the dragon's head at the back.

WOLF (CONT'D)

You did this to my-

FOX

(interrupting)

So he was awake, what does that prove?

WOLF

His hands are bloodied, his tongue
is silvered, his eyes are wild.
This is no man, this is a monster.

FOX

You've all gone sea mad!

WOLF (CONT'D)

(to Raven)
I will have your head.

Wolf lunges toward Raven, grabbing him by the throat.

Fox jumps between them, shoving Wolf away with all his might.

FOX (CONT'D)

Look at yourselves! This is not how
we handle these matters.

WOLF

Step aside, Fox.

CROW

Yes, do step aside, let justice be
dealt.

FOX

Justice? This is no justice, this
is murder!

WOLF

Murder for murder *is* justice.

FOX

And what reason would Raven have to
kill Bear?

TURTLE

That is not Raven, Fox, not
anymore.

FOX

You are so certain that you would
kill him now? You are acting like
savages.

BULL

Bear must be avenged, and I will
sleep soundly knowing my life is
secure without this changeling to
assault me.

FOX

I demand a trial.

CROW

We have no time for trials.

FOX

We are adrift at sea, we have nothing but time.

RAVEN

I did not do it, I swear!

CROW

Shut your mouth, I won't have you tainting me with lies.

FOX

Bull, brother, see reason! We must not fall into madness and mob rule!

CROW

We must act quickly.

FOX

And if there is a changeling aboard, if there really is a changeling as you say, how can you be certain you aren't playing into its hands?

Beat.

FOX (CONT'D)

I do not ask you to forget this matter! Bear was like a mother to me. I would be dead a hundred times over without her and I have no wish to let her murderer live, believe me. But I refuse to let this turn us against each other. I refuse to let this turn us into beasts. We are men, men of the north, and we do not stoop to this.

WOLF

And what would you have us do? Sit around and wait for another throat to be slit in the night?

FOX

We talk through it, that is all I ask. We take time to consider this, start at the beginning and work our way forward.

(to Bull)

(MORE)

FOX (CONT'D)

I'm sure our Chieftain agrees that without law, without order, we are nothing. Without those things, we will have no defense against the changeling's lies.

Beat.

BULL

Tie him up.

FOX

Bull! No!

BULL

Tie him up, I say!

Bull storms over to Fox, pushing him out of the way and grabbing Raven. He pins him against the arcing dragon head at the back of the boat.

BULL (CONT'D)

If I am to listen to you, if we are to delay our justice for your conscience, I will at least have my safety. If he lives, he does so in bondage.

FOX

But no harm will come to him.

BULL

For now.

Crow and Wolf tie Raven to the stern.

RAVEN

Please, I swear I had nothing to do with this. See reason.

BULL

You are lucky I have seen as much "reason" as I have. Thank my brother for your life, changeling, you won't have it for long.

FOX

What kind of a fair trial can Raven expect if you are already so set on his treachery?

BULL

He gets a trial. That is my kindness. I promise nothing more.

(MORE)

BULL (CONT'D)

And no one gets a weapon, do you understand me?

TURTLE

Bull, a sword hangs at your hip even now! You expect us to sleep unarmed in the midst of a shapechanger while you yourself remain so well defended?

Bull wheels on Turtle grabbing him by the throat and pushing him against the side.

BULL

You forget that I am still your chieftain. My word is law, and I am growing weary of having my every breath questioned! That goes for the lot of you!

He throws Turtle into the bottom of the boat. Bull pulls a shortsword from its sheathe at his hip.

BULL (CONT'D)

Does anyone else have an issue with me remaining armed?

Silence.

He sheathes his sword again.

BULL (CONT'D)

Good. I see anyone else with one of those weapons and I will assume you are the changeling. Someone get rid of the body.

FOX

How, sir?

BULL

Throw it in the sea! Has your brain really gone soft?

WOLF

She deserves better than-

FOX

It's only that if we do, the sharks will come. I would say it is better to mop up the blood before it gets in the water and hope that the sharks haven't caught our trail already.

BULL

Fine, fine. Do as he says.

Fox turns and puts a hand on Wolf's shoulder as he passes. He sits near Raven.

Otter and Crow kneel to swab the blood. They stop for a moment, each seeing the other. They eye each other suspiciously, before warily returning to work.

Bull watches the crew.

EXT. VIKING LONGSHIP - LATER

Fox looks up at the sun bearing down.

Crow and Otter are just finishing up with the blood. They throw down their darkened rags and slump against the sides of the boat, dripping sweat.

RAVEN

How much longer must I remain
unjustly bound? Start your trial
Bull!

BULL

You're in no position to be making
demands, changeling.

CROW

Well if there's to be a trial I too
would rather be done with it, if
it's all the same. Don't see why we
have to drag this out any longer.

WOLF

Yes, let us be on with it.

OTTER

What are the rules of this?

CROW

The rules?

FOX

She's right, we need to establish-

BULL

Fuck the rules. Someone had better
start telling me why I should or
shouldn't kill this thing before my
patience wears thin.

They all sit in silence.

RAVEN

Now that you have time to think, do you not see how little evidence you have of my guilt?

OTTER

What about you, Weasel, you seemed rather keen to accuse Raven.

Weasel looks up, nervous.

OTTER (CONT'D)

It's only that you seemed quite certain of his guilt.

WEASEL

Well I was only agreeing-

TURTLE

No, no, you said you had seen him speaking to Bull. What did they speak of?

WEASEL

I don't know, I couldn't hear-

RAVEN

So you didn't even know what we were talking about and you were willing to kill me for it?

CROW

"didn't even know" so you admit that it was something damning that you spoke of!

RAVEN

No, that's not it at all!

WOLF

Well, Bull, what were you speaking of?

Heads turn to Bull.

BULL

He only ever speaks in stories I don't know what the fuck he's talking about most of the time.

FOX

I remember one of the stories. You told me about it in your tent that night.

WOLF

What night?

FOX

The night I returned, the night the wise man spoke his doom.

Murmurs.

CROW

Wise man?

FOX

The old man, the man with the prophecy. I came to your tent to apologize for my actions.

WOLF

Tell your tale boy.

FOX

I came to his tent, I said I'm sorry for my outburst earlier. He said, "your mind-

INT. BULL'S TENT - NIGHT - AS RETOLD

BULL

Is yet unhealed; I understand. You are forgiven. But you should make a sacrifice to the gods, they won't be as understanding of your blasphemy as I am.

Bull pours a drink into two mugs, and hands Fox one of them.

The tent is simple but well ordered and decorated here and there with many treasures.

FOX

I intend to.

Candles flicker. The two brothers sit across the fire from each other.

They down their drinks.

Bull refills the mugs. They down them again.

FOX (CONT'D)

Sober subjects require drunken
minds, eh?

BULL

Oh surely you didn't come here to
blabber about serious matters!

FOX

No, I came here at the crack of
dawn just to get drunk.

Bull laughs and refills their cups as they speak.

BULL

Raven told me this story of a
farmer who, everyday, would wake up
and weed and plough his fields and
work all day till sundown, never
looking up; just ploughing until
night came. The crops came in and
he weeded and ploughed and worked
and they prospered; until one day,
he did look up, and he saw that he
hadn't been ploughing his fields at
all, he'd been ploughing his
neighbors! He asked his neighbor
why he hadn't stopped him, and the
neighbor said, 'well fuck, if you
want to do my work for me, who am I
to complain?'

Bull bursts out laughing. He sips from his horn.

FOX

So...

BULL

So what?

FOX

What happens next?

BULL

I think the farmer kills his
neighbor and takes his land or
something, I stopped listening. My
point is, stop working so much,
look up every once in a while. Look
at where we are, what we've done.

FOX

But if I want to do your work for
you-

BULL

Who am I to complain?!

They both laugh.

EXT. VIKING LONGSHIP - BACK TO PRESENT

Fox finishes his story.

TURTLE

Well what does that mean?

CROW

Nothing, it was a waste of time!
The changeling is running us in
circles. There's no point trying to
figure it, the longer we wait, the
longer it has to confuse us.

WEASEL

The story was about you, Fox, and
you Bull.

OTTER

What?

WEASEL

Fox was the farmer ploughing Bull's
fields. Raven was telling Bull to
be careful not to let his neighbor
do his work for the neighbor will
grow angry at his abuse and seek
revenge.

FOX

That's absurd! Raven has ever been
my friend, he knows I would never
betray my own blood!

TURTLE

And yet he whispered such lies in
his ear.

CROW

He knew of the changeling before
any of us, told its story, how can
you explain that!?

RAVEN

I am a skald! It is my life's work
to know the stories.

CROW

Well I'd never heard you tell the story of the changeling before, and I've heard all your stories.

RAVEN

You can't have possibly heard all of my stories.

FOX

Is it true, Raven? You were warning my brother to be careful of me?

RAVEN

You had just returned! I did not know what to think.

BULL

I remember it now, you did speak of the changeling! I hadn't remembered, it was a night of much drinking.

TURTLE

The feast to celebrate your brother's return.

CROW

And only a day after the old man-after the wiseman spoke.

WEASEL

Without prompting too, he said it of his own will! He was trying to set us on edge!

RAVEN

I did not want to speak of it! I was pushed into it! Persuaded by...by...well I don't remember, but someone convinced me to say it! Fox, you were there tell them!

Fox stares at the bottom of the boat.

BULL

Fox.

Fox looks up.

BULL (CONT'D)

Does he speak true?

FOX

Yes. It was not his idea, he resisted at first.

BULL

Tell it in full, my memory is fogged with drink.

CROW

You are wasting our time!

BULL

I promised a trial! I will hear it in full.

FOX

The feast was under way, but I couldn't...I could not manage it. It seemed to me to be no festivity at all, rather a cacophony.

INT. FEAST HALL - NIGHT - AS RETOLD

Tent canvas flickers with torch light. A cacophony of loud CHATTER, MUSIC, and LAUGHTER.

Long tables and benches are filled with norsefolk happily eating, drinking and making merry.

At the end: the high table with Bull, Wolf, Raven, and two empty chairs.

Otter sits with STAG, her husband, they hold hands and kiss deeply.

Bull toasts Raven and they empty their cups. Wolf beckons a WINEBEARER over to refill them.

EXT. FEAST TENT - MEANWHILE

Fox sits by a small fire and picks at the food on his plate.

Bear approaches from behind.

BEAR

The Chieftain wonders at your absence.

FOX

It was too loud.

Bear sits next to him and sips from her horn. She offers it to him, but he declines.

Bear looks up at the stars, Fox stares into the fire.

They sit in silence.

Bear goes to say something but thinks better of it.

FOX (CONT'D)
What?

BEAR
Nothing.

Silence.

BEAR (CONT'D)
I think this will be my last raid.

FOX
With any luck, this will be the
last raid any of us have to go on.

Bear chuckles.

BEAR
Bull's not that old yet.

Fox says nothing.

BEAR (CONT'D)
No, I mean...I mean I might settle
down after this, buy a farm, live a
quiet life.

FOX
Good.

BEAR
Good?

FOX
It's about time.

BEAR
Are you saying I'm getting old?

FOX
I'm saying I'm not a boy anymore.
You don't need to protect me, I can
fend for myself.

BEAR

You are my charge, I could not
taint my honor by abandoning-

FOX

Too much of your life has been
wasted worrying about your honor.

BEAR

It was honor that made me return to
save you when your brother ordered
the retreat.

FOX

Yes and for that-

BEAR

It was honor that drove you to
fight so valiantly in the first
place!

FOX

And see where that got me! Honor is
a ghost, a word we say when we are
too afraid to see the cost of our
wealth. Abandon it now before it
costs you too. Bear, I don't want
to see you dead in some field. If I
see you dead, I would rather time
be the murderer than some fool with
a knife.

Beat.

BEAR

What did they do to you?

CUT TO:

Bear and Fox are suddenly in different positions. This seems
like a different part of the conversation. *What just
happened?*

A group of PARTYGOERS spill out from the feast tent and into
the night, among them are Wolf and Raven.

FOX

Speaking of stories, Raven! So nice
of you to join us.

RAVEN

(slurring)

We were sad to see you go.

He sits down across from Fox, sloshing and spilling his drink.

The other partygoers gather round.

FOX
The crowds, the noise, I could barely think.

EXT. VIKING LONGSHIP - PRESENT

Fox's story is interrupted by:

OTTER
Wait, what just happened?

FOX
What?

OTTER
Did you skip a part of the story?

FOX
No.

OTTER
It just seemed that you did-

WEASEL
I noticed that too.

FOX
I did not. And if I did, it was only to skip to the important part. May I continue.

BULL
Go on.

FOX
Anyway. I had said "I could barely hear myself think, and Raven responded..."

EXT. FEAST HALL - NIGHT - AS RETOLD

We pick up where we left off.

RAVEN
That's the point!

They laugh. Wolf, cheeks rosy with drink, sits next to Bear, but Bear shifts and moves a little away. Wolf takes notice, concern flashing across her face for a moment.

RAVEN (CONT'D)

What were you two talking about before we interrupted.

FOX

Just the old days.

RAVEN

Old days? You're hardly a man yet, you don't have old days!

WOLF

Hardly a man to some, yet proven more a man than many.

They laugh again.

RAVEN

Stories 'round the campfire then?

FOX

I suppose you could say so.

RAVEN

Bear, you must have many stories, being as...seasoned as you are.

Bear smiles.

BEAR

I'm sure I could rival even you.

RAVEN

Ah psshhh. None could rival me.

FOX

You seem taken with drink, my friend, are you well?

RAVEN

I would be well if I were taken with drink, but alas I assure you, I am quite sober.

He sips from his drink, swaying.

FOX

You boast of stories, well let us have one then!

Murmured approval ripples through the crowd.

Raven stands, addressing the group.

RAVEN

And what story will you have, ey? A story of dragons? A story of heroes and maidens fair? Of great raids? The gods? Oh the gods! Perhaps the dastardly machinations of Loki, the Trickster-

BEAR

How about the story of the changeling-

EXT. VIKING LONGSHIP - PRESENT

Fox is interrupted once again by:

WOLF

Bear didn't say that!

FOX

She did. I remember quite clearly.

WOLF

No, she...I would've remembered if she had.

FOX

You were drunk, Wolf, I was sober. I assure you, Bear brought it up.

Wolf tries to remember.

EXT. FEAST TENT - AS RETOLD

We pick up where we left off.

BEAR

How about the story of the changeling?

RAVEN

Changeling?

BEAR

Aye.

RAVEN

No, no, I would rather not-

FOX

Oh surely one as well versed as you
knows the story! Or else perhaps
Bear was right! Perhaps she is more
storied than you!

Laughs from the crowd.

RAVEN

Of course I know it! I know it. I
simply did not think it would suit
the festivities, but if you must
harass me, then fine. The
story...of the changeling:

The group pulls tighter around him.

The fire simmers and CRACKLES.

RAVEN (CONT'D)

There are some--old men, wise men--
who still speak the ancient
stories, stories of forgotten
magics, stories of the realm of
fairies; where the great Seelie and
Unseelie lords would hold their
grim and magnificent court. These
unseelie know many dark magics with
which to prick and prod us mortals.
Some speak of a creature born of
such dark magic, a creature known
as the changeling!

WHISPERS.

Raven strides around the campfire, shadows flickering in the
trees, seeming to take the shapes of his story as he speaks.

RAVEN (CONT'D)

A creature, nay a monster whose
nature it is to shift and morph its
shape, to crack its bones into new
forms and thereby to replace a
member of the mortal world, who
would thence be spirited to the
dark realm of the fae to be chained
up and enslaved for ages eternal.
All the while, upon Midgard, there
would walk among the people a fairy
trickster, wearing their friend's
visage, nigh indistinguishable from
the original.

Bull, Otter, Turtle, and the others stroll out of the tent, laughing RAUCOUSLY and sloshing their drinks.

Fox jumps up from the fire and rushes over, shushing them and directing their attention to the story.

They quiet down, drawn in by their curiosity, and enthralled by Raven's presence.

RAVEN (CONT'D)

But soon after the kidnapping, those familiar to the victim would start to see in their friend a change of attitude, a shift in personality. What was once a jovial, loving father is suddenly overtaken with wrath, or perhaps a mother of most noble nature suddenly breaks out into arguments and demands her husband defend her honor against imagined slights. Then, the rumors spread. Small rumors at first: "the neighbor has a wart on her ankle, I saw it." Harmless little things at first, then slightly larger and larger lies, built upon the foundations of the first: "and I saw her sleeping with the baker." A web of misdirection so complex you can't see it at first until a tragedy hits, then their trap of deceit closes, and the web becomes clear: a plague hits the community, and suddenly the neighbor's warts become witch-marks, and her affairs with the baker, they aren't so harmless anymore. Before you know it, you're hunting dark sorcerers in your neighbor's homes, with great torches, and savage fiery eyes. The community is destroyed-- not by invasion, not by plague, not by famine, but by lies and rumors-- and with that, the changeling is gone. Returning to the dark woods of its unseelie court to brag and boast of its horrid accomplishments. And to the waking world, the towns around it, the mortals of meager knowledge, it seems that a hysteria fell suddenly, unconscionably upon this once peaceful town.

(MORE)

RAVEN (CONT'D)

A tragedy, no doubt, but a natural one. Still, to those old men, those wise men, those men of ancient stories, they know the truth of the matter. A changeling, with its pale featureless face, with its cracking bones and shifting form has corrupted the peace and left the village in ruins.

Silence.

The FIRE CRACKLES.

A loud POP and spray of sparks startles Weasel.

FOX

You are right, it was not well suited for such festivities at all.

The Vikings laugh, but there is still a coolness to them, an uneasy nature which the story has instilled in them.

Bull watches with nervous eyes.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. VIKING LONGSHIP - BACK TO SCENE

Bull listens, eyes distant, remembering this night.

Crow claps.

CROW

Brilliant story, brilliant retelling. I still have no fucking idea what this has to do with Bear's death here on this ship. You're wasting our time Fox.

WOLF

He's right, this is pointless. If we are to talk of Bear's murder, let us talk of Bear's murder! Let us recount last night, figure out the-

FOX

You don't understand, do you?

WOLF

I don't understand? Are you talking down to me, boy? Are you calling me dim?

FOX

We can't start with the murder. We can't. Did you listen to the story at all? The changeling thrives on misdirection, deceit. We cannot decipher its plan on its terms, it is too...complex too arcane. We have to start at the beginning and find the thread of its lies, the first small rumor, the foundation upon which it has built the rest of its plan. A plan that led us here, stranded, thirsting, confused, and **paranoid**. Bear's death is the last piece of the puzzle, it wants us to start there so we don't see how we got there.

TURTLE

Who else would it be, Fox?

FOX

I don't know.

TURTLE

If you don't think it's Raven, then you must have an alternative.

FOX

I don't know what happened I just don't want us jumping to any conclusions. I'm not-I don't know, but you saw blood and you wanted to make more. That's dangerous.

WEASEL

How could Raven possibly know all that?

OTTER

What?

WEASEL

About the changeling. He couldn't have known all that-

CROW

I'll tell you how; he *is* the fucking changeling!

RAVEN

I heard it from a druid we met on the raids of the Celtic lands. That is why none of you have heard it, that is why I alone know it, and that is why I had not told it before.

CROW

How absolutely convenient.

FOX

The Celtic lands?

RAVEN

Aye!

FOX

When did we raid the Celtic lands?

Silence.

FOX (CONT'D)

I've been on every fucking raid since I was a boy, Bull when did you...

Bull looks Fox in the eyes.

FOX (CONT'D)

I thought you said you didn't have the men for a fight. I thought you said that you only left me in that dungeon because you were too weak for a-for fuck's sake you left me there to rot while you filled your pockets-You're unbelievable Bull.

BULL

I did what I had to do!

FOX

What you had to- you left me there!

BULL

I had to make a choice between my brother and my people, it is my duty-

FOX

Duty, duty, duty, you always hide your greed, your bloodlust--duty is always your excuse.

BULL

I did not want to leave you-

FOX

If it weren't for Bear I'd be dead right now, do you understand that? I'd be dead and it would be your fault. And you, Raven, I thought...I thought at least you would be honest with me. I thought you would speak reason to our chieftain.

CROW

Why the fuck are you still surprised that Raven is acting strangely? It is in the story! "And those who know the victim will see in them a change of personality!" Why would he lie to Bull and tell him to be careful of your treachery? Because he's spreading lies! Fuck sake how are you so blind.

FOX

It may not be as it seems.

CROW

I'm going mad with all this talking, my fucking head is splitting, your voice, your fucking voice I hear it in my sleep. Bull where is the ruthless invader that you're supposed to be, huh? Where did he go? You let this creature sit here while you tell bed-time stories.

BULL

Sit down Crow.

CROW

Fuck all this! Your brother has made you go soft.

Crow storms past Bull.

TURTLE

Vigi, where are you going, sit down.

BULL

I will not have this disrespect on my ship!

CROW
I'm getting my knife, and I'm
ending this!

WOLF
This is not yours to end,
boy.

BULL
I said no weapons. You touch
steel, and you die!

Crow reaches down and flips open a hatch, in a bed of straw sits Bull's assorted belongings. Crow reaches in and starts rummaging around.

Bull throws him away from the compartment.

CROW
I'm done with this!

Crow shoves Bull back.

Bull stumbles and falls into the compartment.

BULL
You dare strike me?!

CROW
You have stolen what is mine!

Bull jumps out of the compartment.

CROW (CONT'D)
You are a coward and a fool, and I
refuse to die because of it.

Crow shoves Bull out of the way before he can get his balance.

Bull stumbles to the side of the ship. He draws his sword.

Crow jumps into the compartment.

CROW (CONT'D)
Now where have you put my knife,
thief.

Turtle tries to lunge for Bull, but Bull throws him away.

Crow looks up at the motion and sees Bull, charging him, sword drawn.

Bull stabs Crow hard, falling as the momentum carries him over the compartment.

Crow lurches back against the side of the compartment, the force of Bull's charge driving him back.

There's a sickening SNAP, as the sword breaks off in his chest, and he collapses awkwardly into the straw at the bottom of the boat. Crow is dead.

Bull pushes himself to his feet and slams the compartment shut, closing off Crow's body with it.

Turtle let's out a scream of rage and charges Bull, but Fox and Wolf catch him first.

BULL

I said no fucking weapons!

He pushes his hair out of his face with bloody hands, out of breath, a savage look in his eyes.

BULL (CONT'D)

He'd gone sea mad you all saw it!

TURTLE

You murdered him!

BULL

I restored order. As is my due.
This is my ship! I am your
chieftain I won't let some fucking
thing take that from me.

(screaming into the air
around them)

You hear that? I will kill to keep
what is mine! And I will die before
I see my people fall to you!

Fox puts a hand on Bull's shoulder.

FOX

Brother-

Bull, startled, backhands Fox before he can stop himself.

His fist connects with Fox's cheek sending him reeling.

Fox stumbles and falls to the bottom of the boat.

EXT. ENGLISH VILLAGE - FLASHBACK

VIKINGS pillage the town.

A house burns as armored Norsemen watch.

Nearby, there are SCREAMS.

EXT. VIKING LONGSHIP - PRESENT

Fox struggles to keep his breathing in check, he struggles to keep the memories at bay. He can't. He scrambles along the bottom of the boat, hyperventilating.

He reaches over the side splashing water on his face.

The water drips in rivulets down his face, sparkling in the setting sun.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. ENGLISH CHURCH - FLASHBACK

His face caked in blood, panting.

EXT. VIKING LONGSHIP - PRESENT

Fox stands, tearing at his clothes.

WOLF
(muffled)
Fox, Fox what is wrong.

FOX
I-I--I'm too hot, my back. It's
burning I've been-I've been
stabbed! I can't breath! I can't-

Bull comes and tries to grab Fox, an aggressive attempt to calm him, but Fox panics; he shoves Bull away, and falls backward into the ocean.

EXT. ENGLISH VILLAGE - DAY - FLASHBACK

A younger, unscarred Fox trudges out of a church, exhausted, blood-covered, eyes vacant.

A sword hangs loose in his hand.

Bull embraces Fox, clapping him heartily on the back.

A MONK stumbles out of the church, falling to the ground.

Bull bellows a laugh, and stalks over to the monk.

The monk feebly crawls away.

Fox watches, unmoving.

Bull watches the monk struggle, then buries an ax in his head.

A horn of warning BELLOWS.

Their heads snap to it.

EXT. OCEAN - PRESENT

Fox bursts to the surface.

EXT. ENGLISH FIELD - FLASHBACK

ENGLISH FOOTSOLDIERS battle VIKING WARRIORS. Any semblance of battle lines have dissolved. It is the worst kind of battle: a melee.

ANOTHER ANGLE:

Fox, drunk with battle, charges into a pack of Englishmen, his sword in one hand, a round shield in the other. He fights wildly, a fiery rage burning in his eyes.

A devastating blow from a warhammer SPLINTERS Fox's shield, and knocks him to the ground. He reels, his arm bloody and potentially broken. He lashes back at the assailant before he can draw back for another blow, cutting him down.

English soldiers close in around Fox, cutting him off from the rest of the Vikings, but in his fury, he is able to keep them away for the moment.

On another part of the field, Bull fights amongst a small group of Vikings. He detaches himself from the battle for a moment, and surveys the field.

BULL'S POV

All across the field, Vikings are being surrounded and cut down. The English are winning.

Bull grimaces at the choice he has to make.

BULL

Retreat!

Fox hears this and tries to fight his way to his brother, pushing past enemy soldiers, tripping on bodies. Rage is a powerful weapon, but eventually fatigue sets in, and Fox has reached this point. His movements are slower now, his breathing ragged, his eyes don't burn as strong.

He is so close to cutting a path clear.

From behind, a sword punches through Fox's armor. Blood drips down the blade.

He falls to the ground, gasping in pain.

Between the legs of soldiers, he makes eye contact with Bull.

Bull stares at him for a moment, then turns away and retreats.

Fox rolls onto his back, and stares at the sky.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. OCEAN - PRESENT

Fox gasps for breath as he surfaces. Bull reaches down his massive hand and grabs him, yanking him back onto the ship.

Fox tumbles back in, rolling to the bottom of the boat, shaking, shuddering. On his back, a wicked scar burns a bright red, matching the place where he was stabbed in the battle.

His whole body shivers and he shuts his eyes tight.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. TORTURE ROOM - FLASHBACK

Fox opens his eyes.

Fox, bloodied, filthy, haggard, tied to a chair squints up at ENGLISHMEN.

FOX (V.O.)
He left you to die.

One Englishman leans in towards Fox, a glittering crucifix falling out of his shirt.

ENGLISHMAN
(In saxon?)
Make him renounce his gods, his
kin, his world.

The TORTURER nods under a hood, and picks up a set of thumbscrews from a nearby table.

FOX (V.O.)
He left you to torture.

Fox struggles against his bindings to no avail.

The Torturer affixes the thumbscrews to Fox's hands.

BULL (V.O.)
Fox.

The Torturer twists the screws, crushing his hand. Fox contorts in pain, a scream ripping through him.

BULL (V.O.)
Fox.

EXT. VIKING LONGSHIP - PRESENT

WEASEL
He's gone mad!

WOLF
He's battle-worn.

WEASEL
Battle-worn? He's fucking lost it!
You want someone who's changed?
Look at him!

OTTER
You're awfully quick to point the
finger elsewhere, Weasel, aren't
you.

BULL
Fox!!

WEASEL
What are you insinuating?

WOLF
What are *you* insinuating?

WEASEL
I'm just saying if there's one of
us acting strangely, why are we
ignoring the man who just tore off
his clothes and dove into the
ocean!

OTTER

I've been watching you, Weasel, did you know that, and I'm starting to get real suspicious of how quiet you are? Quiet until someone needs pushing, then all of a sudden you've seen Raven whispering to Bull and you're certain it's him, then when it's convenient you change your mind and suddenly Fox is the one we should be watching. Anyone but you, isn't that right?

WEASEL

I haven't done anything!

OTTER

Exactly.

BULL

Fox!!

Fox's eyes shoot open, he thrashes about for a moment before regaining his bearings.

The rest of the Vikings all stare at him.

Fox pants hard, clutching his head, still fighting the memories in some dark recess of his mind.

OTTER

You're suspicious of him? Let's just ask him.

WEASEL

I hardly think-

OTTER

What? You don't think its worth it? So you think it's worth saying when he can't hear us, when he can't defend himself. You think it's suspicious just so long as no one notices it was you suggesting it in the first place?

WEASEL

No! I just-

OTTER

Fox. What the fuck was that?

Fox shivers and tries to dry off with his clothes.

WEASEL

See? No answer! That's suspicious!

WOLF

Leave him be!

WEASEL

No! I won't leave him be, not while he's acting like a fucking changeling, no I won't leave him be!

WOLF

Have you ever been in a fight?

WEASEL

Yes of course I have-

WOLF

No, not a scrap, not a brawl. A battle, Weasel, a real battle with steel and blood and fire and pain and chaos? Have you ever been in a real fight?

WEASEL

I'm the navigator-

WOLF

So no. Tell me then? Have you ever been held prisoner? Tortured day-in, day-out, tormented and starved and battered by people whose language you couldn't even understand?

Tense silence.

WOLF (CONT'D)

I thought not.

Bull looks over at the sun, now making its descent towards the horizon, then at his brother: shaking, broken, starving and dehydrated.

WEASEL

What if...what if Crow was the changeling and the Chieftain just ended it, right now, just...what if it was already over.

Turtle leaps to his feet.

TURTLE
Crow was no monster.

WEASEL
And why not?

TURTLE
I would have noticed. I would have seen.

WEASEL
Well Raven, how could we know? How do we know if a changeling is dead?

RAVEN
I don't know!

WEASEL
You must!

OTTER
It's a fair question to ask! If Crow was the changeling and Bull really was right then there would be no need of further trial.

TURTLE
What, of anything that has happened so far, has pointed towards Crow? Huh?

FOX
Nothing so far.

TURTLE
So far?

FOX
We should stay the course. Continue piecing it together.

WEASEL
Let it lie!

FOX
We cannot afford to let it lie until our fears are laid to rest.

BULL
We'll start again in the morning.

TURTLE
Start again?

BULL
You heard me.

TURTLE
I will not wait another night for justice, nor will I listen to the orders of a murderer-

BULL
Perhaps you would like to question me, perhaps you'd like to reach for a weapon as well. See if you fair any better.

Turtle's muscles tense, ready to brawl.

Wolf pulls Turtle away.

BULL (CONT'D)
We need to rest. Everyone takes a watch of the prisoner tonight, understood?

Turtle and Wolf talk in whatever "private" way they can on such a small boat.

WOLF
Be calm.

TURTLE
He has slain-He has murdered Crow!

WOLF
Crow had gone mad.

TURTLE
He hadn't-

Fox passes and puts a hand on Turtle's shoulder.

In the background, Otter opens the compartment and looks down at Crow's body.

FOX
(in a trance)
Still your temper. It is the wrathful who strike quick, it is the wise who lie in wait.

Fox continues towards Raven at the back.

TURTLE
You call Crow mad?
(re: Fox)
(MORE)

TURTLE (CONT'D)

That is madness. That is a dangerous lack of fucking awareness. "it is the wise who lie in wait" what kind of ominous nonsense is that?

WOLF

He's been through much.

TURTLE

It sounds like a threat is what it sounds like, maybe we should listen to Weasel.

WOLF

You think Fox could kill Bear?

TURTLE

What if it isn't him?

FOX

Weasel, Otter, would you be so kind as to clean up again. I believe Bear's body has started to...smell a bit. Store them in there.

Fox gestures at the place where Crow's body still twitches, his blood staining the straw.

BULL

Those are my things!

FOX

You will have no use for them now.

Otter and Weasel look to Bull for direction.

BULL

Do as he says.

Fox stands over the compartment as Otter and Weasel lower Bear's body down next to Crow in the straw. As they step out of the compartment, Fox jumps down.

Fox arranges Bear's body respectfully, rummaging around in the straw to set it like a bed. He moves Bull's bags, but no one seems to pay much attention.

He climbs out and looks down at the two lifeless bodies.

FOX

Such rashness, such violence will get us nowhere! You are all playing into its plans.

Fox slumps, his eyes seeing something distant, far away. His hands still shaking.

Bull throws the broken hilt of his sword in the sea.

It glints in the darkness for a moment before it is swallowed in the vast unfeeling depths.

TURTLE

How can he speak of patience?

WOLF

Because he knows patience. How do you think he survived?

TURTLE

I'm not entirely sure he did.

WOLF

He held out until Bear came for him, and because of that, he's still alive. I am waiting for this stupid fucking trial to be over because I am patient, and I know that if I act as Crow acted I would be branded mad as well. If I am awaiting my vengeance, then so must you.

TURTLE

But what if that isn't Fox?

WOLF

The story said that those who know him would see a sudden change in his behavior something out of the ordinary, yes?

TURTLE

Yes and-

WOLF

And Bear would've noticed that wouldn't she? I would notice it. Fox is changed, yes, but it is not because he is some monster. It is because he has seen the kind of monsters we can become.

Turtle takes this in, glaring at Bull who sits in the bow of the boat.

Raven anguishes in his bonds, the sun shining directly in his eyes.

EXT. VIKING LONGSHIP - NIGHT

All is dark again. The stars and moon are blanketed by cloud and the ship rocks in the swells. CREAKING TIMBER whines a poor lullaby.

Fox stares, unseeing, at a point off in the distance.

Wolf comes by and shakes him. He snaps out of it.

WOLF

Alright Fox. Time to watch over
your ship.

Fox blinks.

FOX

My ship?

WOLF

You made it didn't you?

Fox chuckles and runs his shaking hands along the beams, feeling it as if caressing a loved one who has passed away.

FOX

Ah, yes. And what a beauty she is.
Or...was. Alas it will have been my
last.

He holds up his gnarled and mangled hands.

FOX (CONT'D)

These are not shipwright's hands
any longer.

WOLF

You'll find some purpose.

Fox looks over at the compartment where Bear and Crow's bodies are stored.

FOX

If we survive.

WOLF

Look at me. Bear lived her whole
life protecting you. You die now,
what was the point.

FOX

Get some sleep. We have a long day
ahead of us.

Wolf lowers herself down, wraps herself in furs and closes her eyes.

Fox looks up at where Raven hangs by his hands at the stern. Raven's eyes drift in the no man's land between sleep and the waking world, kept alert by the discomfort of rough rope on sea-chapped skin, but not aware of those around him.

FOX (CONT'D)
(softly)
Wolf.

Wolf peeks out from beneath her eyelids.

FOX (CONT'D)
(sincere)
I won't tell anyone, I hope you know that.

WOLF
Tell anyone what?

FOX
About you...and Bear?

Wolf clenches her jaw.

WOLF
What do you mean?

FOX
Nothing, nothing. But I won't.

WOLF
Tell whoever you want, Fox, I don't know what you're talking about.

FOX
You do...know what I'm talking about.

Wolf rolls over ignoring him.

FOX (CONT'D)
You're the only other person who cared about her as much as I did. More probably. Or maybe just differently.

Tears well up in Wolf's eyes.

FOX (CONT'D)
I'm sorry.

She snuffles.

WOLF

Be quiet and let me sleep, fool
boy.

Beat.

FOX

Sleep well then.

She closes her eyes, tears streak down her cheeks.

EXT. VIKING LONGSHIP - LATER

Fox sits, staring into nothing, the endless unbroken swells lulling him into a gentle trance.

The hollow sound of wooden boats BUMPING together snaps Fox out of it, his head whipping to the sound.

His face, hopeful, drops in confusion, revulsion.

Another boat, woven together from fingernails and hair, bumps gently against the port side of Fox's own. No crew mans the other boat besides the shadows dancing in the pale light of the moon.

It drifts away, towards the horizon.

Fox follows it along, stepping carefully between sleeping Vikings, he climbs up onto the side of the ship, holding a remnant of the mast-rigging for balance.

Fox stands at the bow, hanging over the side by the arcing dragon's head.

He watches the other ship drift toward the sloping horizon: just a long empty sea arcing off beyond view.

A slight wind kicks up, blowing Fox's hair and rustling his clothes. He squints through it, looking at something far off. His eyes widen and face grows pale.

Off in the distance, barely visible through fog and clouds, an IMMENSE DARK SHAPE rises from the depths like a snake raising its head above water.

The winds picks up and great ripples emanate out from the shape, rushing toward them, gathering in speed and size until they are massive waves, propelling the other ship, hewn of hair and nails, towards them.

Fox stares harder through the fog, braced against the oncoming waves.

The great shape arcs its serpentine head, shifting towards the boat. Slowly, the massive thing opens its piercing yellow eyes; staring directly into Fox's core.

The waves are only a mile off, and in them, another BEAST OF INCOMPREHENSIBLE SIZE writhes and undulates its trunk-like tentacles.

Fox stares at these two vast entities.

They stare back.

The waves come crashing towards the small viking ship.

RAVEN
(softly)
Fox.

Fox whirls around, seeing Raven awake, then looks back to the horizon:

Empty, calm, still. Nothing but calm unbroken seas. Fox furrows his brow in confusion.

He turns back to Raven.

FOX
You're awake.

RAVEN
Indeed I am.

Fox picks his way past sleeping Vikings to the stern.

He sits by Raven's feet.

RAVEN (CONT'D)
Would you be so kind as to release me from my bonds? Just for your watch, then you can put me back. You can't imagine how...well maybe you can. Yes you know exactly how it feels. Please, be a true friend and release me for just a bit.

Fox laughs and looks at the rest of the crew.

RAVEN (CONT'D)
No? No?

FOX

If they were to wake and find you
free of your bonds, it would be the
end of both of us.

Beat.

RAVEN

Why do you defend me?

FOX

What do you mean?

RAVEN

You were awake too. That morning.
Before me even. I saw you moving
away from Bear's body. You were
doing something, I couldn't see and
then I noticed Bear and all hell
broke out, but no matter how I
figure it I don't understand why
you would be awake on that morning,
and crawling away from her but
still wanting to defend me.

FOX

What?

RAVEN

Why did you kill Bear, Fox?

FOX

I'm not the changeling.

RAVEN

There is no changeling.

FOX

It isn't what it looked like.

RAVEN

Then what was it?

Fox looks at a knot in the side of the ship for a long time.

RAVEN (CONT'D)

I can't keep covering for you, not
if it means my life.

Fox stands up tearing a strip from his tunic and knotting it
in the center.

RAVEN (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

Fox ties the gag around Raven's mouth, tight.

Raven tries to speak through the gag but it only comes out as grunts and muffled cries.

FOX
It wasn't me.

Fox sits down and goes back to staring at the knot in the boat.

Raven SCREAMS through the gag.

Weasel, Otter, and Wolf wake from their sleep and look to the sound.

FOX (CONT'D)
He was speaking nonsense. Poison in my ear. I couldn't listen any longer.

WOLF
Well get him to shut up. We are sleeping.

They return to sleep.

Raven thinks, head spinning, trying desperately to think of a way out.

Fox looks back at the horizon where he saw the vast creatures looming. Still just fog and cloud.

EXT. VIKING LONGSHIP - DAY

Raven blinks in the sunlight, he stretches his mouth, but feels the gag dig into the sides of his mouth.

He strains against his bonds.

BULL
Why is he gagged?

FOX
You want him spewing his lies in your ear all night? Or better yet, ever?

Bull considers this.

RAVEN
Hrnnng krrrd hrrrr.

BULL

Oh shut up!

Raven looks at Fox with wild eyes.

BULL (CONT'D)

Well, let's get on with it then.

TURTLE

What are you looking for? I mean, we've been talking in circles for a while now and I just-I don't understand at what point you decide that you're certain enough.

BULL

I decide when I decide.

TURTLE

For fuck's sake I understand, "you're the chieftain, you have the power" but I don't even know what it is I'm fucking aiming for!

FOX

We are just parsing this out one moment at a time. When we get to the end, when we are done talking, that is when we will decide.

TURTLE

Bear is dead. And now Crow is dead too. We have the thing locked up and it is still able to turn us in knots. The longer we wait the higher the body count gets!

FOX

Or perhaps the body count keeps going up because you don't have the right fucking person tied up!

Raven looks at Fox, confused: *"why is he still defending me?"*

WEASEL

I don't understand why someone doesn't just finish this and kill him already.

FOX

Because everyone knows the first person to pick up the blade to kill Raven will be the next person to die by it.

Beat.

WOLF

Where did we leave off?

FOX

We were talking about Raven's story of the changeling.

OTTER

Did anyone else notice how jumpy Weasel got from the moment Raven started telling it that night?

WEASEL

It's a scary fucking story.

OTTER

Or you were nervous because we suddenly knew too much about you.

WEASEL

That's ridiculous.

OTTER

Fox saw it too. He was the one who first pointed it out, right?

FOX

What?

OTTER

After the story...?

(beat)

You came over...

(beat)

And asked if I had noticed how strangely he'd been acting?

FOX

No I didn't.

OTTER

Yes you did. You told me to keep an eye on him, for he was acting suspicious; that's the only reason I've been watching him-

FOX

No-no-Otter I'm telling you, I never said that.

OTTER

You're lying.

TURTLE

You've been played Otter. It was the changeling. Another fucking lie!

OTTER

No, but it couldn't be. I've been watching Weasel, and I'm-I'm-I'm certain. He's been so suspicious.

BULL

This is the changeling's craft. It was pointing your attention away.

OTTER

Fuck you. I wasn't fooled by some trickster, Fox must be lying.

FOX

Otter. I speak sooth when I say, I did not come to you that night.

Otter sits and thinks.

WEASEL

Maybe Otter's the changeling!

WOLF

Shut the fuck up Weasel. Until you have something to actually contribute keep your accusations to yourself.

BULL

I won't have you wildly pointing your fingers around.

TURTLE

Maybe if we'd started pointing fingers earlier we wouldn't be in this mess.

BULL

I have heard enough of your grumbling, Turtle.

TURTLE

Grumbling? Grumbling?! I have sat back and watched you ignore every piece of good advice that's been put to you.

BULL

Watch what you say-

TURTLE

I have watched what I said, I have been careful and minded my tongue, and it has gotten us no where! Even those who don't watch their tongues and counsel you with their true minds, even they are ignored it is like you are determined to drive us all to our deaths.

BULL

I always listen to my counsel.

TURTLE

And who are your counsellors, exactly?

BULL

This is not my trial, Turtle, you'd do well to-

TURTLE

This is all of our trials, Bull! You're just as likely to be a changeling as the rest of us, you're not immune cause your daddy gave you a fucking title.

BULL

Your friend died for talking to me like that-

WOLF

I thought he died because he reached for a weapon?

TURTLE

Or was that just an excuse to get rid of an inconvenient thorn in your side?

BULL

I do not answer to you!

TURTLE

Right, you answer to no one, but you always listen to your counsellors, and you killed Crow because he tried to arm himself, but also because you didn't like what he had to say; so which is it Bull? Because I'm getting fucking confused. You're changing your story and just now there's only one reason I can think of that you'd do that.

FOX

Enough! Enough, please. Let us return to our business. Let us piece this thing together.

TURTLE

I am trying to do that-

FOX

You are making accusations, and...I cannot deny that there is a disturbing amount of merit to your argument-

BULL

Merit? Are you fucking-

FOX

He's right, "brother," no one here is beyond suspicion.

Beat.

FOX (CONT'D)

But the truth lies hidden somewhere in the past and if we let these accusations run wild, we won't be able to tell what is truth or where the changeling has simply peddled its lies.

TURTLE

You would have us die of thirst and hunger telling these stories before we ever come to a fucking conclusion.

FOX

Then so be it. I would rather die a slow death than kill an innocent man because we were too scared to take time to fucking think.

WOLF

So when will you be satisfied?

Beat.

FOX

The story tells us a few things about the changeling: we know that they suddenly change in attitude, we know they lie and hide things, perhaps stealing objects and making things go missing, we also know that people will remember someone saying something that they never said.

OTTER

That is not much.

FOX

It should be enough.

WEASEL

That could be anyone!

TURTLE

Has Raven not changed? Has he not grown more quarrelsome, more bitter?

FOX

No!

WOLF

The night of the prophecy, you two fought.

FOX

As all friends do!

BULL

It is not in Raven's character to make open argument.

OTTER

No, you're right, Raven doesn't argue, not usually.

(MORE)

OTTER (CONT'D)

Usually he's more sly than that,
plying you with stories after the
fact to sway your mind.

FOX

We all argue from time to time.

OTTER

I remember this night quite well.
Raven fought against your counsel,
he fought hard.

Fox sighs.

FOX

Speak your piece.

OTTER

This was the night before Raven
told the story of the changeling.
Bull had called a meeting on
account of Fox's sudden return from
prison, saved by Bear's bravery.

INT. MAIN TENT - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

The same tent that the feast was held in, except now it is
laid out as a gathering hall. A long fire pit smolders and
gives the whole tent a smoky atmosphere, lit only by
flickering candles and burning embers.

OTTER (V.O.)

He was still weary from travel and
burdened by many torments of the
body.

Bull sits in a simple wooden throne, behind a low table, on a
raised platform above where Raven, Bear, Wolf, Fox (just
returned from his escape so still dirty and bloody), and
Weasel sit around a table. Assorted other VIKINGS attend
these powerful few.

Otter and Stag sweep into the tent.

OTTER

It is late, Chieftain, I hope this
is important-oh...Fox, you've
returned.

Fox nods, every movement seems to pain him, and the wounds
from his torture have not yet closed.

Otter and Stag join the others by Bull's throne.

BULL

Yes! A most wonderful thing, my brother has escaped from his bondage, and made his return home.

FOX

We are not home, we are on some forsaken island still in the English sea for reasons that I don't understand. Why have you not returned to our lands, brother? The raids must have ended long ago.

BULL

We have been waiting for you!

Fox is skeptical.

OTTER

Surely you haven't called us here simply to welcome your brother, no offense meant.

BULL

We must inform him of what has happened, the exciting new prisoner we have found!

Crow and Turtle drag in the WISEMAN, an old frail looking fellow dressed in only rags, bound by rope, yet with a piercing eye that sees all.

BULL (CONT'D)

Excellent timing! You'll never believe the fortune the gods have granted us! We have a prisoner--Fox--who speaks of a new land far off in the west. A land untouched by Christian men, untainted by other Norsefolk, a world of vast trees and mountains and new seas. This prisoner even tells us of a people who reside there who-

FOX

You want to continue raiding?

BULL

A brand new continent! Can you imagine the tales they'll sing in our names when we have conquered and raided a new uncharted coast?

FOX

So you have dreams of conquering
now too?

BULL

Oh, do not be so obstinate! Do you
not see the scope of this?

FOX

You promised me that this was
the last raid Agnarr. You
said that with the spoils we
gained from this we would
settle a fertile valley
somewhere and begin the work
of merchants.

BULL (CONT'D)

This is an opportunity,
Ulfgeirr! We cannot pass it
up!

BULL (CONT'D)

That was before we found a man with
directions to-

FOX

And why the fuck do you believe
him?

BULL

Mind your tongue, boy, you speak to
your chieftain.

FOX

I thought perhaps the one good
thing to come of my capture would
be that you might see the bloody
ends your ceaseless raiding has
brought!

RAVEN

These raids bring our people
wealth, pride, honor-

FOX

Honor?

RAVEN

Yes honor.

FOX

How many good men, strong capable
men, men with families and-and-how
many of these men's lives have you
thrown away for your wealth, and
pride, and honor.

RAVEN

Deyr fé, deyja frændr, deyr sjalfr
it sama, ek veit einn, at aldrei
deyr: dómr um dauðan hvern. Fullar
grindr sá ek fyr Fitjungs sonum, nú
bera þeir vánar völ; svá er auðr
sem augabragð, hann er valtastr
vina.

SUBTITLED:

Cattle die, and kinsmen die, And
you will die the same way; But a
noble name will never die, if its
reputation lives. Cattle die, and
kinsmen die, And so one dies one's
self; One thing now that never
dies, The fame of a dead man's
deeds.

FOX

They were not dead yet, they did
not have to die!

RAVEN

But they would die, eventually. As
will you.

FOX

Is that a threat?

RAVEN

It's a fact. We all die, Fox, but
these raids give our people a way
to win their honor, a way to live
on in the stories of their deeds.

FOX

Their stories, how many have died
for your stories?

BULL

Enough of this.

FOX

You are responsible for death, Bull
you do not get to be impatient when
someone shows you that.

RAVEN

Many have died for the stories, and
yet many will live on forever in
them.

FOX

They will die forever in them.

RAVEN

Better to die a thousand deaths in the sight of history than to die one death and be forgotten.

FOX

Vague aphorisms and cryptic messages to make yourself sound wise, is that all you have? The only justification to drag your people across an unknown sea to an unknown land on the word of some prisoner?

BULL

He has brought us a tool. To find these lands. He calls it the sunstone.

Bull gestures to Weasel, who draws from a pouch: *the sunstone!*

FOX

Fuck your sunstone.

WISEMAN

The bloody one is right, you will find nothing but pain and suffering in those lands.

Beat.

FOX

You speak our tongue?

WISEMAN

You may wish to find wealth and glory, but you will find nothing but death.

BULL

Oh be quiet.

Bull kicks the Wiseman in the ribs sending him over.

The wiseman rises to his feet, the once frail façade replaced with one of surprising power, there is something strange about him, a new presence that was not there before.

WISEMAN

Hear me now, little chieftain, for the gods of Asgard have no power to save you from your fate, not in the lands from which I hail. It is the domain of our spirits, and if you spill the blood of their people you shall draw the wrath of the land.

The wiseman, arrayed in this eldritch power stalks towards Bull.

WISEMAN (CONT'D)

Should you embark to bring such bloodshed and pain to the shores of my people, your mighty ships shall be wracked with a great and terrible tempest with winds so savage that your sails shall rip and your world shall spin.

CROW

Who bade you speak prisoner? You have no right to address those gathered here!

Crow grabs at him, but the wiseman shoves him back with surprising strength.

BULL

Someone stop him!

The Vikings make a move toward the man, but this new presence has instilled fear in them and they freeze.

WISEMAN

You shall know the wrath of my land, in such a way as will shake your will, and you shall find yourselves lost upon the sea, baking in the heat of the holy sun, but of all these, the chiefest of calamities is yet unspoken of, for the greatest evil will walk among you. **A creature with the face of a friend shall whisper in your ears small lies and simple truths to drive you mad, and like a pack of wild dogs, you will tear yourselves apart.**

WEASEL

What does he speak of? A creature with the face of a friend? What does that mean.

BULL

It is nonsense!

The wiseman slams his hands on the table in front of Bull.

WISEMAN

Hear me, I say, for this is your
only warning! Turn back, return to
your lands, or die upon the sea-

Crow finally makes it back to the Wiseman again, he draws an
ornately decorated dagger, Crow's dagger, from his belt and
stabs the wiseman's hand, pinning it to the table.

He rears back and punches the wiseman to the ground.

The Wiseman slumps awkwardly, hand still pinned to the table,
and as fast as it came, the strange energy passes.

Tense silence. The room is made uneasy by this ominous
prophecy.

BULL

You craven sons of bitches, an old
man speaks some words and your
courage leaves you? Crow, you are
the only true Viking among these
cowards!

Bull grabs the knife, still stuck in the old mans hand and
twists it. The old man yelps.

BULL (CONT'D)

Did you think some scary words
would be all that it took to
dissuade us?

WISEMAN

Those were not my words, but rather
words of power, the words of my
gods, sending you their doom.

BULL

Did I not tell you to cease your
mutterings, cur?!

Bull stalks around the table to where the wiseman sits
slumped.

BULL (CONT'D)

We care little for your
superstitions old man.

He kicks the wiseman in the ribs.

Raven notices Fox.

Fox watches, pain in his eyes. That same rage starts to burn, the searing rage he's only shown in battle. His trembling hand starts to reach for a weapon at his belt when:

RAVEN

Enough! Enough! Stop this! We don't torture! Leave the old man be!

BULL

He has threatened us, our people.

RAVEN

Empty words from a bitter man! Pay him no heed and give his words not the weight of your anger, but rather dismiss him, defy him, raid his lands and show him what a true Chieftain of the Tales thinks of his meager deceptions.

Fox creeps to the wiseman while the rest argue and bicker. He looks at him tenderly, a look of compassion, of intense knowing.

The wiseman looks up.

The two prisoners see each other. In a way no one else can, they truly see each other.

WISEMAN

You are scarred.

Fox pulls the dagger out of the man's hand.

FOX

Aye, but they'll heal. As--in time--will yours.

WISEMAN

(gesturing at his body)

Not here.

(gesturing at his mind)

Scarred here. You long for something, scarred one, I can see it.

Fox pauses. They stare hard at each other, trying to see past each other's mask to the true man beneath.

BULL

Fox, what are you doing.

Fox snaps out of it, dropping back into his persona.

FOX

We don't torture people, Bull.

BULL

Of course we do! When they are our prisoners-

FOX

I said we don't torture people. And we don't raid, not anymore, that was your promise.

BULL

Mind how you speak to your chieftain, boy, I don't take instruction from you-

FOX

(brandishing Crow's knife)

I am speaking to my brother and asking him to see reason! You gave your word, no more raids, no more death, no more senseless killing!

Bull strides toward Fox, the dagger still levelled at Bull's chest. He snatches Fox's wrist and pulls the dagger from his hands.

BULL

Things have changed. I must decide what is best for our people, not what you want when your stomach has grown too weak for the sight of blood. Men must die for the greatness of our people to persist and men who die for our people, die with honor!

Bull tucks Crow's ornate dagger into his belt.

FOX

They die for your vanity,
 "chieftain," and your vanity is
 going to kill us all,
 (re: Raven)
 Unless you stop letting this poet
 fill your ears with-with stories of
 valor and honorable deaths, unless
 you stop that--you must see there
 is no such thing as an honorable
 death!

Bear puts her hand on Fox's arm, but he pulls away, too incensed to stop.

FOX (CONT'D)

Death is death. There is no Valhalla, no Heaven, no anything. Just darkness and nothingness, and you don't know because you haven't seen it, not truly, not deeply. But if you listen to Raven you will see it. Trust me you will. And you'll see that there isn't anything valiant or honorable about it-

BULL

Fox, sit down.

FOX

Listen to me-

Bull steps up to Fox.

BULL

I have listened to you, boy! You think that anyone who disagrees with you is beneath you. I am the Chieftain, not you. If I say we go on this raid, then we go on this raid. I say sit...you sit!

The brothers square off, neither one moving.

Only the CRACKLING of the fire, and the tent flaps RUSTLING in the breeze disturbs the otherwise silent battle.

Bear puts a reassuring hand on Fox's shoulder. He winces away snapping out of it.

He backs down.

BULL (CONT'D)

We will use the sunstone to guide us to these new lands and we will raid them. That is my decision.

Fox droops his head, tired, defeated.

BULL (CONT'D)

We have no use of the prisoner any longer. Brother, in the morning you are to take him to the woods and slit his throat. Let the birds of our land thrive from the nourishment of his corpse.

FOX

Are you mad-

BULL

Do as I say! We prepare to leave at once.

EXT. VIKING LONGSHIP - PRESENT

The gathered Vikings listen intently.

OTTER

We began the preparations to embark the next day, the next night was the feast where Raven told the story of the changeling. We left for this new land in the west less than a week later.

A long beat.

They all look at each other, trying to figure out if the others are thinking the same thing as them.

Fox stares at the knot in the wood.

TURTLE

Fox, were you threatening him?

Fox doesn't answer.

Raven nods vigorously, grunting, clearly trying to speak.

OTTER

Raven has something to say-

FOX

Since when do you want to hear from Raven?

OTTER

What?

FOX

This entire time, every time he spoke you all shouted him down. Every time. Some one or other would yell at him to shut his mouth; now I finally follow your direction and gag the man and you want to hear him talk?

Silence.

Bull eyes Fox suspiciously.

BULL
Let the skald speak.

FOX
You don't want to do that, Brother.

BULL
Are you threatening me?

FOX
No.

BULL
Are you sure? It wouldn't be the first time as Turtle was so clever as to point out.

Fox looks up at Bull, his eyes dead and vacant; the eyes of someone with nothing to lose.

FOX
(calm)
Fine. You want to hear him speak. Then let him speak.

Bull nods at Otter. She picks her way to the stern of the boat, stepping over Fox, and unties Raven's gag.

Raven spits and stretches his mouth.

RAVEN
It's him. He was- he was already awake when I arose, I swear it. He was crawling away from Bear, she was still breathing, he started fiddling with the side of the ship. I didn't see what he was doing because that's when I noticed Bear's body. She was still warm.

Wolf laughs.

RAVEN (CONT'D)
Is that funny?

WOLF
Yes.

Everyone looks at her.

WOLF (CONT'D)
He will say anything to save his hide, look at him. To think Fox could let Bear die.

She spits.

WOLF (CONT'D)
And if that was the case, why did
he not say so sooner?!

RAVEN
I was defending Fox, as he defended
me. I was not yet ready to accept
the truth.

WOLF
And what truth is that?

RAVEN
Fox is dead somewhere, or else with
the Unseelie courts. That thing is
the changeling. It must be.

WOLF
Grasping at straws!

RAVEN
Well then ask him, why don't you!

Wolf chuckles and looks at Fox for the first time since Raven
accused him.

WOLF
Fox?

Fox stares at the knot in the wood.

WOLF (CONT'D)
Fox!

FOX
Yes, I was awake before him.

Stunned silence.

WOLF
You're saying he's right?

FOX
Yes-er-no-I-I-I didn't kill Bear
but she was-yes she was still alive
when I woke up, barely.

TURTLE
We've been listening to him
this whole time!

BULL
You should have spoken sooner
Frar!

WEASEL
See? See? I told you he was
suspicious.

OTTER
You did tell me to watch
Vagn, didn't you, you piece
of shit.

FOX
I didn't kill Bear!

WEASEL
That's exactly what the changeling
would say.

FOX
It's also exactly what someone
who's not the changeling would say.

WOLF
How could I not see it? Even
when I was warned I ignored
it.

BULL
I won't have my own brother
being used against me.

FOX
I didn't kill her I swear it by the
gods! I swear it!

RAVEN
Then what were you doing that
morning? Why didn't you wake
anyone?

Fox doesn't answer, he just gives Bull a meaningful look.

Bull furrows his brow, not sure what the look means.

RAVEN (CONT'D)
Well?

Fox looks off at the horizon.

FOX
Looks like a storm is brewing in
the west.

TURTLE
Do something Bull!

Bull continues to watch Fox with a mixture of confusion and
curiosity.

WOLF
Bull!

He snaps out of it.

BULL
Um-tie him up. Bind him.

RAVEN
Release me! You have found your
changeling!

BULL
Not yet, soon maybe, but...I need
to think.

WOLF
I'm done thinking!

Wolf charges Fox, throwing him against the side of the boat,
bashing his head off the benches. She hammers down fists upon
him.

BULL
Stop that! Stop! Get her off him!

Turtle and Bull struggle to pull Wolf off Fox. They push her
back away from him.

WOLF
Don't get in my way!

TURTLE
Be calm! Remember when you
told me that?

BULL
(re: Otter)
Tie him up, make sure he's
breathing.

Otter nods and sets about binding up Fox, his body limp and
unconscious, face already swelling.

WOLF
I have been plenty patient already,
it is time to serve my justice!

BULL
It is not your justice to serve.

WOLF
Oh, it is.

BULL
Well then try it. But if you do
there will be more than one new
body joining Bear and Crow down
there.

WOLF
That may be, but I won't be one of
them.

BULL

Then try, and see what happens.

They standoff.

Wolf looks past Bull to where Fox is being tied.

WOLF

When we end this, I deliver the
punishment.

She stalks away.

BULL

(to Otter)

Get him secure.

He watches Fox with a concerned eye.

EXT. VIKING LONGSHIP - NIGHT.

Fox's face is swollen and bruised.

Fat rains drops patter on his forehead. His eyes flutter and open as much as they can.

He stands, strapped to the broken mast. The rain has just begun, its first few drops hitting the decks of the ship.

The rest of the Vikings sit beneath a tarp, shielded from the wet, even Raven is given the protection of shelter, though his hands are still bound.

The sky opens up and the full force of the deluge hammers down upon Fox's sun-chapped, scarred, sea-raw skin.

He tries to grin and bear it, but the intensity of the rain slamming down on his head lights that burning rage in him.

His eyes sear the boards of the ship, arcing up until they stare hard into the darkness beneath the tent.

He screams his anguish into the storm, water dripping from his beard, plastering his hair to his face.

He screams, and screams, and screams again, screaming all his pain out to the horizon, the wind ripping the sound from his mouth even as it leaves his throat.

Lightning FLASHES.

The whole sea is singed with its pure white light, and for a second, in the light of the flash, we see again the boat hewn of hair and fingernails, the Serpentine head with yellow eyes, and the massive tentacled beast that lurk beyond the horizon and beneath the waves. Night sweeps back in and plunges everything into darkness once more.

Fox stops, paling in the shadow of these vast creatures. He shakes, with cold, with fatigue, with pain.

He droops his head.

The rain batters the boat.

INT. TARP - CONTINUOUS

The Vikings huddle in their small shelter. The only sound is the cacophony of RAIN pounding on the tarp above their heads.

Raven watches Fox through the opening at one end.

BULL

Fear not, it is almost over.

OTTER

At the least it is a chance to
refill our water-skins.

WOLF

I can hardly sleep with this noise!
This dreadful noise!

BULL

Tell us a story, Raven.

RAVEN

What?

BULL

To pass the time.

TURTLE

It was his stories that got us into
this mess. His stories and your
bull-headedness.

RAVEN

I hardly think it would be
appropriate anyway.

The rain HAMMERS against the tarp.

OTTER

Do you think the others survived
the storm?

RAVEN

Perhaps some of them.

OTTER

Do you think...

WOLF

I'm sure he's alright, he's strong.

WEASEL

It was a mighty storm, not much
chance-

WOLF

Oh quiet. What do you know about
anything?

WEASEL

I know the sea, I know the storms.
We were lucky to have survived it,
I'd be surprised if others were
equally lucky.

TURTLE

If you know the seas and storms so
well, perhaps you should've
navigated around them.

WEASEL

I went as the sun-stone directed.
That was my order and that was my
duty.

WOLF

Well the sunstone led us here-

OTTER

Likely led my husband into a sea-
grave.

WEASEL

The course was true! Would that I
still had it, I might be able to
bring us home, but since it was
lost in the storm there is no
helping it now.

They sit and stew in their helpless situation.

OTTER

I would do anything to see him
again.

WOLF

Do not despair. He may yet live.

TURTLE

I just want to be on solid land
again, if I could feel the earth
beneath my feet once more I could-I
could kiss it.

WEASEL

I would settle for some food,
proper food, feasts of it.

BULL

No use talking about it. Sleep.

RAVEN

And may we find our hopes in the
realm of dreams.

They groan at his poetry and turn over.

They pretend to sleep, but none can. Instead they lay
restlessly, wondering if the man next to them, the man they
once trusted, is still what they appear to be.

EXT. VIKING LONGSHIP - DAY

Fox hangs from his bound arms, dripping wet, eyelids heavy
from lack of sleep.

The tarp rustles and shifts and Bull climbs out, stretching.

Steam rises off the ship as the sun burns away any evidence
of the previous night's storm.

Bull strides to the where Fox drifts in and out of sleep and
grabs him by the hair, pulling his head back to look in his
swollen eyes.

BULL

Wake up changeling.

He lets go of Fox's head and it drops to his chest, rolling
weakly from side to side.

FOX

You hang me up. You make me your
Loki and the gods your serpent,
letting them drip their venom upon
my sleeping head. But do not
forget, dear brother, what happens
to Loki's captors when Ragnarok
comes.

BULL

More threats. Hard to see how it
took so long for me to figure you
out.

FOX

We both know it wasn't me who
wielded the dagger.

BULL

How do you know it was a dagger
that killed her?

FOX

Because the wound was too small and
too precise for a sword, and
because I'm not a fool, and because
I know, Bull, I know that it wasn't
me and I know that a dagger killed
Bear.

BULL

Are you saying that--I don't like
what you're insinuating.

FOX

Well I don't like being held
prisoner once more, and yet here I
am.

The rest of the Vikings begin to stir from their dry spot.

BULL

You'll die for this, changeling.

FOX

We both know I'm not the
changeling, but perhaps I'll die
for it anyway. You lot seem hell-
bent on killing someone so I'm not
overly optimistic of my odds
either. Still...I can't cover for
you forever. At some point I'll
have to tell them.

Bull laughs, then sees Fox, his face a mask of calm, but his eyes belie a fiery danger. Bull stops laughing.

BULL
You're serio-Tell them what?

RAVEN
Good morning, Bull.

Raven approaches from behind, as Otter and Wolf fold up the tarp and store it in one of the ship's many below deck compartments.

RAVEN (CONT'D)
Having a chat with the prisoner
before we start, are we?

BULL
I was just...

RAVEN
Oh it's no matter. Listen, I hardly
feel it necessary to keep me bound
up like this. None of the others
are treated so harshly and I'd
hardly say I'm any more dangerous
than them, I mean I've never even
been on a raid for Christ's sake.

FOX
Christ's sake?

RAVEN
It's a English saying.

FOX
Do you know what it means, Skald?

RAVEN
(overlapping)
Of course I do!

FOX
(overlapping)
You're invoking the name of the
Christian god.

RAVEN
I...Of course, yes.

FOX
Are you a Christian then?

RAVEN

The poison, look at the poison he
spews from his mouth. Why should we
not gag him as you gagged me, hmm?
And should you not release me now?
Should the treatment not be fair?

Turtle steps forward cracking his knuckles.

TURTLE

You know what? I think I am done
with fair, I think I am done with
talking. I want answers, how about
you?

Turtle looks at Bull. Bull looks at Fox for a long beat, then
at Turtle's clenched fists.

He thinks.

Bull nods.

Turtle stomps over to Fox.

Fox lifts his head barely in time to see a fist crashing down
towards his face as Turtle launches a punch at him, WHAM.

Fox spits blood onto the boards at his feet.

Raven slips over to Bull, pulls at his clothes, groveling.

FOX

Ah, so you choose to spill
more blood.

RAVEN

Just my bonds, Agnarr, I
simply want to feel my wrists
again! I'll be docile and
peaceful and-

TURTLE

Admit what you did!

BULL

Oh quiet, cur, do not
distract me from my duties.

WHAM, a hard left hook sends Fox's head rolling back in the
other direction.

Raven grasps at Bull's pants. Bull throws Raven to the floor.

FOX

First you leave me to torture, now
you take up the tools yourself?
This is-

WHAM!

Raven notices the torture for the first time.

RAVEN
What are you doing!?

TURTLE
Getting my answers!

RAVEN
You haven't even asked a question.

WHAM! Fox is hammered by another blow to the head.

FOX
I haven't done anything!

WHAM!

TURTLE
Confess!

Turtle draws back for another blow.

OTTER
Enough!

TURTLE
I'm not wasting more time talking
in circles, Otter, no more!

OTTER
Then get your answers, but still
your temper. You'll get nothing
from a dead man.

Turtle huffs but backs off.

OTTER (CONT'D)
Well...ask your questions.

RAVEN
(to Fox)
What were you doing that morning?

FOX
Sleeping mainly. We were rather
drunk the night before. If you'll
remember, you forced me to drink.
Perhaps had you not, I would have
slept not so heavy and woken when
the murderer was at their business
rather than after, but I suppose
you'll just have to live with that
now won't you-

RAVEN

Then what were you doing with the side of the boat.

FOX

I don't know what you mean.

RAVEN

You were crawling away from her to the side of the boat, I saw you fidgeting with something, what were you doing?

FOX

You must've been imagining something.

Bull nods at Turtle, WHAM!

Fox looks at Bull with that same fiery, dangerous glare, as if to say: *Why are you pushing me to this?*

OTTER

What was that?

TURTLE

What was what?

OTTER

That look. I just saw-yes, there it is again. Why do you look to Bull so?

FOX

I look to Bull frequently, he is my brother.

OTTER

No that look, you gave him a look.

WOLF

I saw it too. There was a look. Bull, what do you know?

BULL

Nothing! I have no idea what you're talking about!

OTTER

Fox is hiding something, and when asked what it was, he looked to you, why is that?

BULL

It is the changeling, why do you invest so much trust in the quality of its gaze? Go on with your questions.

FOX

Then be it upon your own head, "brother."

WEASEL

What does he mean by that?

BULL

He's playing you! Continue.

They turn back to Fox, but they are not so certain anymore.

RAVEN

I know I wasn't imagining things. I know what I saw. You were fiddling with the side of the boat.

Fox says nothing.

WHAM!

Fox coughs and reels, his head spinning.

FOX

Fine, fine! Enough just...I'll tell you what I know, only get me some water.

RAVEN

We're almost out.

TURTLE

Water? You didn't get enough of it last night?

FOX

I'm thirsty. My throat is dry. If you want my answers I'll need to speak them with a quenched tongue.

WOLF

Just give it to him.

WEASEL

That's ours! Why waste it on the monster? Who knows when it will rain again! We may not be able to fill our skins again for weeks!

RAVEN

Just do it! A little water to get
the spring of truth to flow.

TURTLE

Piss off with your poetry, fool.

Wolf approaches Fox and grabs a fistful of his hair. She
pulls back his head and pours her waterskin down his throat.

Fox splutters and coughs, but drinks greedily.

She lets go and retreats.

FOX

Thank you.

He breaths and thinks.

WOLF

You've had your water! Speak!

RAVEN

What were you doing that morning?
What were your plans for us? How do
we get ourselves out of this!

FOX

For the last time, I didn't kill
her! I'm not the changeling-

Turtle rears back to fire another punch at him.

FOX (CONT'D)

But!

Turtle stops mid swing, still poised to deliver the blow if
he doesn't like the answer.

FOX (CONT'D)

When I awoke, I saw Bear bleeding
there, Raven was right. But...I-I-
there's a secret compartment over
there, I built it in when I
designed the boat in case I ever
needed to-well I don't know why I
did it, but when I awoke, the
weapon was still-just look for
yourself, just open the latch.

Fox gestures with his head over to the side of the ship.

Otter slinks to the compartment he indicates.

She feels along the side of the boat.

OTTER
I don't feel anything.

FOX
There's a latch at the top, you
just have to-

CLICK, she finds the latch and what once looked like the normal side of the boat now reveals a small hidey-hole.

Otter looks, furrows her brow, then reaches in.

BULL
What is it?

RAVEN
Is it a trick? A trap?

Otter pulls something out of the hole and looks at it for a moment, but her body blocks our view.

WOLF
Well...

Otter takes it in her hand driving it into the bench next to her.

As she releases her grip we see what she found: **Crow's dagger** lies stuck into the wood of the bench, glimmering in the light of the sun, stained dark with dried blood.

WOLF (CONT'D)
Is that-

TURTLE
Crow's dagger.

All eyes look to Bull.

BULL
Why do you look to me?!

WEASEL
You were the last to have it.

TURTLE
Where'd you get the knife, Fox?

FOX
When I awoke...it was...it was
stuck in Bear's still beating
heart.

(MORE)

FOX (CONT'D)

I didn't-I didn't mean to let her die, but I couldn't help her and I-I panicked. All I could think to do was protect my brother-

BULL

Protect me-I had nothing to do with this!

TURTLE

No? Then how did Crow's knife end up covered in blood?

BULL

I don't know-

TURTLE

How the fuck did the knife end up there, then?!

BULL

It's twisting your minds-

OTTER

Then why were you so resistant to return the dagger to Crow, Bull?

BULL

What?

WEASEL

Crow wanted his dagger, and when he went to find it...you killed him.

BULL

I said no weapons!

OTTER

And when I asked where the murder weapon was, how quick were you to have us believe that it was cast into the sea.

RAVEN

That's convenient, isn't it.

BULL

Raven you know as well as I that the changeling is bound there.

RAVEN

Well now you're certain it was your brother?

BULL

He stole the dagger, planted it-

FOX
Stop with the lies!

BULL
Lies? Lies! I swear I have not seen
that dagger since I was given it!

RAVEN
You were well positioned to skew
suspicion away, seeing as you
continuously insisted on being in
charge of the trial.

BULL
I had mercy! I heard your
arguments! Stayed your execution
long beyond the point of wisdom.

OTTER
So you admit you acted foolishly in
order to keep this investigation
going?

BULL
Well-

OTTER
I'm sure you'd like us to believe
it was altruistic, or perhaps you
knew the longer we thought a
changeling was among us the longer
you'd be able to prey upon that
fear.

TURTLE
You kept us defenseless and waited
for us to get impatient! You waited
for us to try to kill each other so
you could kill us with impunity
claiming sea-madness, didn't you?

TURTLE (CONT'D)
A cunning plan, a wicked
plan.

WEASEL
It didn't matter who we
thought the changeling was,
so long as we kept falling
into your trap, you could
keep killing us and claim
"law!"

Bull looks around for support, sympathy, anything.

BULL
I-I-I am innocent!

He finds none. Exasperated, enraged, primal, his eyes turn to Fox.

BULL (CONT'D)

I told you! I warned you,
changeling, that if you try to come
for what is mine I will kill you!

FOX

Is that why you killed Bear? She
challenged what is yours?

Bull roars and charges Fox. He wraps his hands around Fox's throat, squeezing the breath out of him. Fox, hands still strapped to the mast, gasps helplessly.

Turtle lunges for Bull, grabbing at his shoulder, but Bull wheels around rocketing his fist at Turtle.

Turtle gets laid out, falling to the floor of the ship.

Bull spins back to Fox and beats him over the head, bashing him in the face with his hammer-like fist.

Now Wolf and Otter charge Bull. They struggle.

Raven rushes to the compartment containing the weapons and throws it open, jumping down into it.

Wolf and Otter finally throw Bull away from Fox.

Bull falls hard against one of the benches; the bench where Crow's knife still lies stuck in the wood.

BULL

I'll not have a mutiny on my ship!

Bull snatches the knife and charges toward Wolf and Otter, but his eyes look past them at his brother, Fox.

Wolf and Otter stand their ground, but they're too small to stop Bull's massive body and he careens through them.

Bull charges past the compartment in which Raven finally finds a sword.

Bull is only a few feet from Fox, nothing can stop him now.

Fox shuts his eyes tight.

Desperately, Raven swings the sword.

Steel flashes in the sun.

CRASH! Bull falls to the floor, screaming in pain, Crow's dagger skittering away.

The force of his body falling rocks the boat. The Vikings grab whatever they can to stabilize the ship.

Fox opens his eyes.

Raven stands in the compartment still holding the bloody sword in his bound and shaking hands. In his eyes is the cold look of someone who just tried to kill for the first time.

Bull clutches his leg where a deep gash now gushes dark crimson blood onto the floor, trying to fight back the pain.

Otter picks herself up off the floor and grabs Crow's knife from the ground.

Wolf checks to see if Turtle is alright.

BULL (CONT'D)
Will none of you help your
chieftain?

They continue about their business.

Otter cuts Fox's bindings and he collapses to the ground.

The Vikings stand and look down at the defeated Bull. Bull stares back, venom in his glare.

WEASEL
What do we do now?

FOX
Tie him up.

Otter hands Fox the dagger and cautiously approaches Bull, wary of any last attempts to fight, but Bull just clutches at his wound and tries to fight unconsciousness.

She ties him to the mast.

TURTLE
How do we kill it, Raven?

RAVEN
Kill it? I do not know.

TURTLE
I thought you knew all things of
the changeling.

RAVEN

I never claimed that! You all assumed. I knew only what the druid told me and what he told me, I told you.

BULL

I'm--someone stop the bleeding...I...

Bull's eyes flutter and droop.

Fox crouches down and puts pressure on the wound.

Bull cries out in pain.

FOX

Stop your yelling. Someone get me a belt or-or I don't know I need to tie off the leg.

TURTLE

You're saving it?

FOX

I'm buying us time to think.

WEASEL

Here.

Weasel holds out a strip of cloth, but doesn't get any closer.

FOX

Well bring it over! He's tied up. Be not so afraid.

Weasel approaches slowly, and hands Fox the cloth then immediately retreats back to the others.

Fox ties a tourniquet around Bull's leg, but Bull's head droops losing consciousness.

They watch him for a long beat.

He doesn't move.

WEASEL

Is it...?

Fox hold's Crow's dagger up to Bull's mouth. The blade fogs over with Bull's faint breath.

FOX

Not yet. But I doubt he'll last long

TURTLE

Good.

FOX

Do not celebrate yet. He may be the only one who knows how to get us out of this, seeing as he put us into it. We may yet need him alive.

OTTER

It is not a 'him' Fox. You must understand that now.

Fox looks at his brother for a long time.

FOX

So...my brother is dead then.

OTTER

Aye.

WOLF

It seems that way.

WEASEL

If so then that would make you...

WOLF

The chieftain.

Fox continues to stare at Bull.

FOX

Would that it came by better means.

Beat.

FOX (CONT'D)

If it be so then...then...we keep him alive for now. Search his things, perhaps there is more that he has hidden.

Otter goes over to the compartment where Bull's things are kept and throws the latch open.

Wolf and Otter stare down at the bodies of Bear and Crow, who stare, unseeing, back at them.

Otter jumps down into the compartment.

BULL
 (muttering)
 It's not me-it's-it's-

Otter pulls something out of Bull's bag and holds it up.

In her hand, the Sunstone glitters.

WOLF
 Is that-

WEASEL
 The Sunstone!

Weasel snatches it out of her hand and rushes to the side of the ship, inspecting it.

FOX
 Does that mean you can set a new course?

WEASEL
 Yes! Yes! Even on the cloudiest day, we will not stray from our path. That is--well we'd need a way to get the ship moving again.

FOX
 Wolf, Otter, Turtle, help me fix these oars. We are going home.

EXT. VIKING LONGSHIP - NIGHT

The crew sits around, mending the broken oars under Fox's guidance.

The cool night rocks their boat gently.

FOX
 That should be enough to get us moving again.

WOLF
 We will be rowing with broken oars, they will surely break again.

FOX
 Then we will mend them again.

RAVEN
 Have hope.

FOX

In any case, we begin a long
journey tomorrow. Get your rest,
you will sleep unassailed tonight.

They put down their work and settle in for the night.

Wolf stares at the splintered ends of the oar she holds. Her eyes arc up and she searches for some of that "hope" that Raven spoke of. She sighs and rolls over, trying to sleep.

Fox watches them all, then nestles into the crook of the dragon's head at the bow.

He closes his eyes and drifts to sleep.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. FOX'S HOUSE - MORNING - DREAM

The younger Fox sleeps, morning's light filtering through a nearby window of his simple home. He is scarred from his time in the dungeon, but cleaned up.

He wakes up with the sunlight and looks around, expecting to see the stranded ship, but...he's Home: *how?*

He stands up confused.

FLASH:

INT. BULL'S TENT - LATER - DREAM

Fox is suddenly in Bull's tent, he looks around getting his bearings.

Bull looms out of the smoke and darkness, his form large and distorted, voice booming, face a mangled nightmarish visage.

BULL

Well, take the prisoner to the woods.

FOX

But-

BULL

Leave his body for the crows.

FOX

What should I use?

BULL
I don't care.

FOX
I have no weapon.

BULL
Mine are on the table just take one
and be done with it.

Fox goes over to a table covered in various weapons. He looks through them, before his eyes catch on one.

He looks over to Bull:

Bull is looking away.

Fox takes one of the weapons, but in the dream-haze we can't quite see it. He tucks it in his belt.

FLASH:

EXT. ENGLISH FOREST - LATER - DREAM

Fox leads the Wiseman through the brush by a rope that binds his wrists to this throat.

He passes out of the edge of the wood and into a small glade, sunlight streaming down on them. He stops. The wiseman stops behind him.

Fox pulls the weapon he took from Bull from where he tucked it in his belt. He looks down at it:

In his hands, is **Crow's Dagger**.

Fox turns to the Wiseman. He looks down in pity. He reaches one hand down to take the Wiseman's thinning hair and pull the head back, exposing his throat. He puts Crow's Dagger to the Wiseman's throat.

Fox looks down in concentration, but the Wiseman just looks up with calm, peaceful acceptance.

FOX
Why do you not fight?

WISEMAN
Why should I?

Fox hesitates.

WISEMAN (CONT'D)

I see you, scarred one. I see what
you long for. I know who you are.
You will not kill me.

FOX

And why not?

WISEMAN

You are done with that, are you
not?

Fox releases his grip.

FOX

You play some kind of game, Oldman,
I won't be your pawn.

WISEMAN

My part in this game is over,
whether you kill me or not. The
rest is yours to play.

Fox looks down at the dagger.

WISEMAN (CONT'D)

Do as you will scarred-one.

Fox extends the dagger toward the Wiseman's throat. It hovers
for a moment, uncertain whether it will cut flesh or rope.

Fox cuts the rope at the Wiseman's throat, then at his
wrists.

Fox looks back the way he came with a cold resolve.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. VIKING LONGSHIP - LATER

Fox's eyes open. He looks over at Bull and sits up.

A foot steps right in front of Wolf's face, the impact waking
her, but she pretends to still sleep, trying to ignore this
motion in the night.

Fox stealths past Wolf, his feet delicately placed, as he
creeps toward where Bull lies asleep; tied at the foot of the
broken mast.

He stands over Bull's sleeping form for a moment, watching,
then turns and looks over the rest of the crew.

They all sleep soundly, save Wolf, but her back is to Fox so he doesn't see.

Fox crouches down, and with one hand covers Bull's mouth, with the other he presses down upon Bull's wound.

Bull wakes with a start, YELPING in pain through Fox's hand.

Wolf hears the muffled scream and shifts slightly, peaking over her shoulder.

Fox releases Bull's leg and puts a finger to his mouth. Bull regains his breath and nods.

Fox slowly releases Bull's mouth, and sits next to him.

Bull breaths heavily, a sheen of feverish sweat glistening in the dim light from the moon.

BULL

Raven?

FOX

No brother, it's me, Fox.

BULL

Why am I...what's happening?

FOX

You're dying of your wounds, Brother. A slow death. A quiet death.

BULL

Some water, please.

FOX

Poor brother, you don't even seem to understand, though I suppose that makes sense.

Bull's head rolls from side to side.

FOX (CONT'D)

Have you ever heard the Christian myths brother?

Bull's eyes roll in his head.

FOX (CONT'D)

I didn't think you would. Never one to pay attention much are you? I've heard it. Many times.

(MORE)

FOX (CONT'D)

They used to speak it as they raked
my body with knives and demanded
that I renounce our gods, which I
did, though not for the reasons
they wanted.

Fox looks off towards the horizon. The sea gently rocks the
boat.

FOX (CONT'D)

The story goes that a long time ago
there was this man, this-this
pinnacle-this paragon of man. And
he walked among the people and
preached peace, and showed love for
all those he met, and gave eternal
forgiveness to even the most wicked
of people, and he was loved. But
the powers that be, some man named
Rome, didn't like him and paid his
friend to betray him, and deliver
him into Rome's dungeons whereby he
would be taken to a field and
staked up, nails through his hands
and feet, upon a great wooden
cross. But even then, even as he
died upon that cross, he forgave
the traitor who put him there, and
died as a martyr and a hero. There
are some other stories of great
magics he was able to perform and a
resurrection if you believe all
that. I do not. I believe that this
was a great man, but a man. No
magic, just...a wish for peace. For
that he gave his life, hoping that
some might take his example and
seek that eternal peace. But alas
death is death. It has no magic to
give life meaning, no power to
change everything. It is simply an
end.

(beat)

Can you believe that they preached
to me about the value of peace even
as they burned my skin and carved
my flesh? They preached of the
sanctity of this holy man who died
for them, the beauty of his death,
the glory of it, but even still
they ignored his purpose. He was a
fool. There is no honorable death.

(MORE)

FOX (CONT'D)

You see that now, Brother, don't you. You see what your killing has wrought.

Bull's eyes grow distant. His body goes limp. His breath fades.

Fox watches him silently. Some part of him mourns even as another celebrates his bittersweet victory.

WOLF (O.S.)

You're the monster.

Fox looks up.

Wolf stands at the other end of the boat, holding the splintered oar in her clenched hand.

FOX

There is no monster of magic and myth. Only the monster we made. Only man.

Raven wakes up and looks over at the commotion.

WOLF

You killed Bear. You're the one who did this.

Fox stops, his eyes well up with tears.

FOX

Aye.

WOLF

You wanted revenge on your brother, so be it, she did not have to die for it!

FOX

You do not see the scale of this. I do not seek revenge, or title, or power alone. I seek change.

WOLF

Change? You have destroyed your people!

FOX

I have done nothing to destroy you; I only let you destroy yourself, and in this destruction I have sent a message to all who shall hear of it.

Fox stands.

FOX (CONT'D)
 Honorable, dishonorable, rich,
 poor, storied, or forgotten. Thus
 is our fate.

Wolf walks toward him, not hearing him, not hearing anything other than his confession of guilt. Tears stream down her cheeks and in her eyes is the grief of what she must do.

Fox looks Raven in the eye.

FOX (CONT'D)
 You wanted a story? Tell mine.

Wolf plunges the oar into Fox's chest. He clenches his teeth. She drives him stumbling backwards towards the back of the boat and with all her strength drives the oar through his chest, pinning his body to the wooden dragon-head at the stern.

Fox gargles out his last few breaths, his eyes trace to the horizon, searching for those yellow serpentine eyes, then fading into death.

Wolf collapses to her knees, all of her pain and anger released in that one blow.

She weeps.

The boat floats in a sea of night.

INT. RUINED CHURCH - NIGHT

SUPER: MANY YEARS LATER

A dirty, battered, TEMPLAR, who looks an awful lot like Raven, is bound to a wooden support beam, held prisoner.

SUPER: AND IN LANDS FAR ABROAD.

He finishes his story.

TEMPLAR
 Wolf wept for a long while, her
 tears staining the decks of Fox's
 ship as she kneeled at his feet.
 (MORE)

TEMPLAR (CONT'D)

They had been ruined by a monster with the face of a friend who convinced Turtles to act like Wolves and Bulls to act like Bears so that there was none who could see the thread of its deceit. Fox the bloody, Fox the shipwright, lay, life's blood dripping onto the decks of his own ship. His name alone survives the tale, for it is said his name was Ulfgeirr. He passed quietly into death, following his brother, who gasped his last breaths only moments before. The sea was quiet, the wind still. The prophecy was fulfilled, but the vast unfeeling depths paid no heed.

He stares into the flames of a nearby campfire.

In the dancing shadows cast by the flames, various other KNIGHTS and ATTENDANTS, MERCENARIES listen intently.

They huddle in the darkness of their camp amongst the crumbling ruins of a church.

KNIGHT

So...what happens next?

TEMPLAR

I do not know.

ATTENDANT

What do you mean?

MERCENARY

Why bring it up then?!

KNIGHT

It is heresy anyway! Why should we believe you when we know not from whence this tale is born?

TEMPLAR

It was told to me by a Norseman!

KNIGHT

A Dane?!

MERCENARY

What does this have to do with us? Let's just kill him and be done with it.

ATTENDANT

But how does it end?!

In the shadows, another PRISONER huddles amongst the stones of the church, bound by his hands and feet; bloody and dirtied such that he is nearly indistinguishable from the stones he sits in.

He leans out of the darkness, face illuminated by the glow of the flames. In the low light he looks eerily similar to the Wiseman from the story.

PRISONER

The story is not over. It has no ending.

Silence.

ATTENDANT

Why did Bear have to die? I mean...what does it all mean?

The prisoner shrugs. He leans back into the shadow of the church.

The prisoner looks out at the figures huddled in the darkness, wary hands on the hilts of blades, and paranoid eyes scanning their former friends. In the darkness, the shapes of their armor, the symbols of their gods, the color of their skin all fade away and they are simply shapes hiding in the night.

The Templar stares into the fire, now just simmering coals.

In the embers, the faint image of a serpent with glowing yellow eyes stares back at us.

The Templar returns its stare, his face growing pained and feverish.

The Serpent glows, sinister in the darkness of the night.

The Templar snaps out of it, looking up. He locks eyes with the prisoner in the night. In the glow of the embers, the prisoner's eyes glimmer yellow like the serpent's.

For a moment, in the flicker of the campfire, the Prisoner's face seems to shift, and for just a half a second...*Was that Fox?*

END.