

"THE INHERITANCE PROJECT, 1x06"

"A *Path Revealed*"

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Based on the novel by

Christopher Paolini

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1st Draft

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FADE IN:

EXT. GIL'EAD CAMP - EVENING

The moon is full and bright overhead, bathing the hilly grassland around Gil'ead in silvery light. A few miles north of the city, Isenstar Lake shimmers like metal in the moonlight.

The center of the city is an impenetrable looking military fortress, and rather than being surrounded by houses it is instead surrounded by rough log barracks.

A few miles from the city, far enough that it can't be seen, is a solitary campfire out on the plains. Snowfire and Tornac are picketed a few feet away, grazing.

SAPHIRA, sparkling in the firelight, is curled up by the fire and chewing on a freshly caught deer. She takes it apart effortlessly, crushing bones in her jaw, as she watches the two figures around the fire.

ERAGON, his ribs fully healed after a month of travel, and MURTAGH dance around the fire as they spar. The edges of their blades have been magically guarded so they can't cut each other and the ring of steel on steel echoes through the night.

Eragon and Murtagh strike with incredible speed, parrying each others attacks each time. Eragon disengages with a flourish and spins away, settling into a crouch as he searches for an opening. Murtagh grins and charges in again, Eragon smiling as he dodges.

They continue to hammer away at each other, seeking an opening in the others' defenses but finding none. Their arms start to weaken and sweat pours down their faces as they start to exhaust themselves.

ERAGON

Respite?

Murtagh stops mid-swing and sits down heavily, panting. Eragon staggers over and collapses next to him, also breathing heavily.

MURTAGH

You're good. I know a strong teacher when I fight their student.

Eragon nods solemnly, looking back at Saphira.

ERAGON

Likewise. Your mentor, Tornac, could make a fortune with an academy. People would come from all parts of Alagaesia to learn from him.

MURTAGH

(sharply)

He's dead.

ERAGON

I'm sorry.

They sit in silence for a minute, catching their breath, until Eragon sits back up and heads to the fire. He uncovers the pot simmering over the fire and stirs the cooking stew.

MURTAGH

I'm not sure you should be the one to go into Gil'ead.

ERAGON

Why? I can disguise myself well enough, and this Dormnad will want to see my mark as proof.

MURTAGH

The Empire wants you much more than me. If I'm captured, I' can easily escape again. But you,...

(beat)

You'll be in for a slow death by torture, unless you join Galbatorix.

Saphira growls quietly, gnawing on her deer.

SAPHIRA (V.O.)

We would prefer death.

Murtagh nods.

MURTAGH

Besides, Gil'ead is a major staging point for the army. Those buildings we saw, they're barracks.

(beat)

Going in there would be like handing yourself to the king on a gilded platter.

Eragon looks to Saphira.

SAPHIRA (V.O.)

It makes sense. There are certain words I can give him that will convince Dormnad of his truthfulness.

ERAGON (V.O.)

I don't like letting him put himself in danger for us.

Eragon looks back to Murtagh.

ERAGON

Alright, then. But if anything goes wrong, I'm coming after you.

Murtagh grins.

MURTAGH

That would be quite a tale, a lone Rider facing on the king's army single-handedly.

(beat)

I'll head out early in the morning. Neither of us should remain near Gil'ead longer than a few days.

SAPHIRA (V.O.)

(dryly)

I like his logic.

Eragon nods and begins filling two bowls with stew for dinner.

FADE TO BLACK

The OPENING CREDITS ROLL.

FADE IN:

INT. GIL'EAD - MORNING

The rough city is awake and bustling now, yapping dogs running through the streets rather than children. Soldiers are everywhere, patrolling the streets in formation. A few haggard looking traders pass through the streets too, giving Murtagh some cover.

Murtagh moves casually through the streets, wearing a weathered cloak with the hood up. He sticks close to the traders and travelers so as not to seem out of place.

CUT TO:

EXT. GIL'EAD CAMP - DAY

Eragon stands on the crest of a small hill, hand on Zar'roc's pommel at his waist, watching Gil'ead. Saphira is crouched a little below him so she can't be seen from the city, but still watches intently.

ERAGON (V.O.)
Should we go in?

SAPHIRA (V.O.)
He said it would be a few hours. Be patient.

They are silent for a few moments, waiting for some sign.

ERAGON (V.O.)
I should've gone in with him. Putting him in danger; it was selfish.

SAPHIRA (V.O.)
He can take care of himself. Trust your friend.

Eragon nods and fidgets with Zar'roc, looking at Saphira.

ERAGON (V.O.)
I wonder if the woman from my dreams is in there.

SAPHIRA (V.O.)
(exasperated)
Eragon...

ERAGON (V.O.)
(frustrated)
I've checked in almost every town we've passed by, and now my dreams show nothing but an empty cell!

SAPHIRA (V.O.)
Alagaesia is a large place, she could be anywhere. If her cell is empty, perhaps the worst has happened.

Eragon turns away from her and back towards Gil'ead.

ERAGON (V.O.)
I don't want to think that.

Saphira continues to stand guard, perfectly still, while Eragon fidgets.

As the hours pass and the sun moves across the sky, he eventually goes over to Snowfire and starts checking his gear. He has just finished tying his pack onto the saddle when Saphira straightens.

SAPHIRA (V.O.)

Look.

Eragon spins around and runs back up to the top of the hill. In the distance, a single horseman exits the city and gallops towards them furiously. Eragon climbs onto Saphira's back.

ERAGON (V.O.)

Be ready to fly.

SAPHIRA (V.O.)

I'm prepared for more than that.

As the rider gets closer, Eragon can recognize Murtagh crouching low over Tornac's neck. He does not slow down as he reaches their camp, dismounting hurriedly and panting for breath.

MURTAGH

Did anyone follow me?

ERAGON

We didn't see anyone! What's wrong?

Murtagh nods.

MURTAGH

Good. Let me eat before I explain.
I'm starving.

Murtagh heads over to the pot, where the leftovers from breakfast are cooling. He eats a few mouthfuls, talking in between sloppy bites.

MURTAGH (cont'd)

Dormnad agreed to meet us outside Gil'ead at sunrise tomorrow. If he's satisfied you really are a Rider and it's not a trap, he'll take you to the Varden.

ERAGON

Where do we meet?

Murtagh points westward.

MURTAGH

On a small hill across the road.

SAPHIRA (V.O.)

Then why were you fleeing?

MURTAGH

It's a simple, foolish thing. I was seen in the street on the way back by someone I know. I tried to run, but he recognized me.

ERAGON

I don't know your friend, so I have to ask. Will he tell anyone?

MURTAGH

If you'd met him, that wouldn't need answering. It's not *if* he will tell people, but *whom* he will tell.

(beat)

If word, reaches the wrong ears, we'll be in trouble.

ERAGON

I doubt that soldiers will be sent in the dark. We'll be safe once the sun sets, and if all goes well, we'll be leaving with Dormnad tomorrow morning.

Murtagh shakes his head.

MURTAGH

No, you will be leaving with him. I told you already, I won't go to the Varden.

ERAGON

But-

SAPHIRA (V.O.)

(to Eragon)

Now is not the time.

ERAGON (V.O.)

(to Saphira)

Very well.

ERAGON

(to Murtagh)

We'll just have to keep watch until dark. Or move closer to where we will be meeting Dormnad.

Murtagh nods and finishes his lunch.

MURTAGH

Sounds good to me.

Murtagh finishes the leftovers quickly and shoves a few stray belongings into his pack before mounting Tornac again. He and Eragon turn their horses and kick them into a gallop, heading west.

Saphira takes off and climbs into the sky quickly to reach the height where she could be mistaken for a bird.

The green fields remain empty and calm as Eragon and Murtagh ride. They arrive at the hill and start setting up a small camp, keeping an eye out for soldiers. Saphira lands there a short time later, laying down next to Eragon and watching the city.

FADE TO:

EXT. GIL'EAD CAMP - NIGHT

The sun gradually crosses the sky and sets, plunging the land into pure darkness. The moon did not rise tonight, leaving only the stars. Eragon and Murtagh have set up camp on the hill where the Varden agent intends to meet them in the morning and have kept watch all day.

Saphira is laying with her head on her paws, facing the city. Suddenly she lifts her head, looking around and sniffing.

ERAGON (V.O.)

What is it?

SAPHIRA (V.O.)

I smell horses.

Eragon stands, looking around. He draws Zar'roc and Murtagh stands as well.

MURTAGH

(whispering)

What is it?

ERAGON
 (whispering)
 She smells horses. What are they
 doing?

SAPHIRA (V.O.)
 They were moving, but they've
 stopped.

She stands and turns around slowly.

SAPHIRA (V.O.) (cont'd)
 They are behind us.

ERAGON
 (to Murtagh)
 On that side of the hill.

Eragon gestures with Zar'roc and they both creep slowly in
 that direction, fighting stances ready.

ERAGON (V.O.)
 Do you smell anything else?

SAPHIRA (V.O.)
 I'm not-

Saphira is cut off as a hulking Urgal charges up the hill
 suddenly, bellowing and brandishing a large cudgel. Murtagh
 steps back as Eragon raises his hand immediately, gedwey
 ignasia glowing.

ERAGON
Brisingr!

The Urgal screams and explodes in a flash of blue light.
 Eragon and Murtagh are splattered with blood and move
 forward to investigate when Saphira suddenly bugles in alarm
 behind them. They spin around and see a group of Urgals
 running up from behind.

MURTAGH
 (angrily)
 Of all the stupid tricks to fall for!

He and Eragon run to meet them, while Saphira jumps into the
 air to get behind them. Murtagh reaches them first,
 attacking the first viciously, and four Urgals rush up to
 keep Eragon from joining him. Eragon ducks the first blow,
 stepping to the side, and kills him with another spell.

The second Urgal swings with his broadsword and Eragon is able to block it. He swings it wide and uses the opening to slash the Urgal across the throat.

He is able to hold off the third, but tries to move back towards Murtagh as the fourth Urgal moves in. He glances to the side and sees a second group of spear wielding Urgals running up the hill.

Saphira roars and lands, crushing one Urgal under her back foot and snapping up another in her jaws. She shakes him hard, tearing him in her teeth.

Murtagh dispatches his Urgal and whirls around to where Eragon is fighting two. He sees the second group approaching and dashes over.

Before Murtagh can get to him, Eragon stabs the third Urgal through the heart. He isn't quick enough however, and the fourth Urgal charges as he struggles to rip Zar'roc free from the Urgal's chest. Murtagh shouts as the Urgal's heavy club swings down at Eragon.

ERAGON
(screaming)
Run, Saphira!

The Urgal's club strikes Eragon's head hard and he crumples to the ground. Murtagh snarls and raises his sword, ready to attack as the Urgal whirls to face him and bellows, but at that moment the squad of spear wielding Urgals crests the hill and charges.

Saphira roars, enraged, and charges at the Urgal that attacked Eragon. He swings his club wildly at her, striking her nose, and the Urgal squad forms up around him, harrying her with their spears. They surround Eragon's unconscious body, preventing her or Murtagh from getting to him.

Saphira snarls and bellows like a rabid beast, practically berserk with fury, but they hold firm against her and block her attacks.

Drops of blood drip from her nose where the tips of their spears have managed to hit. Further enraged, Saphira spins around and suddenly grabs Murtagh in one front paw, taking off into the sky.

Murtagh screams and clings desperately to his sword, closing his eyes and trying to keep from flailing around so Saphira doesn't drop him by accident.

She flies long enough to be sure the Urgals haven't pursued them before landing. She sets Murtagh down, less than gently, and he stumbles as he tries to stand, collapsing as his shaky knees give out. He quickly stands up again.

MURTAGH

What now?

Saphira snorts and bobs her heads towards her back and crouches lower to the ground. He hesitates, uncertain, and nervously climbs into the saddle on her back.

She takes off again before Murtagh has even finished tightening the straps on his legs, flying quickly back the way they had come. She flies close to the ground, Murtagh hunched low over her back.

EXT. GIL'EAD CAMP - EARLY MORNING

Saphira flies back to their camp and they pick up the Urgals' tracks, traveling towards Gil'ead. They follow the group for a hour, waiting for an opportunity to rescue Eragon from them. She and Murtagh stay far enough away they can't be spotted, but the Urgals remain on alert and do not stop to rest as the sun begins to rise.

EXT. GIL'EAD

The group of Urgals finally stop and Saphira lands in a small grove of trees nearby. Murtagh dismounts and they creep closer, watching the Urgals stand around aimlessly. The Urgals have also taken Tornac and Snowfire with them, the horses tossing their heads and stamping nervously.

MURTAGH

(whispering)

I don't understand why they're
risking coming so close to the city.
Do they want to be discovered?

He looks at Saphira, who's bloody lips are pulled back in a snarl. When he looks back at Gil'ead, he starts as he sees a company of soldiers marching out of the city gates and heading towards the Urgals' hiding place.

MURTAGH (cont'd)

(whispering)

Damn. Saphira, when they attack each
other, I want you to fly at the
Urgals as if you are going to ram
them.

(MORE)

MURTAGH (cont'd)

That should scatter them enough for me to grab Eragon and maybe the horses.

(beat)

You can take him from me and escape. If I get out alive, I'll follow you.

Saphira nods her head slowly, growling softly. They both tense and prepare to attack as the group of soldiers approach the Urgals. Strangely, the soldiers don't appear to be ready to attack despite a group of heavily armed Urgals coming so close to the city.

The soldiers stop in front of the Urgals, both groups glaring at each other distrustfully, and their commander steps out.

He approaches the Urgals and says something to them. The Urgal leader hands him Eragon's unconscious body, salutes, then the entire group starts to retreat back into the wild. The commander returns to his men and they march back to Gil'ead.

Murtagh sits back, dumbfounded.

MURTAGH (cont'd)

(shocked)

They're working for the Empire. What sort of alliance is this?

Murtagh shakes his head and stands. He looks to the city, uncertain. He looks at Saphira, who's snarling has only gotten louder as she has become nearly blind with rage. Smoke curls from her nostrils and blood tinted drool drips from her fangs. Murtagh gently lays a hand on her shoulder.

MURTAGH (cont'd)

I'll follow the soldiers and see where they're taking Eragon. While I do that, can you find the Urgals again and try to get our horses back?

(beat)

I'll come find you once I know where they've taken him.

Saphira turns to regard him with one enormous eye. Murtagh meets her gaze, unwavering.

MURTAGH (cont'd)

Eragon's my friend. I won't let the Empire have him.

Saphira nods sharply and takes off after the Urgals without a word. Murtagh turns back to the city.

MURTAGH (cont'd)

(quietly)

He doesn't deserve what the king will do to him.

CUT TO:

INT. GIL'EAD CELL - DAY

Eragon slowly comes to, blinking slowly before remembering what had happened and jolting upright. He is laying on a narrow cot, his hands unbound, in a cell with an iron-bound door and a barred window in the wall above his cot.

Eragon stands up, peering out the window. The window is level with the street outside and all Eragon can see are the feet of people passing by on the busy street.

Eragon sits back down and rubs his head, still groggy. He sees a tray of food in front of a slot in the cell door and grabs it, taking a few bites of stale bread and cabbage soup.

He chews slowly, nodding dumbly as he eats. Suddenly, he realizes what is wrong and jumps to his feet, spilling his food.

ERAGON

What am I doing here?

He looks around again, this time peering through the small barred window set in the door. He looks down at his hand and tries to summon his magic, but his gedwey ignasia doesn't glow.

ERAGON (cont'd)

Drugged again. Damn them.

He shook his head, trying to clear his thoughts, and paced anxiously around his cell. After several hours another tray of food is pushed into his cell, which Eragon ignores. He is laying on his bed when he hears the rhythmic stomping of steel-shod boots in the hall outside. He grimaces and goes to his cell door, peering outside.

A column of soldiers march down the hall, swords drawn. They are all dressed in matching, sparkling plate armor with Galbatorix's symbol of a golden twisting flame emblazoned on the front of their breastplates. They march in perfect time and stare directly ahead with the same hard expression.

Eragon grimaces and is about to go back to his cot when he sees a break in the middle of the column. Carried between two soldiers is ARYA, unconscious. Eragon watches curiously until she passes his cell, where her head lolls to the side and exposes her face. Eragon gasps, recognizing her from his visions. His eyes widen when her hair shifts as she is carried away, revealing her pointed elven ears.

Eragon snarls as he watches the line of soldiers disappear further into the prison. There is a moment of silence, then the hard click of boots on the stone. A man with red hair begins to pass his cell, following the soldiers, then stops. DURZA turns to look at Eragon with his maroon eyes, lips pulling back in a vicious grin to reveal pointed teeth.

Eragon stumbles back, hand over his racing heart, and collapses on his cot. Durza chuckles and continues to follow the soldiers. It is quiet again and Eragon gasps for breath.

ERAGON (cont'd)

(quietly)

A Shade. So help me, the rumors are true. Even worse, he's working for the Empire.

Eragon looks up at the window over his cot.

ERAGON (cont'd)

I have to escape.

CUT TO:

EXT. GIL'EAD - EVENING

Murtagh makes his way through the wilderness, pushing aside the tall grass as he comes to a clearing. Saphira is laying on the far side of the clearing, her tail is gently draped over the horses' necks to keep them from bolting away as she gnaws on the corpse of an Urgal. The trampled ground of soaked in blood and strewn with horned Urgal heads.

MURTAGH

Where are the rest of the Urgals?

Saphira swallows and snaps her jaws, pantomiming chewing at something. Murtagh grimaces and looks at the Urgal heads.

The horns made them too difficult to eat. He shakes his head and walks over, patting Tornac on the neck and picketing both horses.

MURTAGH (cont'd)

I followed the soldiers through the city, but I lost them when they went into the fortress. But he's in there.

I know it

(beat)

I think I have a plan.

Saphira nods slowly, her tail swishing anxiously in the grass.

MURTAGH (cont'd)

Tomorrow night. It's risky for both of us, but it's the only way.

Saphira raises her head and looks in the direction of Gil'ead, snarling softly.

FADE TO:

INT. GIL'EAD CELL - MORNING

A rooster crows outside and Eragon sits up, stretching his arms. He stands and grabs the breakfast tray that had been slid under his door and tosses the food out the window.

He paces the tray back in front of the slot and takes a deep breath, closing his eyes. He focuses and his gedwey ignasia begins to glow faintly. He smiles, feeling his power starting to return.

ERAGON

(softly)

Must've been the food.

Eragon spends his day pacing his cell, trying to remember all of the words in the ancient language he'd been taught. He remembers some, but nothing happens when he utters the words. His lunch is slid through the door slot, and he tosses that out onto the street as well.

Eragon is sitting cross legged on his cot, trying to meditate when he hears a commotion outside his cell several hours later.

CAPTAIN (O.S.)

You can't go in there! The orders were clear; no one is to see him!

DURZA (O.S.)

(coldly)

Will you be the one to die stopping me, Captain?

CAPTAIN (O.S.)

(nervous)

N-no, but the king-

DURZA (O.S.)

I will handle the king. Now, unlock the door.

There is the sound of jangling keys outside his cell door and Eragon hurriedly lays back on his cot, trying to adopt a calm, stupid expression on his face.

The door opens and Durza steps inside. This close, his skin appears to be stretched thin as if pulled tight over his skull. Thin veins are visible under his pale skin. Eragon fights to control his breathing.

DURZA

So, this is the fabled Rider. We've been waiting for you.

ERAGON

(mumbling)

Who...who're you?

DURZA

No one of consequence.

Durza sits on the other end of the cot, his blood red cape billowing around him. He moves unnaturally gracefully and stares at Eragon with a predatory hunger. Eragon takes a deep breath and sits up, resisting the urge to flee to the other end of the cell.

DURZA (cont'd)

My name doesn't matter to one in your position. It's you that I'm interested in. Who are you?

ERAGON

(slurring)

M'name's Eragon, but that's not all I am, is it?

Durza grins, baring his teeth.

DURZA

No, it isn't. You have an interesting mind, my young Rider.

Durza suddenly leans forward and Eragon shirks back.

DURZA (cont'd)

(firmly)

It seems I must be more direct. What is your name?

ERAGON

Era-

DURZA

Not that one! Don't you have another one, one that you use only rarely?

Eragon hesitates, realizing the Shade is trying to learn his True Name. He nods dumbly as he tries to make one up.

ERAGON

Brom told it to me once. I think it was...*Du* something

He paused, pretending to think very hard. He grinned widely as if remembering.

ERAGON (cont'd)

Du Sundavar Freohr. Yes, that was it.

Durza does not move, continuing to stare unblinking at Eragon. He appeared to be thinking, and after a time Eragon couldn't bear to meet his gaze any longer and looked away, pretending to fidget idly with a loose thread on his blanket.

ERAGON (cont'd)

Why are you here?

Durza snorts and leans away, looking at Eragon with contempt.

DURZA

To gloat, of course. What use is a victory if you can't enjoy it?

There is a moment of quiet, then Durza stands sharply.

DURZA (cont'd)

I must attend to other matters, but while I am gone, you would do well to think on who you would rather serve.

(MORE)

DURZA (cont'd)

(beat)

A Rider who betrayed his own, or a fellow man like me, skilled in arcane arts. When the time comes to choose, there will be no middle ground.

Durza looks to the side and sees Eragon's full pitcher of water.

DURZA (cont'd)

(shouting)

Captain!

The door bursts open immediately and a broad shouldered man rushes in, sword in hand.

CAPTAIN

What is it, my lord?

DURZA

Put that away.

He turns to look at Eragon, his voice deadly cold.

DURZA (cont'd)

(to the captain)

The boy hasn't been drinking his water. Why is that?

Eragon grips his blanket tightly.

CAPTAIN

I talked with the jailer earlier. Every bowl and plate has been scraped clean without fail, my lord.

Durza's eyes narrow, but he turns back to the captain.

DURZA

Very well. But make sure he starts drinking again.

The captain nods and hurriedly excuses himself from the cell. Durza also moves to leave, stopping in the doorway.

DURZA (cont'd)

We will talk again tomorrow when I am not so pressed for time. I have an endless fascination for names, and I will greatly enjoy discussing yours in much greater detail.

The door slams shut and Eragon immediately collapses back onto his cot, his hands pressed over his face. He takes a few shaky breaths, getting his emotions under control.

ERAGON (V.O.)
 (whispering)
 Think. Everything has been provided
 for me; I only have to take advantage
 of it.

He holds his hands up, clenching and unclenching them as he stares at his gedwey ignasia.

FADE TO:

INT. GIL'EAD CELL - NIGHT

Eragon is sitting up on his cot, staring intently at the bunched up blanket on the other end of the cot.

ERAGON
 (whispering)
Nagz reisa.

At first, nothing happened. Then the blanket jerked as if snatched and flew across the cell. Eragon grinned, jumping upright and moving to the door. He knelt, his ear pressed against the lock. He whispered a few words to himself, his hands pressed against the cold metal. After a moment, he heard the locking mechanism click.

Eragon pushed the door open slowly and looked around. The hall was empty and he headed down the direction they had taken Arya the day before.

ERAGON (V.O.)
 (shouting)
 Saphira? Can you hear me?

Eragon starts as her response comes immediately and with surprising alacrity.

SAPHIRA (V.O.)
 Eragon! I'm over Gil'ead now. Murtagh
 is on his way.

ERAGON (V.O.)
 What are-

He freezes as six soldiers suddenly march into the hallway. They stop as well, shocked, and look between him and his open cell door.

SOLDIER

Charge!

On instinct Eragon settled into his fighting stance as the soldiers charged with their swords drawn before remembering he didn't have Zar'roc with him. Instead he raised his hand, gedwey ignasia glowing. The soldiers hesitated, fearful, but continued towards him anyway.

Before Eragon could speak the words, two arrows zipped past him in rapid fire, striking two soldiers. He looks over his shoulder quickly and sees a bearded man standing at the other end of the hall, a crutch laying at his feet.

The soldiers regrouped to face the new opponent and Eragon seized the moment.

ERAGON

Thrysta!

Two of the soldiers gasped and clutched their chests, collapsing as their ribs were crushed. Eragon's knees trembled as the magic took its toll, but remained standing. The bearded bowman took down another soldier and aimed at the final man.

ERAGON (cont'd)

Don't kill him!

The archer lowered his bow and Eragon advanced calmly towards the lone soldier. The man was breathing hard, clinging desperately to his sword, but seemed to understand his life was being spared.

ERAGON (cont'd)

(sharply)

Answer my questions, or the rest of your life will be spent in agony.

(beat)

Where's my sword, the red one, and what cell is the elf in?

The man shook his head. Eragon bent down and grabs a pinch of dirt off the floor. His palm begins to glow.

ERAGON (cont'd)

Do you know how much pain a grain of sand can cause you when it's embedded red hot in your stomach for twenty years? You'll be an old man before it burns its way down to your toes.

(MORE)

ERAGON (cont'd)

(beat)

This is a bit bigger than a grain of sand, but it'll burn through you faster that way. Still, it'll leave a bigger hole.

The dirt begins to glow cherry red and the soldier yelps, dropping his sword.

SOLDIER

The elf's in the last cell to the left. I don't know where your weapon is! Probably in the guardroom upstairs!

Eragon nods.

ERAGON

Slytha.

The soldier's eyes roll back and he collapses to the ground.

MURTAGH (O.S.)

Did you kill him?

Eragon whirls around, shocked. Murtagh is walking towards him, shrugging off his ratty cloak and removing the fake beard. They clap each other on the shoulder quickly, grinning widely in relief.

ERAGON

No, he's only sleeping. How did you get in?

MURTAGH

I'll explain later. We have to get up to the next floor before anyone else finds us.

ERAGON

Didn't you hear what I said? There's an elf in here! I saw her!

Murtagh shakes his head, grumbling.

MURTAGH

Make it quick.

He snatches a ring of keys from the soldier's belt as Eragon runs towards the last cell the man mentioned. Murtagh tosses him the keys and he unlocks the door.

A single beam of moonlight illuminates the room. Arya whips around to stare at him, her cat like eyes eyes narrowing. She holds her head high, sitting regal and strong. Their eyes lock and Eragon holds out his palm, showing her his gedwey ignasia.

ERAGON

My name is Eragon. You can trust me,
I want to get you out of here.

Arya's eyes widen, but otherwise she shows no emotion.

ARYA

She hatched? How did you come by her
egg?

Eragon blinks, shocked.

ERAGON

How-

Arya shakes her head.

ARYA

There is no time to explain. It is
too late. I...

Her eyes roll back and she shudders, collapsing. Eragon lunges forward and catches her before she hits the ground, lifting her up in his arms. He turns to leave and Murtagh is standing in the doorway.

MURTAGH

What's wrong with her?

ERAGON

I don't know. She knows Saphira! Or
at least of her egg. Somehow.

Murtagh sees Eragon struggling to lift her and takes her from him, slinging her over his shoulder.

MURTAGH

We can tend to her later. Get
upstairs!

Murtagh leads Eragon down to the end of the hallway he had come from and up a stone staircase. The room is filled with broad wooden tables and shields line the walls. Murtagh lays Arya on one of the tables and looks up at the ceiling worriedly.

ERAGON

How are we going to get out unnoticed?

MURTAGH

(grimly)

We're not. Can you talk to Saphira for me?

Eragon nods.

MURTAGH (cont'd)

Tell her to wait another five minutes.

There is shouting in the distance and Eragon and Murtagh duck under the table. Soldiers rush past the entrance but do not see them.

ERAGON

(whispering)

Whatever you're doing, you better do it quickly.

MURTAGH

Just tell her and stay out of sight.

Murtagh grabs Arya and hides her under the table before running off. Eragon snatches some food off the table and ducks back under quickly. A group of soldiers enter the room and he freezes in place. They give the room a quick look and check under a few close tables before leaving and continuing on to the commotion elsewhere. Eragon scarfs down the food, trying to recover his strength, as he contacts Saphira.

ERAGON (V.O.)

Saphira, Murtagh says to wait another five minutes.

SAPHIRA (V.O.)

I will. Are you alright?

ERAGON (V.O.)

Just weak. Saphira, I've found her. The woman from my visions. An elf woman, and she knows about your egg. We're taking her with us.

Saphira hums in response then goes quiet. Murtagh scurries back under the table, carrying Zar'roc and a strange bow. He also has an elegant and unusually slim bladed sword with him. He hands Zar'roc to Eragon.

MURTAGH

I've never seen weapons like these before, so I assumed they were hers.

ERAGON

Let's see.

Eragon slides the sword into the empty sheath at Arya's waist and it fits perfectly.

ERAGON (cont'd)

What now? We can't wait here forever, the soldiers will find us.

MURTAGH

We have to. Our escape has been arranged.

ERAGON

Murtagh, there's a Shade here! When he finds us, we're doomed.

MURTAGH

A Shade?! Tell Saphira to come now. We were going to wait until the watch changed, but delaying even that long is too dangerous then.

ERAGON (V.O.)

Saphira, you need to come now instead. There's a Shade here and we can't wait.

MURTAGH

(grumbling)

You messed up my plans by escaping yourself.

ERAGON

Perhaps I should have waited. If I had to use magic, I'd be exhausted by now. Thanks for coming when you did.

MURTAGH

(sarcastically)

Glad to be of some use.

(beat)

Let's just hope the Shade doesn't find us.

DURZA (O.S.)

I'm afraid it's far too late for that.

Before Eragon and Murtagh can react, the tables around the room flip over and fly against the wall, exposing their hiding place. Durza is standing alone at the end of the room, his pale scratched blade in his hand. He undoes the brooch holding his cape and it falls to the floor.

DURZA

So, my young Rider, do you wish to test yourself against me?

MURTAGH

(whispering)
I'll take care of him.

ERAGON

(whispering)
No, he wants me alive, not you. I can stall him.

MURTAGH

(whispering)
You won't have to for long.

Eragon nods solemnly and draws Zar'roc. He advances slowly, the red blade glinting in the fiery light. He stopped several feet from the Shade, who has not moved.

DURZA

Do you really think to defeat me, *Du Sundavar Freohr*? What a pitiful lie, "death of the shadows".

(beat)

I would have expected something more subtle from you, but I suppose that's all your capable of.

Eragon doesn't respond but to adjust his grip on Zar'roc, staring intently at the Shade.

Before either of them moved, the ceiling suddenly booms and shakes. Dust falls from the beams overhead and Eragon flicks his eyes upward, afraid of falling debris. Durza seizes his distraction and flies forward, moving unnaturally quick.

By the time Murtagh has cried out in warning Durza is already swinging his sword at Eragon. Eragon brings Zar'roc up in a parry just in time, struggling as he fights the Shade's unnatural strength.

He grasps Zar'roc with both hands and pushes Durza's blade away, swinging with all his strength. Above them, soldiers are screaming and there is a terrible sound like metal scraping against stone.

Eragon retreats back towards Murtagh, narrowly blocking each of Durza's attacks each time. The Shade is clearly toying with him. Lazily, Durza knocks Zar'roc from Eragon's hand with a flick of his wrist.

The force of the blow sends Eragon to his knees, panting for breath. The screeching above them has gotten louder.

DURZA (cont'd)

I expected so much more, rather than a mere pawn in this game. If the other Riders were this weak, they must have controlled the Empire only through sheer numbers.

Eragon looks up at the ceiling, finally understanding.

ERAGON

(to Durza)

You forget something.

DURZA

(mockingly)

And what is that, little Rider?

There is a boom like thunder and the sound of grinding stone as the ceiling is ripped away to reveal the starry night sky.

ERAGON

(shouting)

The dragons!

Eragon throws himself to the side, rolling, and Durza snarls as he swings his sword. He misses widely and, before he can recover, one of Murtagh's arrows strikes him in the forehead with a solid thud.

Durza stands frozen, a surprised expression on his face. Then, as his skin slowly turns gray, he howls in agony and writhes in pain as he slowly transforms into mist.

With a final cry, the cloud vanishes and there is nothing left. Eragon runs up to Murtagh, grabbing him by the shoulders.

ERAGON (cont'd)

Take pride! You just killed a Shade!

MURTAGH

(grimly)

I'm not so sure.

They turn and raise their weapons as a group of soldiers wielding nets and spears begin pouring into the banquet room from both entryways, forming a half-circle around them.

Then Saphira, her maw dripping blood and gore, shoves her head through the hole in the ceiling as she rips another chunk out of the ceiling with her talons. She roars, frightening a few soldiers so badly they drop their weapons and run.

Eragon and Murtagh move against the wall to avoid the falling debris, dragging Arya with them. Saphira continues to tear apart the ceiling, raining stone and shattered beams down into the banquet room.

One soldier makes a break to attack Eragon and Murtagh, but Saphira's head snaps down and snatches him up in her jaws. She shakes her head violently and tosses him to the side. The rest of the soldiers turn and run.

The hole is finally large enough for Saphira to drop into the banquet room, wings folded. Eragon rushes up to her and hugs her tightly.

SAPHIRA (V.O.)

I've missed you, little one.

ERAGON (V.O.)

Same here. Now, we have to leave. Can you carry three of us?

SAPHIRA (V.O.)

Of course.

Saphira kicks the destroyed tables and ceiling debris away while Murtagh carries Arya over. Eragon climbs up first, helping Murtagh secure Arya in the saddle, then Murtagh jumps up behind them.

ERAGON (V.O.)

I heard fighting on the roof, are there soldiers up there?

SAPHIRA (V.O.)

There were, not anymore.

Eragon nods and they brace themselves as Saphira jumps up through the ceiling. Bodies of watchmen lay scattered around the roof and, as Saphira perches on the roof, a row of archers begin filing out of a tower on the other side of the destroyed roof.

ERAGON

Watch out!

Saphira unfurls her wings and jumps off the roof. The extra weight on her back makes her drop alarmingly quick, but she quickly recovers and climbs into the sky. Behind them, there is the twang of bowstrings being released.

Saphira roars in pain as they strike her and she rolls to the left to avoid the next volley. Eragon winces and sits up, looking for her injuries.

ERAGON (V.O.)

(panicked)

Where?

SAPHIRA (V.O.)

(pained)

My wings. One of the arrows, it's stuck!

ERAGON (V.O.)

How far can you take us?

Saphira's body shudders as she struggles through the pain.

SAPHIRA (V.O.)

Far enough.

Eragon holds tightly to Arya, tied into the saddle in front of him, and looks behind them to watch the lights of Gil'ead fade into the night.

FADE TO:

EXT. GIL'EAD CAMP - NIGHT

Saphira glides eastwards towards a camp only half a league from Gil'ead. She lands awkwardly, whimpering from the arrow wounds in her wings. Snowfire and Tornac, picketed nearby, snort nervously as she lands.

Eragon slides down and immediately inspects Saphira's wings, while Murtagh removes Arya from the saddle and sets her down.

Eragon can't see well in the darkness, instead running his hands over her leathery wings. He finds three places where arrows had cleanly punctured the membrane of her wings.

ERAGON

Waise heill!

The punctures heal easily and Murtagh comes over with a small torch he just lit. They search the rest of her wing for the arrow still stuck and find it embedded in one of the large muscles of her flying arm, close to her body.

ERAGON (cont'd)
Hold her wing down.

Murtagh stabs the end of the torch into the ground so it stands upright and grabs the end of Saphira's wing.

ERAGON (V.O.)
This will be painful, but it'll be over quickly.

Saphira extends her neck and bites down on a small sapling, pulling it out of the ground with a yank of her head. She clamps down firmly on it.

SAPHIRA (V.O.)
I am ready.

Eragon nods and grabs the arrow shaft.

ERAGON
(to Murtagh)
Hold on.

Eragon carefully breaks off the arrowhead. Then, he quickly pulls the shaft from below and out of her muscle. As he pulls it out, Saphira throws her head back and whimpers. Her wing jerks involuntarily and Murtagh yelps as it clips him on the chin, knocking him to the ground.

ERAGON (cont'd)
Waise heill.

He seals the wound quickly, then helps Murtagh to his feet.

MURTAGH
I thought that would hurt more.

Murtagh rubs his chin, finding the skin rubbed raw by her scales.

SAPHIRA (V.O.)
(to Eragon)
I'm sorry.

ERAGON
She didn't mean to hit you.

Saphira tosses her tree to the side and stretches her wings, finding them fully healed. Eragon kneels and inspects Arya, who is still unconscious.

Murtagh remains where he is, looking around them for signs they were followed. In the distance, torches flare to life as soldiers begin to leave Gil'ead to search for them.

MURTAGH

We can't stop for long, they're coming for us.

Eragon nods.

ERAGON (V.O.)

You're going to have to carry her a bit longer. We can't ride fast enough if one of us carries her on the horses.

SAPHIRA (V.O.)

Of course, I'll take her.

Eragon gently grabs Saphira's face in his hands, pressing his forehead against hers.

ERAGON (V.O.)

What you did tonight was incredible. I'll never forget it.

Saphira hums softly, nuzzling him. He lifts Arya back into the saddle and tightens the straps before Saphira takes off again. He and Murtagh mount their horses, Murtagh putting out the torch, and gallop after Saphira.

Eragon and Murtagh weave their way through the trees in the darkness as fast as they dare, lines of torches behind them in the distance.

They urge their horses faster as they finally break out of the trees and reach the open plains. Their horses froth at the mouth as they gallop hard. Eragon continues to glance behind them, watching the torches get smaller and smaller until they finally disappear.

As the first rays of sun begin to peak over the horizon, Eragon and Murtagh abruptly turn south to throw off any pursuers. They approach a small outcropping of rock next to a river, where Saphira has already landed and is gulping water from the river. Arya is still unconscious on her back.

ERAGON

(exhausted)

We have to sleep. I don't think we can go any farther.

They dismount wearily and tie their horses near the rocks.

MURTAGH

We can't. We'll probably be safe enough for a rest.

Together they until Arya, setting her down gently, before sitting heavily with their backs against the large boulder. Eragon looks at Arya worriedly.

ERAGON

It's been hours since we escaped, why hasn't she woken up at all?

Murtagh shakes his head and looks at her.

MURTAGH

I don't know. As far as I know, she's the first elf the king has captured.

(beat)

Likely by chance. If Galbatorix found their sanctuary, he'd have declared war and sent his army after them.

ERAGON

We can't be sure until she wakes. How did I end up in Gil'ead and not an Urgal camp?

Murtagh grimaces.

MURTAGH

The Urgals are working for the Empire. We saw the Urgals give you to a group of soldiers.

SAPHIRA (V.O.)

Do you remember the Urgals outside Teirm? They mentioned a master when they spoke to you.

ERAGON (V.O.)

(horrified)

They meant the king. He's using them to commit atrocities against his own people. But why?

SAPHIRA (V.O.)

(grimly)

Because he is evil.

ERAGON

(to Murtagh)

Traders came to my village and told us large groups of Urgals had been traveling towards the Hadarac Desert.

(beat)

Galbatorix must be gathering an Urgal army, though I shudder at the thought. Why would he do this to his own people? To what end?

MURTAGH

His authority is being challenged by the Varden, and Surda in the south. With the Urgals he can create such a rule of terror he will be able to shape the Empire however he wants.

ERAGON

(outraged)

It can't work! People will rebel and support the Varden. They have to!

Murtagh shakes his head.

MURTAGH

They may not. Galbatorix could convince them the Urgals have been secretly misunderstood all this time, and that the elves and the Varden are the real enemy.

(beat)

People will believe whatever he wants them to. It's happened before.

Murtagh stares ahead grimly and Eragon decides to drop the subject.

ERAGON

I don't think the Shade is working for Galbatorix. Perhaps he was, but he told me I would have to choose between him and the king.

(beat)

Perhaps he means to betray Galbatorix.

MURTAGH

Not exactly a comforting thought.

Eragon shakes his head.

ERAGON

I'm too tired to figure all this out. Whatever Galbatorix or Durza are planning, they'll only cause us trouble.

(beat)

Murtagh, you risked your life to rescue me. I owe you for that. I couldn't have escaped on my own.

MURTAGH

I'm just glad I could help. It...

Murtagh trails off and shakes his head.

MURTAGH (cont'd)

My main worry now is how we're going to travel with so many men searching for us. Gil'ead's soldiers won't give up so easily.

ERAGON

And we still don't know where to find the Varden. Without Dormnad, we have nowhere to go.

SAPHIRA (V.O.)

Don't give up. We will find a way.

Saphira comes over to them and lays down, her head at their feet. They both reach out and lay their hands on her snout.

MURTAGH

The plan wouldn't have worked without you, Saphira. You are the only reason we escaped alive.

Saphira hums appreciatively. Eragon gives her a pat and looks over at Arya.

ERAGON

We should make her a bed before we turn in.

Murtagh groans as they both stand up. He goes through their packs, spreading out bedrolls for them and a blanket for Arya. Eragon goes to pick up Arya, and gasps when her shirt shifts.

The fabric of her sleeve tears, revealing her skin was mottled with bruises and cuts. Some are half healed, others are fresh and still bleeding.

MURTAGH

What is it?

Eragon shakes his head, scowling, and brings her over to the blanket. He lays her on her front and starts tearing the rest of her sleeve, exposing more and more wounds. He finally reached her shoulder and untied the back of her shirt, gasping in horror. Murtagh curses.

Arya well muscled and strong, but her skin is completely covered in scabs that make her skin look like dry, cracked mud.

There were scars from whips, brands shaped like claws, and everywhere her skin was miraculously intact it was bruised black and purple. Her left shoulder is tattooed with the same symbol etched into Brom's sapphire ring.

ERAGON

I'll kill whoever did this to her.

MURTAGH

(anxiously)

Can you heal all of this?

Eragon shakes his head.

ERAGON

I don't know. There's so much.

SAPHIRA (V.O.)

Eragon! This is an elf. She cannot be allowed to die. Tired or hungry, you must save her.

(beat)

I will meld my strength with yours, but you are the one who must wield the magic.

ERAGON (V.O.)

You're right.

ERAGON

(to Murtagh)

This is going to take a while. Can you get us some food? Also, boil some rags for the wounds I can't heal.

MURTAGH

We can't make a fire without being seen. The food will be cold and the rags will have to be unwashed.

Eragon grimaces but nods his head anyway. Murtagh moves off to gather the rags and Eragon places his hand in the center of Arya's back. Saphira crouches next to him, looking over his shoulder.

ERAGON

Waise heill!

His palm begins to glow, and Arya's skin begins to flow together under his hand. He ignores the minor injuries, like small cuts and bruises, and instead focuses on the large whip scars and burns.

Murtagh brings him a wineskin and a chunk of stale bread, which Eragon periodically stops to eat. Murtagh bandages the wounds Eragon doesn't heal as he works.

The day is nearly done when Eragon finally groans and stands. He stretches, groaning as his cramped muscles ache.

MURTAGH

Will she live?

ERAGON

I've done what I can, but not even an elf can endure abuse like this.

MURTAGH

She still hasn't woken up.

ERAGON

I know. I don't understand why. If I could just speak with her, I-

Eragon stops, considering. He kneels back down by Arya's side and takes a breath.

MURTAGH

What are you doing?

ERAGON

I can try and contact her mind. I might be able to find out what's wrong with her. If she lives, hopefully she'll forgive such an intrusion.

Murtagh nods and settles back, eating his own food while keeping watch. Eragon takes several deep breaths, then everything around him fades to black.

Eragon opens his eyes and stands, looking around him. Everywhere around him dark storm clouds loomed ominously. They flashed with strange lights, Arya's consciousness itself.

There is a faint hint of a melody in the air, like a song played in the distance, that is wild and dangerous.

Suddenly there is a harsh shrieking sound, like metal against metal, and Eragon screams. He drops to his knees, clutching his head, as Arya assaults the intruder in her mind.

ERAGON (cont'd)

(screaming)

Eka ai fricai un Shur'tugal! I am a
Rider and a friend!

The shrieking suddenly stops as Arya considers him. Eragon opens his eyes, standing hesitantly. Suddenly, Arya's voice echoes around him, speaking in the ancient language.

ARYA (V.O.)

Who are you?

Eragon also responds in the ancient language, stuttering over the unfamiliar language.

ERAGON

My name is Eragon! I rescued you in
Gil'ead. Who are you?

ARYA (V.O.)

Ah, the Rider.

Arya hesitates.

ARYA (V.O.) (cont'd)

I am Arya. Why have you contacted me
in this manner? Am I still a captive
of the Empire?

ERAGON

No, you are free! I've healed most of
your wounds as well as best I can.
But since then you haven't woken or
stirred once.

ARYA (V.O.)

I sensed my wounds were healed, but I did not understand why. Perhaps for some new torture, I was certain.

(beat)

A rare poison, the *Skilna Bragh*, was given to me along with the drug to suppress my power. They would give me the antidote each morning to begin the process again.

The storm clouds of her mind shift and roil as she speak, the music growing and fading rhythmically. Eragon turns slowly and watches it all, entranced by her alien mind.

ERAGON

(slowly)

We don't have the antidote with us. What can we do?

ARYA (V.O.)

This trance slows the *Skilna Bragh's* progress, though it does not stop it. I contemplated waking for the purpose of ending my life and denying Galbatorix, but I refrained from doing so out of hope that you were an ally.

ERAGON

How long can you remain like this?

ARYA (V.O.)

Weeks, but I can feel it growing every day.

ERAGON

We can get the antidote for you! Do you know where to find it?

ARYA (V.O.)

With my people, or with the Varden.

ERAGON

We are trying to find the Varden!

ARYA (V.O.)

I will tell you, so long as you give me your word that you will never reveal their location to Galbatorix or to anyone who serves him.

(MORE)

ARYA (V.O.) (cont'd)

(beat)

Swear to me that you have not
deceived me in this, the ancient
language.

Eragon takes a deep breath, understanding the implications.
He answers her, still speaking in the ancient language.

ERAGON

I have not deceived you. I mean no
harm to the elves, dwarves, Varden,
or the race of dragons.

ARYA (V.O.)

It is understood...

Eragon stumbles and lurches as her mind suddenly shifts. A
series of images flash through their shared minds. He finds
himself riding along an enormous mountain range, the Beor
Mountains, and traveling east.

Then he was heading south, still following the mountains. He
suddenly enters a narrow valley and follows it to the base
of a waterfall.

ARYA (V.O.) (cont'd)

It is far, past the Hadarac Desert,
but do not let the distance dissuade
you. When you arrive at the lake
Kostha-merna at the end of the
Beartooth River, take a rock and bang
on the cliff next to the waterfall.

(beat)

Speak the phrase, "*Ai varden abr du
Shur'tugalar gata vanta*" and you will
be admitted. You will be tested, but
do not falter.

ERAGON

What should I tell them to give you
for the poison?

The visions fade and Eragon is returned to the stormy
blackness of her mind. A cloud of mist begins to form in
front of him and it solidifies into Arya's physical form,
healed of all her injuries. She looks into his eyes and
steps towards him.

ARYA

Tell them to give me Tunivor's
Nectar. You must leave me now, I have
expended too much energy already.

(MORE)

ARYA (cont'd)

(beat)

Please do not speak to me again unless all hope is lost. If that is the case, there is information I must impart to you so the Varden will survive.

ERAGON

Wait! You mentioned my dragon. You said she had hatched. How did you know of her?

Arya's expression is grim.

ARYA

I was charged with protecting her egg and finding one she would hatch for. Know that at the moment you first beheld it, I was captured by Durza.

She pauses, her voice filled with grief.

ARYA (cont'd)

He led the Urgals that ambushed and slew my companions, Faolin and Glenwing. I do not know how he knew where to find us, but I was drugged and imprisoned to learn where I had sent the egg.

Her voice becomes harsh and Eragon flinches at the restrained fury in her voice.

ARYA (cont'd)

Durza tried for months to learn all I knew of her egg and Ellesmera, the elven capital. After failing for so long, Durza was ordered to bring me to Uru'baen.

(beat)

If it were not for you, I would have stood before Galbatorix himself.

Eragon's eyes well with tears and he blinks them away. He resists the urge to grab her hand or her shoulder and comfort her as he would a human woman.

ERAGON

I am so sorry for what was done to you. But you are safe now, and we will bring you to the Varden.

Arya nods slowly.

ARYA
Farewell then, Eragon, rider of
dragons. My life is in your hands.

Everything around him fades into mist and Eragon gasps as he comes to. It is night now, and Murtagh and Saphira are seated on either side of him, watching him nervously.

MURTAGH
Are you alright? It's been almost
fifteen minutes.

ERAGON
It has?

SAPHIRA (V.O.)
Yes, and you've been grimacing like a
pained gargoyle.

Eragon winces as he stands, his knees popping. He looks down at Arya, who is as still and lifeless as she was before.

ERAGON
Her name is Arya. She was the
guardian of your egg, Saphira, and
sent it away when Durza ambushed her.

MURTAGH
Did she tell you what's wrong with
her?

ERAGON
She's been poisoned, and only the
elves and the Varden have the
antidote. She told me how to get to
the Varden, but it's a long way to
travel.

Murtagh nods, not happy about the revelation. Eragon takes several drinks of wine to steady himself.

MURTAGH
We can worry about that in the
morning. We need rest, though we
should take watch in shifts tonight.

Eragon nods.

ERAGON
I agree.

Murtagh hesitates, looking at Eragon from the corner of his eye.

MURTAGH

You would travel faster if it was only you and the elf on Saphira. If you want to go your own way, I won't stop you.

ERAGON

Don't insult me! The only reason I'm free is because of you. I'm not going to abandon you to the Empire. We'll find a way around this.

Murtagh bows his head gratefully to Eragon.

MURTAGH

Together then.

Eragon settles next to him, the two of them laying down on their bedrolls as Saphira curls up protectively around them and stares off into the night.

CUT TO BLACK.

CREDITS

END.