

"THE INHERITANCE PROJECT, 1x04"

"The Mire of Dras-Leona"

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Based on the novel by

Christopher Paolini

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1st Draft

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FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST - EVENING

ERAGON kneels at a small creek and cups his hands under the water, bringing them to his mouth to drink. He savors the cool water and observes the forest around him. His attention is caught by something on the opposite bank of the stream and he stands.

Eragon steadies himself and jumps across the stream. As he lands, his foot slips on a wet patch of moss and he falls. His right wrist cracks as he hits the ground and he gasps in pain, biting back a scream.

SAPHIRA (V.O.) (O.S.)
(startled)
Eragon! What happened?!

ERAGON (V.O.)
(pained)
Slipped...Broke my wrist.

IMAGE: Saphira tearing through the forest to reach him.

ERAGON (V.O.) (cont'd)
No, stay there! I can make it back.

Saphira growls and Eragon struggles to his feet. He hobbles over to what caught his attention and kneels, inspecting a large, heavy footprint.

ERAGON
(snarling)
Urgal.

Eragon jumps to his feet, his arm clutched to his chest.

ERAGON (V.O.)
Saphira, fresh Urgal tracks! Keep
Brom safe!

Eragon jumps back across the stream, carefully this time, and runs through the woods back to camp. His head whips around, looking for enemies behind every tree. He breaks into a small clearing and immediately duck as a large blue tail swings over his head.

ERAGON
It's me!

SAPHIRA is crouched in the clearing, her wings folded protectively in front of her. The horses whinny and rear up nervously where they're picketed off to the side.

SAPHIRA (V.O.)

Oops.

ERAGON

Where's Brom?

BROM (O.S.)

(muffled)

Here! Tell her to release me!

ERAGON

Let him go! Didn't you tell him?

Saphira raised her wings and let BROM step away from her.

SAPHIRA (V.O.)

(sheepishly)

No, you just said to keep him safe.

Brom stomps up to Eragon.

BROM

What in the blazes-

ERAGON

(quickly)

I found an Urgal footprint. Fresh.

Brom's expression turns grave and he hurries to put out the campfire.

BROM

We're leaving. What happened to your arm?

ERAGON

I fell jumping across the creek.

Brom curses and throws their gear into their packs.

BROM

We'll deal with it later. Ride Saphira, you'll be safer.

Eragon nods and hurries to her, struggling to climb onto her back with one hand.

BROM (cont'd)

(to Saphira)

You'll have to fly overhead. It'll be dark soon and maybe they'll think twice about attacking with you nearby.

SAPHIRA (V.O.)

They better, or else they won't think again.

In the distance, a hunting horn sounds. Brom and Eragon freeze in place until it fades away.

BROM

They must have found our tracks.

(beat)

Urglas; once they've found prey, it's not in their nature to let it escape.

Brom mounts Snowfire and urges him into a gallop, leading Eragon's horse. Saphira takes off and flies close to the top of the trees, directly above the horses. Eragon winces in pain with each jostle but holds on tight.

The hunting horns continue to sound in the distance, some growing closer. Brom pushes the horses faster and faster, crashing through the underbrush. Two horns sound in unison, much closer, then silence.

ERAGON (V.O.)

Where are they?

Before Saphira can reply another horn sounds, this time directly below them. They can hear coarse voices and savage war cries below them as well. Looking down they can glimpse Urgals on horseback charging out of the underbrush and converging on Brom's trail.

CUT TO:

Brom kicks Snowfire hard, urging the stallion faster. Urgals begin to converge on him, spurring their own horses faster. One Urgal gallops towards him and Brom whispers to himself.

BROM

Jierda.

The Urgal's horse stumbles and collapses as its front legs shatter. The Urgal shouts, tumbling to the ground, and is left behind. His companions continue charging after Brom.

CUT TO:

Saphira continues to fly over Brom and Eragon struggles to see him. The trees are so dense they lose sight of Brom for brief stretches of time. When they fly over a clearing, they no longer see him. The Urgal hunting horns continue to sound.

ERAGON (V.O.)
Saphira, you need to land!

SAPHIRA (V.O.)
Are you crazy?!

ERAGON (V.O.)
I know what I'm doing!

SAPHIRA (V.O.)
If we get hurt, you're taking the blame!

Saphira flaps her wings to gain a burst of speed before angling down. When she spots an opening she folds her wings and drops straight down onto the ground, spraying dirt and rocks everywhere.

The pursuing Urgals shout with surprise and their mounts collide as they try to avoid Saphira. The Urgals untangle themselves and face Saphira, growling and baring their teeth, but do not attack.

ERAGON (V.O.)
What are they doing?

Eragon jerks back, shocked, when the largest Urgal forces his horse closer.

URGAL
Our master wishes to speak with you,
human!

SAPHIRA (V.O.)
It's a trap. Don't listen.

ERAGON (V.O.)
Let's find out what he has to say, at least.

ERAGON
(to the Urgal)
Who is your master?

The Urgal spits.

URGAL

You don't deserve to hear his name.
But our orders are to bring you to
him, alive.

ERAGON

(angrily)

I don't care much of your orders!
Doesn't matter who you serve, I have
no wish to parley!

The Urgals roar and bellow.

URGAL

There is no way to escape him. You
will stand before our master!

ERAGON

Keep your offer and tell your master
that the crows can eat his entrails!

URGAL

(roaring)

Then we will drag you to him!

The Urgal bellows and gestures with his arm. The Urgals
charge forward and Eragon raises his hand.

ERAGON

(shouting)

Jierda!

SAPHIRA (V.O.)

No!

Eragon's palm glows before beams of light shoot out and
strike each of the Urgals in the gut. They are all thrown
back and collapse to the ground.

Eragon gasps and sways before he tumbles from Saphira's
back. As his vision starts to fade, he sees an Urgal
stumbling towards Saphira with a sword in his hand.

ERAGON

No...

The Urgal creeps past her tail and raises his sword to
strike her neck. Saphira whirls around, roaring savagely,
and lashes out with blinding speed. Blood sprays everywhere
as she rips the Urgal in two.

Turning back to Eragon, Saphira gently wraps her bloody claws around him and takes off into the sky as he passes out.

FADE TO BLACK

The OPENING CREDITS ROLL.

FADE IN:

INT. GIL'EAD CELL - NIGHT

The cell is cold and empty. The moon shines through a barred window high on the wall and illuminates the cell. ARYA, the black haired elf woman, is chained to her cot and hunched over in pain.

She looks up to face the window, the moonlight illuminating the tears running down her face.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Eragon gasps and jolts upright, crying. He wipes his tears away, confused, and takes a few deep breaths. He raises his right arm and finds it's been wrapped in a splint. He's laying in his blankets with a smoldering campfire nearby. The horses are picketed a few feet away.

ERAGON (V.O.)

Saphira?

There is no answer. Eragon looks around nervously and struggles to his feet, still weak. There is stew leftover in the pot over the fire, so he eats. He finds a waterskin as well and takes a long drink. He inspects it for a moment before pouring some of it out into his empty bowl. He takes a deep breath.

ERAGON

Draumr kopa!

He looks down at the bowl of water. The surface of the water is completely still and devoid of any reflections. It shimmers and turns white, depicting an image of Saphira on a pure white background. She is flying with Brom on her back, his sword bloody.

Eragon releases the magic with a sigh and the image disappears.

ERAGON (cont'd)
At least they're safe.

Eragon takes another drink and pauses as he thinks.

ERAGON (cont'd)
Draumr kopa!

The water shimmers again and shows an image of RORAN, again on a white background and sitting on an invisible chair. He looks much older and tired, more like Garrow now. Eragon's expression turns worried as he lets the spell fade.

He leans back and takes some deep breaths as he recovers.

ERAGON (cont'd)
I wonder...could I scry something I'd
seen in a dream?

Eragon sits up and again stares down at the bowl. He closes his eyes and thinks before calling on the magic.

ERAGON (cont'd)
Draumr kopa!

Eragon waits, but nothing appears to happen at first. As he prepares to release the magic and drain the bowl, the water ripples. The bowl turns jet black and the image of a low burning candle comes into view.

The same cell from his dream appears in the bowl. It is day now, with beams of sunlight streaming through the barred window. Arya is laying on the cot in the corner, facing the wall. Suddenly, she sits up and turns around.

Arya looks directly at Eragon, staring into his eyes with her penetrating gaze. Eragon recoils and immediately dismisses the spell. The water returns to normal and he empties it out of the bowl.

ERAGON (cont'd)
She shouldn't be real! It was just a
dream!

The rhythmic thump of flapping wings breaks him out of his stupor and Eragon scrambles to his feet. Saphira lands gently and Brom jumps down, scowling at Eragon.

ERAGON (cont'd)
What happened?

BROM
(shouting)
What happened?! I've been cleaning up
your mess!

Brom gestures wildly with his sword, flinging drops of blood everywhere, before stabbing it into the dirt.

BROM (cont'd)
Do you know what you did with that
little trick of yours?

Saphira nuzzles Eragon with her snout and he pats her nose.

ERAGON
(nervously)
I stopped the Urgals from catching
you.

BROM
(shouting)
That spell could've killed you! Two
days! That's how long you've been
out. There were twelve Urgals, but
that didn't stop you from trying to
throw them all to Teirm!
(beat)
You could've sent a rock through
their heads! But no, you had to knock
them unconscious so they could run
away!
(beat)
Two days, I've been tracking them
down! Even with Saphira, three
escaped!

Eragon keeps his head bowed as Brom lectures him.

BROM (cont'd)
And why, oh why, did you show
yourself to them?!

ERAGON
You said that they found our tracks.

BROM
We didn't know for certain! They may
have thought we were stray travelers.
And since you let them live, they're
scrambling around the countryside
with all sorts of fantastic tales!

Brom yanks his sword out of the dirt.

BROM (cont'd)

You don't even deserve to be called a Rider after this, boy.

Brom stomps over to the fire and sits, cleaning his blade. Eragon looks to Saphira.

SAPHIRA (V.O.)

If you had explained what you were planning to do, none of this would have happened. I would have told you it was a bad idea.

ERAGON (V.O.)

(sarcastically)

Thank you so much.

Saphira snorts.

SAPHIRA (V.O.)

Speak to Brom.

Eragon slowly heads over to the fire.

ERAGON

Would it help if I said I was sorry?

BROM

No, your feelings can't change what happened. You made some very bad choices that could have dangerous repercussions.

(beat)

You almost died, Eragon! From now on, you're going to have to think. There's a reason why we're born with brains in our heads, not rocks.

Eragon nods and sits.

ERAGON

It's not as bad as you think, though. The Urgals knew about me and had orders to capture me.

Brom growls and sheaths his sword.

BROM

No, it's not as bad as I thought. It's worse! So the Urgals have some sort of leader now?

ERAGON

It seems that way.

BROM

And you defied his wishes, insulted him, and attacked his men.

(beat)

Congratulations, you continue to make enemies of the most powerful beings in Alagaesia.

Eragon nods and hangs his head, thoroughly scolded. Brom sighs.

BROM (cont'd)

I do have to take blame for some of this. Teaching you how to do things, but not whether you should. All the magic in Alagaesia won't help you if you don't know when to use it.

ERAGON

What happens now, then? Are we still going to Dras-Leona?

Brom nods.

BROM

Your arm will take a couple of weeks to heal, plenty of time before we make it to the city. That time would be well spent forging some sense into you.

(beat)

Until your arm is healed, you'll have to train your left hand with Zar'roc.

ERAGON

I won't disappoint you again.

BROM

We'll see. Are you well enough to ride?

Eragon nods.

BROM (cont'd)

Then we can at least cover a few miles today.

They stand and gather their things. Eragon and Saphira share a glance before she takes off into the sky. Brom helps Eragon into the saddle and they take off at an easy canter.

FADE TO:

EXT. PLAINS - DAY

Eragon and Brom follow along the Toark River as it flows along the Spine. Winter is starting to change into spring, with fresh flowers and new buds beginning to bloom between the dead underbrush. The Toark River grows wider as more and more tributaries flow into it. The mountains of the Spine in the distance remain capped with snow.

Brom drills Eragon as they ride in various theoretical combat scenarios, and they both frequently become frustrated with the questions. At night they spar as usual and Eragon has to learn to use his left hand. His broken wrist heals as they expected and he becomes more accustomed to using his left hand.

EXT. TOARK RIVER - NIGHT

Eragon and Brom make camp by the riverbank and Saphira stands in the river, cleaning herself and drinking. Brom and Eragon circle each other around the fire, swords drawn. Eragon suddenly darts forward, grabbing a stick by the fire and throwing it at Brom.

Brom dodges easily and rushes forward. He swings his sword and Eragon ducks, running forward and tackling Brom to the ground. They struggle, each trying to stay on top. Brom blocks Eragon's swing towards his shins and jumps to his feet, back away. Eragon stands quickly and rushes to attack, sparks flying from their blocked blades.

Brom blocks each blow, but is clearly tiring as they hammer away at each other. With a shout, Eragon swings faster than he has before and knocks Brom's sword from his hands. He flicks Zar'roc's point to Brom's throat and they both freeze, panting hard.

BROM

(panting)

We're done for today.

He picks up his sword and sheathes it.

ERAGON

We just started!

Brom shakes his head and smiles.

BROM

Not many fighters can defeat me, never mind with their left hand. You know everything I do, Eragon. Be proud of yourself.

ERAGON

Does this mean we're not going to spar every night?

BROM

(laughing)

Oh, you're not getting out of it. But, we'll go easier now.

Brom sighs as he sits down and wipes the sweat from his brow.

BROM (cont'd)

But remember, if you ever have the misfortune of fighting an elf, expect to lose. The same goes for the Ra'zac. They are not human and tire much more slowly.

ERAGON

Is there any way rival their skill?

Eragon sits cross-legged next to him and Saphira curls up around the two of them, humming contentedly.

BROM

A few, but none are available to you now. Magic will let you defeat all but the strongest enemies. For those you'll need Saphira's help, plus a great deal of luck.

(beat)

Remember, when creatures of magic actually use magic, they can accomplish things that would kill a human.

SAPHIRA (V.O.)

How does one fight with magic? You've not said.

ERAGON

Yes, what if I was attacked by a Shade? How would I block their magic? Most spells take place instantaneously, how could I react in time?

Brom sighs and tosses some more wood on the fire.

BROM

A wizard's duel? Very dangerous. You'll have to know your opponent's intention before they act.

(beat)

Galbatorix is as powerful as he is, because he is a master mind breaker. No one uses magic until one of the participants gains access to the other's mind.

SAPHIRA (V.O.)

Why wait? By the time an enemy realizes you've attacked it will be too late.

Brom shakes his head.

BROM

If I were to use my power against you, Eragon, you would die. But there would be time for a counterattack in the brief moment before you were destroyed.

(beat)

Once you're inside your enemy's mind, it's easy enough to anticipate what they will do and prevent it. Even then, it's possible to lose if you don't know how to counteract spells.

Brom pulls out his pipe and lights it, puffing out strange shapes with his smoke.

BROM (cont'd)

That requires quick thinking. You have to understand the exact nature of the forces directed at you.

(beat)

If you're being attacked with heat, you have to know whether it is being conveyed through air, fire, or light. Then you can counteract it by, say, cooling the flame.

ERAGON

It sounds difficult.

BROM

Very. Not many survive such a duel for more than a few seconds.

(MORE)

BROM (cont'd)

Once you've progressed, I'll teach you the necessary methods.

(beat)

In the meantime, if you ever find yourself in a wizard's duel, my advice is to run.

Eragon nods and chuckles. He begins to prepare their dinner and they relax in comfortable silence.

FADE TO:

EXT. LEONA LAKE - DAWN

The light of the rising sun makes Leona Lake appear to shine silver against the fertile green plains around it. The lake is large enough to almost be a small sea and is fed by many rivers flowing into it. This early in the morning there are no boats or people on the lake.

Saphira is standing on the shore of the lake, fanning her wings dry. Eragon runs up to her.

SAPHIRA (V.O.)

This water is lovely; Deep, cool, and clear.

ERAGON

Want to have some fun?

Eragon grins and Saphira whips her tail from side to side as she crouches to let him jump onto her back. As soon as he's seated, Saphira takes off and flies close to the surface of the lake. Even in the air, the far side of the lake is not visible.

ERAGON (V.O.)

Would you like another bath?

Saphira turns her head back to look at him, nearly grinning. She folds her wings and dives into the lake as cleanly as a knife.

Eragon holds on as the water hits him and opens his eyes once they're underwater. The water is perfectly clear and he can see the plants and fish thriving under the water's surface. Saphira writhes like an eel in the water as she uses her tail to propel herself.

Eragon taps on Saphira's shoulder when he can't hold his breath any longer and she kicks her feet, propelling them to the surface. She breeches with a splash and swims calmly.

SAPHIRA (V.O.)
It's a pity you can't hold your
breath any longer.

ERAGON (V.O.)
Well I can't help that. Maybe Brom
knows a spell he'll teach me.

Saphira continues to swim along the surface of the water.

SAPHIRA (V.O.)
Did Brom say when we should reach
Dras-Leona?

ERAGON (V.O.)
Tomorrow morning, if we stay on the
trade road.

Saphira nods her head.

SAPHIRA (V.O.)
The two of you must be careful. The
Ra'zac could have spies watching for
travelers that fit your description.
(beat)
I won't be able to protect you in the
city. I will be too far away to come
to your aid, nor would I survive long
in the narrow streets your kind
favor.

ERAGON (V.O.)
I know. I'll follow Brom's lead.

Saphira turns and begins swimming back to the shore.

SAPHIRA (V.O.)
When the Ra'zac are killed, will you
go with him to the Varden? He will
want to take you to them.

Eragon rubs his hands together nervously and shakes his wet
hair out of his face.

ERAGON (V.O.)
I don't want to fight the Empire like
the Varden do. Life has to be more
than constant war. We'll have time to
consider it after we kill the Ra'zac.

Saphira reaches the shore and shakes herself dry when Eragon
hops down. She looks down at him.

SAPHIRA (V.O.)
Don't be too sure.

EXT. TOARK RIVER - LATER

As Brom carefully puts items into his back, he adjusts his gloved left hand. The cries of war fill his head.

MORZAN (V.O.)
Don't make me kill you, old friend.

BROM (V.O.)
That ended when you killed her! Give me the egg and I'll make *your* death painless.

MORZAN (V.O.)
We'll see about that!

The cries of war and clashing swords continue. Brom is clearly troubled by these memories.

ERAGON (O.S.)
Brom!

Brom snaps back to reality. Eragon watches him, adjusting Zar'roc to his saddle.

ERAGON
Is everything alright?

BROM
Yes, yes. We'd best get a move on.
There's a long ride ahead of us.

Brom hurries to his saddle. Concerned, Eragon finishes his packing and adjusts the stirrups.

CUT TO:

EXT. DRAS-LEONA ROAD - DAY

Brom and Eragon ride their horses down the trade road to Dras-Leona. The road becomes more and more populated with traveling merchants and wagons as they travel closer to the city. Eragon and Brom move their horses closer to the side of the road to avoid the crowds. Eragon's right arm is still bandaged, but not as tightly anymore.

ERAGON

You still haven't told me what Helgrind is.

BROM

That's right.

ERAGON

Will you?

Brom nods towards the road ahead of them.

BROM

You can see for yourself.

Eragon turns to look ahead and sees--

EXT. HELGRIND - DAY

Up ahead, smoke rises from the chimneys of Dras-Leona. The city sits next to Leona Lake, and the heart of the city is walled off by a yellow mud wall. It appears to be an ill planned and ramshackle city, with a black cathedral looming over the city in its center.

A few miles east of the city, a mountain of bare black rock rises into the sky like a jagged piece of bone.

BROM

It's the reason Dras-Leona was built. People are fascinated by it, an unhealthy and malevolent thing.

ERAGON

They worship it?

Brom grimaces as he nods.

BROM

In a way. They drink human blood and sacrifice their flesh to Helgrind. They believe the more bone and sinew they give up the less attached to the mortal world they are.

Eragon gapes in horror at Helgrind and the cathedral, fidgeting nervously with the reins in his hands. Brom urges Snowfire faster towards the city gates and Eragon follows.

INT. DRAS-LEONA - DAY

Unlike Teirm, Dras-Leona is cramped and the buildings are tall and thin. The houses are built atop one another and hang over the streets, obscuring the sun so the whole city seems dark.

Ragged children fight over scraps in the streets, and beggars lie in the mud by the city gates. Their begging and crying almost drowns out the sound of the animals. Eragon takes it all in, disgusted.

ERAGON

We don't even treat animals like this.

BROM

We need to find an inn and get off these streets.

Eragon and Brom forge ahead into the city, leaving most of the squalor behind. Eragon is no less uncomfortable, and he can still hear the cries and pleading from the gate. He and Brom come upon the Golden Globe and head inside.

INT. GOLDEN GLOBE - EVENING

Brom opens their room door to see one narrow bed and little else. Eragon glances skeptically at the mattress.

ERAGON

I'm sleeping on the floor. There's probably enough bugs in that thing to eat me alive.

BROM

Well I wouldn't want to deprive them of a meal.

Brom sets his pack down on the bed, while Eragon sets his on the floor beside it.

ERAGON

What now? Where do we look?

BROM

First, food and beer. Then we sleep. Leave the searching for tomorrow.

Eragon scowls and grumbles under his breath as he follows Brom out of their room.

FADE OUT

INT. GOLDEN GLOBE - MORNING

Eragon groans as he rolls over, rubbing his eyes. Brom is already up, splashing his face with water from the washbasin.

ERAGON

You drank more than I did, how are you up already?

BROM

Hot tea and ice water, then wash it down with brandy.

Brom buckles his sword onto his belt.

BROM (cont'd)

We need to find out where the Seithr oil was delivered. Discreetly.

(beat)

Soldiers or workmen involved in transporting it would know best. Come on.

Eragon grabs his gear quickly and hurried after Brom.

EXT. DRAS-LEONA - DAY

Eragon and Brom leave the Golden Globe and head towards the center of the city, where the roads begin to slant upwards towards the cathedral and an ornate palace.

They pass several warehouses, stopping to make small talk or bribe workers into discussing whether or not they'd transported Seithr oil or heard of it.

There are more guards passing by the closer they travel to the palace, so Eragon and Brom have to cut through alleys to avoid main roads. No matter where they go, the dark cathedral is always in sight.

EXT. DRAS-LEONA PALACE - AFTERNOON

Eragon and Brom approach the palace gates. They can just barely see the courtyard through the gate, ornately decorated with mother-of-pearl and gold. Black statues sit in alcoves with burning incense.

ERAGON
Who lives there?

Brom steers Eragon around to the side of the palace.

BROM
Marcus Tabor. He answers only to the
king and his own conscience.
(beat)
And the latter hasn't been very
active recently.

Around the side of the palace is a small warehouse and
stable. Several workers are loading and unloading crates
from a wagon, overseen by an unhappy looking administrator.
Brom and Eragon approach her.

BROM (cont'd)
(to the administrator)
Plenty of business I see.

ADMINISTRATOR
(grumbling)
More than plenty. Who're you?

BROM
Neil, and this is my nephew, Evan.
I'm a jeweler by trade, out scouting
the market.

The administrator chuckles.

ADMINISTRATOR
Well I'm sure you'll find plenty of
business in Dras-Leona.

BROM
I don't know about that, my goods are
rather expensive.

Brom hands her a few coins.

BROM (cont'd)
Here, for your troubles. Do you know
anyone willing to buy Seithr oil?
I've asked all around town with no
luck.

ADMINISTRATOR
You've come to the right place. I
know the palace trades in a lot of
Seithr oil.

ERAGON

Oh?

Brom glares at Eragon. The administrator nods.

ADMINISTRATOR

Oh yes, we receive large shipments
all the time.

BROM

Is that what all this is?

Brom gestures at the crates being transported into the
warehouse, and the administrator shakes her head.

ADMINISTRATOR

Oh no, the oil is sent out to
Helgrind along with two slaves and a
month's worth of provisions.

(beat)

All this nonsense is to prepare for
the king's arrival.

Eragon had begun to grimace distastefully at the mention of
the slaves, but he and Brom both start when the king is
mentioned.

BROM

The king is visiting?

The administrator nods and sighs.

ADMINISTRATOR

Apparently, Tabor has taken too many
liberties with his station and the
king needs to teach him some
humility.

(beat)

And that means disrupting my shipping
schedule with all this frivolous
royal nonsense.

Eragon looks at Brom with a panicked expression and Brom
clears his throat.

BROM

(to the administrator)

Well, we'd best leave you to your
business then. Thank you, I'll
contact the palace about buying some
of my oil.

ADMINISTRATOR
Best of luck to you.

Eragon waits until they've traveled some distance from the palace and ducked into an alley to panic.

ERAGON
Galbatorix is coming here?!

Brom hushes him and rubs the sweat from his own brow.

BROM
He knows of us, but I doubt he knows our location. The Ra'zac would certainly have us if they knew where we were.

(beat)
The one thing in our favor is that the Ra'zac are likely here, preparing for his visit. Whatever we're going to do about them must be accomplished before he arrives.

ERAGON
They live in Helgrind. That's the only explanation.

BROM
But where? At the bottom where they are well fortified, or at the peak where only their mounts can reach?

ERAGON
What if we took the place of the slaves?

Brom shakes his head.

BROM
Too risky, the slaves could be killed at a distance and we'd never get close.

ERAGON
Maybe they aren't killed.

Brom gives Eragon and knowing look and shakes his head.

ERAGON (cont'd)
I thought the Riders demolished the slave trade.

BROM

Unfortunately, there's been a resurgence under Galbatorix. The slaves are certainly killed, and until we know more it's too risky.

ERAGON

We don't have much time.

BROM

I know. It's late in the day and the sun will be down soon, we'll have to wait until tomorrow to investigate Helgrind itself.

Brom leads Eragon out of the alley and they head back to the Golden Globe.

BROM (cont'd)

I'll visit the palace in the morning, see what else I can learn. You explore but stay unnoticed.

ERAGON

Of course.

EXT. DRAS-LEONA - EVENING

Eragon and Brom wander back to the inn, stopping to purchase some food for dinner. While Brom barterers for their food, Eragon contacts Saphira.

SAPHIRA (V.O.) (O.S.)

Helgrind is a fitting place for those creatures.

ERAGON (V.O.)

We need more time. But we can't be anywhere within twenty leagues of Galbatorix. He'd tear us to pieces.

SAPHIRA (V.O.) (O.S.)

True. But, you've found the Ra'Zac. You should be proud.

ERAGON (V.O.)

When they're dead, maybe we could visit Carvahall again.

Saphira growls.

SAPHIRA (V.O.) (O.S.)

(angrily)

What is it you want? To go back to a farmer's life? You know it won't happen, so stop mooning after it!

(beat)

Will you hide for the rest of your life or help the Varden?!

ERAGON (V.O.)

(frustrated)

If I have to, I'll cast my fate with the Varden!

SAPHIRA (V.O.) (O.S.)

I know. Sometimes, you have to hear yourself say it.

FADE OUT

EXT. GOLDEN GLOBE - DAY

Eragon steps outside and stretches, yawning. He carries his bow with him and keeps his hand on his coin purse as he heads to the marketplace.

He buys some food and talks with some of the merchants as he wanders around, careful to avoid guards and soldiers.

AUCTIONEER (O.S.)

(faintly)

And here we have our first item.
Lords and ladies, do I have a treat for you!

Curious, Eragon cuts through a side passage and arrives at a large, open spaced market with a large stage. The crowd in front of him is dressed in fine clothes and bright, expensive jewelry. The auctioneer is standing on the stage next to a row of men and women standing in chains.

AUCTIONEER

A healthy male from the Hadarac Desert! Captured just last month, and in excellent condition.

A pair of soldiers force one a young man to step forward so the crowd can inspect him.

AUCTIONEER (cont'd)

Look at those arms and legs; he's as strong as a bull and perfect for a shield bearer or hard labor!

(beat)

He's bright as a nail too, if you can get him to talk in a civilized tongue!

The whole crowd laughs and Eragon glares at them in disgust. He starts to move his hand, the words of a spell forming on his lips, before he stops. The slave wouldn't be able to escape even if Eragon broke his chains now, and he knows it.

Eragon watches helplessly as the slave is sold and taken away. The nobles gathered at the auction clap and murmur among themselves as the woman who bought the slave leads him away.

A small girl, no more than six years old, is ripped from her mothers arms and the auctioneer starts the bidding. Eragon curses and turns away, back the way he came. He wipes the tears from his face as the continue to fall.

ERAGON (V.O.)

I could have freed those slaves with you by my side. I've been graced with special powers; what good are they if I don't use them to help others?

SAPHIRA (V.O.) (O.S.)

That is what it means to be a Rider.

Eragon takes a deep breath and tries to compose himself.

ERAGON (V.O.)

It feels like I should have done something. I could have.

SAPHIRA (V.O.) (O.S.)

He never would've escaped the city and you'd have been taken as well. You know that.

Eragon nods slowly and glances back at the auction in the distance, where the auctioneer is still shouting.

ERAGON (V.O.)

Someday, I'll return and put this right.

Saphira growls eagerly and, after a moment's hesitation, Eragon begins to head towards the cathedral.

EXT. DRAS-LEONA PALACE - DAY

Brom hides in a shadowed alcove around the backside of the palace. He watches the servants coming and going from their quarters, going about their duties. A particularly haggard looking maid comes outside and begins washing laundry. Brom moves towards her, adopting a cheery and easy going demeanor.

BROM

My dear, I've never seen a poor woman more in need of some cheer in her day.

MAID

(sourly)

Oh yeah? And who do you think you are?

Brom steps back and flourishes his ragged cape.

BROM

Name's Neil, traveling bard by trade. I've seen and heard all manner of daring and exciting adventures with my own eyes.

(beat)

All so that I may share them with the world.

The maid scoffs and continues her scrubbing. She hangs several sheets up to dry.

MAID

Just another lousy storyteller if you ask me. Even I could do that.

BROM

Perhaps, dear lady. I'm sure you have plenty of stories to tell working in this magnificent palace.

The maid attempts to appear uninterested but Brom is clearly winning her over.

MAID

I doubt the common folk would be interested to hear what I know. Who'd want to know that one of the earls houses all three of his mistresses in the same wing of his palace?

Brom leans in closer.

BROM

Why, I would, my dear. With that one tidbit imagine the tales I could weave. Such scandal and drama.

(beat)

I imagine the earl himself is absolutely exhausted.

The maid chuckles.

MAID

Aye sir, I imagine he is. A wife and three lovers is quite the burden.

BROM

And, if you are not one for stories, I know a great many songs and poems from all across Alagaesia.

MAID

Oh? Where have you travelled?

Brom spreads his arms wide.

BROM

From east to west, north to south. I have traveled to the Iron Cliffs on the coast, I wandered the Hadarac Desert with the nomadic tribes.

(beat)

I've even ventured into Du Weldenvarden in search of elves.

MAID

(sarcastically)

And of course you found one?

BROM

No, my lady. Only one of their beautiful songs, if you should care to hear it.

The maid sighs and shrugs.

MAID

A pretty song would make the day a tad better.

BROM

Then allow me to assist.

Brom clears his throat and closes his eyes, gesturing slowly with his arms in time with the song.

BROM (cont'd)

(singing)

O liquid temptress 'neath the azure
sky, your gilded expanse calls me,
calls me.

CUT TO:

INT. DRAS-LEONA

The city bustles as merchants and traders go about their day. From above, it is hard to make out the squalor and depravity of the city. Looking closer, Eragon is wandering the city streets, talking to merchants and fellow travelers.

BROM (V.O.) (O.S.)

For I would sail ever on, were it not
for the elven maid who calls me,
calls me.

Leona Lake shines in the daylight. Boats of all shapes and sizes come and go, some for trade and some as fishing boats. The land around is beautiful and green, marred by the dark shape of Helgrind and the city built near it.

CUT TO:

EXT. DRAS-LEONA PALACE - DAY

Brom sways gently, lost in his song.

BROM

She binds my heart with a lily-white
tie, never to be broken, save by the
sea. Ever to be torn twixt the trees
and the waves.

The maid is transfixed by the song, pausing in her washing as she watches Brom. He clasps his hands in front of him and bows politely.

MAID

That was beautiful, sir.

BROM

Thank you, dear. It was the *Du
Silbena Datia*. The sad tale of two
elven lovers from a time long ago.

The maid looks over her shoulder back towards the palace, then begins packing up her laundry.

MAID

Sir, if you've got more fine tales
and songs like that I know quite a
few people who'd like to meet you.

BROM

And I would undoubtedly love to meet
them as well. I am at your command,
my lady.

Brom follows behind the maid as she leads him back towards
the palace. He looks behind him briefly before heading
inside the servants' quarters.

CUT TO:

EXT. DRAS-LEONA CATHEDRAL - DAY

The cathedral mimics the shape of Helgrind, with sharp and
twisting spires made from black stone. Tall stained glass
windows line the walls of the cathedral and snarling
gargoyles leer down from the pillars and arches carved into
the cathedral.

Stone stairs lead up to an iron-bound door. Eragon ascends
the stairs slowly, stopping to read the script inlaid in
silver on the doors. It is written in the ancient language.

ERAGON

(whispering)

May thee who enter here understand
thine impermanence and forget thine
attachments to that which is beloved.

Eragon shivers before slowly pushing on the doors. They
swing open silently and Eragon steps inside.

INT. DRAS-LEONA CATHEDRAL - DAY

As soon as the doors close behind Eragon the sounds of the
city completely disappear. The cathedral is silent as a tomb
and devoid of all decorations except the stained glass
windows.

Rows of granite pews line the walkway that leads to slab of
stone that serves as the altar at the front of the
cathedral. The wind organ behind the altar sounds with each
gust of wind outside.

Eragon walks up the aisle, observing the windows. They depict bloody scenes of sacrifice and death throughout history. A few priests shuffle here and there and Eragon realizes all of them are missing an arm or leg, sometimes more than one.

Two priests leave the altar and walk down the aisle, passing Eragon. One is missing both his arms, another is missing a hand. They both bow and Eragon awkwardly returns to gesture.

PRIEST ONE

(quietly)

Welcome, Brother.

PRIEST TWO

(quietly)

Reaffirm your fealty to the
Triumvirate, and to our Great and
Terrible Lord.

At a loss, Eragon simply nods and lets the priests walk by. He approaches the altar and, after hesitating, kneels and looks up to the dark vaulted ceiling.

ERAGON (V.O.)

This place feels wrong. I can't
imagine all the sorrow these walls
have witnessed.

SAPHIRA (V.O.) (O.S.)

Evil festers here. I would prefer it
if you leave.

Eragon nods slowly and stands to leave. He turns around and sees the cathedral is now completely empty, save for two hooded figures standing by the doors. The RA'ZAC stand with their swords drawn and hoods pulled low. The shorter one hisses quietly, but neither make a move towards him.

When the shock wears off, Eragon snarls and rips his bow off his back.

ERAGON

(shouting)

Murderers!

He fires two arrows, which the Ra'zac dodge easily, and readies another as the Ra'zac run towards him.

SAPHIRA (V.O.) (O.S.)

(screaming)

Eragon, run!

Eragon moves to fire again, but a line of soldiers files into the cathedral behind the Ra'zac. He snarls, knowing he doesn't have a chance, and searches frantically for a way out.

Eragon runs through a door to his left that leads to a vestibule where some priests are gathered. He pushes through the crowd and runs faster, hearing the Ra'zac's feet behind him.

Eragon darts down a hallway and alarm bells start ringing from behind him. He can hear the soldiers shouting behind him in the distance and a hiss from one of the Ra'zac.

ERAGON (V.O.)

How did they find me? Brom might be in danger, can you find him?

Saphira doesn't respond while Eragon searches frantically for a way out of the cathedral. He tries to lose the Ra'zac by darting down side passages and chambers, but he can't shake them off his trail. He darts through a kitchen, causing the staff to curse and yell after him.

SAPHIRA (V.O.) (O.S.)

Brom is safe. He'll meet you at the inn. Hurry!

ERAGON (V.O.)

I'm coming!

Panting for breath, Eragon skids to a halt at the end of a hallway. The door is closed and locked, but he has no where else to go. He kicks the door before backing up.

ERAGON

Jierda!

The door explodes into pieces and Eragon sprints through the doorway. He finds himself in a garden surrounded by high walls with no sign of a door or gate.

Steeling himself, Eragon sprints and leaps at the stone wall, managing to grab the top. He groans and struggles to pull himself up, hanging their for a moment.

He scrambles frantically as the Ra'zac come into the garden, sniffing after him like hunting dogs. With a grunt, Eragon manages to heave himself over the wall.

He jumps down and lands awkwardly, but immediately begins running. Behind him, the Ra'zac leap clear over the wall and continue their pursuit.

Eragon weaves through back alleys towards a crowded marketplace, where he slides under a parked wagon and freezes. Hundreds of tramping feet pass by the wagon, but he sees no sign of the Ra'zac.

ERAGON (V.O.)

I think I lost them. How could they have known? Did something happen to Brom?

SAPHIRA (V.O.) (O.S.)

He didn't say, so I doubt it. Hurry! If you don't leave Dras-Leona immediately, I'll come get you myself.

Eragon waits for several more minutes until he is sure the Ra'zac have lost his trail. He slips out from under the wagon and makes his way back to the Golden Globe.

EXT. GOLDEN GLOBE - MIDDAY

Brom is waiting with the horses around the side of the inn, out of sight. Eragon is out of breath and wheezing by the time he reaches him and takes his horse's reins.

BROM

What did you do?

ERAGON

I didn't do anything! I was in the cathedral and the Ra'zac just appeared behind me. There were soldiers with them.

Brom nods and they both mount their horses and hurry towards the city gates.

BROM

We need to get outside the city before they close the gates. If they're shut, it'll be impossible for us to leave.

Eragon and Brom gallop down the main road, civilians and travelers jumping out of their way and cursing them as they fly past. Eragon nearly falls off his horse when they're forced to jump over a cart that rolls into the road.

INT. DRAS-LEONA GATES - MIDDAY

Eragon cries out in dismay as they finally catch sight of the gates. The gates are already half closed and a line of soldiers wielding pikes block the road.

ERAGON

They'll cut us to pieces!

BROM

We don't have a choice! I'll deal with the men, you have to keep the gates open!

Eragon and Brom charge towards the line of soldiers as they lower their pikes at the horses' chests. Before they collide, Brom raises his hand and speaks something in the ancient language. The soldiers fall as if their legs had been cut from under them and begin to collapse.

Eragon grits his teeth and raises his own hand.

ERAGON

(shouting)

Du grind huildr!

There is a deep grinding sound as the gates jerk and stop closing.

CUT TO:

EXT. DRAS LEONA ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

Eragon and Brom fly out of Dras-Leona, and the gates slam shut when Eragon releases his spell. Brom watches Eragon with concern as he sways in his saddle, exhausted, but they continue on. Bells and trumpets sound in alarm from the city behind them and they leave the main road behind.

They push the horses faster and faster until they reach a small copse of trees where Saphira is waiting. She snarls and whips her head from side to side, searching for anyone who may have followed them.

SAPHIRA (V.O.)

Are you OK?

Eragon pants and gasps, struggling to breath, before he can answer.

ERAGON (V.O.)

Only because we were very lucky.

Saphira nuzzles him with her snout as he catches his breath.

BROM

Evading the Empire will be harder than ever now. That was hardly an unobtrusive escape.

ERAGON

I still don't understand how they could have found me.

BROM

One of the palace servants warned me there were spies. Word of my questions must have reached Tabor, and then the Ra'zac.

ERAGON

How are we going to kill the Ra'zac now?! We won't be able to go back for years!

Brom shakes his head and urges Snowfire back into a gallop, Eragon following his lead. Saphira takes off and flies close above their heads.

BROM

Right now, we have to concentrate on staying alive. The Ra'zac will be strongest in the dark when they hunt us tonight.

Eragon and Brom ride hard until the sun sets. Leona Lake recedes into the distance, and the landscape around them turns dry and rocky.

As the sun sets and it grows dark, the wind begins to pick up. Eragon and Brom have to slow the horses and Saphira follows on foot as the wind becomes too strong.

EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

Hours pass and it becomes too dark for them to travel. They make camp between two boulders, with Saphira sheltering them from the wind with her wings and body. They eat cold food and sit in the dark, too risky to light a fire.

BROM

We'll trade watches tonight, then set out at first light.

Eragon nods and stands to stretch. He flinches suddenly, catching a flash of movement to his right. Seeing him start, Brom also stands.

BROM (cont'd)

What is it?

Eragon stares into the darkness, completely still. He shakes his head.

ERAGON

I don't know. I thought I saw something.

As he turns around to face Brom, Saphira roars suddenly and starts to leap to her feet. Something strikes the back of Eragon's head and he collapses to the ground.

FADE TO:

EXT. RA'ZAC CAMP - NIGHT

Eragon opens his eyes slowly, wincing as the bright light of a lantern blinds him momentarily. He tries to sit up and realizes his hands are bound.

He manages to roll over and sees Brom laying beside him, also bound. Eragon tries to get a better look around before a pair of black boots step in front of him.

One of the Ra'zac looks down at him, hissing and cocking its head to the side. Eragon can't make out much under its hood, just a faint glimpse of gleaming black eyes and a pointed beak. He snarls and begins to say something in the ancient language, but the words keep escaping him.

RA'ZAC ONE

(chuckling)

The drug is working, yesss? There will be no magic for you.

Eragon hears chains rattle to his other side and rolls over, eyes widening as he sees the other Ra'zac fit a muzzle over Saphira's snout. Heavy black chains pin her wings and legs to the ground.

RA'ZAC ONE (cont'd)

She was most cooperative once we threatened to kill you.

The first Ra'zac begins rummaging through Eragon's pack, making strange clicking sounds as it holds Zar'roc.

RA'ZAC ONE (cont'd)

What a pretty thing for one so...
insignificant. Maybe I will keep it.

(beat)

Or maybe, if you behave, our master
will let you polish it.

The second Ra'zac joins the other in inspecting the sword.
They turn the sword over, exposing the symbol on the sheath,
and they both screech.

RA'ZAC TWO

Yesss, you will serve our master very
well.

ERAGON

(stuttering)

If I do, I will kill you.

The Ra'zac chuckle.

RA'ZAC TWO

We are too valuable. But you...are
disposable.

Saphira snarls loudly and smoke curls from her nostrils. The
Ra'zac do not seem to notice. They do, however, notice when
Brom groans and rolls over. The first Ra'zac goes over to
him, grabbing his shirt and hoisting him up.

RA'ZAC ONE

It'sss wearing off.

RA'ZAC TWO

Kill him. He has caused us much
grief.

RA'ZAC ONE

Yesss, I would like to.

The Ra'zac cocks its head to the side and pulls Brom in
closer.

RA'ZAC ONE (cont'd)

Yesss, Brom. I would like to kill you
very much. But the king's
instructionss were to keep you alive
for himself.

(beat)

Despite the trouble you have caused.

RA'ZAC TWO
We can sssay he was killed when we
captured them.

The first Ra'zac points at Eragon.

RA'ZAC ONE
If he talksss?

RA'ZAC TWO
He would not dare.

The first Ra'zac seems to consider it a while, clicking and
chattering back and forth to its companion.

RA'ZAC ONE
Agreed.

Eragon cries out as the Ra'zac drags Brom to the center of
the camp, the second one drawing a wicked dagger.

ERAGON
Brom!

Eragon pulls at the rope binding him, rubbing his skin raw
as he tries to get free. The taller Ra'zac hisses loudly.

RA'ZAC ONE
(to Eragon)
None of that now.

The tallest Ra'zac tosses Brom to the ground and the second
grabs him by the hair, pulling back his head to expose his
throat. Brom comes to slowly, blinking as his eyes open.

BROM
(weakly)
Finally got the upper hand, eh?

The second Ra'zac holding him snarls, pressing the dagger
against Brom's throat. The first one stops, standing up
straight, and sniffs at the air. It looks around slowly,
searching for something.

RA'ZAC TWO
(to Brom)
Long have you been a thorn in
Galbatorix'ssss ssside. He wishesss to
break you himssself.

BROM
I would imagine so.

Eragon thrashes wildly, still trying to break free. He stutters as he keeps trying to cast spells to save Brom, but the poison is still affecting him.

There is a sudden whistling sound and the Ra'zac holding Brom shrieks. It drops Brom and staggers forward, an arrow protruding from the back of its shoulder. The first Ra'zac scuttles towards its companion, both of them hissing angrily. Brom staggers to his feet.

ERAGON
(shouting)
Get down!

As Brom totters towards where Eragon is laying prone, more arrows come whizzing out of the darkness. The Ra'zac dodge them before, after a brief lull, the arrows come in from a different direction.

The smaller Ra'zac hisses and drops its dagger, fleeing the volley of arrows. As it runs past Eragon, it kicks him viciously in the ribs and he cries out in pain, struggling to stay conscious.

Brom shakes his head, his mind clearing, and sees the taller Ra'zac grab its companion's fallen dagger. The Ra'zac begins to run after its companion, dagger in hand, and Brom follows. He doesn't try to keep up, simply keeping himself between the Ra'zac and Eragon.

Eragon wheezes in pain and looks up in time to see Brom running towards him, just as the fleeing Ra'zac hurls the dagger in Eragon's direction.

ERAGON (cont'd)
(screaming)
Brom!

There is a loud thump as Brom hits the ground in front of Eragon and does not move, but falls on his back. Eragon can see the dagger buried to the hilt in Brom's chest.

ERAGON (cont'd)
NO!

Saphira roars in grief. As one of the Ra'zac draws his sword and heads towards Saphira-

Eragon struggles to break free. As his eyes begin to falter, a shadowy figure approaches the camp.

The figure, carrying a hand and a half sword. A quiver of arrows and bow rests on his back and a WHITE HORN with silver fittings hangs from his belt. He draws his sword and swings at the Ra'zac, chasing them away.

He finally turns back to Eragon, Brom, and Saphira. Eragon's eyes falter more. The figure kneels beside Eragon, returning his sword to its sheath.

Finally, Eragon's eyes close.

CUT TO BLACK.

CREDITS

END.