

DAMSEL
The Untold Story of Rapunzel

By: Bryan McMullin

EXT. REDWOOD FOREST - SOUTH - DAY

Mounds of white powder, as far as the eye can see.

Winter consumes the land.

Titan trees with trunks of red, break through the glittering snow-scape and stretch into the sky. Their needles, strong and green against the elements.

BRAUN (V.O.)

In days of old, a great famine swept across the land. Men and women turned to the wilds for survival, but few overcame that winter's fury.

In the distance, a simple canvas tent.

INT. TENT - CONTINUOUS

A DESPERATE MAN and his STARVING WIFE lie huddled in their insignificant canvas dwelling.

BRAUN (V.O.)

In that time, there was a desperate man whose beloved wife was starving, so severely, that he feared she might too succumb to the frost.

Wrapped in thin blankets, atop the pelts of fallen animals, they shudder in the frigid night's cold.

EXT. REDWOOD FOREST - SOUTH - DAY

An icy breeze chills the stale air, whispering as it snakes through the redwoods.

The Desperate Man battles through the frozen land. His boots sink deep into the snow as he walks.

A bow is strapped across his chest. A quiver at his back.

An ethereal tone grows from the distance ahead.

EXT. FORBIDDEN GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

The Desperate Man stands at the edge of a clearing. Behind him stands the redwood forest, before him, a lush garden of smooth grass and white flowered vines.

BRAUN (V.O.)

One day, while hunting for food,
the man came upon a strange garden,
untouched by winter.

At the center of the garden a remarkable tree grows. It puts forth a white light and emanates the ethereal hum.

Twisted branches of white explode outward from the trunk,
bearing leaves of ghostly flame and luscious white fruit.

Yellow fireflies twinkle throughout the breathtaking space.

BRAUN (V.O.)

At the center was a magical tree of white flame. It hummed an ethereal tone and put forth an otherworldly light.

The man approaches the tree, moving his fingers through the unconsuming flames, in awe.

He reaches for a white pear.

BRAUN

The man had unwittingly come upon an enchanted garden. The peculiar tree bore fruit, which granted eternal life in a single bite.

CUT TO:

EXT. TENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

The Desperate Man treks through the snowscape, making his way toward the tent in the distance.

BRAUN (V.O.)

He returned to his wife and together, they ate of the fruit. Their youth returned and their hunger became eternally nourished.

INT. TENT - CONTINUOUS

The Desperate Man and his wife share the Forbidden Tree's fruit.

CUT TO:

EXT. FORBIDDEN GARDEN - NIGHT

A potato sack full of the tree's stolen fruit, hangs from the Desperate Man's, newly-youthful, shoulders.

BRAUN (V.O.)

Greed consumed the man. Hoping to profit from the forbidden tree's gift, he returned to the enchanted garden.

A WITCH, 40 years old, clothed in a green dress, with hair as dark as the night, slinks toward him.

BRAUN (V.O.)

But, when he returned, he was confronted by a witch, whose power overwhelmed him.

The witch turns, waves her hand and he's on the ground, writhing in pain.

The white fruit scatters as his bag falls to the ground.

His veins visibly throb under his brow and neck. He struggles against an unseen force.

BRAUN (V.O.)

Showing pity for his desperation, the woman spared the man's life but demanded his first born child, in return for what he had stolen from the garden, which she claimed for her own.

His pain subsides.

BRAUN (V.O.)

Knowing that his wife was barren, the penniless man agreed.

CUT TO:

INT. DESPERATE MAN'S COTTAGE - 9 MONTHS LATER

A modest single-bedroom home of stone.

BRAUN (V.O.)

9 months later the man's wife, miraculously delivered their first child.

Beads of sweat dot the pale skin of the Desperate Man's Wife as she struggles through child birth. Her eyes clenched tight, she breaths heavily, crying out.

FADE TO BLACK.

BRAUN (V.O.)

As the infant took her first breath, the witch arrived to collect her due. She reclaimed the eternal life that the man and his wife had stolen from her garden and left with their child, who she named, Rapunzel.

CUT TO:

EXT. STONE TOWER PRISON - 12 YEARS LATER

The sun glows bright. Birds of the forest chirp and flutter in the trees that dot the rolling foothills.

A lone tower of stone stands amidst the wilderness.

No stairs, no door, a single window at the top of a 200 foot prison.

In the window, 12-YEAR-OLD RAPUNZEL, with hair the color of a wheat field.

Her eyes are crystal blue. Simple brown freckles spot her face.

She hums a haunting melody.

BRAUN (V.O.)

The girl grew into a young woman whose beauty was beyond any the witch had known. Understanding the corrupt heart of man and their deceitful way, the witch locked Rapunzel in a high tower and began to discipline the girl's mind against the creatures of humanity.

A dove lands on Rapunzel's window seal. She approaches it, nearly touching it, before the bird flies away.

BRAUN (V.O.)

But, with every day that passed
Rapunzel grew more intrigued by the
outside world.

CUT TO:

INT. STONE TOWER PRISON - 5 YEARS LATER

17-YEAR-OLD RAPUNZEL reaches for a pile of blankets under her bed. Wedged between them is a length of golden rope, woven from her hair.

BRAUN (V.O.)

The witch denied the girl's wish to walk outside of her prison's walls and so Rapunzel began weaving a rope of her own hair's clippings in secret, with hope that she might escape.

She takes her hair out of a tight bun and saws away a foot, from her shoulder down.

She begins to braid the new length of hair into the rope.

All the while, she sings the same haunting melody.

A young man's voice calls to her from below.

YOUNG PRINCE EDWARD (O.S.)

Hello?

Rapunzel freezes, uncertain. Her eyes grow wide with anticipation.

YOUNG PRINCE EDWARD (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Hello? Up there!

She snaps into action, quickly hiding the length of rope between the folded blankets and sliding them back under her bed.

Rapunzel apprehensively peers over her window's ledge. She sees him now. YOUNG PRINCE EDWARD.

Edward dawns a fitted black jacket and riding pants. The Kingdom of Thessia's golden lion on his chest. His hair, fire-red and his eyes, like the lion, gold. 20 years old.

Startled, she drops out of the prince's line of sight.

YOUNG PRINCE EDWARD (CONT'D)
There's no need to be frightened.
I was drawn here by your song.

Moments pass as she reconsiders.

She peers over her ledge once more.

She's enthralled by the interesting figures. The man and his horse, neither a creature she'd ever seen.

YOUNG PRINCE EDWARD (CONT'D)
The most beautiful voice I've ever
heard.

As her face comes into the sun, he catches her beauty and his heart becomes full with anticipation.

The perfect fairytale begins.

YOUNG PRINCE EDWARD (CONT'D)
And you are far more beautiful than
any creature I've ever seen. Might
I come and introduce myself?

Rapunzel inspects him curiously, through her cell window, from high above.

17 YEAR OLD RAPUNZEL
Only the witch knows the way.

YOUNG PRINCE EDWARD
What witch?

The prince hops from his horse, stepping toward the tower wall. Rapunzel is silent.

YOUNG PRINCE EDWARD (CONT'D)
What is your name?

17 YEAR OLD RAPUNZEL
I am Rapunzel.

YOUNG PRINCE EDWARD
I am honored to meet you Rapunzel.
I am Prince Edward of Thessia.

Their eyes locked, even in the distance.

YOUNG PRINCE EDWARD (CONT'D)
Are you a prisoner?

17 YEAR OLD RAPUNZEL
What is that?

YOUNG PRINCE EDWARD
Do you wish to leave your tower?

17 YEAR OLD RAPUNZEL
My only wish is to see the world
outside of these walls. I've
braided lengths of my hair into a
rope that I might soon climb down.

YOUNG PRINCE EDWARD
Rapunzel, let down your hair!

Rapunzel vanishes from her window seal, appearing moments
later, fastening the rope of hair to an iron sconce.

She tosses it out her window. It unravels, floating downward
until it whips its final stretch.

Rapunzel's heart races.

YOUNG PRINCE EDWARD (CONT'D)
I'm afraid it's not yet long enough
to reach.

17 YEAR OLD RAPUNZEL
Might I climb down and jump?

YOUNG PRINCE EDWARD
Still too high, I am afraid.

Rapunzel sinks.

Edward's face twists with intrigue.

YOUNG PRINCE EDWARD (CONT'D)
I will fashion a ladder high enough
and will return with an army to
free you!

17 YEAR OLD RAPUNZEL
You will? How I hope you will!
Please!

Excitement flitters in the innocent girl's voice. She melts.

YOUNG PRINCE EDWARD
My loyalty is yours. I vow it, my
princess.

17 YEAR OLD RAPUNZEL
Then, I shall be in waiting until
you've returned, Prince Edward of
Thessia!

BRAUN (V.O.)

Rapunzel held young Prince Edward's vow dear, locking it deep in her heart. She fell, madly in love and waited for him to return, that they might live together in happiness forever after.

CUT TO:

EXT. STONE TOWER PRISON - NIGHT

The soldiers' armor, a metallic clank, as they ride atop their galloping steeds.

The orange glow of their torches reflects from their silver gear. 25 knights, lead by Young Prince Edward.

The crest of Thessia's golden lion, waves.

Rapunzel's rope of woven hair still hangs from the iron sconce. Floating high above the ground.

Soldiers urgently move and assemble sections of a grand ladder.

INT. STONE TOWER PRISON - CONTINUOUS

Edward steps through the window of the bleak cell to find that all of Rapunzel's possessions have been cleared away.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS - MORNING

A single white tower rising over an ivory castle.

A man-made fortress among nature's magnificent beauty. Nestled among the majestic redwoods, atop a southern mountain.

A grand staircase stretches to the entryway of the forgotten structure of stone.

BRAUN (V.O.)

Having learned of Prince Edward's plot to free Rapunzel, the witch took her to a secluded castle atop a mountain, so that she might never meet another living soul again.

INT. IVORY FORTRESS - TOWER PRISON - CONTINUOUS

Rapunzel lies sobbing on her new cell's stone floor.

RAPUNZEL

Please! I cannot stay here!
Please help me. Please don't make
me stay here.

Her entire life in solitary confinement. She begs in prayer through breathless tears.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)

I don't want to be alone anymore.
Help me. Set me free. Give me
freedom!

Her face is stained in tears. Dark circles under her young eyes.

A white dove lands on Rapunzel's window seal. She notices it and wipes her tears away. Catching her breath, she reassures herself.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)

He will come. He will come. He
will find me.

FADE TO:

INT. IVORY FORTRESS - TOWER PRISON - DAY (20 YEARS LATER)

Rapunzel's finger nails are caked in dirt. Bloody from picking.

RAPUNZEL

He will come. He will come. He
will find me.

She's lost count of the days. Her movements have become twitches of insanity. Erratic.

BRAUN (V.O.)

For 30 years Rapunzel lived alone in the high tower cell. Nourished only by the dark magic of her captor.

She sits in the corner, masked in the dark shadow of her prison. She brushes her own hair. Babels. Trying to remember-

RAPUNZEL
He will come. He will find me.

Her clothing is stained. Age lines crease at the corners of Rapunzel's face.

The white dove comes to her window. She erupts in a bout of insane anger. With a scream of frustration, she rushes toward the bird. It flies away.

Her screams echo through the redwood forest surrounding the Ivory Fortress.

Isolation.

BRAUN (V.O.)
When Rapunzel had finally lost all hope, the darkness consumed her and her golden heart turned black as night.

CUT TO:

INT. IVORY FORTRESS - TOWER PRISON

Her prayer has changed. Furious. Malicious.

RAPUNZEL
Give me revenge. Revenge against the one who kept me. Revenge against the one who abandoned me. Revenge against the one who mocks me while I beg for freedom.

Rapunzel; Ominous, backlit by the moon which glows through her tower's window.

BRAUN (V.O.)
Rapunzel surrendered her innocence for vengeance and her prayer was answered. The forces of darkness filled her with a power so great, that she might have her revenge.

A red cardinal lands on her window's ledge.

CUT TO:

INT. IVORY FORTRESS - TOWER PRISON - DAY

Rapunzel sits on her bed, gazing out the window of her prison.

Her captor, the witch, arrives. Shuffles through a set of iron keys, sliding one into Rapunzel's cell door.

As though she were a caged bird-

WITCH
My pretty girl.

Strange, considering Rapunzel's aged face.

The door creaks open. The witch quickly locks it behind her. Alone in the cell with her "daughter", whose back is turned.

Rapunzel grins, deviously. At last.

The witch begins to brush Rapunzel's hair.

WITCH (CONT'D)
I've missed you my child.

A powerful rage swells.

RAPUNZEL
Have you, Mother?

INT. IVORY FORTRESS - GRAND THRONE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Glistening white-stone walls stretch high. Pillars. Grandeur.

The giant bolted doors at the entry of the grand throne room creak against a persistent force. They strain and begin to twist until they shatter inward.

Powerful, snake-like roots, forking as they grow, enter the opulent space.

Leaves unfurl, creating a new archway of thick vines and bramble.

Massive stained glass windows shatter as the castle's new skeleton of living-wood wraps inward.

The throne room becomes wilderness with remnants of white-stone.

She brings the outside world she's longed for, to her.

INT. IVORY FORTRESS - TOWER PRISON - CONTINUOUS

Rapunzel's scalp begins to bleed black in the witch's hands.

The witch sets the brush on the bed and stands, backing away from Rapunzel.

The blackness runs to the tips of Rapunzel's hair until her mane has lost all of its golden hue to the darkness.

Rapunzel eyes the witch over her shoulder, oozing contempt.

WITCH
What is this?

The witch fumbles with the iron keys, scurrying toward the door.

Rapunzel stands. The witch waives her hand, trying to control Rapunzel with her magic, but Rapunzel is unaffected.

Rapunzel twists her fingers aggressively inward. The witch hangs in the air. Her eyes grow wide with fear.

Her toes slide across the stone floor as Rapunzel's black hair begins to drift into the air, weightlessly.

Rapunzel moves the witch effortlessly, toward the tower window.

The Tree of Life's power drains from the witch's body. She ages until she is decrepid. In balance, Rapunzel becomes young and beautiful once more.

Strong vines grow into the space, overpowering the iron bars of Rapunzel's cell. The metal buckles at her will. The iron door is ripped from its hinges.

Her eyes reveal a black soul of hate. A malevolent grin.

Rapunzel sends the witch flying out of the tower window.

CUT TO:

EXT. REDWOOD FOREST - SOUTH - DAY

A cardinal flies over the sprawling forest of redwoods and lands in a tree near the Ivory Fortress.

Rapunzel's familiar serenade begins. Her voice pure, long and light. Angelic.

INT. IVORY FORTRESS - GRAND THRONE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A HANDSOME PRINCE, 20 years old with dark hair and blue eyes, steps through the leaved entryway.

He enters Rapunzel's grand throne room, drawn by her siren song. It ends.

Rapunzel appears behind him.

Her hair is woven into a crown of wolves' teeth.

A smooth corset of bone is molded to her perfect body. Her long ribs wrap from her back, forward. Her bare stomach, tight.

She grins seductively, eyeing her prey.

RAPUNZEL
Welcome, prince.

He stumbles over himself, enthralled by her otherworldly beauty.

She comes in for his kiss. He hangs on her lips. She gracefully moves with him, against the wall.

Vines of black ivy grow toward the unsuspecting prince, writhing and unfurling at her command. They move up his legs and bind him where he stands.

She holds him in her kiss. His skin deteriorates until he is bone. He lands seated in a throne of ivy, as it grows beneath him.

CUT TO BLACK:

INT. CASTLE THESSIA - THRONE ROOM - 10 YEARS LATER

A grey stone, throne room. Banners of red, hang. Thessia's golden lion crest.

Castle Thessia's throne room is particularly elaborate tonight.

Illustrious decor. A regal gala. A gathering of royal magnitude. Boisterous chatter echoes between the high archways and stained glass windows.

Sconces ablaze. A band of musical men play for the party.

The King's Guard, soldiers and the social elite banter as they tap endless wine.

In the throne, KING EDWARD, 60 years old now, observes. His hair, still red. He's grown stern with age. Dressed in black, royal clothing.

At his side, QUEEN MARIE, stunning in her early 60's. Her chin high. Natural. A comfortable and kind smile.

Their son, PRINCE CAVILL, is among the crowd, laughing with a few of his male peers. He bears a striking resemblance to his father Edward.

His jaw is square. His heavy brow is framed by his fire-red, Irish hair. Golden eyes. 21 years old.

King Edward turns to his queen.

KING EDWARD
Join me?

The queen nods, standing with him.

They step forward, landing front and center. Edward addresses the crowd.

KING EDWARD (CONT'D)
Attention! Attention, this way.

A few final jokes ricochet. Their accompanied laughs die down as well.

KING EDWARD (CONT'D)
Though I, as most of you, need no reason to enjoy wine, tonight we gather to celebrate Cavill.

Edward extends his hand toward Cavill, beckoning him to the front of the room.

Cavill smiles uncomfortably. His friend's toss his hair and poke, shoving him forward. Cavill gives in, moving for his father and mother.

Cheers.

Cavill kisses his glowing mother's cheek.

The room falls quiet again as the prince lands beside his father.

KING EDWARD (CONT'D)
Another year closer to the throne.

The comment reeks of strangely placed disdain.

Marie's smile grows wider through her side-eyed frustration.

Edward puts his hand on Cavill's shoulder.

KING EDWARD (CONT'D)
My heir. Sure to grow into a
powerful king. One day.

Cavill glances at the king, who gives him the floor.

Cavill has more charisma in his pinky than his father has in his entire body.

Kind. Grateful. Genuine.

PRINCE CAVILL
Thank you all, so much, for being
here to celebrate with me. Where
would I be without any of you?

He gestures to his friend, SAMUEL.

PRINCE CAVILL (CONT'D)
Without you, Samuel, I would have
never learned which end of a sword
to swing.

Cavill rethinks it.

PRINCE CAVILL (CONT'D)
Not that I learned well, but at
least which end to swing.

Cavill controls the crowd. They hang in his charm. He turns to another friend, BRADLEY.

PRINCE CAVILL (CONT'D)
Bradley, you have helped me wade
through my endless bout with love.
All my fickle heart's desires. My
moral sounding board.

He sets his sites on his friend, GABRIEL.

PRINCE CAVILL (CONT'D)
Without you, Gabriel, well- I'd
have fallen down that cliff as a
child. I would be dead.

The on-lookers laugh at Cavill's grand delivery. He glances to the king.

PRINCE CAVILL (CONT'D)
My father might have had to work at
a second son!

The laughter grows.

Edward folds his hands behind his back, uncomfortably.

Marie eyes her husband, calming him.

PRINCE CAVILL (CONT'D)
But, really. My life is something
special because of all of you.
What all of you bring to my days.
It is, of course, a blessing and a
burden to bear the weight of, one
day, becoming king. But you, my
friends, make it seem manageable.
You make it a crown worth wearing.
A kingdom worth saving. I love
you. Now, let us drink!

The crowd explodes with applause.

PARTY PATRON #1
To Cavill!

The entire party joins in the toast.

PARTY PATRONS
To Cavill!

And they drink. The room fills with the sounds of laughter
once more.

Cavill turns and embraces his mother, who holds him tightly.

King Edward leans in, overwhelmed with frustration.

KING EDWARD
A kingdom worth saving?

He releases his mother and sarcastically glances at his
father.

PRINCE CAVILL
I am terrible with speeches.

As Cavill returns to his friends, they accept him with open
arms and shouts of approval.

Samuel pushes a goblet of wine into Cavill's hand.

CUT TO:

INT. CASTLE THESSIA - HALLWAY - HOURS LATER

The royal gathering has subsided. The castle is silent.

Marie and Cavill walk a long hallway of stone. A simple comfort on Marie's face.

QUEEN MARIE
There was a time when your father
was not such a stern man.

He jokes, light-hearted.

PRINCE CAVILL
Before I was born.

She laughs.

QUEEN MARIE
He loves you Cavill.

PRINCE CAVILL
In his way.

They continue onward.

PRINCE CAVILL (CONT'D)
I only hope to grow on what he has
built. What more could a father
want from his son, than to honor
his work and help it forward, into
a new day?

They land at the door to Cavill's bedroom.

QUEEN MARIE
I am so proud of you. I am so
thankful for you. Be you a king or
pig farmer.

Cavill is her world.

PRINCE CAVILL
I quite like pigs.

QUEEN MARIE
I love you.

She embraces him.

PRINCE CAVILL
And I, you.

CUT TO:

INT. CASTLE THESSIA - CAVILL'S CHAMBER - THAT NIGHT

Cavill sleeps. A warming fire burns in its place across the room.

Blue moonlight dances over the pine forest and moves across the rolling hills of green just outside Cavill's window.

Rapunzel's familiar melody grows from the south. Faint.

He's woken.

Her siren song draws him to the overlook. He peers into the great distance.

The land is eerie in the twilight hour. A vast, unexplored ocean of earth, calling the sailor.

CUT TO:

EXT. PINE FOREST - DAY

Beams of light bolt through the breaks in the needled forest trees.

Stillness.

Her blue eyes glow in the sunlight. Strands of her golden hair dance across her freckled nose.

ELISE. 20.

Her fingers blush against the harsh bowstring as she draws.

The thunderous rumble of a sprinting stallion's gallop breaks the peaceful scene, sending a flock of birds scattering.

Her target, a six point buck, spooks, taking flight.

She exhales. Retracts her bow and sheaths her arrow.

Over her shoulder, she sees a man, dressed in fitted royal regalia, atop his monstrous horse.

A sudden realization comes over her.

ELISE

Stop!

His horse gallops onward. Elise gives chase, waving her arms in the air.

In the path, ahead of the speeding traveler, is a thin line of twine. The mechanism for a net trap, which he'll soon trip.

She races forward, trying to edge out his horse's route.

ELISE (CONT'D)
Watch out! There's a trap!

He continues, unaware.

ELISE (CONT'D)
There's a trap! Stop!

Finally, moments before the horse makes it to the line, Elise draws an arrow and lets it fly.

A true shot.

The arrow cuts through the twine and the mechanism trips. A heavy boulder plummets to the forest floor. Leafy camouflage scatters as the hidden net is yanked into the air.

The man pulls back. His horse dances as it spins to a halt.

She slings her bow over her shoulder, annoyed.

The beast trots toward Elise. On his mount, Prince Cavill.

He dismounts and approaches her, removing his riding gloves.

Cavill is aloof. Separated from reality. A shell of the life-of-the-party prince from two nights prior.

PRINCE CAVILL
I am sorry. I did not see you.

ELISE
Lucky I saw you. These are hunting woods, you should be careful about riding like that through here.

PRINCE CAVILL
I will be sure to. Thank you for your help.

Elise catches up with herself, cooling off.

She finally takes note of his royal wardrobe.

Cavill begins to come out of his daze. He extends his hand.

PRINCE CAVILL (CONT'D)
I apologize, I should have
introduced myself. I am Prince
Cavill of Thessia.

Elise eyes him curiously. Doesn't take his hand.

ELISE
What brings you to South Shire?

He recoils his palm.

PRINCE CAVILL
Passing through.

Cavill is nearly himself again, realizing that he's hungry.

PRINCE CAVILL (CONT'D)
But, it has been a two day journey
thus far and I am embarrassed to
say that I have come, somewhat, ill-
prepared.

He notices the rabbit carcasses piled in a cart just behind
Elise.

PRINCE CAVILL (CONT'D)
If you wouldn't mind cooking some
of that meat, I'd be grateful.

She minds.

ELISE
The king's tax already starves all
of South Shire. I cannot imagine
anything I would like less, than to
give you the food off our table as
well.

PRINCE CAVILL
Miss.

ELISE
Miss?

PRINCE CAVILL
I still do not know your name.

ELISE
Elise. My name is Elise.

She mocks a curtsey.

PRINCE CAVILL

Pleased to meet you, Elise. Though I may dress in royal clothes, ride atop a royal horse and bear striking similarities to my father, I assure you, I am not him. I am, however, very hungry and I would like very much, to eat. I hope you might show a stranger kindness?

He reaches into a pouch, removing 5 gold pieces.

He smiles. All charm.

ELISE

Alright, but only as a kindness.

She takes the offering.

CUT TO:

EXT. PINE FOREST - AN HOUR LATER

The sun is beginning to set. Dusk rolls across the land.

One of her rabbits has been skinned and strung across a spit. The flames flitter across its browning skin.

Cavill's horse drinks from a nearby stream.

Elise and Cavill are seated near a makeshift fire pit, mid-conversation.

CAVILL

-and I, being 16 years old, was the only person he would let on his mount. So, he chose me more than I him. The big beast.

Cavill looks over his shoulder at his beast.

PRINCE CAVILL

Is that not right, Luke?

She smiles.

ELISE

Luke. It fits him.

PRINCE CAVILL

I think so.

Elise pulls the rabbit from the fire and tears pieces of its meat for Cavill, taking some for herself.

ELISE

It is getting late. Where will you set camp for the night?

PRINCE CAVILL

Here, I guess. I had not put much thought to it.

He eats.

ELISE

You are not going to tell me where you are going?

He points south, toward the mountain.

She chuckles and mocks his gesture, pointing in the same direction.

ELISE (CONT'D)

That way?

PRINCE CAVILL

You would not believe me if I told you.

ELISE

I would like to try.

PRINCE CAVILL

The mountains in the South. I dream of an ivory tower. A fortress of white. She calls me from it.

His eyes wonder into the distance as he recalls the angelic sound he follows.

He's lost there for a moment.

PRINCE CAVILL (CONT'D)

It is haunting. A damsel, she cries out for me. I am compelled to rescue her.

She laughs. Examining him curiously.

ELISE

Rescue her?

He quickly changes the subject.

PRINCE CAVILL

Would you find it forward if I were
to ask you to camp with me tonight?
I am not one to be without company
and I quite like you.

It's posed as nothing more than a friendly request.

ELISE

I have a day's journey back home
ahead of me anyway, I'd have to set
up somewhere. Besides, I think you
are in need of some protecting-

The two share a smile.

PRINCE CAVILL

Then it is settled.

ELISE

For a price.

PRINCE CAVILL

5 more pieces?

ELISE

It was a joke!

PRINCE CAVILL

It is a shame that royal women
don't come with your demeanor.

He grins.

PRINCE CAVILL (CONT'D)

Your beauty, for that matter.

She blushes. They connect.

PRINCE CAVILL (CONT'D)

You would make a wonderful queen.

Her eyes shift nervously. A smirk as she chomps on a chunk
of the rabbit's meat.

CUT TO:

EXT. PINE FOREST - THAT NIGHT

Sounds of the forest night's orchestra play. Crickets and
frogs of the stream, chirp. Owls chime in.

Elise and Cavill are wrapped under separate blankets.

The last embers of the fire burn.

Elise gazes at the prince, noting the gentle curve of his nose and soft lips, intrigued by his shape and kindness.

Her eyes fall heavy.

CUT TO:

EXT. PINE FOREST - MORNING

Sunlight wakes Elise.

Confusion floats across her face when she sees Cavill's empty space. The tree which once bore Luke's tether.

She cuts her gathered food from their hoisted safety. Folds her blankets. Packs her cart.

All the while a simple melancholy haunts her expression.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOUTH SHIRE - LATER THAT DAY

A golden flatland of wheat meets the rolling blues of the sky.

A small wall of rock, lines the boundaries of the town.

Dilapidated wooden fences. Modest cottage homes. Muddy corrals with bored pigs, chickens and dairy cows.

A mutt wags its tail.

Two hundred settlers. Dirty clothes and poor in finance but high in spirit and thick of heart.

Elise's family home is quaint. Stone and clay.

INT. ELISE AND BRAUN'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

Simple sconces with candles provide light.

Everything is hand crafted.

The kitchen, dining room and living space are all a single common area.

Pots hang over a brick fire pit. A bunk bed stacked on the opposite side of the room.

BRAUN, Elise's elder brother, a wide-shouldered young man of 23 with dark eyes and hair, sits at a wooden dining table near the wall.

ELISE

How was father while I was away?

Silence. Braun stabs at the scraps of meat on his plate.

BRAUN

He is still distant. I cannot tell
what is sickness and what is
hopelessness.

Elise ladles stew into a bowl from their iron kettle.

She crosses into the adjacent and only bedroom.

INT. ELISE AND BRAUN'S HOME - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Their father, DOUGLAS, coughs. Eyes closed. Early 50's, weathered and tired. He's propped up in a bed at the center of the space.

Elise enters with the bowl of stew and rests her free hand on his.

ELISE

You should try to eat.

He tosses. Slow and drawn. Muffled.

He begins to cough again. She sets the stew near the bed and holds his hand for a moment.

She kisses his forehead and moves back into the main living space.

INT. ELISE AND BRAUN'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

An ominous, quiet energy in the home. Waiting for the inevitable.

Elise takes a seat next to her brother and removes an unfinished wooden figurine from her pocket.

She whittles.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOUTH SHIRE - DAY

Braun holds a staff diagonally, across his body. Ready for her attack.

He's at least a foot taller than Elise, who wields two handles with a weight of cloth tied at the top. Practice maces.

She brings her left arm down, then her right. She spins from under, brings her left arm through and follows powerfully with her right.

Each hit lands at the center of Braun's staff.

She spins the maces over the back of her hands effortlessly.

Repeats the same motion.

BRAUN
Now from above.

She brings her left arm across, then her right.

This time she jumps, spinning and bringing her left and right maces down from above.

The practice mace vibrates as it connects with Braun's staff. It escapes her grip.

Frustrated, she wipes the hair from her brow and sweeps the weapon from the ground.

Braun notices her distant demeanor.

BRAUN (CONT'D)
What is on your mind?

ELISE
I cannot stop thinking about the
prince.

He swats her backside with his staff.

BRAUN
Smitten?

She glares and sets her maces on a nearby barrel.

Hand-drawn carts roll along the gravel road nearby.

Sore, she massages her own hands.

ELISE

We have always dreamed of what we
might do to one of the royals with
a moment alone.

He smiles.

BRAUN

Bash them outright. I'd have.

ELISE

But, he was charming. Far more
kind than anything I'd ever
imagined.

BRAUN

They teach them how to act that
way.

ELISE

They teach them how to be
absolutely magnetizing?

BRAUN

Goodness, listen to you swoon.

She blushes.

BRAUN (CONT'D)

Don't you think your gypsy-boy will
be upset?

He bats at her with his palms and she slaps them away.

They laugh.

ELISE

It has been months since I last saw
him.

He scrutinizes her playfully.

BRAUN

You are as fickle as a leaf in the
wind, Elise.

ELISE

Why do I tell you anything at all?

He shrugs.

She ponders, Braun waits for her to finish.

ELISE (CONT'D)

It was strange, though. The prince. It was like, he was caught between two worlds. He said he was traveling toward a voice. He was entirely helpless.

CUT TO:

EXT. REDWOOD FOREST - SOUTH - NIGHT

The monstrous redwoods reach high into the heavens, blotting out the night sky. Serene and peaceful.

Rapunzel's melody grows from a distance ahead.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS - HOT SPRING - CONTINUOUS

A large pool of spring water reflects the ghostly moon.

Steam radiates from the still surface of the crystal water and rises into the night sky.

Her pale, wet skin glistens as she continues to hum her haunting tune.

RAPUNZEL.

Every line, every curve and accent of her body is perfection.

Her eyes, ice blue. Young.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS - CONTINUOUS

Cavill comes to a plateau in the terrain, a short distance from the hot spring, which he does not see.

Dead doves hang from the trees, bound by their feet with twine. They sway in the breeze.

Cavill's leather boots sink into fallen needles and grass as he dismounts.

He leaves his horse behind, seeking out the source of the hymn.

He comes to the grand staircase of white marble, leading to Rapunzel's castle.

Her song abruptly ends.

RAPUNZEL
Hello traveler.

Cavill turns to find her standing directly behind him.
She is dressed in thin, revealing cloth.

PRINCE CAVILL
It was you, singing?

She admires his shape and he, hers.

RAPUNZEL
It was I, who called you here.

She reaches out her hand and Cavill moves toward it.

PRINCE CAVILL
You are even more beautiful than I
dreamed.

She smiles, deceptively pulling him in.

RAPUNZEL
It has been many years since the
warm heart of a traveler passed
through this place.

Her fingers begin at his neck and move to his waist as she circles him.

She lets the silence consume him. He hangs in her grasp.

PRINCE CAVILL
I am Cavill, Prince of Thessia.

Thessia. The word reaches into her soul. Her mood grows pensive.

RAPUNZEL
Thessia?

She moves closer. Peering into his eyes. Running her hands through his hair.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)
Hair of fire. Could it be that
Edward's son has finally come of an
age to answer my call?

PRINCE CAVILL
You know my father?

Rapunzel grins.

RAPUNZEL

I once stole your father's
admiration with the same song.

Her feminine feet grace the first stair of the cold marble
fortress.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)

How I've longed for this day.

EXT. IVORY FORTRESS - STAIRCASE - MOMENTS LATER

Rapunzel leads Cavill up the grand staircase of her high
tower.

INT. IVORY FORTRESS - GRAND THRONE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Rapunzel's fortress remains as she'd created it years before.

The glistening white-stone walls, reaching high, have been
overcome by wilderness.

The castle's new skeleton of wood and vine reinforces the
magnificent creation of man.

A throne of bone, woven by ivy, rests at the center of the
room.

8 rotting bodies. Skeletons of men in their regalia, are
seated in thrones of bramble and leaf. Backed to the walls
of the circular space.

PRINCE CAVILL

What is this place?

RAPUNZEL

A kingdom of those before.

PRINCE CAVILL

These men?

He's under her spell. Black ivy begins to grow toward his
feet.

RAPUNZEL

Others I've called, in search of
you, my prince.

PRINCE CAVILL

I have ridden through many a
treacherous terrain to answer your
call.

Rapunzel approaches Cavill. Her eyes longingly gazing into his.

She grows closer, moving him backward, a familiar dance.

RAPUNZEL
You risked your life to find me.

The ivy creeps up his leg.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)
How I've waited to be rescued.

Rapunzel has grown so close to Cavill that their lips may touch.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)
Show me where your kingdom lies.

Her smile turns sour as her eyes narrow.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)
Show me the way to your father.

She presses her lips to his. His eyes fall closed.

This prince does not become bone. Instead, he sleeps.

The ivy takes him against the wall, holding him, arms stretched out at his sides.

The ivy moves under his neck, frames his face, tethers around his shoulders.

He is wrapped in a crucifix of black ivy.

CUT TO:

INT. CASTLE THESSIA - KING'S CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Edward's chamber is lavish. Rich woods and rare fabrics.

Ornate rugs and furniture.

A wall of books. A massive 4 post bed.

Thick, red-velvet curtains that reach to the ceiling.

Two massive black ravens sit atop their perch at the corner of the room.

King Edward is dwarfed by the window at which he stands, observing.

A fire roars in the massive stone fireplace behind him.

Candles flicker from silver sconces. They quit. Smoke rolls.

Edward raises his nose, a change in the air.

The fireplace is extinguished. Darkness comes over the place.

Edward cautiously runs his fingers down the hilt of the sword at his side.

Rapunzel steps out of the shadows, into the moonlight behind him.

RAPUNZEL

I had nearly forgotten your hair of fire.

He turns.

KING EDWARD

What are you doing? How did you get in here?

She approaches the king, slowly.

RAPUNZEL

Lion of Thessia. How I dreamed of that hair. Your broad stance.

It's been 30 years, but her face hasn't changed. He recalls.

Her hips sway side to side as she moves to him.

His hand falls away from his sword as her hand comes to his.

She runs her fingers up his arm. Around the back of his neck.

KING EDWARD

Rapunzel. After all the years.

She pulls her hips to his. Slides her cheek against his.

He longs for her touch. She speaks with a child-like want. Seducing him.

RAPUNZEL

You were the first boy, I had ever seen.

KING EDWARD
I remember it well.

She wraps her hands around his collar.

She brings her lips so close to his that they graze as she speaks.

RAPUNZEL
How I held to your vow year after year. I had faith that you would come.

KING EDWARD
I came for you. I returned and you had been taken.

RAPUNZEL
And that is where it ended for you.

He hopes that she may kiss him, still.

KING EDWARD
No. I had no way of finding you.

RAPUNZEL
I sang out for you. If only you had listened. But, you had moved on.

She throws him backward. Her seductive ploy gives birth to her true motive.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)
And you left me for dead!

He's still enthralled.

KING EDWARD
It has haunted me.

RAPUNZEL
That is of no consequence now. The power of your apology has long since withered in my captivity.

He's catching on.

KING EDWARD
What do you want?

A twinkle in her eye, years in the making.

RAPUNZEL
My revenge.

Queen Marie enters from the hallway, through the massive wooden door.

KING EDWARD
Stay back!

Marie, startled, stands in her place.

QUEEN MARIE
What is going on?

He stays on Rapunzel, sword now drawn.

KING EDWARD
You forget, my wrath comes with an army, Rapunzel. I am king.

Her laugh, insane with power. Her eyes water.

RAPUNZEL
Bring them. Arm them well. King.

Dead serious. Her impenetrable glare of hatred cuts him down.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)
Perhaps this time, you will come and find me. Now that your son is of age. He has answered my call.

She lets it sink in.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)
At last. I have taken your son.

With that, she's gone.

Marie rushes down the hall.

QUEEN MARIE
Guards!

Edward stabs his sword through a massive sitting chair, crying out in anger.

Two guards appear at the entryway.

King Edward shouts his demand. The highest of stakes.

KING EDWARD
Find Cavill!

CUT TO:

EXT. SOUTH SHIRE - DAY

Elise and Braun throw axes at stacks of hay.

She tosses, then Braun and they retrieve them. Steady, and again.

A small group of mounted royal guards gallop along the dirt road of South Shire.

A short, stone wall separates the siblings from the regal entourage.

BRAUN
They're a long way from home.

Elise watches. Knowing.

BRAUN (CONT'D)
Think it has something to do with
the prince?

The guards halt near the entrance of the South Shire.

One of the men steps down from his mount and fastens a notice to a high post.

ELISE
It must be.

As quickly as they came, the men are gone.

Elise hooks her axe into a bail of hay and heads toward the post.

Braun is quickly behind her.

He's illiterate.

ELISE (CONT'D)
It is about Cavill. He is missing.
They are offering a reward.

Elise's eyes grow wide.

ELISE (CONT'D)
They are a long way behind him.

BRAUN

Assuming he is not dead.

ELISE

He is not.

ELISE (CONT'D)

The reward is ten thousand pieces.

Elise, full with anticipation, turns to her brother.

ELISE (CONT'D)

Braun.

BRAUN

No. Elise. You just got back.

ELISE

I may be the only one who knows where he was going! Surely I am the last person who saw him!

BRAUN

So, tell somebody.

ELISE

Braun, that reward-

BRAUN

It is not worth it Elise. You said it yourself, he was helpless. He is probably dead! You will likely end up that way too.

Her excitement for the journey, swells. It's coming to her as she goes.

ELISE

I know the woods well beyond the hunting grounds. I have travelled three times the distance of anyone in South Shire. With this money, we could afford anything we need! Food, better shelter, blankets through winter! I could do this, for us!

BRAUN

It is not just that. You are enamoured by him.

ELISE

Do not use my confession against me.

(MORE)

ELISE (CONT'D)

This has nothing to do with an infatuation. If he is in danger, who would I be if I did not help? And Braun, this reward would change everything.

BRAUN

If it is not your infatuation with the prince, then it is yet another opportunity to seek out your gypsy-boy, no doubt.

She eyes him viciously.

ELISE

This has nothing to do with him. Or any boy, for that matter.

BRAUN

It just so happens that his caravan travels in the South during these months. I am not dense Elise.

ELISE

I may be the only person who knows the prince's destination. If that gives me the upper hand in getting him home safely and collecting this prize, why should I not go?

BRAUN

It is dangerous, for one. Forget the animals, what about the wild folk? The King's Guard have horses and armor. They can move in numbers.

ELISE

Numbers are a hinderance in the wilderness, Braun. I am small, I can travel light. I can feed myself and protect myself.

BRAUN

These are probably the last of father's days with us.

Her frustration boils over.

ELISE

Have I not sacrificed enough for him?

It hits Braun in the gut.

BRAUN

Have I not?

She reaches for her brother's hand. He pulls away.

ELISE

I am sorry. I did not mean it. We have both sacrificed.

BRAUN

This is just another way for you to escape, Elise.

ELISE

That is not true.

Braun's emotions have taken over.

BRAUN

I am left to take care of father. Who else to catch the slack in your absence? You decide to leave and I am left without a choice. If you were really doing it to help us, maybe. But this, like everything else, is for you.

ELISE

What does my motivation matter when the outcome is the same?

It's a dramatic moment between them, but Elise is stern against Braun's fit.

ELISE (CONT'D)

I will set out in the morning.

On that, Braun turns toward their cottage. Slamming the door behind him as he enters.

Elise is lost.

CUT TO:

INT. CASTLE THESSIA - KING'S CHAMBER - DAY

King Edward's black ravens sit atop their perch at the corner of the room.

A FEMALE HANDLER, bearing sheers, unfolds their wings and trims them.

Queen Marie stands at the massive window, overlooking the rolling hills of green that meet the pine forest in the distance.

QUEEN MARIE
I hate that he keeps those birds.

The queen turns, addressing the handler.

QUEEN MARIE (CONT'D)
Does it hurt them?

HANDLER
No, your highness.

QUEEN MARIE
It is just so that they cannot fly.

The queen's face is sad as she turns back to the massive window.

The handler finishes her business and scoops a pile of trimmed feathers from the floor.

She shoves them into her pocket on the front of her apron and addresses Marie, out of turn.

HANDLER
Your highness, if I may-

The queen turns, kindly.

HANDLER (CONT'D)
I lost a son. In birth. It is not the same, I understand. I never knew him as a man.

QUEEN MARIE
I am sorry to hear.

HANDLER
The people of Thessia love Cavill.
We pray for his return.

Marie sheds a soft smile in thanks.

HANDLER (CONT'D)
I suffered desperately when I lost my son. I was guided to a woman of the wilderness, by a friend.

The nervous woman attempts to calculate the correct approach.

HANDLER (CONT'D)
The woman revived me from anguish.

QUEEN MARIE
How?

HANDLER
At the time, "how" was of no consequence, you understand? I believe the way was dark. But, the pain subsided nonetheless.

Marie considers.

QUEEN MARIE
I do not wish to forget my son.

HANDLER
Why forget him? He is likely still alive.

QUEEN MARIE
You believe that she can help find my son.

HANDLER
It seemed that her power was of such a magnitude.

CUT TO:

INT. ELISE AND BRAUN'S HOME - BEDROOM - DAWN

All is still.

Elise moves to her father's bedside and says her silent goodbye as he sleeps peacefully.

She sets the wooden figurine she'd whittled on his bedside table. An angel.

It's become hopeless to her, but she loves him the same.

INT. ELISE AND BRAUN'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

Braun's eyes open when the front door rattles. Elise exits.

He tosses in the top-bunk. Stares at the ceiling above him. Abandoned.

CUT TO:

EXT. PINE FOREST - DAY

The forest is in full swing. Birds chirp and flutter in the pines. The orange sun burns.

Sweat beads across Elise's brow.

She moves briskly through the pines.

Her bag and quiver are strapped to her body. Her bow slung over her shoulder.

The free spirit is at home in the wild.

CUT TO:

EXT. SWAMP LAND - AFTERNOON

The sky is a haze of grey.

Twisted trees of black, darker than the night. Their roots, a maze of wood weaving through the muddy swamp land.

Grim.

Bull frogs moan. Raven's cackle. A snake writhes into the hole of a rotting log.

A cloaked figure, travels atop a valiant steed.

As the stranger moves further, the land becomes darker and more unseemly.

Bones, human skulls, goat heads mounted on spikes, filthy animal pelts, loose entrails and feathers matted in blood.

Crude trinkets and jewelry hang on Pagan alters.

The remanence of a fire pit. A spit with animal remains hanging from it.

The traveler approaches a mossy slope of earth in the darkness.

A heavy wood and iron door stands at the entrance of a home burrowed into the side of a hill.

The cloaked figure dismounts and removes her hood.

Queen Marie ties her horse's rein to the twisted limb of a tree.

She approaches the dense wooden door and knocks.

A hunched woman of an indistinguishably elder age opens it. A black ribbon, tied over her eyes.

She leans heavily on a wooden staff before returning inward, leaving the door open for Marie to enter.

INT. WITCH OF THE WILDERNESS' HOME - CONTINUOUS

The living space is framed by massive wooden beams, which hold large boulders at bay.

Earth creeps between the cracks in the rock. Moss hangs downward into the dimly lit shelter.

Shelves are built into the flatter walls.

Countless apothecary jars are full of various specimen both living and dead. Butterflies, feathers, newts, frogs, eyes, toes, clumps of hair, mushrooms and so on.

A massive wooden table. A large iron scale. An unmade bed at the corner of the room. Soiled sheets and blankets.

Queen Marie covers her mouth as she enters. The stench is overwhelming.

The Witch of the Wilderness rummages through her apothecary collection, tossing various plants and feathers into a stone bowl.

WITCH OF THE WILDERNESS
You have come to learn where she
holds your son.

Marie keeps her space. Sets a bag of gold near the large iron scale atop the wooden table.

The witch pauses when she hears the gold clink.

WITCH OF THE WILDERNESS (CONT'D)
I can show you where your son is
held. Sit.

The queen scans the room, finding a high stool against the wall to her right.

The Witch of the Wilderness moves to the bag of gold and dumps it on the table. She counts out 5 pieces and returns the rest.

The witch moves back to her jars, rummaging. She holds them in front of her blindfolded face and then returns them to the shelf.

She finally finds a jar of twisted white twigs. She opens it, removes one and throws it into the stone bowl.

She hobbles toward Marie and hands the queen the bowl of ingredients.

Hawk feathers, black moss, mushrooms and the white twig.

The witch removes a knife from the table.

WITCH OF THE WILDERNESS (CONT'D)
I'll need blood.

The queen shifts uneasily as the witch takes her hand.

WITCH OF THE WILDERNESS (CONT'D)
You are connected in blood.

Marie steadies the bowl under her other hand, cringing as the witch runs a cut across her palm.

WITCH OF THE WILDERNESS (CONT'D)
In the bowl.

The red liquid drips from the laceration in Marie's hand, over the ingredients of the bowl.

The mysterious woman returns the knife to the table and removes her blindfold.

Her eyes are scarred shut. She turns the blindfold on Marie, who lowers her head, allowing the vagrant to tie the cloth around her face.

The witch sparks a flint stone over the bowl and it begins to burn. Smoke rises.

She wafts the smoke under Marie's nose.

WITCH OF THE WILDERNESS (CONT'D)
Calm. Calm. Silence.

Moments pass. A light hum pierces the air. Marie raises her chin, working to distinguish the images in her mind.

WITCH OF THE WILDERNESS (CONT'D)
The soul. The blood. Connected.
Eternal.

QUEEN MARIE
I see Thessia. The castle.

WITCH OF THE WILDERNESS
Go beyond what you know. Let your
mind sleep.

The ringing grows. The witch continues to sway the burning
bowl under Marie's nose.

WITCH OF THE WILDERNESS (CONT'D)
Breath.

Marie takes a deep breath.

WITCH OF THE WILDERNESS (CONT'D)
Be the air. Around you. Grow.
Around the trees. In the distance.
The sky. Grow farther.

QUEEN MARIE
I see a forest of titan trees.
Red.

WITCH OF THE WILDERNESS
Think on your son. Think on his
face. What do you see?

Marie smiles.

QUEEN MARIE
His smile.

WITCH OF THE WILDERNESS
Beyond what you know. What does he
feel? Now?

Marie frowns at first, feeling silence from him. Thinking it
could be death.

QUEEN MARIE
Quiet. Silence.

WITCH OF THE WILDERNESS
Now feel what he does.

Marie goes silent.

WITCH OF THE WILDERNESS (CONT'D)
What does he remember?

The ringing grows in Marie's ears. It's piercing. A
culmination of sound until-

QUEEN MARIE

I see a white fortress. That is
where she holds him! The southern
mountains.

The queen removes her blindfold.

QUEEN MARIE (CONT'D)

He is alive!

CUT TO:

EXT. SOUTHERN PINE FOREST - DAY

Elise moves briskly through the descending terrain.

A blood-red cardinal lands on a nearby branch.

In the distance, Elise spots a buck. Six points, like the
one she'd nearly downed when the prince interrupted her.

She pauses in her place. Draws an arrow.

Steadies.

A vicious snarl comes from her blind-side.

She cautiously turns. A dire wolf. Black. Twice her size.

Saliva trembles in the aggressive breath of the beast's
exposed fangs.

It lunges. She spins, releasing the arrow into its throat,
moments before its teeth are on her.

It falls.

Knowing the dire wolf, a pack animal, she readies another
arrow.

Scans the terrain.

Another stalks toward her from over a high rock. A short
distance ahead. Another flanks on her right.

A final joins from the left.

They notice when the buck scampers away, but their sites are
on Elise now.

She aims at the center, closest, wolf.

It snarls and snaps. Leaping from the high rock, pursuing her with all of its vicious might.

She releases the arrow into the wolf. It falls dead.

She draws and launches another arrow, barely having time to finish the third attacking wolf.

She draws another arrow, aiming it at the final dire wolf.

The wolf is calm. It makes human-like eye contact.

Elise lowers her bow, her arrow still cocked.

She allows the animal its choice.

The wolf watches her as it walks away.

CUT TO:

EXT. PINE FOREST - RIVER BANK - LATER THAT DAY

A pale grey sky floats above. The air is dry and frigid.

Elise's heavy breath turns to steam as she walks, briskly.

She comes a still river. Removes her pack. Breaths into her palms.

She eyes the water with dismay before removing her vest and then her cotton shirt.

Her long, thin, back is bare.

She puts the vest on without the shirt. Rolls the shirt into her bag. Removes her boots.

She ties her hair up with a length of twine.

She hoists her bag and boots over her head and forges across the cold river.

Her quiver and bow, still strapped across her body.

She's up to her chest in water.

Finally, at the other side, she drops her boots and bag. Shivering.

CUT TO:

EXT. PINE FOREST - RIVER BANK - THAT NIGHT

Elise's vest and pants are draped over a branch. The fire below dries them. She's wrapped in her blanket.

A pack of coyotes laugh in the distance.

Elise's eyes are full of sorrow. Far from home. Her fight with Braun. Her father.

She allows herself to break. Feeling alone, she remembers a prayer.

ELISE

What is far, will soon be near. I will not fear what I am bound to face. I will not want for what I soon, will have. Though, I am blind in darkness and the paths are many, my guide is true. Though the weight is heavy, I do not bear it alone. Though my heart shys from the struggle, I will fight through the current. Against the adversary, I will stand strong, for I do not stand alone.

CUT TO:

INT. CASTLE THESSIA - WAR ROOM - NIGHT

A stone fortress, spare of furnishings. A giant table at the center. A large map lies unfurled, orange in the flickering torch light.

Red tapestries with the king's golden lion insignia hang.

Edward stands a short distance from his wife, whose back is turned.

He oozes contempt. Eyes ablaze.

KING EDWARD

Do you think you are not watched at every second of every hour?
Especially now!

He explodes, bringing his hand hard into the wooden table.

KING EDWARD (CONT'D)

Do you think, I would send men at
the suggestion of an insane,
vagrant woman who makes her home in
a swamp?

Marie lowers her eyes. Edward encroaches. Spins her by her shoulder so that she faces him.

Edward takes hold of her bandaged hand. Blooded by the witch.

KING EDWARD (CONT'D)

It is unbecoming of the queen to
have dealings with a pagan. You
will be labelled a heretic, they
will demand your head on a stake!

He squeezes. She cringes as her hand buckles in his grip.

KING EDWARD (CONT'D)

Am I not doing everything I can,
Marie? How am I to control a
kingdom, if I cannot control my
wife?

Marie pushes Edward, freeing herself.

QUEEN MARIE

You have failed to find Cavill! He
waits in the southern mountains in
a fortress of white. Go and save
my son, before it is too late!

Edward is unbending. Rigid.

KING EDWARD

I have sent trained scouts. Search
parties. I will find Cavill
through honest means, from a
trustworthy source and when that
occurs. I will send my legions to
have my heir returned.

The corners of Marie's mouth twist with animosity.

QUEEN MARIE

If my son dies because you do not
listen to what I have said tonight,
I will kill you myself.

Edward lets her threat sink in, waiting to hear Marie's regret. It does not come.

She leaves him there.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOUTHERN PINE FOREST - EVENING

Elise has made good time.

She's reached the foothills descending toward the base of the southern mountains.

The scenery has changed. The pines have become more sparse. The terrain is uneven. New grasses and ferns fill the spaces between the trees.

The sun begins to set.

Her pace and breath are steady, but she grows weary after the days journey.

A blood-red cardinal lands on a low branch ahead. It observes Elise, intrigued. She notices.

A tribal bravado from a distance to her left. Elise is startled at first but anticipation consumes her.

The rattle-clank of a tambourine joins yet another loud cry.

Music.

Elise changes direction and follows the sound, east. Her pace quickens as she grows near.

EXT. GYPSY CAMP - CONTINUOUS

A circle of 15 strange wagons and carts of various colors.

Each one more ornate than the last.

It's a magical site to behold.

The small pop-up town features an array of curiosities.

Spotted Shetland ponies trot among their full-sized friends.

Thick manes and full faces. Horses from another land.

Pygmy goats.

Colorful fabrics hang across ropes which stretch in every direction between the carts.

A drum joins their song. A lute. A violin. A Setar. A masculine voice sings in a foreign tongue. It's a mysterious, ancient music.

Elise approaches the wagons.

GILBERT, a broad shouldered boy in his early 20's, chops wood. Black, curly hair, blue eyes, freckles, a gap in his front teeth. The "gypsy-boy" Braun referred to.

Elise sees him and breaks into an excited run.

He spots her out of the corner of his eye and drops his axe.

She leaps into his arms and he spins.

GILBERT
Elise!

They laugh.

GILBERT (CONT'D)
I've missed you!

They finish their embrace.

ELISE
I hoped I might see you this way.

GILBERT
Will you stay?

It's what he's always wanted. An awkward moment passes.

ELISE
For the night.

Disappointment hovers.

He smiles, making light of his wanting.

She meets his smile, bears the awkward moment.

GILBERT
For the night then. Let's get you something to eat?

ELISE
I am starved.

GILBERT
Of course.

He takes her by the hand and they wedge between two of the carts, into the wagon circle.

INT. GYPSY CAMP - CONTINUOUS

They orbit the musical gathering at the center of camp.

An array of detailed rugs in every color, blanket the forest floor.

30 members in the wondrous tribe. People of different shapes and color. Each one dressed in different rags and articles of their own liking.

CUT TO:

INT. CASTLE THESSIA - HALLWAY - NIGHT

The castle is silent.

Marie dawns her cloak once more. She looks over her shoulder as she makes her way down a long hallway of stone.

INT. CASTLE THESSIA - THRONE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Colorful light is cast onto the floor of the massive throne room. Stretched projections of stained glass by the midnight moon.

The air is crisp and thin. The quiet is eerie in the grand space. Especially compared to Cavill's party, days earlier.

The sound of a burning torch can be heard from a distance.

Marie comes to a large wood and iron door, cautiously removing its key from a pocket in her cloak.

She twists the key in its socket and the door creaks open, sending shrill echoes throughout the throne room.

Marie peers over her shoulder before taking the torch from its sconce and descending a long and dark staircase.

INT. CASTLE THESSIA - PRISON - CONTINUOUS

At the base of the stairs, a landing area. A guard's space. To the right and left, rows of prison cells.

Torches protrude from the wall, lighting the bowels of the castle by fire.

Marie makes her way down the corridor of cells to the left. Most of the prisoners sleep. A few babble incoherently.

None recognize the queen or bother to notice that anyone is passing by.

She lands in front of a particularly large prisoner's cell. VEL is a dangerous looking man. 35 years old.

He stands ready behind his iron bars.

VEL

Timely.

QUEEN MARIE

Vel.

He nods.

QUEEN MARIE (CONT'D)
You are called the Wolf of the
South? You know the white tower in
the mountains?

VEL

I know it.

QUEEN MARIE

A reward has been set. Many
untrained men search for my son but
none know the way. I require a
warrior of your skill and
composition. Be my champion and
return him to me.

VEL

In exchange?

QUEEN MARIE

Your freedom.

VEL

Your husband won't be getting in
the way?

QUEEN MARIE

He will not know.

His eyes narrow.

VEL

Who's to say I'll return with the
prince?

QUEEN MARIE

I will double the reward. 20,000 pieces when you return, with my son. I can offer you any weaponry or armor you might need. Horses.

VEL

Armor is heavy. Horses need caring. I travel light.

QUEEN MARIE

Whatever you want.

VEL

I'll need my men.

The men stand behind the bars of a larger adjacent cell. Vel signals their way.

VEL (CONT'D)

Won't want to be splitting that reward either.

She unlocks his prison door.

QUEEN MARIE

20,000 each when you return with my son. More, if that is not enough.

Vel stands free. An ominous snarl grows across his face.

VEL

You know of my crimes? Why I am here?

QUEEN MARIE

Bring me my son.

He extends his hand, sealing the deal with Marie in a shake.

CUT TO:

INT. IVORY FORTRESS - GRAND THRONE ROOM - NIGHT

Rapunzel, seated in her throne of bone, senses something. Her head lowers, her gaze moves elsewhere.

CUT TO:

EXT. GYPSY CAMP - HOURS LATER

The music has subsided. The camp fire dwindle to embers.

Groups of the traveling clan begin to turn in for the evening, making their resting places together around the campfire.

The clearing gives way to the vast night sky.

Freed from the burden of her supplies, Elise sits on a boulder, just outside the circle of wagons.

Gilbert, by her side.

Elise is lost in wonderment. The stars glitter across a blanket of black.

ELISE

I dream of this freedom.

GILBERT

I will never forget the look on
your face when you first came upon
our camp, those years ago.

Elise flashes a nervous smile.

ELISE

What look was that?

GILBERT

You were so taken by the idea of
what we are. You asked a million
questions a minute. I thought you
might have stayed forever.

She laughs.

ELISE

The thought has crossed my mind.

Her eyes lower. She knows where this conversation is heading and she'd rather it not.

ELISE (CONT'D)

Braun is not ready to be alone.

A moment passes. Gilbert thinks on her reasoning.

GILBERT

My brother was protective of me.
Like you, with yours.

Gilbert fights to remember what he can.

GILBERT (CONT'D)

He was a little older than I am now, when I lost him. I remember a desert. Being alone. I remember walking for days in heavy sand. I remember the headmistress and her wagons coming to me. From that day on, I have travelled with them.

ELISE

How old were you?

GILBERT

I cannot know for certain. I was a child.

Elise turns her lips apologetically.

GILBERT (CONT'D)

I became strong when I lost my family. Maybe you deciding to be free is the way that your brother will learn to be strong on his own.

ELISE

You are not on your own Gilbert.
There is a difference.

Elise turns her attention back to the night sky.

ELISE (CONT'D)

Braun is not like you. Choosing your own path. Being whoever you want to be. Going wherever you want to go. Home is all that matters to him.

Gilbert puts his hand on hers.

GILBERT

But, you are not him.

Elise thinks on her options.

ELISE

What I love about this freedom is equally, the freedom to leave. Coming here to stay would just be another sort of responsibility that I do not want right now.

GILBERT

I thought that, with time, it would be easier for me to understand.

(MORE)

GILBERT (CONT'D)
When you are not here, I think on
you constantly.

He tries to compose himself, knows that this conversation
never goes they way he'd like.

GILBERT (CONT'D)
I wish that you needed me the same.
I wish that you remembered the look
on my face when we first met.

ELISE
Who says that I do not? There is a
difference between what I want and
what I can give right now. I do
not even know the difference
between the two.

They gaze at the stars. The majestic purple galaxy above.

ELISE (CONT'D)
I wonder if my visits only make it
harder for you.

A sadness floats between them. Gilbert tries to find a way
to smooth it over. A kinder approach.

GILBERT
No matter how far apart two people
may be, they see the same moon, the
same stars.

Gilbert turns his eyes to Elise. Connecting.

GILBERT (CONT'D)
I think about that often now.

His gaze floats back to the sky.

She steals another glance at him. He catches her and smiles.

Gilbert decides to leave her on a good note.

GILBERT (CONT'D)
I should turn in.

ELISE
I am going to stay for a while.

He stands.

GILBERT
Maybe one day, I will not have to
look to the stars for comfort.

A melancholy smile between them.

Elise's thoughts float to Prince Cavill.

ELISE
Maybe one day.

Gilbert disappears back into the circle of wagons.

Elise loses herself in the twilight. The sounds of the wilderness resonate.

Solitude.

RAPUNZEL (O.S.)
You are beautiful.

She turns to find Rapunzel, dressed her version of a gypsy's attire, approaching her from the direction of the circle.

Rapunzel's hair, thick and long. Angelic.

Their first encounter.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)
I am sorry if I startled you. I
saw you out here and wanted to see
if everything was alright.

ELISE
Thank you.

Silence binds them.

Elise's eyes wander across the sky. Her worries get the best of her, tears well.

RAPUNZEL
Is... everything alright?

Elise turns to Rapunzel, feeling strangely drawn to her.

Rapunzel wraps her fingers around Elise's wrist and gently pulls her from her seat, bringing her into an embrace.

ELISE
My heart and my head constantly
tear at one another. I never know
which to follow.

Rapunzel holds her there, comforting the girl as her tears finally spill over.

RAPUNZEL
Dear child.

Rapunzel speaks in an ominous whisper.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)
Surely you know of the dangers to come. The dangers you have not yet faced. This journey you are on is nothing to be taken lightly.

Elise immediately collects herself and moves away.

ELISE
I do not take it lightly.

RAPUNZEL
What is it that compels you to continue onward?

She recognizes Elise's weakness.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)
Leaving your father and brother. A journey to save a man you cannot possibly love and for the king of a kingdom that forgets you.

ELISE
I never said it had anything to do with the king. Who are you? How do you know what I am doing?

Rapunzel reaches out for Elise, placing her hand on her shoulder, calming her.

RAPUNZEL
You remind me much of myself.

Elise softens.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)
We are connected, you and I.

Rapunzel presents a necklace. Silver with a blood-red jewel.

ELISE
It is beautiful. I couldn't-

RAPUNZEL
It is yours.

Rapunzel gently turns Elise's back toward her, hanging the jewel from her neck.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)
Return home. Your brother and
father miss you.

Elise takes hold of the jewel. Considers.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)
You need only grasp this pendant.
Ask to return to South Shire and it
will be so.

The moment weighs on Elise.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)
This is not your fight.

Elise has a hundred things that she wants to ask. She waits
one second too long.

Elise's lips part as she spins to face Rapunzel once more,
but she's already gone.

Elise hangs in the mysterious moment. Her hand on the
necklace around her neck.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOUTHERN THESSIA WILDERNESS - DAWN

Four men, the queen's mercenaries, travel on a path through
the forest.

Ruffians, dressed in weathered leather clothes. Belts and
straps harness their weapons.

Their hair, long and unkept. Skin, worn and scarred.

FISHEL, the smallest of the group, leads the way.

A thin twine line runs across the path, it goes unnoticed at
first.

Vel wears a heavy long sword. He spots the trigger.

VEL
Fishel.

Fishel stops.

Vel inspects the taunt line, which is attached to a steadfast
tree on one end.

On the other, it is attached to a tall, unstable stick, supporting a heavy rock pendulum.

He signs for the crew to step back and sweeps the rope with his sword.

The stick falls and pendulum swings across the path, crushing against a massive boulder on the other side.

BEAR, even larger than Vel, but not as quick, carries a heavy, one-handed hammer.

BEAR
Could've done some damage.

VEL
Someone wants to make sure they're the first one to the prince, eh?

BEAR
The things some folks will do for money.

They grunt with humor.

VEL
Best we travel off the path from here on out.

Bear raises his nose.

BEAR
I smell fire.

FISHEL
It's early.

BEAR
A little breakfast before the day's journey?

RUNE, the final of the four, is of medium stature and bears a bow and quiver.

RUNE
What fool would set fire in the daylight at a time like this?

BEAR
A fool that wants to be found.

A dangerous crew.

CUT TO:

INT. GYPSY CAMP - DAWN

Morning fog hovers over the land.

The center of camp, where a fire once blazed, has become the common sleeping grounds.

The gypsy folk lie atop blankets which cover the forest floor. They rest as a tribe.

The colors of the ornate campsite are even more interesting in the morning light.

Hens peck at the grass.

Elise is rolling her blanket into her bag, preparing to head out. Gilbert sleeps nearby. She steals a glance as she packs.

She straps her quiver over her shoulder, followed by her bag and finally, her bow.

She bends and kisses Gilbert's forehead goodbye. He doesn't stir.

Elise begins to make her way out of the wagon circle when she spots a familiar face tussling with hay, tending the horses ahead.

Headmistress ACANTHA, the most elaborately dressed of all the gypsies. A heavy-set woman in her late 60's.

Elise smiles wide as she approaches.

The warm woman wraps Elise in a loving embrace.

ACANTHA
My finch, flying away again?

ELISE
I am afraid so.

ACANTHA
Hopefully you will come to stay,
one day.

ELISE
I would like that very much.

ACANTHA
I know Gilbert prays for it.

The headmistress laughs and strokes Elise's face with a maternal glow.

ACANTHA (CONT'D)
Hearts break. It is the way of
fragile love. You are young and
your spirit is wild. You might not
guess it, but I know the feeling
well.

Elise smiles.

ACANTHA (CONT'D)
You are always welcome among us.

ELISE
Thank you, Acantha.

Acantha notices the silver chain around the girl's neck.

Her demeanor becomes utterly sincere. A severe antithesis to
the motherly figure she was moments earlier.

Her eyes narrow with suspicion.

ACANTHA
Where'd you come across something
with such darkness?

Elise shifts uncomfortably under Acantha's ominous scrutiny.

ELISE
What do you mean?

ACANTHA
That jewel hanging on your neck has
powerful darkness in it.

Elise reaches for the jewel around her neck.

ACANTHA (CONT'D)
Place your hand in mine.

She cautiously rests her hand in the gypsy queen's coarse
palm.

The headmistress is encumbered by the weight of Elise's
emotion and self doubt.

ACANTHA (CONT'D)
By not telling anyone of your day
with the prince, or of the
destination he sought, you have
brought the burden of saving him
onto your shoulders alone.
(MORE)

ACANTHA (CONT'D)

You fear that by turning your back
on your life at home, you have
tangled yourself into a fate that
was not yours to conquer.

Acantha peers into Elise's soul. A word of encouragement.

ACANTHA (CONT'D)

It was no accident. All comes to
pass, exactly as it is meant to.
The burden has always been yours to
bear, Elise. It is why Cavill came
upon you in the forest.

Acantha continues.

ACANTHA (CONT'D)

When you accepted this task, you
did not know your foe. Perhaps you
would have chosen differently if
you had. Perhaps that is why you
were not meant to know. But now
fate has brought you to me, that I
may help you understand the
darkness you face. Because, I know
it well. Fate guides you. You are
its champion. For that reason, I
believe that you stand a chance.

A warning.

ACANTHA (CONT'D)

There is one who controls the
forces of the twilight world. She
rules the legions of dead. She has
taken princes of other lands before
yours and she will not stop until
the world of man is under her will.

ELISE

She has Cavill?

ACANTHA

Yes.

Elise fills with hope, her eyes widen.

ELISE

He is alive?

The question hangs in the air.

ACANTHA

For now.

ELISE

What do I do? How do I fight such an evil, if it truly is mine to face?

ACANTHA

Darkness has power where hope is lost. The spirit dies in hopelessness. And so, the doubt that we have in ourselves, that doubt that lives deep in our spirit, is the deadliest foe any of us will ever face.

Acantha stares deeply into the weary girl's eyes.

ACANTHA (CONT'D)

I pray, for all of our sake, you are victorious. If you do not prevail, many will suffer. The world will see generations of chaos and violence. None will escape her wrath. Not your family in South Shire, not our tribe, none in our kingdom or beyond.

ELISE

Can she be stopped?

ACANTHA

It is not my way to know the things which alter time, only to know that they can be altered. Stay steady. Keep your pace. Do not sway in her manipulation. Cling to hope, though it seems futile. And listen to fate, it guides you.

Acantha brings Elise close, holding tight in her embrace.

ACANTHA (CONT'D)

There is no darkness so black that even the faintest flame cannot overcome.

Acantha releases her.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOUTHERN THESSIA WILDERNESS - THAT MORNING

The queen's mercenaries approach a camp of strangers.

Four, unsuspecting victims. No more than 20 years old each. They're dressed in simple, but clean, cotton clothes. Their morning fire burns hot. Rabbit on the spit.

The group of young men stir uncomfortably when the ruffians make it to their campsite. The boys are dwarfed, even by Fishel.

VEL
Morning boys.

A zestful, rotted tooth grin.

Bear makes a point of throwing his nose in the air to clarify.

BEAR
Good smelling meat.

VEL
Where you traveling to?

The bravest of the group responds. Still, weary.

CAMPER #1
Just out hunting for our families.

VEL
Just out hunting for your families,
huh?

Rune examines their fine, clean clothing.

RUNE
Clothes like that, seems like your family can afford to buy their food.

VEL
Certainly aren't hunting-clothes.

Vel lets the intimidation game hang stagnant in the air for a moment.

VEL (CONT'D)
You boys wouldn't have happened to set a trap a way back?

He describes it sarcastically.

VEL (CONT'D)
Big thing. Tied to a tree. Nice crushing blow sort-of swipe, across the path.

They shake their heads.

CAMPER #1
No. Wasn't us.

CAMPER #2
We should get going.

BEAR
Ah, but you've not even eaten. Why
the hurry?

The bullies encroach.

CAMPER #2
You are welcome to it. If you are
hungry.

FISHEL
We planned to have it anyway.

CAMPER #1
We don't want any trouble.

VEL
And yet, trouble has found you.

Rune catches the prince's reward poster in one of their bags.
Pulls it out.

RUNE
Hunting, eh?

What can they say?

VEL
I am not fond of liars.

Vel takes the reward poster from Rune and rips it in half.

VEL (CONT'D)
Not much competition either.

BEAR
You know, I think they may have set
that trap.

CAMPER #1
Honest, it wasn't us.

RUNE
Quiet.

Vel signals Fishel with his eyes, gesturing toward the pack.

Fishel takes one of their bags up and begins to shake the contents into the dirt.

VEL

Won't mind if we have a look?

One of the campers stands. Bear buries his fist in the camper's face. Knocks him out cold.

The remaining wearily scoot from their places, trying to separate themselves from the clan.

Vel sees Fishel pull a length of rope from the bag.

VEL (CONT'D)

Bear, I think these hunters intend to run. Why don't you make sure they don't.

Fishel tosses the rope to Bear.

CAMPER #2

Please. Take whatever you want.

Fishel has finished digging through one of the bags. Tosses a pouch of coins to Vel.

VEL

We will.

Fishel moves to the next pack.

One of the campers makes a run for it. Bursts to his feet, in the opposite direction.

Rune draws an arrow.

CAMPER #2

No! Please!

Bear kicks Camper #2 in the face and wrestles him to his stomach.

Rune buries a well placed arrow in the center of the running camper's back.

Camper #2 begins to cry as Bear roughs him up. Tying his hands behind him.

Vel looks at Camper #1

VEL

You going to stay put?

The camper nods.

Fishel continues to dig through their belongings. He throws more gold to Vel.

VEL (CONT'D)

It's not safe for boys like you to
be traveling with this much gold.
There's not a soul out here who
wouldn't kill you for less.

Bear moves to his first victim, the knocked out camper, and begins tying his hands together as well.

CUT TO:

INT. IVORY FORTRESS - GRAND THRONE ROOM - NIGHT

Rapunzel sits, powerful in her throne. She rolls her fingers across one another.

A black vine grows toward her. It crawls upward into the air at her shoulder's height.

Leaves unfurl as the vine rolls open, like ever-growing parchment.

She opens her palm to the sky.

The final leaf at the end of the vine opens and a lethal black spider emerges. It drops from the edge of the plant by a strand of web, landing in her palm.

Loneliness has driven her mad.

She rolls her fingers, toying with the spider as it dances between them.

Her eyes move to Cavill, whose head hangs as he sleeps. Held at bay by the queen's black ivy.

RAPUNZEL

What a waste.

She rises, floating from hip to hip until she lands in front of him.

She runs her hand across his smooth cheek. Her eyes dart to-and-fro.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)
I would have made a wonderful
bride. A doting wife. I could
have been yours.

Her chin jitters, manic.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)
I would have been a queen of the
people.

She spins her finger in a circle in the air, referring to the
dead princes surrounding the room.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)
Any of theirs.

She rests her head against Cavill's chest. Tears drip from
the corners of her desperate gaze.

In her brokenness.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)
Foolish wanting.

She stands again. Loses herself in thoughts of Edward. Her
eyes drift into the past.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)
I would have been loyal. I could
have loved you forever.

She steadies her gaze back on Cavill.

Her shoulders square, her posture rises, her chin comes high.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)
What might have been is lost. Now
I am a queen by my own accord.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOUTHERN PINE FOREST - DAY

Elise presses on, beside a small river.

The land falls away ahead. A waterfall.

She cautiously climbs down the steep embankment.

EXT. SOUTHERN PINE FOREST - POOL - DUSK

Winded, Elise pulls her bow from her shoulder and drops her pack to the ground.

A serene pool collects at the base of the falls.

She scans the crystal water for fish. A few scamper by.

She removes her boots and vest. Rolls up her pants. Pulls her hair back, tying it with a small piece of twine.

She grabs her bow and a single arrow before cautiously stepping into the shallow water.

She moves quietly until she's at a depth just above her knees.

She notches the arrow and draws back the bowstring.

Ready, she watches. Patient. Still. The disturbance she created subsides.

Small fish hurry by.

She lets the arrow fly. It shoots into the water sending a spout upward.

She retrieves it by its shaft. A flopping rainbow trout, her prize.

EXT. SOUTHERN PINE FOREST - POOL - MOMENTS LATER

Elise uses her flint to start a fire in a pile of kindling and dry brush.

Her gutted fish is run along a spit.

A sudden change in temperature. Elise shivers and moves to her boots, pulling them on while the fish cooks.

Her leather vest comes next.

She rubs her hands together, breathing into them.

She moves to her pack and takes her blanket, throwing it over her shoulders, she sits by the fire.

An eerie whisper, an ancient language, nearly inaudible, creeps across Elise's neck.

SPIRIT (O.S.)
Nior choir duit mall.

Elise only notices a syllable or two, but it's enough to catch her ear.

Thinking it her imagination, she turns her attention back to the fire.

SPIRIT (CONT'D)
Nior choir duit mall.

Still a whisper, but audible. It's a breeze.

Elise stands.

ELISE
Hello?

Nothing.

Scanning her surroundings. The cliff and waterfall behind her. The pool to her right. Rolling hills of pine to her left and in front of her.

She spins. Nothing.

ELISE (CONT'D)
Hello?

Moments more before she tightens the blanket around her shoulders and wearily takes her seat again.

CUT TO:

EXT. ELISE AND BRAUN'S HOME - THAT NIGHT

Braun sits on the bench outside of his family's home.

Staring into the glittering sky above.

He stands and enters through the front door.

INT. ELISE AND BRAUN'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

Douglas coughs from the adjacent bedroom.

Braun makes his way to the stove and ladles soup into a bowl.

DOUGLAS (O.S.)
Braun?

He sets the bowl on the dining room table and makes his way toward his father's room.

BRAUN
Coming.

INT. ELISE AND BRAUN'S HOME - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

BRAUN
You ok?

His father lies on his side, struggling to prop himself upright.

Braun helps.

Douglas has trouble catching his breath.

DOUGLAS
Thank you.

BRAUN
Of course.

He gestures for his son to sit next to him in the bed. Braun obliges.

DOUGLAS
I worry that I have been too big a
burden on you and your sister in
these last years.

It cuts Braun.

BRAUN
Do not think that way. Father, I
love you. Elise loves you.

DOUGLAS
I know. I know, son.

A moment passes.

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)
Thank you. For what you have been
to me. I pray hard that you might
be a father to children as generous
as you have been.

BRAUN
Father-

Douglas needs to finish, but he's weak.

DOUGLAS

When you have children, you are
born into a new world. You see
everything in a new light. You
helped me learn so much.

BRAUN

And you, I.

Douglas rests his head on the backboard. Fragile.

DOUGLAS

Do you remember the song I taught
you, when you were a child? Of the
eternal lovers?

The father holds tight to his son's hand.

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)

Will you sing it for me?

Douglas' breath grows shallow. His eyes heavy.

Braun tries to gather himself, tearing up. He grips his father's hand tightly.

He sings. His throat is gravel, but beautiful.

The song is slow. Old.

BRAUN (SINGS)

Was long ago the tale began/
a devil and an angel.
Two lovers met and bound their
souls/ they dance through time and
fable.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOUTH SHIRE - MORNING

Braun stands atop a green hill.

His father lies on a pile of dry grass. He's passed on.

The song continues.

BRAUN (SINGS) (V.O)

Each life they live t'gether in
heart/ each ends within death's
cradle.

The angel leaves early of us/ it
happens without fail.

(MORE)

BRAUN (SINGS) (V.O) (CONT'D)
 The path is rough to tir-na-nog/
 and she's the only able.

The grass burns. Braun's head high and strong. His face red, overcome with tears.

BRAUN (SINGS) (V.O) (CONT'D)
 One day they'll be t'gether again/
 o'er sadness they'll prevail.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOUTHERN PINE FOREST - MORNING

Elise walks briskly.

Sadness comes over her. Knowing.

BRAUN (SINGS) (V.O.)
 The angel waits to guide his soul/
 across death's foggy va-le.
 One day they'll be t'gether again/
 love is an eternal ta-le.

She pauses. Holds the dark necklace tightly, longing for home. Tempted to use Rapunzel's gift.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOUTHERN PINE FOREST - POOL - MORNING

The queen's mercenaries; Vel, Bear, Fishel and Rune come to Elise's camp site at the base of the falls, near the pool, where she'd camped the night before.

Vel fondles the fire pit where Elise's spit once stood.

VEL
 Still warm. Can't be too far
 ahead.

Rune notices a path of Elise's footprints in the mud near the shore.

RUNE
 Only one set of tracks. Small
 feet. If I didn't know better, I'd
 say it must be a girl.

Bear grins deviously.

BEAR

Just our luck, eh boys? A lonely
lil' girl, ripe for the taking.

RUNE

She's moving south.

VEL

Looks like we've got another hero
on our hands.

The dangerous men gain on Elise.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOUTHERN PINE FOREST - ELISE'S CAMP - NIGHT

The music of the night thunders around her. Frogs and
crickets chirp. Owls sing.

Elise has set up camp. She's unloaded her traveling supplies
and weapons.

She pulls her blanket around her and readies for sleep.

Her small fire flickers in a pit nearby.

Her heavy eyes fall closed.

Suddenly, all of the animals are quiet. At once.

She notices a change in the air. The strange empty twilight.

INT. IVORY FORTRESS - TOWER PRISON

Elise opens her eyes. She's in Rapunzel's tower cell.

Startled, she rolls to her back and quickly gets to her feet.
Trying to understand.

All of her belongings are gone.

Rapunzel approaches the frightened girl.

RAPUNZEL

I haven't brought you here to harm
you.

Rapunzel smiles.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)

I wish for you to know me.

ELISE

I know who you are.

RAPUNZEL

Do you?

ELISE

You have taken the prince.

RAPUNZEL

I have.

Elise scans Rapunzel. There's a kindness in the witch's eyes, though slight.

ELISE

Why did you give me this necklace?

Impenetrable eye contact between them.

RAPUNZEL

I am fond of you.

Rapunzel narrows in.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)

I heard your brother as he serenaded your father's passing. How does it go? *The angel waits to guide his soul across death's foggy vale?* You felt it. You grasped the necklace in your hand and you thought of returning home. You could have. You should.

Even more.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)

Braun is alone now. In South Shire.

Elise is winded. Emotional. Punched in the gut.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)

I've brought you to the very castle where I hold Cavill. You will not be able to wake him from my spell.

Rapunzel reaches out, brushing Elise's pale cheek with her hand.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)

Do you know what your king did to me, Elise? Left me to rot.

(MORE)

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)

In this very cell. For 30 years. I had no way of knowing if I'd ever leave these walls. Each day I would pray for nothing more than an escape from my prison. Each day I prayed for freedom and instead, each day, a dove would come to visit that window.

She gestures to the window behind Elise. The ghostly-white moon breaking through.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)

I spoke to it. It became my only friend.

She oozes insanity. Wickedness.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)

Then, one day, when my hope was no more, I thought, how cruel, the stars, to give me a friendly dove, rather than a life outside of the tower's walls. I stopped praying for freedom. I began to pray for revenge against my captor and against the man who betrayed my trust. Who broke his vow.

The corners of her mouth quiver with anger as she recollects the reason for it all.

Her eyes swell with hatred.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)

And I prayed for revenge against the one who sent the dove when I asked for only freedom. Darkness became my lullaby. A blood-red cardinal visited my window and all at once I knew the power of a twilight so black that I might have my revenge.

Elise feels for the tormented woman.

ELISE

The king deserves your revenge.

Rapunzel's eyes glow with elation. A connection. She's enthralled by the thought.

ELISE (CONT'D)

But, Cavill is kind. A good man.

All at once her enthusiasm fades. Her lips turn down, sour.

RAPUNZEL
The world of man is corrupt.
Fickle.

ELISE
There are those who say that I am
fickle. My brother is a loyal man.
My father a loving husband.

Rapunzel's evil rears its head. Her eyes grow black with fury.

Black vines grow from the ground at Elise's feet.

They writhe and twist like snakes, binding her to the stone floor.

Elise scrambles to stand, but she is held at bay by hundreds of rope-like vines.

RAPUNZEL
If you will not heed my warning
then, know your foe.

A show of Rapunzel's might.

Elise struggles. The vines wrap around her throat and begin to strangle her.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)
Should I squeeze the light from
your eyes? Should I finish your
journey for you? With a thought, I
could!

Rapunzel calms. With a wave of her hand, the vines are black ash. They float and vanish.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)
You will drown in my fury if you do
not heed my warning. Return to
South Shire. This journey was
never yours to make!

Rapunzel is gone.

EXT. SOUTHERN PINE FOREST - ELISE'S CAMP - CONTINUOUS

Elise's breath is vapor in the cold air.

The music of the night returns. Frogs and crickets chirp.

Wolves howl in the distance.

Elise's eyes, filled with fear. She thinks on her father's death.

She thumbs the jewel around her neck and closes her eyes.

ELISE

What is far, will soon be near. I will not fear what I am bound to face. I will not want for what I soon, will have. Though, I am blind in darkness and the paths are many, my guide is true. Though the weight is heavy, I do not bear it alone. Though my heart shys from the struggle, I will fight through the current. Against the adversary, I will stand strong, for I do not stand alone.

CUT TO BLACK:

Moments pass before Vel's taunting voice breaks through.

VEL

What do we have here?

EXT. SOUTHERN PINE FOREST - ELISE'S CAMP - MORNING

Vel kicks at Elise.

VEL

Pretty little thing.

Her eyes burst open. She's surrounded by the group of ruthless men. Vel, Bear, Rune and Fishel.

VEL (CONT'D)

What in the world would possess a little girl like you to be out in the middle of the woods?

Rune dumps her bag on the ground.

RUNE

Ain't nothin' good in here.

Vel turns his back to join Rune. Kicks through her belongings, now on the floor.

Fishel approaches her and squats.

FISHEL

What are we going to do with you?

BEAR

I've got some ideas.

The monsters snicker and toy with their prey.

Fishel reaches to pet Elise's face.

ELISE

Don't touch me.

She slaps his hand away. He's red with frustration.

RUNE

Feisty one!

BEAR

No trouble. We'll smooth out the edges, eh?

Fishel notices the dark jewel around Elise's neck.

FISHEL

Look at this boys. Girl's got a nice lookin' stone on her neck.

He reaches for it. She grabs him by his wrist, pulls him in and head-butts him in the face.

He buckles and stumbles backward onto the floor.

Fishel's cohorts laugh.

VEL

Well, well! Aren't you the little box of surprises.

ELISE

Stay back!

Fishel makes it to his feet, his nose cracked and bloody.

FISHEL

Bitch, broke my nose!

Vel draws his sword.

Elise turns to run but Rune gets her by the wrist and yanks her backward onto the floor.

Vel puts a foot on her back.

VEL

You out lookin' for the prince too?
Trying to secure yourself a piece
of that reward?

She cringes in pain.

VEL (CONT'D)

Bear, get that necklace.

BEAR

You best behave now, girl.

Vel puts more weight on her, a crack. She cries out.

Bear reaches for the necklace. She flails, grabbing for anything she can. Resisting.

It's no use. Bear yanks the chain from her neck and dangles it in the light before sliding the jewel into his pocket.

FISHEL

Let me have her Vel. She broke my
damn nose.

VEL

Sure thing.

He lifts his weight and Elise rolls to her back, struggling for breath.

Fishel picks Elise up by her vest and slams her against a tree, knocking the wind out of her.

She buckles.

Panting for breath, she slyly reaches to the knife-sheath in her boot.

When Fishel approaches again, she buries the knife deep in his chest.

Before Vel can catch buckling-Fishel, Elise is 30 paces away, sprinting for her life.

VEL (CONT'D)

Rune!

Rune is already on it. An arrow drawn, he lets it fly.

EXT. SOUTHERN PINE FOREST - CONTINUOUS

The point buries deep into a tree over Elise's shoulder.

A second arrow comes for her, cuts over the top of her shoulder and flies past.

She winces in pain, but continues. She's fast.

There's a commotion at Elise's camp, a distance behind her.

She doesn't look back.

EXT. SOUTHERN PINE FOREST - ELISE'S CAMP - CONTINUOUS

Gilbert palms a rock and bashes Vel in the temple, knocking him to the ground.

Rune draws an arrow, aims it at Gilbert, 10 feet away.

Hard to miss.

EXT. SOUTHERN PINE FOREST - STEEP HILL - CONTINUOUS

Elise, still sprinting for life, tries to glance back but loses her footing.

All at once she's rolling. Buckling over herself, too fast to catch an eye-line.

EXT. SOUTHERN PINE FOREST - ELISE'S CAMP - CONTINUOUS

Gilbert dives out of Rune's aim and sweeps his legs out from under him.

Rune comes hard into the ground. Gilbert picks up Vel's sword and buries it into the bowman's chest.

EXT. SOUTHERN PINE FOREST - STEEP HILL - CONTINUOUS

Elise is tumbling down the steep hill.

Her shoulder hits hard against the earth, then her ankle. Her head, her foot, her back, then her knees.

One end over the other.

Then, the earth falls out from under her. She plummets over a cliff.

Elise experiences moments of weightlessness. Disoriented. Falling backward. Unsure of what's to come.

She closes her eyes. Accepts her end.

With a splash she's 8 feet under water. A river with heavy rapids.

EXT. SOUTHERN PINE FOREST - ELISE'S CAMP - CONTINUOUS

Gilbert squares off with his final foe. Bear. They circle one another.

Bear is 3 times Gilbert's size, wielding a hammer. Gilbert white-knuckles Vel's sword.

EXT. RIVER - CONTINUOUS

Elise explodes upward, gasping for air, struggling to stay afloat in the heavy rapid water.

EXT. SOUTHERN PINE FOREST - ELISE'S CAMP - CONTINUOUS

Bear swings at Gilbert, who barely makes it out of the hammer's path, then comes at him again, catching Gilbert's cheek.

The bruised boy fumbles into a tree. Blood streams down his face.

BEAR
Stupid boy, eh?

Bear puts all of his weight into his next swing.

EXT. RIVER - CONTINUOUS

Elise is pushed under for longer than she can manage, then she's up for air.

The cycle happens a few times before she experiences the weightlessness again.

A waterfall. 200 feet. She plummets.

CUT TO:

INT. CASTLE THESSIA - KING'S CHAMBER - THAT NIGHT

King Edward stands near his roaring fireplace. He hasn't slept.

The fire's rage reflects in his eyes. The orange glow dances on his face.

Queen Marie hasn't slept either. She stands at a massive chair, facing the fire as well.

QUEEN MARIE
I don't understand. Why, Edward?
Why is this cruel woman out for us?

He hides his transgression from his wife.

KING EDWARD
People don't need a reason to hate the throne. They do it on their own accord.

Their backs to the bed, still made. The king's massive window provides little light.

Vines of black ivy grow from a stone at the corner of the room. The snake-like plant expands, unwinding until the wall is consumed by it.

The ominous black garden casts a dark shadow within itself.

As a large gathering of the ivy opens, Rapunzel emerges, rising.

The vines creep toward Queen Marie's feet.

They slither up her leg.

Startled, the queen turns.

Before she can breath a word, Rapunzel rolls her fingers and Marie is silenced.

The vines consume her, wrapping up her arms and around her neck.

Edward turns to find Marie held at bay by Rapunzel's ivy.

KING EDWARD (CONT'D)
Marie!

It tightens, like a snake on its prey.

Rapunzel steps behind Marie.

RAPUNZEL
Once again, you keep me waiting
Edward. My patience has grown thin.

10 feet separate the bitter enemies.

Edward's eyes shift toward Marie.

Rapunzel catches Edward's cowardly glance to his wife. His apology.

Rapunzel sees through it.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)
She doesn't know?

Rapunzel circles her, like a buzzard tracking wounded pray.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)
Sweet Marie. She doesn't know.

She holds the queen in her spell, coming close behind her.

KING EDWARD
What do you want? Name it and it
will be yours.

She mocks him.

RAPUNZEL
Anything? Oh, the power you
posses!

KING EDWARD
She isn't part of this, Rapunzel.
Leave her!

A new vine of ivy unfurls. Leaves bloom outward as it rolls up Marie's arm, toward her neck.

She whispers, the reason for it all.

RAPUNZEL
Your husband vowed his loyalty to
me and married you instead. Your
love was built on a bed of lies and
your king's broken promises. He
left me to rot, for you. And now,
it will be your end.

A final leaf blooms from the end of the vine, unveiling a lethal black spider. It walks down the unfurled leaf and steps onto Marie's neck.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)
She can hear you Edward. Will you
confess?

KING EDWARD
I am so sorry Marie.

Marie musters the strength.

QUEEN MARIE
Please, let Cavill go, he is not
his father.

RAPUNZEL
But, with him, his father's name
will end.

The spider buries its fangs into the queen's neck. Her veins become black, pulsing under her skin.

Marie's breath grows thin, her eyes become glossy.

The vines vanish in black ash, allowing Marie to fall to her knees.

Edward rushes to his wife and holds her close, while she dies.

QUEEN MARIE
You are a villain in this, as much
as she.

KING EDWARD
I am sorry Marie. I am so sorry.

His lips quiver, his eyes well with rage. Marie manages her dying wish in her final breath.

QUEEN MARIE
Cavill is Thessia's only hope. The
white fortress in the southern
mountains. Now, go and save our
son.

The Queen's face becomes ghostly white. Her veins entirely black with poison. She's gone.

Rapunzel's eyes dart to-and-fro. Manic. Something deep inside her regrets Marie's murder. It's difficult for her to watch the innocent woman die.

RAPUNZEL
I have thought long on how I might have you understand what you have stolen from me. It is important that I see your face while you watch everything you love whither and die. It will happen for you again, with your son and with your kingdom.

(MORE)

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)
When you have lost it all, you will begin to understand loneliness. I will leave you to rot in the very cell where you left me. You will spend the rest of your years alone with your thoughts. Your own faults will haunt you. They will be your torture. Only then will you begin to understand.

Rapunzel is gone.

King Edward cries out a guttural cry of anguish.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOUTHERN PINE FOREST - NIGHT

The knights in silver armor march. The golden lion of Thessia on their shields.

A front-line of hundreds.

They make their path through the trees, toward the queen's Ivory Fortress in the south.

CUT TO:

EXT. REDWOOD FOREST - SOUTH - RIVER BANK - MORNING

Elise is wrapped in a blanket. Her boots sit near a blazing fire.

She's out cold. Still wet.

She coughs, rolls to her side, struggles to open her eyes.

Beaten.

Gilbert is crouched next to her. Mud covers the place where his cheek was bashed.

GILBERT
Good morning.

Elise sits up. She cringes in pain and breaks free of the tightly wrapped blanket.

She holds her ribs.

GILBERT (CONT'D)
You fell over the waterfall.

ELISE

You came and found me?

GILBERT

Yes.

ELISE

How long have you been following
me?

GILBERT

You left without saying goodbye.

ELISE

I knew you'd demand to come.

Elise notices her belongings sitting next to a nearby tree.

No quiver. No bow. No necklace.

ELISE (CONT'D)

What happened to your face?

GILBERT

The big one with the hammer got me.

Elise sorts through her bag. Her hatchet, cloth, the flint,
the twine.

Elise finds the bloody knife that she used to take Fishel
down.

Examines it. Guilty. Gilbert catches on.

GILBERT (CONT'D)

They would have killed you.

ELISE

I know.

GILBERT

Or worse.

The weight of murder clearly effects Elise more than Gilbert.

GILBERT (CONT'D)

All I got was the bag. I was
terrified. Worried that you had
drowned.

His face says it all. Terrified is an understatement.

She puts her hand on his.

ELISE
You saved my life.

Their eyes lock.

ELISE (CONT'D)
Thank you.

She inspects their surroundings. The high waterfall, from a cliff that separates the land, as far as she can see.

There's no going back.

ELISE (CONT'D)
Hand me my boots?

He does.

She slides the carving knife into the sheath and pulls them on. Struggles to stand.

The ache gets her, she limps.

Elise throws her bag over her shoulder.

ELISE (CONT'D)
You are a long way from the camp.

She turns her back on the river and makes her way south. The towering trees of the redwood forest.

EXT. REDWOOD FOREST - SOUTH - CONTINUOUS

Elise and Gilbert are dwarfed by the colossus trees.

GILBERT
Elise, the reason I followed you-

He tries to find the right words.

GILBERT (CONT'D)
The way our conversation ended-

A confession.

GILBERT (CONT'D)
I remember more about my brother
than I have told you.

Her pace slows.

GILBERT (CONT'D)
He was a prince. My father, the
king of our land.

Elise stops in her tracks. Puzzled.

GILBERT (CONT'D)
One day, my brother spoke of a
strange voice calling him to a
distant world.

ELISE
Rapunzel.

GILBERT
She took him. When my father
finally found him, it was too late.

It's hard for him to say.

GILBERT (CONT'D)
She didn't stop with my brother.
She murdered my father and mother.
She burned our kingdom to the
ground with an army of darkness. I
escaped with my life. But, she
murdered thousands. Everyone I
knew.

Elise comes to know the breadth of Rapunzel's wrath.

ELISE
So it is not just King Edward. Not
just Thessia.

He takes her hand. Elise feels an emotional spark in his
touch.

ELISE (CONT'D)
Who am I to stand against her
darkness. How can I face something
so powerful?

They connect. Electric.

GILBERT
If something were to have happened
to you and our last conversation to
have been the one under the stars-

The moment hangs too long, her feelings for Gilbert are
exposed.

GILBERT (CONT'D)
I will not let you face it alone.

She buries her head against his chest.

ELISE
I am glad you are here.

CUT TO:

EXT. REDWOOD FOREST - SOUTH - NIGHT

Night has fallen over the redwood forest.

Elise and Gilbert hurry south, trying to make better time.

The wind gives way to the mysterious whisper.

SPIRIT (O.S.)
an mbealach seo

Louder now.

SPIRIT (O.S.) (CONT'D)
go tapa. an mbealach seo

ELISE
Do you hear that?

He squints, intently. Hears. His eyes widen.

SPIRIT (O.S.)
go tapa. go tapa. go tapa.

GILBERT
What is it?

They change directions. Following the voice.

SPIRIT (O.S.)
an mbealach seo.

It swirls around them, echoing, drawing them further into the east.

They make it a couple hundred yards before they hear a strange ringing. A familiar, ethereal tone.

They continue. Several moments pass before they see a faint glow in the distance.

The strange ghostly glow from the center of a clearing.

SPIRIT (O.S.) (CONT'D)
teacht. teacht. an mbealach seo.

GILBERT
What is it?

EXT. FORBIDDEN GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

Elise and Gilbert stand at the edge of the clearing.

Behind them, the redwood forest, before them, the lush garden of smooth grass and white flowered vines. Yellow fireflies dance.

The remarkable tree, at the center of the garden. It emanates its ethereal tone.

Its ghostly, unconsuming flame dances among the twisted branches of white.

They are in awe. Taken aback.

ELISE
It cannot be.

Elise leads the way into the garden.

GILBERT
What is it?

They look on the site's glory. Something few have ever seen.

ELISE
My grandfather used to tell me a story of a forbidden garden.

She grows closer. The story unfolds.

ELISE (CONT'D)
The fruit was blessed with light.
It offered eternal life. A tree of tangled white wood, with leaves of flame. It sang an angel's tone.

They grow closer still.

ELISE (CONT'D)
He stole of its fruit and in return, a powerful witch forced him to surrender his first born child. My aunt. Even my father thought it nothing more than a story.
(MORE)

ELISE (CONT'D)
Something he made up about a child
they had lost in birth, before my
father. Everyone thought it just
another tale of my grandfather's.

They're at the tree now.

She runs her fingers through the ghostly flame, unharmed.

She moves her hand along its sturdy branches of white.

ELISE (CONT'D)
Rapunzel said we are connected.
Could it be?

Rapunzel's infatuation with Elise unfolds.

Fire dances between her fingers. The air around her
sparkles.

Elise is enveloped in its glow.

ELISE (CONT'D)
The whispers. It called me here.

CUT TO:

EXT. IVORY FORTRESS - CONTINUOUS

Rapunzel stands at the top of the grand staircase of white
stone.

She bows her head. Begins to inhale and exhale, drawing
insurmountable power from within.

She shouts a violent war cry, raising her arms high into the
air, summoning forth an epic undead army.

EXT. REDWOOD FOREST - CONTINUOUS

Roots and vines writhe, pulling the skeletons of fallen
soldiers from their unmarked graves.

The creatures hiss and snap as they form, struggling upward
from their earthly prison. They bear the weapons they fell
with.

Vicious horses of bone join, stumbling as they pull
themselves from the dirt. The animals of darkness rear.

Hundreds upon hundreds of undead warriors of vine and bone,
summoned forth by Rapunzel's power.

EXT. REDWOOD FOREST - MORNING

War looms.

A thick fog floats over the land, wrapping around the trunks of the giant redwoods.

The king's army marches.

An eerie crackle, a harsh dry moan from something dark.

A soldier in the frontline notices the sound.

He nudges his neighbor.

THESSIA SOLDIER #1
You hear that?

His cohort nods. Fear overcomes them.

THESSIA SOLDIER #2
I hear it.

Now a beat. The rap of a thousand swords against a thousand shields.

The drum rolls.

The fog parts, revealing the frontline of Rapunzel's army.

THESSIA SOLDIER #1
What devil is this?

THESSIA SOLDIER #2
What are they?

They halt.

The eerie crackle grows. The creatures cry out.

It's an intimidating spectacle. Even more ominous in the forest's fog.

GENERAL

Do not fight on the order of your king, fight on behalf of your creator, for today we fight the devil's men! The Kingdom of Thessia is at war with darkness incarnate. Let us return the rightful heir that we may prosper the good nation that hell fears!

The men cry out in support. A rally cry.

GENERAL (CONT'D)
Charge!

The king's frontline comes to meet Rapunzel's.

The skeletal creatures of bone and earth against the king's forces of iron.

They crash into eachother. Warriors on both sides fall.

A soldier stabs through the ribs of his foe. His sword slides through its bones and out its back.

Unaffected, the skeleton bashes the soldier with its shield.

The soldier falls and the creature of darkness buries its sword through him.

It releases its eerie battle cry.

Another soldier severs the bone-arm of his opponent. The monster fights on.

Rapunzel's undead army overpower's the king's men.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOUTH SHIRE - MORNING

Smoke clouds the morning sky.

The wheat fields of South Shire burn.

INT. ELISE AND BRAUN'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

Braun watches through a small window at the front door of his home.

Rapunzel's creatures overpower the small farm town.

A family of four runs. Father, mother and two daughters.

Braun looks on as the mother trips and falls.

He runs to a great sword at the corner of the room.

EXT. ELISE AND BRAUN'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

Braun explodes out the front door of his home, calling after the fleeing family.

BRAUN
Over here!

They come toward him. He swings through several of Rapunzel's gaining soldiers.

He cuts through arms and legs. Severing their bone limbs.

It's no use, until he lobs off their heads.

They crumble to a pile of bone and earth.

He rushes the family of four into his home.

BRAUN (CONT'D)
Barricade the door! Open it for no one but myself!

One of their daughters, gorgeous 17 YEAR OLD ANNABELLE, eyes brawn with impenetrable gratitude. He looks on her with love at first site.

He's filled with newfound conviction as the door closes, separating the family from the danger he now faces.

CUT TO:

EXT. REDWOOD FOREST - SOUTH - MORNING

Elise and Gilbert sleep. Wrapped together in a blanket.

Fog slithers between their faces.

In the distance, among the trees, a patch of vines swell, pulling skeletal remains from the ground.

CUT TO:

EXT. REDWOOD FOREST - MORNING

Most of the king's soldiers lay beaten.

The general is surrounded by the monsters. He lashes out, severing limbs, dropping many foes. He stands strong.

More come for him. He fells another and another until one makes a stab at him that he cannot block.

He falls.

The monsters rap on their shields.

They move over the bodies of the fallen soldiers of Thessia.

Toward Edward and his castle, the creatures of darkness march.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. REDWOOD FOREST - SOUTH - CONTINUOUS

An eerie crackle startles Gilbert.

GILBERT
Elise.

He shakes her.

GILBERT (CONT'D)
Elise, wake up.

She's disoriented. Pulled from a deep sleep.

He puts his finger to his lips, signaling for her silence.

The creatures cry out. The harsh moan. Predatory and ancient.

Terrifying.

GILBERT (CONT'D)
That sound. I know it.

ELISE
What is it?

They stand. Cautiously moving together.

The crackle explodes to life from right behind them.

They both catch a glimpse of ghastly creature before sprinting away.

GILBERT
Run!

It brings its axe down exactly where Elise would have been.

Elise doubles back for her supplies.

The creature swings at her as she catches hold of her bag.

Gilbert pulls her forward, out of the path of the monster's deadly swipe. Together, they run.

Ahead, several more of Rapunzel's army.

Gilbert and Elise stop in their tracks, backing in another direction.

Again, from directly behind them, the crackle.

Elise cries out in fear. They make a run for it, breaking into an open space at the right.

One of the soldiers catches Elise with its shield.

Elise falls hard. Leaves and gravel fly.

Gilbert grabs the creature's shield and pushes it backward, stumbling on top of it.

The skeleton bites and snaps as Gilbert twists its skull from its shoulders. It falls limp.

Gilbert grabs its sword just in time to catch another creature behind them, readying a thorough stab at Elise.

He flies at it, swinging against the creatures might.

The thick metal swords compete. Gilbert cuts the monster down.

Elise grabs the sword from the bone-hands of Gilbert's second felled foe.

GILBERT (CONT'D)

Go!

He fumbles to a run, pushing her before him.

Elise swings through another of the dark enemies, splitting its skull, saving Gilbert from its swing.

Gilbert barely misses a stab from another nearby creature.

They barrel through a gathering of the monsters, fighting their way through.

All at once, it seems they've made it to a clearing.

Moments pass before Gilbert's face is overcome by deathly shock.

He takes several weakened steps forward. Elise notices his slowed pace.

ELISE

Gilbert?

His eyes, confused. He reaches for the shooting pain in his back.

ELISE (CONT'D)
What's wrong?

He turns, revealing an arrow, lodged deep between his shoulder blades.

Shock comes over Elise. Her eyes wide with fear.

Another arrow cuts through the air near her face.

Gilbert stumbles. She catches him on her shoulder, tries to bear his weight, but can't. He falls to his knees.

The monsters approach. Her eyes grow teary. His are full with fear.

Gilbert's breath grows thin.

GILBERT
This is where you'll leave me.

Elise is overcome with sadness.

ELISE
I won't.

He falls to his shoulder, laying on the forest floor. The light grows dim.

GILBERT
Avenge my brother.

ELISE
I cannot leave you.

She's dizzy with uncertainty. Another arrow, a near miss.

He struggles through his dying breath to make her leave.

GILBERT
You have to. You have to go. Now!

ELISE
I cannot leave you! I cannot!

GILBERT
It is me or both of us.

He holds his hand on her face.

GILBERT (CONT'D)
You must. Elise, you must.

The monsters quickly encroach. Ten more.

GILBERT (CONT'D)
I will wait for you. Meet me on
the other side.

His eyes close. The first time he's ever said it, and the last-

GILBERT (CONT'D)
I love you.

His breath ends.

ELISE
Gilbert? Gilbert, no!

She holds him in her arms. Her teary face on his.

The creatures are near. She cries out a mournful roar and stands, wielding the sword.

She swings through several of the undead army. Severing limbs.

The creature that bears the bow and arrow readies yet another shot. She spins out of its trajectory and races to confront the monster, smashing through its shoulder with her blunt weapon. Slashing at it until it lays lifeless.

Elise finds herself alone among many foes.

Ahead, she finds a way through. A steep hill.

CUT TO:

INT. CASTLE THESSIA - KING'S CHAMBER - DAY

King Edward watches through his window as his kingdom burns.

EXT. CASTLE THESSIA - CONTINUOUS

The soldiers of darkness attack men who defend the castle.

EXT. THESSIA - CONTINUOUS

Clouds of smoke billow from all around. In the distance, South Shire burns.

Civilians fight, only to fall victim to the swords of their foes.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS - LATER

Elise comes to a plateau in the terrain.

She continues onward, fighting tears, looking over her shoulder for the dark creatures that may follow her.

A blood-red cardinal watches her.

She hears a horse's bellow. From 40 feet, Luke, the prince's horse, trots toward her.

A friendly face. Elise recognizes the animal.

ELISE

Luke!

It's a sign. Cavill is near.

She mounts the steed and races onward.

Dead doves hang from the trees, bound by their feet with twine. They sway.

The horse huffs nervously, his breath becomes vapor in the chill air.

Ahead, the grand staircase of white marble, leading to Rapunzel's castle.

Elise dismounts and cautiously approaches the grand staircase.

CUT TO:

EXT. THESSIA WILDERNESS - CONTINUOUS

King Edward is in chains. He's escorted through the pines by the army of dead.

CUT TO:

EXT. IVORY FORTRESS - STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

The magnificent entryway to Rapunzel's fortress of white stone.

She begins, up the grand staircase. Afraid, she repeats her prayer.

ELISE

What is far, will soon be near. I
will not fear what I am bound to
face.

She shivers. Weary.

ELISE (CONT'D)

I will not want for what I soon,
will have. Though, I am blind in
darkness and the paths are many, my
guide is true.

Each step, another beat in her growing resolution.

ELISE (CONT'D)

Though the weight is heavy, I do
not bear it alone.

Elise wipes tears from her eyes, mourning Gilbert's death,
she presses on.

Her determination grows.

ELISE (CONT'D)

Though my heart shys from the
struggle, I will fight through the
current.

Elise comes to the final step of the marble staircase and
finds herself at the entrance of Rapunzel's throne room.

ELISE (CONT'D)

Against the adversary, I will stand
strong, for I do not stand alone.

INT. IVORY FORTRESS - THRONE ROOM

Elise enters the large circular space of white stone and ivy.

Silence but for the wind that whispers through the vast
throne room of forest and stone.

Her eyes come straight to Cavill, who rests under Rapunzel's
spell.

His arms, stretched outward, held in the vines. His body,
tight against the stone wall.

He looks peaceful. Unaware of the war that has fallen over his land.

He is the very same as she last saw him, when they shared a night in the wilderness.

Elise gazes at the prince, again, noting the gentle curve of his nose and soft lips, intrigued by his shape and remembers his kindness.

Even after everything she's gone through to get here, this is too easy and she knows it.

Then it comes.

Backed to the walls surrounding the room, the 8 rotting skeletons of men in royal gear. Elise shifts, knowing.

The familiar sound. The eerie crackle.

THE ROYAL DEAD, awake.

She drops her bag, near Cavill. Scans her opponents.

Each dark prince is dressed in clothing of their prospective lands. Different colors and fashions. Some have heavy metallic helmets, others simple cloth.

Four of them carry one-handed swords and shields.

One wields a bow and quiver of arrows. One, a great, two-handed axe. One, a two-handed sword.

The final, wields two maces.

They rise.

Elise moves away from Cavill. The undead prince with a bow, draws an arrow.

Elise slides behind Rapunzel's throne. The arrow ricochets.

As soon as Elise hears the clink of the miss-placed shot, she's up and over the throne, running at the undead archer.

It pulls another arrow from its quiver and slides the arrow into the nocking point.

The creature isn't able to get a full draw before Elise has a grip, one hand on the upper and lower limbs of the bow.

She spins around its side, pulling the bow forward.

The string snaps forward and the arrow fumbles.

Elise spins the bow counter clockwise. The undead prince's wrist shatters, its hand falls to the floor.

She bashes its skull with the bow's grip. It fumbles backward into its throne of bramble, slides to the floor, but persists.

It grabs at Elise's feet. She punts the creature's skull, which promptly dislocates from its spine of ivy.

The skull spins and crashes into the curved adjacent wall.

The bow prince lies beaten.

Elise kneels and draws an arrow from its quiver.

The remaining 7 princes gain on her.

She releases an arrow, it flies toward the undead prince who wields two maces.

It explodes through the creature's skull, sending fragments of bone and dust into the air.

The nearest soldier bears a shield and sword. 15 feet.

She draws and fires. The arrow ricochets from its block.

It rushes at her, shield first.

From three feet, it takes a mighty stab. She rolls out of the way.

She eyes the maces, 40 feet across the room. Abandoning the bow, Elise makes a run for it.

She makes it to the maces, in the hands of the second fallen undead prince.

The prince with a mighty two-handed sword is near. It swipes at her. She leaps backward, knocking its strike with one of the maces.

She spins the weapons around her palms confidently.

This just became a fair fight.

The prince with the great sword is clumsy, but its weapon deadly. It takes several mighty swings at her.

She's able to dodge, but has been backed toward another shielded soldier, who stabs at her.

She swings at the shielded prince, who bashes her strike.

She falls backwards. The great sword comes down hard. She rolls, barely dodging.

She's on her feet and behind the great-sworded monster before it can ready.

She smashes the back of its skull with her right mace. It cracks and falls to the floor. She finishes it with another great bash to its skull.

The shielded monster is back on her, readying another stab.

Spinning, she knocks its attack. The monster fumbles. She bashes it across the face. Its skull shattered.

Four remain. The prince with the two handed axe is on the opposite side of the room but it gains.

Three shielded princes remain. One particularly large one.

The nearest comes at her swinging. She parries.

Another is at her. Two at once.

She swings at them but can't get by their shields.

The large, shielded prince is nearly on her. She will be outmatched.

Another heavy swing comes down on her. She parries but the force sends her backward.

Another swing, then another.

A shield bash crushes against the heavy swing of her left mace. The vibration is too much, the hilt slips her grip.

The mace goes flying backward, out of her left hand.

She's on her knees.

She uses her free hand to grab the opposite edge of the creature's shield, throwing it to her right.

The undead prince stumbles. She spins around it and brings her right mace backward into its head. It stumbles to the floor.

She gathers herself quickly and crushes the floored prince's skull, finishing it.

She pulls the shield out from under her most recent fallen foe, using it to block a swing from the other shielded attacker.

The largest shielded prince and the prince with the great axe are on her.

Three of them now.

She can't manage. She hunkers behind the shield and charges through them with a cry of adrenaline.

They stumble but get their footing quickly.

They're heading toward her again. The monster with the great axe is closest.

She calculates.

The massive steel axe comes across her. Deadly. She bends back, barely dodging.

The undead prince spins with the weight of his swing and brings it down on her, like a guillotine.

Elise propels a mighty, counterclockwise spin, to the side of the axe.

All at once, she brings the edge of her shield parallel with the ground.

The prince with the two-handed axe's skull bursts under the power of the shield's edge.

Dust flies.

The plan of her bold move continues as she uses the momentum of her spin.

She ducks into her shield, blocking the next monster's stab and bringing the mace, in her right hand, into its skull.

She continues the counterclockwise spin.

She throws all of her weight into her shield, anticipating the largest of the shielded prince's, swing.

But the swing does not come.

Her miscalculation causes her to stumble forward under the force of her own momentum.

The monster bashes her with its shield, sending her tumbling over herself. Her own shield breaks free of her grip and slides a distance, out of her reach.

The undead prince follows with a deadly swipe. She rolls, inches from its strike. The sword bounces from the stone floor.

Elise stumbles to her feet. Unarmed, she squares off against her foe.

It comes at her, swinging and slashing. Several near-misses as she spins and dodges its barrage.

Finally, she sees an opportunity. Moves out of the way of a particularly heavy swing and maneuvers behind the creature.

She grabs hold of its jaw, wrestles it to the floor and pulls, with all her might, until the bone and vine separate from its shoulders.

Breathless and somewhat surprised by her accomplishment, she drops its skull to the ground.

The ivory throne room is quiet. Alone at last, Elise approaches Prince Cavill.

She brings her hand to his cheek.

ELISE
How might I wake you?

A fairytale kiss?

Elise jolts forward from a painful force coming from behind her. Shock blankets her face.

A cold metal sword slides into her flesh. It pierces through her back and protrudes from her abdomen.

VEL
This is for Fishel.

Vel wrenches his sword from the mortal wound. She whimpers as it dislodges.

She drops to her knees.

VEL (CONT'D)
And I'll be taking that reward.
Close though.

Her wound bleeds. She grows light-headed. Falls to her knees.

Rapunzel saunters down the marble staircase that leads into the throne room, from above.

Vel steps backward, weary of the powerful woman.

She continues downward.

Blood streams from the Elise's wound. Her hand is soaked as she tries to stop its flow.

RAPUNZEL
Dear Elise, don't struggle.

Rapunzel twists her hand toward Vel. He's held at bay. His neck locks as vines writhe up his body.

His arms are pulled forcefully behind his back. Vines twist through his palms and wrists until his hands are bound to one another.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)
This coward struck to kill.

His face swells red as the vines begin to tighten, strangling him. He struggles to breath.

Elise tries to stand, whimpering in pain.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)
This vermin.

The vines pull Vel's face to the side by his chin. His eyes grow wide with fear. His end draws near.

Rapunzel steps to the floor of the throne room and Vel's neck snaps.

She lets his bound body fall to the floor.

Her walk is a slow dance. An art of malevolence.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)
I can save you. I can end your
pain.

Rapunzel nears Elise. Ominously towering over the dying girl.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)
My legions swallow Thessia. South
Shire. Your home burns. Soon
Braun.

Rapunzel's eyes soften.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)
You're everything Edward was not.
I admire your bravery. Your
resilience. Your innocent
chivalry. Your childish faith has
carried you far.

Elise's cotton under shirt has become soaked in blood from
her wound. She whimpers.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)
We're connected Elise. We share
the same blood.

Elise realizes, under her breath.

ELISE
It is true?

RAPUNZEL
You no longer have a father.

Then, everything Rapunzel has wanted from Elise, is revealed.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)
No mother.

Rapunzel would very much like to fill that void.

ELISE
You have slaughtered frivolously.
You are driven insane with revenge.
But, I look on you now and I do not
see a monster, I see only an
injured woman, betrayed. I see
humanity in you. And I feel deep
sorrow for you.

Rapunzel cannot overcome her loneliness. Understood, at
last.

Her face is wet with tears. She overpowers them, chin high,
she extends her hand.

RAPUNZEL
Join me.

Rapunzel's hand floats, outstretched. Elise is close enough
to reach.

She pleads.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)

Rule at my side and together we
will build a new world. We'll
teach the corrupt hearts of man the
way of loyalty that you understand
so well. We'll grow from nothing,
a new day.

Elise takes Rapunzel's hand.

Sly. Undetectable. Elise draws a white dagger, crafted from the Tree of Life and buries it deep into Rapunzel's heart.

Rapunzel wraps her arms around Elise, holding her close. An emotional embrace, not between foes, but family.

RAPUNZEL (CONT'D)

Well struck.

The words of Acantha ring true.

ELISE

There is no darkness so black that
even the faintest light cannot
overcome.

Their cheeks are side by side. Rapunzel whispers.

RAPUNZEL

How?

ELISE

Carved from the Tree of Life. The
living flame that overcomes death.

Rapunzel smiles. Her eyes shed tears of joy as the darkness leaves her body. She whispers her powerful truth.

RAPUNZEL

I was always rooting for you.

Elise's eyes, wide with sadness.

Rapunzel releases Elise from their embrace and the wounded girl falls to the floor, fragile.

Rapunzel pulls the dagger from the wound in her chest.

Tiny golden orbs of light begin to dance around her.

The Tree of Life's light encompasses Rapunzel's body.

Rapunzel's true age is revealed as the dark magic dissipates.

Her flesh begins to burn in ghostly fire until she becomes a magical flurry of spirit and flame.

She drifts into the air. Gone.

Elise, exhausted, on the verge of death, reaches for her bag.

CUT TO:

EXT. THESSIA WILDERNESS - CONTINUOUS

The army of dead that transport King Edward fall into lifelessness around him.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOUTH SHIRE - CONTINUOUS

Braun, exhausted, battles a gathering of Rapunzel's militia.

He swings a hatchet, shattering one's skull.

BRAUN (V.O.)
Rapunzel's army of darkness fell
away from the land.

One by one, the remaining creatures of darkness fall into lifelessness around him.

CUT TO:

INT. IVORY FORTRESS - THRONE ROOM

Elise manages to pull her pack open, taking hold of a piece of the Tree of Life's fruit.

She takes a thorough bite before falling unconscious. Her bloodless body, deathly pale.

The vines, which suspend Cavill, crumble to ash.

He drops to the floor near Elise.

Cavill's eyes flutter to life.

EXT. IVORY FORTRESS - CONTINUOUS

Cavill cradles Elise in his arms as he races down the grand staircase.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS - MOMENTS LATER

Cavill, atop Luke, races toward Thessia.

Elise lies slumped across Cavill's lap.

CUT TO:

INT. CASTLE THESSIA - THRONE ROOM - DAY

A crowd of people gather on either side of the long aisle, leading to the throne.

BRAUN (V.O.)
King Edward passed his crown to his heir.

The golden lion tapestries hang.

Cavill makes his way toward the throne. He takes his rightful place. Chin high. Strong.

A crown of gold is placed on his head.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOUTH SHIRE - DAY

Beautiful blue skies meet the rolling golden fields of South Shire.

The town is bustling.

New buildings. Better fences. Happier faces.

BRAUN (V.O.)
Under Cavill's rule, the land of Thessia flourished.

CUT TO:

EXT. ELISE AND BRAUN'S HOME - AFTERNOON

Braun chops wood. Wipes sweat from his brow.

3 men in regal attire arrive on horseback.

BRAUN (V.O.)

Elise's reward was delivered on her behalf to her brother in South Shire, that he might build on what their father left and grow their lineage for generations to come.

Cavill steps from his mount. Bows to Braun. Shakes his hand.

CUT TO:

INT. BRAUN'S HOME - YEARS LATER

Thick stone walls. Plenty of room. New furniture.

Braun has aged slightly. He's grown a full beard.

He sits in the family room of a new home.

3 children. 2 boys and a girl. They are small versions of him.

His children listen intently.

BRAUN

And he did!

He delivers with boisterous inflection, referring to himself.

Trying to catch the attention of his wife, who is in an adjacent room.

BRAUN (CONT'D)

He married a beautiful young woman named Annabelle.

The children laugh as their mother, ANNABELLE appears from around the corner. The daughter of the family Braun saved from Rapunzel's army as South Shire burned.

She's heard this story plenty of times before.

BRAUN (CONT'D)

And had three ornery children.

He points at each of them.

BRAUN (CONT'D)
Bryce, Darryn and a stubborn,
little girl-

He tussles her hair.

BRAUN (CONT'D)
Named Elise.

Annabelle rests her chin on Braun's shoulder.

ANNABELLE
Bedtime.

The kids moan.

Braun turns to his wife. Puckers his lips. Receives a kiss.

BRAUN
I love you.

ANNABELLE
I love you!

The children run out of the room. Braun chases them.

FADE TO BLACK:

Moments pass.

The thunderous clap of a galloping horses hooves.

CUT TO:

EXT. REDWOOD FOREST - SOUTH - CURRENT DAY

Elise, beautiful and full of life, races through the thick of massive redwoods atop a white horse

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. FORBIDDEN GARDEN

Gilbert and Elise have just followed the spirit's voice and have come to the Tree of Life.

Elise removes her bag from her shoulder. Takes her axe and begins to hack at a limb of the tree.

A piece of its white fruit shakes loose. Gilbert swoops it up.

Elise places her hand on his. "No."

He shoots her a glare of quirk and sarcasm before taking a thorough bite.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. REDWOOD FOREST - SOUTH - CURRENT DAY

Elise comes to the edge of the Forbidden Garden and dismounts.

EXT. FORBIDDEN GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

Her bare foot steps across the line between the redwood forest and the garden, full of ethereal magic.

Gilbert stands waiting for her at the tree.

They come together in a passionate embrace. They kiss.

FADE TO:

EXT. PINE FOREST - ELISE'S CAMP - DAY

An old, feminine voice hums the familiar dark melody.

The high pitched squeal of an ungreased wagon wheel.

The Witch of the Wilderness pulls her cart. Humming Rapunzel's dark melody.

She comes across Elise's abandoned camp and supplies.

Three of the queen's mercenaries lay dead, having been finished by Gilbert, following their attack on Elise.

She begins to search them.

She ignores the coins the men had stolen from their first victims in the woods of Thessia.

She works hard to roll Bear over. She reaches into his pocket. Rapunzel's gift to Elise lies buried there.

The witch picks up the dark necklace, brushes it off and dangles it in the sunlight.

END: