

THE LAST KEEPER

by

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Years after the world's decimation, the sole survivor of a warrior people battles monstrous entities to reclaim her lost power and safeguard what remains of humanity.

Fantasy, Epic, Drama, Action, Adventure

EXT. LORD HAVEN - DAY

LORD HAVEN, a grand castle built for any king, is also a stronghold: a fortress of colossal stone walls and gray slate with towers that climb toward orange skies.

EXT. LORD HAVEN BATTLEMENTS - DAY

GREAT HILLS stretch along the bright horizon from a distant perspective: A TEENAGE GIRL's. She stands on a massive wall.

This is MAEVE, a look on her face blacker than her hair, with dark eyes heavier than they ought to be at 17.

Maeve shifts her gaze closer to the castle --

Where not two hundred yards out lies a massive POOL OF LIGHT.

Its insides flow like ocean waves, bright and cosmic -- the stuff of nebulas, sitting out there in open grass.

EXT. LORD HAVEN COURTYARD - DAY

A BEARDED MAN, OWYN, 50s, walks through a hectic courtyard --

SWORD INFANTRY running past ARMORED KNIGHTS -- ARCHERS making for the wall -- SPEARMEN riding by on BARDED HORSES.

ARRAN (O.S.)

Chief!

A company of KEEPERS joins Owyn, all put together the same as him: Leather padding. Cloth. Fur. Light metal work. Bracers.

Owyn faces them, weary, but ready to take command.

OWYN

Arran, join the Keepers already in the field. Surround the Source. We'll meet the Partials head on.

A mountain of a man in his 40s, ARRAN, steps forward.

ARRAN

Aye, Owyn.

Owyn makes a firm grip on Arran's shoulder.

OWYN

This is it, brother.

Arran's eyes are laced with intensity.

ARRAN

Aye, Chief. This is it.

OWYN

They are rain. You are stone. A wall. They will not break you.

ARRAN

They will not break us.

Before Arran goes, Owyn pounds a FIST over his shoulder.

THE KEEPERS echo the gesture. Owyn nods them away. His eyes travel the yard, taking in the madness until he looks up -- Spotting Maeve on the wall.

EXT. LORD HAVEN BATTLEMENTS - CONT.

Maeve hears someone approaching. Doesn't need to turn.

MAEVE

Da.

OWYN

Maeve.

Owyn joins his daughter. They are silent, side by side.

They look out to the hills: dark clouds clot the sky.

OWYN (CONT'D)

This is the end for all of High Halla.

(beat, then)

Say to me our clan's words.

Maeve turns, unpleasantly surprised.

MAEVE

Tradition? In the face of death?

OWYN

You have no audience. Only me.

Maeve won't budge. Owyn sighs, gives in, starts off for her.

OWYN (CONT'D)

Maeve. My honor is my love...

MAEVE

The words died with her, Da.

OWYN

No. She showed her love. She will honor us always.

Maeve breathes in hard. She looks at her hands -- into them.

MAEVE

All our power, and we couldn't save her. I couldn't.

She looks again to the POOL OF LIGHT. Owyn's eyes follow.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

I am unworthy of the Source's gift.

OWYN

Your mother gave her life so you could keep that gift. Because she knew your worth better than anyone.

MAEVE

But how do I know if I'm worthy?

Owyn seems ready to scream the answer out --

Until Lord Haven's very foundation seems to SHAKE...

Maeve and Owyn look ahead, to the hills, as they begin to hear the sounds of *erratic rumbling*.

They turn to each other.

OWYN

We must make for the Source.

Maeve nods. She closes her eyes. When she opens them, they GLOW WHITE as a SHINING AURA begins to outline her.

She starts to leave as Owyn calls out to her --

OWYN (CONT'D)

Maeve. My honor is my love...

Maeve keeps her back to him. Wordless, she simply runs off.

Owyn swallows pain, fighting something back. He looks UP --

OWYN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Ciara.

He shakes it off, running to join Maeve.

EXT. LORD HAVEN FIELDS - NIGHT

Thick fog hangs over Lord Haven's territory. Smoke and flames make ash fall like rain, blanketing the land.

MAEVE bursts through the clouds, hobbling. She's wounded.

She limps past THE DEAD: knights, infantry, horses -- pieces of them, that is. Bits, shreds. Mangled messes.

Maeve comes across the corpse of a CREATURE, spikes poking from its elongated arms, its massive maw agape. Its uneven, red body is riddled with eyes, its claws long like daggers.

MORE OF THESE CREATURES lay dead throughout the battlefield.

These things are PARTIALS, and they belong in Hell.

Pushing on, Maeve kicks into a man with a cloak. A Keeper.

She rolls him over, finding nothing above his lower jaw.

She moves on.

Maeve walks past MORE Keepers -- as more and more of her kind pile up, an atrocity trail leading to:

THE SOURCE, a ring of its dead warriors around it.

Atop the body pile lies a figure resembling OWYN.

Maeve ignores her wounds and RUNS to her father.

Maeve falls at his death bed: the remains of men and Partials.

She lies there. Broken.

On all sides of her, more PARTIALS creep out of the shadows.

EXT. OLD VILLAGE - DAY**SUPER: THREE YEARS LATER**

This forest vill may have been a peaceful place once.

Now, old crop fields rot nearby.

Decrepit structures, once houses.

Desolate roads branch into twisted lanes -- demolished carts sharing ground with the skeletons of livestock.

EXT. VILLAGE ROAD - DAY

A GIRL OF 8, KIRSTAN, runs as FAST as she can from A PARTIAL.

Kirstan cuts past a house, rushing into a narrow ALLEY --

EXT. VILLAGE ALLEY - CONT.

Which is blocked off by a tall GATE. Kirstan turns, to see -- THE PARTIAL. Kirstan shields herself with her arms, bracing -- SLOSH -- the Partial FALLS IN HALF.

She looks up at A MAN, RORY, 30s.

KIRSTAN

Papa!

RORY

Kirstan! Come, come!

Rory picks up his daughter and runs back onto the street --

EXT. VILLAGE ROAD - CONT.

Rory turns both ways -- Partials inbound, everywhere.

He turns around to the alley, remembering the DEAD END.

Rory holds a rusty sword in one hand, Kirstan with the other.

Suddenly, a tall Partial just beside Rory eats a BOLT to the head. It falls. Rory looks in the direction of the shot --

Finding MAEVE, 20, on a rooftop, in her KEEPER GEAR and holding a small SEMI-AUTO CROSSBOW.

She LEAPS DOWN to the road -- swiping a large DAGGER across a Partial as she lands.

She makes for the family while CUTTING THROUGH Partials.

Rory sees Maeve move like sharp wind. He puts Kirstan down.

RORY

Go back to the alley! Go!

Rory steps out into the road, swinging his sword at Partials.

Maeve looks over, seeing Rory fighting like a civilian would. He's going to get himself killed.

She aims her crossbow --

As a Partial looking for Rory's neck takes a BOLT -- dead.

A Partial takes a CHOMP at Maeve's shoulder -- as a GLOWING BARRIER around her strains at the bite, protecting her.

She KICKS the Partial back with ENHANCED STRENGTH.

Rory is getting overwhelmed, backing into the alley again.

Maeve springs, SLICING at Partials as she SHOOTS.

Partials fall one by one, the crowd thinning as Maeve moves.

EXT. VILLAGE ALLEY - CONT.

Rory stabs into a Partial, but its moving flesh TRAPS the sword in its belly! The Partial SWIPES at Rory, sending him.

KIRSTAN

Papa! PAPA!

Rory is disoriented as hell, but he jumps on his daughter, holding her. Prepared to be torn apart first. When --

Maeve's dagger BURSTS through the Partial's chest, swiping UPWARD -- splitting it down the middle. Maeve KICKS it aside.

MAEVE

Are you okay?

RORY

(nodding)

I'm Rory. This is Kirstan. You're
a... Keeper?

Maeve reloads her crossbow. Doesn't answer.

KIRSTAN

Why are they called 'Keepers'?

Maeve forces a faint smile. She holds to Kirstan's arm.

MAEVE

Because we tried.

Kirstan giggles. Maeve turns to Rory.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

Where are the rest of your people?

Rory looks at his child. Then back at Maeve. She understands.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

There's a place up North, near Far
Claws. The Sanctuary.

RORY

We've been searching for it.

MAEVE

I was headed there. I can take you.

RORY

You'd do that?

EXT. VILLAGE ROAD - CONT.

Maeve leads the family out, her weapons drawn.

The only Partials here are DEAD. Maeve has her back turned.

MAEVE

We should move. There will be more.

Behind them all, half of a Partial's corpse TWITCHES.

Red tendrils slither out of its torso, making their way to
another Partial -- contacting its skin.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

I have a camp maybe a mile out of
here. You can eat. Rest.

The Partials CONJOIN. The MUTATED PARTIAL begins to RISE.

Kirstan notices.

KIRSTAN

Papa? Papa!!!

Rory and Maeve turn to see the reanimated Partial standing.

It LEAPS at Rory with all fours, SLASHING at him and Kirstan.

Maeve jumps in and SACKS the Partial. She CHOPS all its limbs
off, then SHOOTS it, two bolts per head. It's down for good.

When Maeve turns back, Rory is bruised, cut at most.

Kirstan has been OPENED at the chest. Gone.

RORY

Kirstan... No, no, no, no, no...
Don't do this. Not this. No, no,
no, please, please, love, please...

Maeve just stares fixedly. Uselessly.

MAEVE

I--

Rory falls into his daughter's body. Drained of heart. Will.

He reaches for his sword. Taking it. LIFTING IT --

MAEVE (CONT'D)

NO--

-- DRIVING THE BLADE THROUGH THE MIDDLE OF HIS CHEST.

Rory is dead as he falls.

Maeve just looks. Empty. Numbness can't begin to describe it.

EXT. SANCTUARY - DAY

Afternoon light shines down on the Sanctuary -- a SIZABLE ISLAND in the middle of a lake, walled at every corner.

A mile from the water lies A SNOWY, SPRAWLING MOUNTAIN RANGE, a line of far-off titans keeping guard.

EXT. SANCTUARY - MARKETS - DAY

A MERCHANT runs a stand selling meat of questionable quality.

A BLACKSMITH sharpens spear points and longswords.

A GUNSMITH toys with a damaged repeating rifle.

The DENIZENS of the Sanctuary roam and run the street like true creatures of habit.

This could be the only bastion of civilization left.

Maeve walks down the street, unblinking. Wherever she is in thought, you'd rather be dead than there. Then --

Someone RUNS past Maeve in a hurry. More and more denizens follow, going the way Maeve came -- the Sanctuary's exit.

A MAN in his 70s bumps into Maeve in his rush.

ELDERLY MAN

My apologies. I must be going!

MAEVE

Hardly alone.

ELDERLY MAN

Haven't you heard? The Myrko scouts
came back this morning. The Source
has returned! It's abandoned that
accursed castle!

Shock takes Maeve as this lands on her.

ELDERLY MAN (CONT'D)

I must go. Do take care--

MAEVE

It didn't grow legs, old man. And
if it did, they'd work a lot better
than yours. Stay here. Survive.

Maeve slouches on, leaving the elderly man stunned.

After some distance, a speck of *contemplation* grows on her.

EXT. LORD HAVEN FIELDS - NIGHT

Maeve runs through a burning field, DEAD BODIES everywhere.
The fire on her hands burns down to her BONES.

OWYN (O.S.)

MAEVE!

Maeve throws her head around the ruined land desperately.

MAEVE

Da?!

CIARA (O.S.)

Save us, Maeve! Please!

ARRAN (O.S.)

Help us, Maeve! Save us!

MAEVE

Ma?! Arran! Where are you? Where is
everyone?! Da!!!

OWYN (O.S.)

Here, Maeve! Behind you!

Maeve turns -- finding Owyn and Ciara in front of THE SOURCE,
surrounded by Partials. Maeve watches them get overran --

MAEVE

NO!!!

INT. THE OPEN ALLEY - DAY

Maeve rocks herself AWAKE at a bar counter, hood up, three entire bottles of wine deep, a fourth opened in front of her.

Fancy silks and colorful flags deck the painted walls -- on the floor, MEN raise cups with grimy laughter.

Like any brothel, the Open Alley has no need for any of this.

The barkeep, DANN, 30s, notices Maeve in her drunken stupor.

DANN

I know just about every face there is in the Sanctuary. Might know yours, too, you take that hood off.

Maeve shakes off her turmoil, tucking back into her wine.

MAEVE

You might.

Dann persists.

DANN

Just passing through? Friends? Family?

MAEVE

Who's got family these days?

Dann acknowledges that. Fair. He decides to shoot for it:

DANN

No one to keep you company, then?

Maeve halts her binge.

She turns around, eyeing a WAITRESS on the bar floor -- short, very pretty, visibly lonely.

Past her, near the back by the stairs, stands a BROTHEL GIRL in blue-red robes.

Maeve can't see her hooded face, but can tell she's *watching*.

Maeve pulls her last COIN PIECE. Gestures it to Dann.

MAEVE

Who do I speak to about your girls?

Dann shrinks, disappointed. But business is business.

INT. THE OPEN ALLEY - BACK ROOM - DAY

An empty glass lands on a table, filling with an amber fluid. Maeve pushes the glass to her lips, DOWNING the drink fully. The Brother Girl from the bar watches Maeve. Hardly thrilled. Maeve notices her with one eye open.

MAEVE

Be grateful. I spent good damn
money on you, not a third bottle.

Maeve lifts her WINE BOTTLE from under the table, shaking it. The Brothel Girl notes the gesture with a little scoff.

BROTHEL GIRL

Baron Bronze is the cheapest drink
we offer.

Oh. Maeve refills her glass. Places the bottle on the table.

MAEVE

Well, don't feel too bad. I'd cost
even less in your place.

BROTHEL GIRL

A compliment?

MAEVE

Silver lining.

BROTHEL GIRL

Ah, yes. Always one to be found...

Brothel Girl loosens a strap -- and the robes fall from her now-naked body.

Maeve watches, gripping her glass a little tighter.

The Girl frees her long, white hair, and her face: glowing from emerald eyes and skin snow-pale. She is 20. Beautiful.

She is OPAL.

OPAL

How would you like me?

Maeve takes a long, thoughtful look... then raises her glass.

MAEVE

I'd like you to pour me another.

Opal sighs. She steps over, grabs the Baron Bronze. Looks at Maeve -- unable to betray the *smallest* smirk she can offer.

And Maeve's smug look is wiped clean as Opal starts SWIGGING the bottle. And doesn't stop. Still going. And... going.

And-- *Jesus*, still going. Maeve bats both eyes. Interested.

Then, finally, Opal clears the bottle. She tosses it aside.

Maeve throws her glass to the stone floor as well.

MAEVE (CONT'D)
My kind of girl.

Maeve makes for the bed -- Opal pushes in, laying her down.

Maeve's hands can't fight the urge to travel Opal's arms.

OPAL
Believe me, dear. We have more in common than... acquired tastes.

Both women lean in for a kiss -- as Opal passes Maeve's face:

OPAL (CONT'D)
(whispering)
Lord Haven.

Maeve pulls back completely.

MAEVE
You know who I am?

OPAL
Of course I do.

They stare into each other. Maeve exhales. Accepting this.

MAEVE
You lost someone?

OPAL
Only my father.

If Maeve feels pain, she doesn't show it. She is still.

OPAL (CONT'D)
Worry not. Of all the High Lords in the Haven, he was the cruelest. Filled men's purses while the people filled graves.

Opal closes in on Maeve's face, clawing at her neck.

OPAL (CONT'D)

Every life you failed to save, you killed... But that includes the Higher Lord of the Old Reach. My father.

Opal lets go of Maeve, who remembers she can breathe again.

OPAL (CONT'D)

"Silver lining."

Opal reaches for her robes, putting them back on.

Maeve feels at her throat -- eyes the BLOOD on her hands. She lifts herself, unable to believe it:

MAEVE

Princess Opal??? Why are you here?

OPAL

I am still my father's daughter. They remind me every day. In any way they like. But they'll have me where no one else will...

Maeve swallows hard. She digs for words and finds nothing.

OPAL (CONT'D)

This place is here, I'm here, because you failed. Now you fix it.

Maeve looks at Opal, defeated.

MAEVE

Fix it how, my lady?

OPAL

If you still have a spine, go back to the castle. Retake the Source.

Maeve gives a small sad laugh. But Opal hasn't moved an inch.

MAEVE

...That's impossible.

OPAL

Of course it is. That's why you won't start there. Word has it, a piece of the Source was spotted away from Lord Haven. A rift.

Maeve sobers up in all of a moment. Something clicks.

MAEVE

...I heard.

OPAL

Those who believe the rumor are
already hours to the West. Former
farmers from Remkana. Fishermen
from Sunup. Cooks from the Vills.

Maeve is overwhelmed.

MAEVE

They'll be slaughtered out there.

OPAL

They will.

Maeve looks at the floor like it has eyes to greet her. She
chins up with a heavy tone, but decidedly tired and flat:

MAEVE

Then I'll have to get there first.

Opal tilts. Considering.

OPAL

You'd take a risk so foolish?

Maeve looks at Opal, fatigued, but absolute.

MAEVE

If the Source is really there, I'll
find it. If not... I will die to
bring those people back.

Opal studies her. Unsure. But there's no time for guarantees.

OPAL

In that case, we leave now. Great
Rise is no small territory, they--

MAEVE

What? Wait, why would you come?

Opal walks past Maeve to a wide dresser, opening a drawer.
She pulls CEREMONIAL LIGHT ARMOR -- faded blue, once her own.

OPAL

Those people, my father's
subjects...

Opal pops open a false compartment in the drawer bottom --

-- Removing a ROYAL SWORD in its scabbard.

OPAL (CONT'D)

They... all deserve a chance to
watch you die. I deserve it, too.

Maeve knows she's a punching bag and she plays the part well.

MAEVE

You'll have it.

INT. THE OPEN ALLEY - DAY

Dann finishes a pour for a MAN too old for a place like this.

Then Maeve and Opal sit at the bar.

DANN

Opal! I should have known our
friend here would buy cheap.

OPAL

Hi, Dann. Look, I'm heading West
for a time. Cover for me? Tell Coop
a bitter client abducted me? I'll
"escape" in a few days.

DANN

Not sure he'll fall for that one
again. I'm sure I could think of a
better story, for your... services.

OPAL

Dann, we've been over this--

MAEVE

I'd be happy to provide that
service. And I never cost a piece.

Opal looks at Maeve. Understanding. Going along with it.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

I saw how you looked at me earlier.
Cover for her, you'll get the best
night of your life when I return.

Maeve extends her hand. Dann shakes it with no delay.

Maeve leaves. Opal follows, impressed with the act.

OPAL

(in Maeve's ear)

Care to work here instead?

INT. THE OPEN ALLEY - LATER

The light shining in on the brothel is warmer now -- MORE MEN on the bar floor at this point in the evening.

Dann is cleaning a glass. Wiping the counter.

Suddenly, thundering at the front door: KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK.

Someone opens the door, ducking under it --

A GIANT MAN IN MASSIVE BLUE-WHITE ARMOR -- thick steel with mechanical limbs -- a DOMED HELMET, black slits for eyes.

The child of a *Space Marine* and a 12th century knight.

He is THE PROTECTOR. Face unseen. Age unknown.

The Protector surveys the room, every single CLIENT staring.

PROTECTOR

The first man here... who opens his mouth... will receive a second one.

...What?

A stubby man in his 60s, COOP, comes forward.

COOP

I don't know what you think you're doing here, lad, but the Open Alley is my establishment, and you will turn around and get the FUCK--

COOP'S FACE IS BLOWN IN BY THE PROTECTOR'S HAND CANNON.

Clients stare at the CRATER on Coop's face: his second mouth.

PROTECTOR

The first man here who tells me where the Keeper is... lives.

A wave of silence over every man in the building.

AS THEY BUST OUT CONCEALED PISTOLS AND FIRE ON THE PROTECTOR.

The shots BREAK ON THE SURFACE of the Protector's armor.

As if bored, he walks to a table, all the while being SHOT --

He picks up a bottle of BARON BRONZE. Inspecting it. The bottle EXPLODES, shot right out of his hands --

He looks at the one who did it, A TALL MAN by the stairs.

The Protector barely lifts his arm and SHOOTS --

Sending a slug round through the tall client's CHEST.

The Protector slowly moves his arm around the room, pulling the trigger as the cannon's barrel crosses a man down range.

Each shot RIPS into a client.

THE REMAINING FOUR CLIENTS hop behind the bar with DANN.

The Protector steps over the corpse of a skinny client. He thinks. And equips a SPARK GRENADE from his belt.

BEHIND THE COUNTER, Dann panics, barely handling his pistol.

Something SMASHES into the wall overhead -- as the SKINNY CLIENT'S BODY drops like a bag of bricks in front of Dann --

Who spots the SPARK GRENADE tucked in the man's waistband.

DANN

MOVE!!!

Dann leaps over the counter, the only one to do so.

The rest of the clients are caught in the FIERY EXPLOSION.

Dann is dizzy from all the noise and death. A sudden feeling takes him -- the kind that overtakes sheep near wolves.

He looks up slowly to meet THE PROTECTOR looking down on him.

PROTECTOR

If you are to speak, speak wisely.

Dann knows no favor is worth this fate and cracks instantly.

DANN

West. West. They went West. That's all I know, sir. I swear, sir.

The Protector realizes exactly what this means.

PROTECTOR

The rift.

A man of his word, the Protector simply turns and leaves.

Dann's pants start to soak down the leg.

DANN

West. That's all I know. West. They went West. I swear. They went West.

EXT. OPEN ROAD - DAY

Day light grows heavy, the sky slowly dimming.

Maeve and Opal walk in the wild, trekking an open dirt trail. Hard to say how long things have been quiet for.

MAEVE

Hard to believe we've never met before... Before all this.

OPAL

Not that hard. You were tasked with defending the castle. Its land. I hardly left my room. Hardly could.

Fair point. Back to silence, then.

Maeve looks down at Opal's hip, noting the GILDED SWORD.

MAEVE

What use have you for a sword, my lady?

OPAL

'Opal' will do just fine. And I grew up swinging these, not twirling wands.

MAEVE

Right. I suppose I didn't figure...

Offended, Opal faces Maeve. One question begs another:

OPAL

Why do you wield power that you do not use? I thought Keepers were masters of blade and magic both.

(beat, then)

Why did my father seek your kind out if all you could do was die?

Maeve turns away, ready to move on. But Opal isn't following.

OPAL (CONT'D)

I wasn't much of a witness to the dealings of failed warriors. Enlighten me.

Maeve sighs. Very well. She wonders where to start.

MAEVE

You know why they call it the Source?

OPAL

You Keepers draw your magic from it. Or-- drew.

MAEVE

And it's where the Partials came from.

Opal nods. Knew that, too.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

Our clans fought them for centuries. We settled in Great Rise. Sworn to all of the Reach.

OPAL

Don't you mean bound to it, Keeper?

MAEVE

I suppose, aye. More than you know. Four years ago, the Partials grew... angrier.

(tough beat, then)

Your father... Lord Callan... wouldn't let us fight. Held the royal army back, too. The rest of the world...

Opal's eyes go wide. She understands:

OPAL

They were on their own.

MAEVE

Callan didn't want Old Reach to fall. By the time we defied him, it fell, anyway.

Opal finds herself at a loss. This part is news.

With a mild sting of guilt, she sees Maeve deep in thought.

Then -- A FAINT CRACK IN THE AIR. A DISTANT GUNSHOT.

Maeve and Opal look in the direction of the shot.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Maeve flies through the forest trail at full speed, effortless -- Opal pushes hard just to keep up.

OPAL

Wait up, will you? Bloody hell!

EXT. RIDGE - CONT.

Maeve breaks through the woods to a steep hillside that leads to the end of a FOREST VALLEY. She looks out into the land.

Opal runs up too quickly and nearly FALLS over the hill --

As Maeve CATCHES her. Holding her. Rather kindly.

Until Opal shoves Maeve off.

OPAL

Am I meant to thank you, Keeper?

Maeve points out into the valley.

MAEVE

Don't thank me yet.

Deep in a field stand TWO CROWDS OF PEOPLE, split into sides.

EXT. OPEN FIELD - DAY

Maeve and Opal, hoods up, walk through the field, approaching the two GROUPS -- DOZENS OF MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN in each.

One is a group of COMMONERS in tattered cloth and flannel -- Toting rusty LOW-CALIBER PISTOLS, brassy REPEATING RIFLES.

The other group consists of HIGHBORNERS, former NOBLE FOLK, draped in robes and cloaks of once-pure silk.

They are guarded by a LINE of royal troops, THE LORD'S MEN, each equipped with SEMI-AUTO CARBINES.

And the groups are AIMING AND SCREAMING at each other.

Maeve and Opal push through the Commoner crowd, blending in.

At the front, Maeve inspects both groups.

She weighs a balance of pause and drive. Stop and go. Until something finally tugs at her. Whatever it is pulls hard --

As Opal watches Maeve RUN OUT in the middle of the standoff!

OPAL

Keeper, wait!

MAEVE THROWS BOTH HER HANDS UP.

MAEVE

EVERYONE! Calm down and listen--

ARRAN (O.S.)
Maeve?!

Maeve turns toward the Common crowd, just noticing ARRAN, still alive, leading the group in the front.

MAEVE
...Arran?

Maeve takes a moment, but the sight is no hallucination.

Everyone watches Maeve run to Arran --

And EMBRACE him. That girl at Lord Haven once again.

ARRAN
Maeve! What in every hell are you doing here??

Maeve looks around and remembers the situation at hand.

MAEVE
(to everyone)
None of you can be out here! It--

CELIA (O.S.)
Cowards!

Everyone looks to the Noble crowd as CELIA, 60s, pushes past the Lord's Men -- joined by PERSTYN, 60s.

Opal recognizes them both.

CELIA (CONT'D)
They mean to kill us and take the Source for themselves!

The Lord's Men prepare to fire --

MAEVE
NO!

Opal removes her hood and shows herself --

OPAL
Celia! Perstyn! My father's Council! I order you to stop!

Celia and Perstyn instantly recognize Opal.

CELIA
By the Furthest Gods-- Lady Opal!

Celia and Perstyn fall to their knees.

Opal looks at them, the first bows she's been given in years.

Perstyn rises and faces the Lord's Men.

PERSTYN

Lower your weapons, fools! That is
your Princess!

The Lord's Men obey, lowering their guns.

ARRAN

(to Opal)

You're the daughter of Callan? The
bastard who caused all this?!

Arran and the Common Folk prepare to fire THEIR guns --
causing the Lord's Men to again RAISE THEIRS.

This clusterfuck must end. Maeve RUNS BACK to no man's land --

MAEVE

JUST SHOOT ME!!!

Everyone suddenly halts.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

Shoot me. Just me. I was there, at
the capital. Lord Haven. I'm...

(voice catching)

I was a Keeper, too.

THE MOB chimes in from both sides:

NOBLEMAN (O.S.)

Traitor! Fucking traitor!

COMMON WOMAN (O.S.)

Get to the bloody point!

COMMON MAN (O.S.)

Let her speak, damn it!

MAEVE

I lost the Reach. Failed you all.
So if what you really need is
blood, go on. Spill mine. Just
don't spill each other's!

Maeve's arms fall at her side. An invitation.

Everyone realizes the weight of her offer. She means it.

Arran sees her in pain. Points his gun away from the Nobles.

Both Commoners and Nobles follow, lowering their guns.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

Look, I don't know anything. I don't know what I'm doing. But I know that I can't just let you all die. Not like this.

Silence over all. They're tense -- but moved. Maeve reads it.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

Now-- I will go with Arran! The princess will go with her Council.

Opal looks at Maeve, a mite bothered.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

Make camp on both ends of the field. We will talk amongst our own then reconvene when night falls.

Celia looks at Perstyn.

Arran turns back, scanning the looks of all those behind him.

Celia and Arran look at each other and nod, resentfully.

EVERYONE backs off toward their respective ends of the land.

Maeve and Opal look each other over, relieved and anxious.

Then Arran PULLS Maeve aside into a bear hug only he could give. Opal watches awkwardly on the side.

ARRAN

My little Maeve. How did you--

MAEVE

We'll talk. I promise. But-- Arran, is it true? A rift?

ARRAN

Past the forest, further down the valley. See for yourself.

Maeve and Opal both look deeper into the field.

EXT. EDGE OF THE FIELD - CONT.

Maeve and Opal walk to the foot of the field, where a steep hill dips into a forest below.

The women look out into the distant valley. There it is:

A RIFT, a GLOWING DIVIDE on flat land. The rumor is true.

MAEVE
I... How...?

After taking it in as well, Opal looks at Maeve.

OPAL
I didn't expect you to just throw
me out there like that, you know.

MAEVE
Sorry. Look... There's no turning
back now. Convince the Old Council
that the Source must be shared.

OPAL
They were never very good at that.

MAEVE
They'll have to learn. If they
can't... if I fail again... You may
get to watch me die, yet.
(beat)
I'll see to it.

Maeve walks off, emotional. Opal stays, standing in thought.

EXT. DEEP INTO THE WOODS - DAY

The Protector stomps over rock and moss. The trees around him
turn black as the sun above begins to set.

He overcomes an incline and looks out in front of him --

PARTIALS, everywhere, infesting a brook.

The Protector reaches into a pouch on his belt, pulling out a
POCKET WATCH. He opens it, looking at the inside of the case.

Whatever he sees belongs to him alone, but his mind **FLASHES** --

TO A BOY, 6, BEING TOSSED UP AND DOWN BY A MAN, FACE HIDDEN.
A GORGEOUS WOMAN, 30S, JOINS IN AND HUGS THE MAN LOVINGLY.

The Protector turns -- back in a sea of dark wood. Alone.

He sighs. Then closes the watch and pockets it. He pushes on.

He walks down near the brook, surrounded by Partials.

One Partial with **TWO TEETHY HEADS** sees the Protector --

He raises his hand in front of one of the heads, focusing.

The Partial is still...

Until it SNAPS, trying to bite the Protector -- who POPS OUT the ARM BLADE on his bracer, BEHEADING that neck.

He raises his hand again for the OTHER HEAD, but this one won't even stay still. He STABS the Partial and moves on.

A fat Partial bumps into the Protector. He SLAMS it down.

He steps on its chest, leaning in, holding his hand out.

The big Partial slows down, its three cold eyes focused.

But after a short focused moment, even this one FREAKS OUT.

The Protector SQUISHES the Partial's head into the grass.

The Protector pops his blade, SWINGING FRANTICALLY -- BUTCHERING PARTIAL AFTER PARTIAL in profound frustration.

He takes a scrawny Partial in a CHOKE, ready to shred.

Then he stops himself. This Partial isn't even fighting it.

He raises his PALM. It glows enchantingly BLUE.

As his hand hovers, the Partial's eyes glow the BLUE SHADE.

Whatever this is, it's finally working.

The Protector waves his hand. The Partial FOLLOWS, entranced.

He lets the Partial go. Points to ANOTHER Partial.

The controlled one moves in and CUTS the other one in two.

The Protector pulls a different Partial in. Hand in front of the eyes. They GLOW. This one belongs to the Protector, too.

The Protector looks at ALL THE PARTIALS around him. An army.

EXT. ARRAN'S TENT - NIGHT

The barren tent lights up with hung lanterns. Only a small table in the middle, where Maeve and Arran stand.

MAEVE

So... They found you, and--

ARRAN

We just left, aye. No choice.

MAEVE

I spent all this time believing I
was the only one left.

ARRAN

And now you are, dear. The others
are gone. Every one. People killed
us. Sickness. Hunger. Partials.
(harsh beat)
Protectors.

Protectors. Maeve rolls the word around.

MAEVE

I still haven't met one.

ARRAN

I know. You're alive. So am I.
Those of us who did meet them...

MAEVE

I understand. Why... "Protectors"?

ARRAN

I don't know. Perhaps that's what
they believe they're doing.

Beat.

MAEVE

You say I'm the only one of us
left, but here you are.

ARRAN

I cut myself off from the Source.

Maeve reacts. Shocked.

ARRAN (CONT'D)

You have that power long enough,
you can do anything with it. Even
lose it. But I wasn't using it. Not
against Partials. Not Protectors.

(beat)

Then, I found others. Turned out
not all the people hated us.

Maeve thinks that over.

ARRAN (CONT'D)

Earlier. You said you were a Keeper, but you're still in that armor. Wouldn't have it on if you didn't have your power.

MAEVE

I... I can barely feel it anymore. I haven't used it in over a year.

ARRAN

Doesn't mean it's gone.

Maeve looks at her hands.

ARRAN (CONT'D)

Don't worry. It's a good thing. We can use your power when we attack that royal scum as they sleep.

Maeve pulls back.

MAEVE

Did you hear nothing I said earlier? It wasn't a ploy. We have to move forward with each other.

ARRAN

Why?

MAEVE

(heated)

"Why?" We'd be doing the Partials' work for them. I've seen more people kill each other than those fucking demons! It has to stop.

ARRAN

Everything that happened, it's on them. The Council. Callan. His bitch daughter.

Arran's venom crawls its way under Maeve's skin. She twists.

ARRAN (CONT'D)

We took the fight to the Partials. They only joined us when the fight came to their precious castle.

MAEVE

Aye, they joined too late, they did too little, but they joined. They tried! They tried to help Da! That matters. That--

Maeve stops herself. Arran eases up at the mention of Owyn.

ARRAN
Make peace with the bloody Haven?

MAEVE
To keep humanity alive.

Beat.

ARRAN
But what does that look like now?
Helping people, saving them? Do you
even know?

Maeve holds to her arm as if stung. She admits:

MAEVE
No.
(beat)
But I know it looks better than
this. If you work with me, we'll
find out. Together.

Arran is silent. Smiling.

ARRAN
You're a lot like him, your da.
More than you know.

Maeve is caught by this.

MAEVE
If I were like him, I would've died
that day, too.

She makes her leave.

ARRAN
Maeve. Is your honor still your
love?

Maeve keeps her back to Arran at the mouth of the tent.

MAEVE
Talk to the people, Arran.

She leaves, giving Arran a hell of a lot to think about.

INT. COUNCIL TENT - NIGHT

Opal and the Council members stand circled around a large table. Their party is far more exciting.

PERSTYN

Lady Opal, we respected your father more than you know. He is resting with the Higher Lords. But--

CELIA

But how could we break bread with a couple of beaten clan dogs?

PERSTYN

Yes, just what I was about to ask.

OPAL

Council members, please. They may be dogs, but the one I roam with is mannered enough.

CELIA

Her kind lived like savages and they died like savages. Is it any wonder your father didn't want to fight with them?

OPAL

My father didn't want to fight with anyone. The dog taught me that.

CELIA

High Halla was not his concern. He was concerned with the Old Reach, and with you.

OPAL

If he cared for the Reach, he would've fed her people. If he loved me, he would have remembered my bloody nameday.

Celia's manner switches, forgetting her etiquette.

CELIA

Lord Callan had more to worry about than namedays, girl. Here you stand, insulting his name, sticking up for the Keepers.

OPAL

I am not sticking up for them.

CELIA

You told us yourself, they're the reason you got stuck in a whorehouse. Not that you could forget.

(MORE)

CELIA (CONT'D)

You carried the stench of a hundred men walking into this tent. Your father would be ashamed.

Opal looks Celia up and down. She defiantly scoffs.

OPAL

I suppose you would have known my father well. You did spend enough time in his chambers, after all.

Perstyn looks at Celia, who maintains her cool.

CELIA

Nonsense, you impudent slut.

OPAL

I don't see your husband here, Celia. He didn't escape Lord Haven, did he? I'd wager you never quite told him about you and my father.

Celia doesn't argue on. Opal addresses them both --

OPAL (CONT'D)

Everything you've done, you've done for yourselves. Cut deals, increase power. By the time you governed your people, the Partials had our world by the neck. Yet here we are with a miracle outside, and you mean to rob mankind of it?

CELIA

Strong words, Lady Opal. But what of you? What of your failures?

OPAL

Me? I'm worse! I left my father to die, abandoned my home, ignored my people, all so I could hide! Survive. But I still had to live with myself.

The Council members pay due attention.

OPAL (CONT'D)

What happened to the world will happen to us, if we don't protect what's left.

The Council members exchange difficult looks.

PERSTYN

How did you learn all this from a
dog, my lady?

OPAL

Perhaps she knows a few tricks.

Opal undoes her belt, raising her SWORD in its scabbard.

OPAL (CONT'D)

Should you stay your course, take
the power, I'm sure one of you will
wish to assert it over the other.

Opal slides her sword to the perfect middle of the table.

OPAL (CONT'D)

That should help you decide who.

Opal storms out of the tent, leaving the Council speechless.

EXT. BACK OF THE COUNCIL TENT - CONT.

Outside, Maeve lifts the tiniest corner of the tent up. She drops it as Opal departs. She grows a little, sincere smile.

EXT. OPEN FIELD - NIGHT

Arran and the Old Council approach each other in the same place they stood off, holding lanterns.

No Lord's Men. No backup on either side. Just each other.

Maeve and Opal watch together close by.

At first, no one speaks. Maybe no one wants to. Until --

ARRAN

I've spoken to the people.

CELIA

We've spoken to each other.

Silence, again. Progress sure is slow, isn't it?

PERSTYN

Allow me to ask you, sir. Should you obtain the Source's magic again, what will you do with it?

ARRAN

Were it to flow through me one last time, I'd use it to kill you all.

The Council members tighten.

So do Maeve and Opal.

ARRAN (CONT'D)

...Or I would have, were I not swayed. So I convinced my people. We work together now, or we die.

Celia looks at Perstyn. Their turn.

CELIA

We were here first, you know.

She weighs what to say next.

CELIA (CONT'D)

Now we are here together. So be it.

Arran extends his hand, offering it.

Celia shakes it.

That might have been the last thing Maeve and Opal expected.

Until Celia walks over to them, returning OPAL'S SWORD.

EXT. EDGE OF THE FIELD - NIGHT

Maeve and Opal look out at the far-off Source rift, which wonderfully illuminates the night.

They turn to the field as the two groups JOIN pitched tents and hitched horses -- creating one large, connected camp.

The Lord's Men even wheel in their TROOP WAGONS.

Opal looks at Maeve.

OPAL

Well done, for a failure.

MAEVE

Such grace, for a whore.

Opal scoffs. *She does love to scoff.* She studies Maeve.

They both turn their heads, hiding near-smiles. Opal returns:

OPAL

You don't suppose we could still
get them all to return to the
Sanctuary? To safety?

MAEVE

They're where they belong.

Maeve looks right at Opal. Unable to turn away.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

Together.

Opal meets her eyes. These two are growing comfortable.

But Maeve breaks the gaze after some sort of *feeling*.

She turns, looking back, beyond the field, to THE RIDGE at the tree line where they entered hours earlier. She stares.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

Opal?

Opal looks where Maeve does. They see what resembles A MAN standing up there in the shadows on the hillside.

EXT. OPEN FIELD - CONT.

Opal and Maeve move throughout the camp with curiosity and caution -- gaining the attention of a number of PEOPLE --

Lord's Men, Common and Noble folk, the Old Council, Arran -- they all gradually begin to follow the women.

The man on the ridge steps into moonlight: it's THE PROTECTOR.

Arran is filled with TERROR at the realization.

ARRAN

No. No. No, no, no, no, no, no, no.

Maeve looks back and forth until she puts it together.

MAEVE

Arran... Is that--?

ARRAN

A Protector.

Up on the ridge, the Protector holds his hand out, aiming it at all the people below. The BLUE GLOW returns to his palm.

And the ground begins to *rumble erratically...*

Maeve begins to gasp for breath.

Common and Noble families RUSH back into camp.

The Lord's Men prepare rifles. The Commoners prepare theirs. Those with swords unsheathe them, including Opal.

Maeve comes to, in time to equip her dagger and crossbow.

The rumbling turns to screeching -- louder, CLOSER -- Until --

A WAVE OF PARTIALS FLIES OVER THE HILL: A MURDEROUS SWARM.

THE DEFENDERS stand their ground, ready to go head to head.

But this horde comes in swinging, OVERRUNNING THEM.

Maeve is DECKED by a Partial -- but STABS IT IN THE THROAT.

Opal SWINGS right into a Partial's chest. It dies.

The Lord's Men GUN DOWN as many Partials as they can.

Then a series of CRAWLING PARTIALS jump STRAIGHT THROUGH the Lord's Men, annihilating many of them.

Arran KICKS and SHOOTS into Partial after Partial. When he turns around, he sees --

The Protector. Waiting for him.

PROTECTOR
You survive.

Maeve LEAPS, shooting BOLTS at the Protector. They BREAK.

HE CATCHES MAEVE BY THE ARM, SQUEEZING.

PROTECTOR (CONT'D)
Good.
(right to Maeve's face)
This one can watch you die first.

ARRAN
You-- You get away from her!

PROTECTOR
Perhaps if you whisper, you'll
startle yourself less.

Arran tries shaking off fear -- as he's TACKLED by Partials.

The Protector puts Maeve in a CHOKEHOLD.

PROTECTOR (CONT'D)
He was a coward then. A coward now.

The Protector POPS the blade out from his bracer.

PROTECTOR (CONT'D)
But you... I could merely cut
across your cheek and have so
little left to take from you.

WHITE LIGHT TWINKLES IN MAEVE'S EYES, but won't stay.

PROTECTOR (CONT'D)
What good would killing you do...
When you've been dead for years?

Maeve punches the Protector's armored hand. No effect.

PROTECTOR (CONT'D)
Your torment has only just begun.

CLANG -- a little pistol round bounces off the Protector. He slowly inches his head left --

Where PERSTYN of all people is holding a smoking pistol.

The Protector looks at Arran, who's fighting for his life.

The Partials beating Arran are SLICED APART BY THE PROTECTOR.

He reaches in, picking Arran up.

With both of them in his grasp, the Protector walks Maeve and Arran over to Perstyn, whose courage seems to have left him.

PROTECTOR (CONT'D)
(to Arran)
Tell me, coward, how a piglet like
this is filled with bravery while a
warrior runs. Tell me. Tell me now.

Arran can't speak. Can't breathe. Can't move.

PROTECTOR (CONT'D)
No? Perhaps he is kind enough to
show us himself.

The Protector THROWS MAEVE right into Perstyn, her GLOWING BARRIER COMPLETELY HALVING HIM.

The Protector pulls Arran close to Perstyn's REMAINS.

PROTECTOR (CONT'D)
See? The stuff of brave men.

EXT. OPEN FIELD - CELIA/OPAL MOMENT

CELIA hectically SLASHES at Partials without aim.

She looks over to the Protector, sees the MESS Perswyn left. Before she can react, she's ran up on by MORE PARTIALS.

Then OPAL comes in, cutting the Partials down, saving Celia.

They look at THE PROTECTOR from afar -- ARRAN in his grasp.

OPAL
You get to the camp, save as many people as you can.

CELIA
What? How???

OPAL
Kill as many Partials as you can!

Opal rushes in.

EXT. OPEN FIELD - MAEVE MOMENT

The Protector walks over to Maeve, who is just getting up. He KICKS her right back down and lays Arran in front of her.

PROTECTOR
Tell it.

MAEVE
Arran-- ?

ARRAN
He... killed all the others. I was there. For every single one. And I ran. Maeve, I ran. I...

Maeve is caught somewhere between disbelief and horror.

ARRAN (CONT'D)
(beat)
I was your father's wall. And I broke. Because I didn't want to die like him, like I thought you did...

Maeve uses all her strength not to cry.

ARRAN (CONT'D)
It's why I stopped using our magic.

Maeve looks back at the Protector.

MAEVE
That's what this is? You came
here... for that?

PROTECTOR
No.

The Protector takes Maeve's chin and leads her head toward --
The VALLEY. THE RIFT.

PROTECTOR (CONT'D)
But it was fun.

CLACK. A SWORD bounces off the back of the Protector's hull.
He doesn't even turn around as he REAR KICKS OPAL AWAY.

Maeve watches Opal roll in the grass, knocked completely out.
Maeve's EYES begin to light up -- this time, they STAY LIT.

PROTECTOR (CONT'D)
What?

Maeve turns to SWING, KNOCKING the Protector up on his feet.

The Protector steps into a DEVASTATING PUNCH -- Maeve CATCHES
HIS FIST like it's a nosediving plane, PUSHED into the dirt.

PROTECTOR (CONT'D)
Curious.

He SWEEPS her legs, KICKING HER all the way into --

EXT. CAMPGROUND - CONT.

THE MIDDLE OF CAMP.

Maeve lands in front of A TEENAGE BOY, his gut slashed open.

She gets to her feet, looks at her hands. Her palms SPARK.

She looks back from where she got launched -- the PROTECTOR
is still torturing Arran. Opal's still unconscious, close by.

Maeve looks ahead, into the campground. Death EVERYWHERE:
pieces of MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN scattered.

Many Common and Noble folk still fight, swinging shovels and old swords -- shooting failing rifles and faulty pistols.

Maeve cycles between ARRAN AND OPAL and THE PEOPLE.

She wipes away a tear and MAKES FOR THE PEOPLE.

Maeve pushes on, a storm of WHITE-YELLOW ENERGY around her. Her daggers slash through Partials at unreal speed.

Suddenly, her light begins to fade, the magic bleeding away.

MAEVE

No! NO!

The Protector moves in, GRABBING Maeve by the LEG.

PROTECTOR

You are a slow learner. Stay down.

The Protector POPS his arm blade, STABBING at Maeve -- her BARRIER shields her, but DENTS more and more with each blow.

MAEVE

Not... my style!

Maeve KICKS at the Protector, her strength shoving him off.

He looks down at a LITTLE GIRL, 7, who BUMPS right into him.

PROTECTOR

Is that right?

The Protector grabs the Little Girl BY HER HEAD.

MAEVE

Let her go!

Maeve RUNS at the Protector.

He counters her with a SLAP, then lifts her up by the neck!

Maeve tries to pry herself free from his fist. No avail.

She looks at the Little Girl. She CAN'T let it happen again.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

Listen to me-- Do what you want to me. Anything! Just let the girl go!

PROTECTOR

You still have not learned, I see.

The Protector's palm emits that BLUE GLOW again from behind the Little Girl's head.

Partials CLOSE IN from a few feet away...

Maeve's eyes fire WIDE.

MAEVE

Not like this! No! Please!!!

PROTECTOR

You lie down when you are beaten.

The Partials get even closer.

PROTECTOR (CONT'D)

You lie, you stay.

The Partials are nearly within arm's reach of the Girl.

Maeve STRAINS herself, feeling for ANYTHING within her.

PROTECTOR (CONT'D)

Stay. And die.

THE PARTIALS DIG INTO THE LITTLE GIRL, OPENING HER WITH EASE. The Protector lets her go. The Partials have at what remains.

He tosses Maeve away, maybe like you would to actual garbage.

Maeve has nothing to say or do.

The Protector takes a knee by her side.

PROTECTOR (CONT'D)

You are not unworthy, little
Keeper. You never have been.

(cold, cold beat)

You... are worthless.

Maeve pulls herself together just enough for a single word:

MAEVE

Why?

PROTECTOR

"Why?"

MAEVE

Why... would you let the Partials
destroy humanity?

PROTECTOR

This world and its filth do not deserve to continue. You proved that when you failed to save them.

MAEVE

And who are YOU "protecting"?

PROTECTOR

I protect humanity from itself. They are doomed. I am salvation.

The Protector grabs Maeve's hair, DRAGGING her to see:

HER ALLIES -- FIGHTING AND LOSING TO PARTIALS.

Opal, regaining consciousness, a MASSIVE PARTIAL closing in.

Celia is back to back with a few COMMON AND NOBLE FOLK.

Arran is writhing in agony out in the field.

PROTECTOR (CONT'D)

You fought the wrong enemy. Soon...

The Protector lets Maeve go. Rising.

PROTECTOR (CONT'D)

You will die to a far worse one.

The Protector throws his hand up, glowing blue. He waves in the direction of the VALLEY.

The enormous Partial simply walks away from Opal.

The Partials leave Celia and the survivors alone.

Maeve looks up as A FEROCIOUS KICK fires down on her.

EXT. CAMPGROUND - LATER

Maeve's surroundings slowly return to her, mostly a blur yet.

Celia kneels with Opal over half a cloth-covered body, their voices muffled:

OPAL

He was trying to help the Keepers.
He died a better man.

CELIA

He died a fool. He died a bloody, simple, brave fucking fool...

Maeve blinks herself awake on a blanket.

OPAL
Furthest Gods. Keeper...

The two women see each other... Opal is suddenly speechless.

Arran stumbles in, going to Maeve's side.

ARRAN
Little Maeve.

Maeve takes Arran's hand, teary-eyed. Then, she *remembers*. She pulls her hand free. Arran looks away, understanding.

There, they all sit. A crippled, humiliated lot.

Celia wipes away what appear to be tears and speaks up --

CELIA
You'll understand when I ask what it is we do now. Six Lord's Men draw breath. A dozen people from the Haven are able-bodied.

ARRAN
My people are wounded or dead. Most of our guns are destroyed.

OPAL
If the Protector reaches the Source rift, he will claim it.

They are all quiet for a moment.

ARRAN
We must retreat to the Sanctuary.

Celia looks around.

CELIA
We did not come here from the Sanctuary, the people of the Haven. But there, we shall return, yes.
(to Opal)
And you must come, dear.

OPAL
What?

CELIA
We lost you for years. We cannot lose you again.

OPAL
I'm fighting for my people.

CELIA
You should be living for them.

OPAL
The Sanctuary is not "living"!

MAEVE
But you won't be dead, either. Out here, that's all there is.

OPAL
What are you talking about?

MAEVE
I was wrong, Opal. These people don't belong belong together. When people come together, they die. Every time.

(beat)
I can't let that happen to anyone else. To you. I'm going alone.

Opal looks at Arran, eyes begging for words.

ARRAN
I know I'm the last person you want to hear from right now, little one. But if you do this, you will suffer the same fate as your father.

Maeve can't look Arran face-to-face, but knows he's right.

MAEVE
Good.

Before Maeve can leave, she feels a pull below. She looks: OPAL has her hand. Maeve seems like she may keep to it...

Until she forces herself free. Opal, Arran, and Celia watch her take off for certain death.

Hopeless, Opal starts further into camp -- spotting a few ROUGH-BUT-INTACT TROOP WAGONS. She eyes them.

She turns to Arran and Celia.

EXT. LOWER FIELD - NIGHT

Maeve makes off on a STALLION. She looks out at the LONG ROAD: the Protector's head start. She considers the stallion.

MAEVE
This better still work...

She feels at the stallion's neck. Breathing. Her hand GLOWS. The stallion's eyes SHINE. His legs take him FURTHER. FASTER. Maeve scoffs in disbelief. She looks ahead. The stallion rides like a living bullet toward the valley.

EXT. THE RIFT - NIGHT

The Protector approaches A MILE-LONG CRACK IN THE EARTH, BLINDING, WHITE LIGHT EMITTING FROM IT.

Dozens and dozens of PARTIALS stand at the Protector's back, dominated, rocking in place like the living dead.

The Protector crouches at the edge of the rift. Looking in.

PROTECTOR
I remember how it felt to lose your gift. And how it felt to have it back. But it does not belong to me. And one day...

The Protector removes and clicks open his POCKET WATCH --

Looking at a photo of A WOMAN AND A BOY -- THE ONES FROM HIS PREVIOUS MEMORY -- AND A MAN, whose face has been TORN OUT.

PROTECTOR (CONT'D)
It shall return to you.

Suddenly -- a *feeling*. The Protector stands, turns, and with GLOWING HANDS he PARTS the army of Partials --

Finding MAEVE at the end.

The Protector closes the WATCH and stuffs it away.

PROTECTOR (CONT'D)
(gesturing the Partials)
They have back what is theirs.
You've again lost what you stole.

Maeve reaches for her dagger. Her crossbow. One last fight.

SHE RUNS RIGHT AT THE PARTIALS -- moving in rhythm, her dagger dancing with her.

She maneuvers through the Partial horde, a bladed cyclone --
KILL AFTER KILL AFTER KILL.

She's cut through THIRTY already, all on her own.

But the Protector has MORE -- summoning them from his side.

Maeve FIRES her CROSSBOW around her as she SWINGS HER DAGGER, dropping even more Partials.

Maeve takes a breather -- until THE PROTECTOR STARTS TO MOVE.

Maeve can't go on forever. This is it, then.

She steels herself, her composure sharp, her face FIERCE.

She eyes the Protector, ready to face her end WITH A SCREAM --

As a Partial right beside Maeve gets SHOT in its ugly face.

Maeve and the Protector both look for the shooter --

Seeing WAGONS OF PEOPLE RIDE IN, all armed with GUNS, BLADES.

Many of them are among the injured, both Common and Noble, yet here they come with all the willpower they have left.

The Protector FIRES HIS HAND CANNON AT THE WAGON WHEELS --

The wagons SPIN, TIPPING, ROLLING OVER COMPLETELY.

Maeve watches the wagons, distressed. Until --

PEOPLE COME RUNNING OUT OF THE CRASHES, ARRAN and OPAL leading charge. CELIA stays, shooting a rifle at a distance.

Maeve LOOKS at the Protector, her momentum returned.

She BREAKS for him, SLICING into every Partial she flies by.

She breaks through the LINE, right in front of the Protector. He SWINGS at her with his arm blade, MISSING --

As Maeve SLIDES beside him, cutting at the gap behind his knee armor -- getting a tiny WINCE out of the Protector.

But it's something. HE CAN BE HURT.

The Protector BOOTS MAEVE AWAY --

She CRASHES into a number of Partials like a bowling ball.

EXT. THE RIFT - ARRAN MOMENT

ARRAN looks over, SEES THE PROTECTOR HEADING FOR MAEVE. He looks down at himself. Breathing heavy. Stuck in place.

EXT. THE RIFT - MAEVE/PROTECTOR MOMENT

The Protector TRAMPLES Maeve -- her BARRIER protects her.

PROTECTOR
You learned nothing, Keeper--

DING! A bullet pokes at the Protector's helmet. He turns to see ARRAN running up, shooting a SEMI-AUTO PISTOL.

The Protector motions his hand at Arran as FOUR Partials suddenly pull him into a PILE, clawing at him.

Maeve tries to stand -- then the Protector STEPS her back in.

But both Maeve and the Protector are surprised to see Arran SHOOT HIS WAY OUT, killing every Partial attacking him.

Arran raises his gun at the Protector -- who stands chest out, facing Arran. Daring him. They stare at each other.

Arran SCREAMS, SHOOTING, running nowhere but at his enemy.

The Protector entertains this and steps off of Maeve.

MAEVE
No..... Arran.....

The Protector GRABS ARRAN, STABBING HIM, LIFTING HIM UP HIGH.

MAEVE RISES, running for Arran --

As the Protector TURNS, PUTTING MAEVE IN AN INTENSE CHOKE. HE PICKS HER UP, WALKING HER AND A DYING ARRAN OVER TO --

THE SOURCE RIFT. HE SLAMS MAEVE DOWN RIGHT NEXT TO THE RIFT.

PROTECTOR
Speak to it. Tell it how deserving
you are, how far you've come.

Maeve leans over, looking into the beautiful, magical rift.

Only a foot down, Maeve REACHES HER HAND IN, TOUCHING IT:

MAEVE
Whatever you are... I know you can
feel me. I feel you.

Nothing happens.

PROTECTOR
As I told you, child. Worthless.

Maeve keeps to the Source, ignoring the Protector.

MAEVE
I know you're listening. I am here
now. I'm here. I'm ready...

PROTECTOR
Try all you like. The truth is
inescapable: You ARE your failures.

MAEVE
(the Source)
I'm worthy. I am worthy. Return to
me the power I once had!

Still nothing.

MAEVE (CONT'D)
I'm fighting for you. I'm here for
you. I worshipped you! I...

Maeve looks up at Arran -- NO FEAR on his face's final shape.

PROTECTOR
Your next words will be your last.

Maeve breathes. She looks inward, and has a **MEMORY OF** --

**OWYN AND HER. LORD HAVEN. SHE WALKS AWAY, UP ON THE WALL.
LEAVING HER FATHER ON HIS OWN...**

Maeve returns to the Source... RECITING HER CLAN'S WORDS:

MAEVE
My honor is my love...

The Protector lifts his arm blade, ready to STRIKE --

MAEVE (CONT'D)
...I will honor you always.

AS MAEVE BURSTS WITH INCREDIBLE WHITE LIGHT -- THROWING THE
PROTECTOR ON HIS ASS. He recovers, looking back:

WHITE ENERGY EMITS FROM MAEVE, EVERY PART OF HER SHINING.

THE REMAINING PEOPLE SHIELD THEIR EYES, THE LIGHT TOO STRONG.

MANY PARTIALS BEGIN TO BURN UP, THEIR FLESH ON FIRE.

The LIGHT eases, but only enough to see MAEVE at its center. She heaves for breath until the raw power in her settles.

FURIOUS, the Protector RUNS at Maeve while FIRING his hand cannon. She sends HUGE TENDRILS OF PURE LIGHT after him.

THEY TAKE HOLD OF THE PROTECTOR, LIFTING HIM -- SLAMMING HIM BACK DOWN, CRATERING THE GROUND -- DROPPING HIS HAND CANNON.

MORE TENDRILS SHOOT OUT. The Protector uses his arm blade:

He CUTS THROUGH them, one by one, until he closes the distance with Maeve and gets her in A CHOKE, picking her up --

PUNCHING HER HARDER THAN EVER, knocking her from her surge.

PROTECTOR

You should thank me. You did not live up to your reputation as last of your kind--

He forces her head toward Arran's bloodied body.

PROTECTOR (CONT'D)

Until I gave it to you.

Suddenly, the Protector is SHOT IN THE SIDE BY ONE OF HIS OWN ROUNDS, where his plates meet -- scoring through. He's hit!

OPAL holds the Protector's hand cannon, shocked.

THE PROTECTOR PICKS MAEVE UP AND CHUCKS HER FURTHER AWAY.

HE REACHES HIS HAND OUT, AIMED AT OPAL --

THE CANNON'S BARREL GLOWS BLUE. IT GOES FLYING --

PULLING OPAL THROUGH THE AIR AND INTO THE PROTECTOR'S GRIP. The Protector looks at Opal for the first time. Hesitant...

PROTECTOR (CONT'D)

The Princess. You look just like your mother.

Opal flashes through emotions. Unsure if she heard him right.

PROTECTOR (CONT'D)

I am sorry.

Then he throws her over his head, one hand on her wrist, the other her ankle. He's going to TEAR HER IN TWO.

From too far away to help, Maeve WATCHES THIS. She **RECALLS** --

THE PILED UP KEEPERS AT LORD HAVEN.

KIRSTAN, DEAD IN RORY'S ARMS.

THE LITTLE GIRL, BEING FEASTED ON BY PARTIALS.

Instantly, the WHITE-YELLOW AURA returns, TAKING MAEVE OVER.

AS SHE BLINKS, SHE VANISHES INTO LIGHT ITSELF --

SHE REAPPEARS IN THE PROTECTOR'S FACE, PUNCHING HIM --

HE BOUNCES OFF THE GROUND WITH THE FORCE OF THE HIT.

Maeve opens her arms wide, SHINING LIGHT LIKE THE SUN'S DIRECTLY ON THE PROTECTOR. His armor starts to CRACK. BEND.

THE LIGHT BECOMES EVEN MORE INTENSE -- THE WHOLE OF HIS TORSO PLATE IS CHIPPED DOWN THE MIDDLE. HIS PAULDRONS ARE BLASTED.

The Protector forces himself on, pushing through the armor damage, the pain. Every step SHATTERS EARTH beneath him.

Maeve springs more LIGHT TENDRILS, restraining the Protector.

Maeve and Opal face the resilient bastard as he struggles.

MAEVE

All the fighting. The killing.
"Protector."

They stare each other out with hellfire. Worse than enemies.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

Did you ever stop and wonder who's
going to protect you?

Maeve wraps his body in more TENDRILS, THRUSTING HIM UPWARD.

She SWINGS him around -- ONCE. TWICE. SHE RELEASES HIM --

CATAPULTING HIM FAR, FAR OFF INTO THE FLATS.

Maeve and Opal DROP, their guards lowered.

Suddenly, Maeve begins to SHAKE. She looks at her hand as it starts to BURN. HER WHOLE BODY BREAKS OUT WITH WHITE FIRE.

LIGHT SHOOTS FROM HER EYES. SHE SCREAMS IT FROM HER MOUTH.

OPAL

KEEPER! It's over! Let it go!

MAEVE

NO! I can... control it!

The GLOW ON HER FISTS begins to spread down her ARMS.

The power Maeve has sought for years is CONSUMING HER.

She manages a final LOOK at Opal before her vision is taken.

A solitary TEAR in Maeve's eye DRIES UP as it leaves her.

She closes her eyes. Opens up her hands. Surrendering.

Maeve rattles as the LIGHT fades from her, the white fire dying down. She blinks rapidly. Losing balance. Collapsing --

Right into Opal's arms.

The women let themselves breathe at last. They sigh relief.

OPAL

So that was your power?

MAEVE

No. I've never felt that before.

OPAL

Do you still feel it?

MAEVE

Not whatever that... burst... was.
It wanted me to feel that. Why --?

Something pulls at her. She turns to the larger battle --

EXT. THE RIFT - THE PEOPLE MOMENT

THE PARTIALS are laid out, burnt to a crisp, diced into bits.

THE PEOPLE shout for humanity's first victory in years.

Opal helps Maeve over to Arran. Maeve kneels beside him.

She makes his hand a fist. Rests it on his shoulder. She drops a tear for him -- it lands on his cheek.

MAEVE

I will honor you, always.

Opal lays a gentle hand on Maeve's shoulder.

Maeve turns around -- THE PEOPLE are here, Common and Noble, gathering around Arran. Even Celia has come to show respect.

Maeve nods them all on while she walks with Opal.

EXT. THE RIFT - MAEVE/OPAL MOMENT

Maeve and Opal approach THE SOURCE RIFT. Maeve heads to its edge, focused. Opal lets her have this moment to herself.

White-yellow light hums in song, wrapping around Maeve. She eases. *Calm.* It's as if the world holds its breath with her.

The rift itself floats an ORB OF WHITE LIGHT up to meet her. She looks at it, robbed of everything but pure awe.

Maeve touches the light, transporting her through **VISIONS:**

- A RIFT OF THE SOURCE ACROSS A RED BEACH.**
- ANOTHER RIFT, UP THE SIDE OF A SNOWY MOUNTAIN.**
- A GIGANTIC RIFT DOWN A LONG DESERT ROAD.**
- A WIDE RIFT SPLITTING OPEN A SUNNY FOREST FIELD.**
- THE ORIGINAL SOURCE AT LORD HAVEN, PARTIALS EVERYWHERE.**

Maeve returns to reality. She looks back at Opal, amazed.

MAEVE

Opal. The Source is everywhere.
Opening rifts throughout the realm.

Opal absorbs that.

OPAL

But what does it all mean?

MAEVE

Lord Haven... It's infested with
Partials.

Opal puts it together at the same time as Maeve:

OPAL

The rifts!

MAEVE

If I connect with them, I'll feel
that surge again. I can... go back
there. The Source is giving us a
chance.

Maeve looks over to the GATHERED PEOPLE, all of them together -- battered to shit, scarred inside and out, but alive. Here.

Maeve looks at her hands. Energy flows through her veins, pulsing, shimmering from her palms. Her magic is hers again.

She returns to Opal, a careful brightness in her eyes.

EXT. GLADE - NIGHT

THE PROTECTOR'S SHATTERED ARMOR sits in the back of a moving HAY CART.

A HULKING MAN wearing a gray gambeson, face guarded by unkempt hair, wheels the cart through a thick CLEARING.

Suit or no suit, it's clear that this man is THE PROTECTOR.

Not far into the clearing stands an AGED TIMBER BARN.

INT. OLD BARN - CONT.

The Protector pushes the cart to the back wall, parking it.

He turns, meeting ANOTHER PROTECTOR IN RED ARMOR.

RED PROTECTOR
You found the Keepers, Prime lord?

PROTECTOR
I killed one. The other remembered
its power.

RED PROTECTOR
It is true, then? The rift?

PROTECTOR
Rifts. There are more.

RED PROTECTOR
How do you know this?

PROTECTOR
...The Source told me so.

The Red Protector acknowledges this, but does not speak.

PROTECTOR (CONT'D)
If the Keeper reaches the remaining
rifts, it will become unstoppable.
(then)
Repair my armor within this moon,
Red. Summon the Protectors.

The Protector turns, trudging out of the barn.

RED PROTECTOR
All of them? For one Keeper?

PROTECTOR
For this Keeper.

Red looks back at the ruined armor.

EXT. THE PROTECTOR'S HOME - NIGHT

The Protector makes his way to the front of a rickety home of fraying wood -- not quite a cabin, not quite a hut.

He drops A GIANT DEER from his shoulder the size of a moose.

He removes his POCKET WATCH. Keeping it close.

INT. THE PROTECTOR'S HOME - KITCHEN - CONT.

ELSIE, 40, and ERYX, 6, sit drowsy at a candle-lit table.

Both of them boot up at the sound of THE FRONT DOOR OPENING --

The Protector enters the room. Too dark to make his face.

ERYX
Father!

ELSIE
Furthest Gods, we thought you dead.

Eryx and Elsie embrace the Protector, who holds them too.

PROTECTOR
Yet here I stand, Elsie.

ELSIE
That many days on a bloody hunt?
With Partials and Protectors about?

PROTECTOR
...I was careful.

ELSIE
Of course. Yes, of course.

ERYX
I want to go hunting, too, Father!

Elsie looks at the Protector.

The Protector runs his hand through his boy's hair.

PROTECTOR
One day, Eryx. One day.

The POCKET WATCH hangs from the Protector's hand.

The FAMILY PHOTO is visible again: and the Boy and Woman pictured are not the same ones in the Protector's arms...

EXT. THE RIFT - NIGHT

Dozens of lightless tents make up an encampment surrounding the Source rift, a mix of every Common and Noble survivor.

INT. MAEVE'S TENT - NIGHT

Maeve lies alone in her dark tent, wide awake on a cot.

OPAL (O.S.)
Keeper?

Opal enters. Just standing in the middle for a moment.

OPAL (CONT'D)
I... knocked at quite a few tents.

Maeve finds that amusing, then falls into herself a little.

Opal lays down on the cot opposite Maeve. She looks at her.

Maeve raises LIGHT from her fingers, letting it fly. Then she lowers her hand and the light fades away.

MAEVE
We'll never be the same, you know.

Maeve and Opal give each other tender eyes.

MAEVE (CONT'D)
But I'll use my gift to do as you have commanded. Retake the Source.
(beat)
I don't expect you to follow.

Opal laughs to herself a little. Not bitterly, not happily.

OPAL
I had my chance to watch you die.
Still, you live. My duty now is to everyone left in the Old Reach.
Those outside it, too. And to help all of them... I have to help you.

MAEVE

Let me rephrase: I don't want you
to follow--

OPAL

I am a princess. I get what I want.

Neither of them can fight back emotional, knowing laughter.

Easy silence.

OPAL (CONT'D)

You called it a gift.

MAEVE

My da did. So did my ma.

OPAL

What happened to her? Your mother?

MAEVE

She saved me. When I was unworthy.

OPAL

If she saved you, then you were
always worthy.

Something shifts in Maeve. *Those words...*

Her eyes take her somewhere. Somewhere long behind her. She blinks herself back to what's in front of her -- *to Opal.*

MAEVE

What happened to yours?

OPAL

I happened. When I was born.

Maeve looks at her, struck.

OPAL (CONT'D)

My father never forgave me for it.
Spoke of her so much, I knew her
ghost better than him. And he
barely looked me in the eye,
because whenever he did, he saw--

Opal stops herself with a troubled face.

MAEVE

What?

Opal scales the weight of recent revelations...

OPAL

The Protector. He... He's invaded
my thoughts again, is all.

MAEVE

Mine, too... Hard not to let him.

OPAL

Then we'll purge him from our minds
when we beat the bastard for good.

Maeve cringes at the thought -- seeing that beast again.

OPAL (CONT'D)

And we will beat him, Maeve.

Maeve perks up hearing Opal use her name for the first time.
She goes from soft to serious. A *recognition* in Opal.

They stare at each other in the darkness, breathing the
intensity back out. They hold this silence. This peace.

Opal watches Maeve curl up. Maeve watches Opal rest her eyes.

No bed to rock. No wine to drink. Only the space they share.
And on just this night, there's nothing more they could need.

EXT. GLADE - DAY

Morning light streaks the sky, the early sun over the field.

INT. OLD BARN - DAY

In his REPAIRED ARMOR, the Protector picks up HIS HELMET from
a table. He inspects it -- Red waiting for him.

PROTECTOR

Well done, Red.

RED PROTECTOR

You taught me well, my lord.

The Protector dons his helmet, one of the monsters again.

PROTECTOR

Let us see how well.

He turns to leave, Red following him --

EXT. GLADE - CONT.

Where a RING OF PROTECTORS stands outside:
A BRONZE BEHEMOTH, A YELLOW GUNMAN, A BLACK SENTINEL, A JADE SHIELD BEARER, A VIOLET SPEARMAN, AND A SILVER SWORDSMAN.

THE SILVER PROTECTOR hisses like the Garden serpent:

SILVER PROTECTOR
Where were you in the night, Prime lord?

PROTECTOR
Alone, Silver. The same as you.

Silver considers the claim... then backs off, half-bowing.

SILVER PROTECTOR
Of course, my lord.

The Protector shoots Silver a sharp side-eye, noting him. Then he looks over his terrifying band.

PROTECTOR
You all know of the rifts. We will find them before the Keeper can.

YELLOW steps forward:

YELLOW PROTECTOR
How, Prime lord?

PROTECTOR
The Source showed me where they are. Now, I will show all of you.

The Protectors collectively nod.

They march out, bulldozers breaking through the glade.

The slits in the Protector's helmet are windows to his EYES: blistering pin pricks in a glare, ever-heavy, fully fueled.

A blue glow begins to swirl in his pupils.

THE END