

THE LAST KEEPER

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The sole survivor of a warrior people faces monstrous entities and her own turmoil as she sets out to regain her magic power and reclaim its mysterious source to save humanity.

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. No fear -- only dark eyes, heavier than they ought to be at 17.

Maeve shifts her gaze closer to the castle --

Where not two hundred yards out sits 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 WEARY, BEARDED MAN in his 50s, OWYN, walks through a hectic courtyard --

INFANTRY MEN running past ARMORED KNIGHTS, WALL ARCHERS making for their posts.

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

Owyn faces them, at once ready to take command.

OWYN

Arran, join the Keepers in the field. Surround the Source. We will meet the Partial's head on.

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

ARRAN

Aye, Chief.

Owyn makes a firm grip on Arran's shoulder.

OWYN

This is it.

Arran's eyes are laced with intensity. Acceptance.

ARRAN

Aye. This is it, brother.

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 motion the same gesture. Owyn nods them away.

Then Owen's 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

Father.

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)

They near.

(beat, then)

Say to me our clan's words.

Maeve appears 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)

My honor is my love...

MAEVE

I don't believe in the words,
Father.

OWYN

My honor is my--

MAEVE

You have no honor! You've forgotten
your love.

(beat)

You've forgotten her.

OWYN

I can never forget. 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 turns quickly from THE SOURCE to his daughter.

OPAL

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 yellow-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 -- then just as quickly shakes it off, running to join his daughter.

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 DEAD BODIES: 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, each uglier than the last.

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.

Maeve moves on.

She walks past MORE Keepers -- as more and more of her kind pile up by the step, a 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 him.

Maeve falls at her father's death bed, the remains of men and Partials. She can't bring herself to go to him...

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, rotten fields sit nearby.

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

Decrepit structures, once houses.

EXT. VILLAGE ROAD - DAY

A GIRL OF 8, KIRSTAN, runs as FAST as she can from a Partial, twitching and jerking in unnatural ways.

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, coming slowly. It raises its scaly hands to strike, Kirstan shielding herself with her arms --

SLOSH -- the Partial FALLS IN HALF, its putrid head falling at Kirstan's feet.

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 SHOTS.

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. Are you... a Keeper?

Maeve dodges the question.

MAEVE

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. 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 are PULLED TOGETHER. They CONJOIN.

The MUTATED PARTIAL begins to RISE.

Kirstan notices.

KIRSTAN

Papa? Papa! Look!

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 SHOTS 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 and stomach. Gone.

RORY

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

Rory's HOWLS could shake even the demons that own this world...

Maeve just stares fixedly. Uselessly.

MAEVE

I--

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

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.

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 SHOVES past her in a hurry. More and more DENIZENS follow, going the way Maeve came -- the Sanctuary's exit.

They're... leaving.

The commotion loses Maeve's attention fast. She slouches on.

INT. THE OPEN ALLEY - DAY

There's something to say of a place when its brothel is its most cared-for establishment. Fancy silks and foreign flags deck the painted walls. A proper bar on the ground level.

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

MEN raise gilded cups, fueling the sounds of grimy laughter and drunken singing -- none of it quite merry.

Maeve sits at the bar counter, her hood on, an entire bottle of wine deep. She's working on the second one.

The barkeep, DANN, 30s, notices.

DANN

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

MAEVE

You might.

Maeve keeps to her wine, but Dann pushes on.

DANN

Passing through, then? No 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?

Maeve halts her binge. Thinking.

She turns around, eyeing a WAITRESS on the bar floor -- tall, gorgeous, visibly lonely.

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

Maeve can't make her face, but can tell she's being watched.

Maeve pulls her last COIN PIECE from a pouch. Faces 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 SLAMS down on a round table, filling with an amber fluid from above.

Maeve pushes the glass to her lips, DOWNING the drink fully.

The Brothel 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 places the bottle on the table, still with her cup.

MAEVE

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

BROTHEL GIRL

A compliment?

MAEVE

Silver lining.

BROTHEL GIRL

Always one to be found, isn't
there?

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

Maeve watches, gripping her cup 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. Impressed... Interested.

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

MAEVE (CONT'D)
My kind of girl.

Maeve makes for the bed, sitting at its edge -- Opal pushes in, laying her down, crawling over her.

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. Breathless.

MAEVE
You know who--

OPAL
Everyone knows who you are.

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

MAEVE
You lost someone that day?

OPAL
Only my father.

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

OPAL (CONT'D)
But worry not.

Maeve focuses up -- *what?*

OPAL (CONT'D)
Of all the Great Lords in the Haven, he was the cruelest. He worked the people rather than let them work. Filled men's purses while the people filled graves.

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

OPAL (CONT'D)
Every soul you failed to save that day is someone you killed, brave Keeper.

Beat.

OPAL (CONT'D)
But that still means you killed my father and all the other Lords.

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

OPAL (CONT'D)
"Silver lining."

Maeve feels at her throat -- eyes the BLOOD on her hands.

MAEVE
Who are you?

Opal pulls it back together. She steels herself. Sits up.

OPAL
Now?

She stands over her robes. She takes them, putting them on.

OPAL (CONT'D)
I'm anyone other than the princess of the Old Reach.

Maeve lifts herself, unable to believe it:

MAEVE
Lady Opal???

OPAL
In the flesh, Keeper.

MAEVE
I don't understand. Why are you here?

OPAL
I am still my father's daughter.
They remind me every day. They remind me any way they like.

Opal shuts her eyes. Maeve swallows hard at the notion.

OPAL (CONT'D)
But they'll have me where no one else will.

Maeve digs for words and finds nothing.

OPAL (CONT'D)
Feel it, Keeper. Feel that shame.
I'm here because you put me here.
This "safe haven" exists because of your failure.

Maeve turns, taking the blows. No defense.

OPAL (CONT'D)
And if any part of your spine is what keeps you standing, you'll do anything you can to fix it.

Maeve looks back at Opal, defeated.

MAEVE
Fix it how, my lady?

OPAL
Simple. Return to Lord Haven.
Reclaim the Source for humanity.

Maeve frees the saddest, smallest laugh, shaking her head.
Then she looks at Opal, her face unwavering.

MAEVE
Lady Opal, that's--

OPAL
Just 'Opal' will do, Keeper.

MAEVE
Opal. That's impossible.

OPAL

Of course it is. That's why you won't start there.

(then)

When you work in a whorehouse, you hear things. And I hear that a piece of the Source was spotted away from Lord Haven. A rift.

Maeve sobers up in all of a moment.

OPAL (CONT'D)

Oh, I suppose you could ask people what they believe, only you're too late. Those who heard the rumor are hours to the West by now.

Maeve is overwhelmed, unsure how to feel.

OPAL (CONT'D)

People are looking for anything to hold onto. A chance. And if that chance is the thing that empowered the Keepers, they need to try.

Radio silence from Maeve, still.

OPAL (CONT'D)

Perhaps there's nothing out there. But would you really let all those people journey in search of nothing and die, while you could have saved them? Saved even one?

Saved even one...

Maeve looks Opal over. Nodding.

MAEVE

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

Opal may not have expected that. She approves, regardless.

OPAL

In that case, we'll leave now.

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

MAEVE

What? Why would you come? You said it yourself, this is my burden.

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

OPAL
All those people, my father's
subjects...

-- 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, Opal.

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
Pleasant to see you too, Dann.
Listen, I'm heading West for a
time. Would you cover for me? Tell
Coop a bitter client abducted me,
maybe? I'll "escape" in a few days.

DANN
I'm not sure he'll fall for that
one twice, Opal. Although, I could
think of a better story, for a
particular service. Free of charge,
of course.

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.

Dann is interested.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

I saw you looking me over earlier.
Cover for her, you'll get the best
night of your life upon my return.

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

DANN

See you then, little lady.

Maeve leaves the counter, turning back:

MAEVE

And Dann-- I'd prefer if I was
never here, either.

DANN

Oh. Yes, of course!

Opal follows Maeve, genuinely 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.

There are MORE MEN on the bar floor than earlier.

Dann is cleaning a glass. Wiping the counter.

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

But who in the hell knocks at a brothel?

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... shall 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 this 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 ALL BUST OUT CONCEALED PISTOLS AND OPEN 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 of a round into 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 SHREDS 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. The rest of the men are in the same state. Then --

Something SMASHES INTO THE WALL overhead -- as the skinny Client's body DROPS like a bag of bricks in front of Dann.

Dann 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 FIREY 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.

DANN

They went West, sir. West. West.

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

Dann's pants start to soak down the leg.

DANN (CONT'D)

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 takes that step first and speaks up:

MAEVE

We shouldn't be too far behind them now, if our trail is true.

Opal turns half-way to Maeve, remembering she's even there.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

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?

OPAL

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.
Everyone thought that.

Long beat between them.

OPAL (CONT'D)

Why did my father seek your kind
out if all you were good for was
dying?

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

Maeve realizes that she is waiting for a real answer.

OPAL (CONT'D)

Oh, you'll forgive me, I wasn't
much of a witness to the dealings
of failed warriors. Enlighten me.

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

MAEVE

Do 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)

My people fought the Partials for centuries. Kept them at bay. Shielded the world. One day, our clans settled in Old Reach. Joined the kingdom.

OPAL

I know this. I did not ask for a history lesson, Keeper.

Maeve goes on like Opal said nothing.

MAEVE

Then, four years ago, the Partials became stronger. Angrier. There were more of them than ever.

(tough beat, then)

Your father... Lord Callan... wouldn't let us fight. Wouldn't let the royal army fight. 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, tried to fight, it fell, anyway.

Opal finally finds herself at a loss. This part is news. She sees Maeve deep in thought.

She may just feel the most mild sting of guilt. 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. They trade looks *not half as awkward as you'd believe.*

Until Opal backs off.

OPAL

Am I meant to thank you, Keeper?

Maeve points out into the valley.

MAEVE

Don't thank me yet.

Deep into a field stand TWO CROWDS OF PEOPLE, like ants from here -- split into sides.

EXT. OPEN FIELD - DAY

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

One is a group of COMMONERS, most harsher in the face, wearing tattered cloth and flannel --

Toting rusty LOW-CALIBER PISTOLS, brassy SEMI-AUTO CARBINES.

The other group consists of HIGHBORNS, 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 AUTOMATIC REPEATING RIFLES.

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 sides of the conflict.

She weighs a balance of pause and drive. Stop and go.
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 HER HANDS UP toward both sides.

MAEVE
Everyone, calm down and listen!
There is no need for this!

ARRAN (O.S.)
Maeve?

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

MAEVE
...Arran?

Maeve takes a moment, but the sight is no hallucination.
Everyone from both sides watches Maeve run to Arran --
And EMBRACE him. That girl at Lord Haven once again.

MAEVE (CONT'D)
Is this real? How did you--?

ARRAN
Worry not of that. You-- What are
you doing here?

Maeve looks around and remembers the situation at hand.

MAEVE
You... You can't be here.
(to everyone)
None of you can be here! It's too
dangerous! You need to return to
the Sanctuary!

CELIA (O.S.)
Cowards!

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

CELIA (CONT'D)

The former Keeper has called on old friends!

Maeve looks at Arran -- *former?*

Opal recognizes Celia.

CELIA (CONT'D)

They seek to destroy us and reclaim the Source for themselves!

The Lord's Men prepare to fire -- so do the Commoners.

MAEVE

No, no, WAIT--

Opal removes her hood and hurries to the middle ground --

OPAL

Celia?!

Celia, Perstyn and Jasper take hard notice of Opal.

OPAL (CONT'D)

(the other two)

Perstyn, Jasper? You were all Seats on the Old Council. My father's council.

Celia drops to a knee -- Perstyn and Jasper fall with her.

CELIA

Princess Opal! A thousand pardons!

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

Perstyn rises and faces the Lord's Men, ordering:

PERSTYN

Lower your weapons, you fools! That is the Princess of Old Reach!

The Lord's Men obey, lowering their guns.

ARRAN

(to Opal)

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

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

Maeve joins Opal in the middle, knowing this clusterfuck must end NOW. At the top of her lungs, she yells out:

MAEVE
I WAS AT LORD HAVEN!

And, just for the moment, everyone stops.

MAEVE (CONT'D)
I was at Lord Haven. Many here were. But I am the daughter of the man who led the Keeper Clans. I am... I was a Keeper, too.
(facing the Nobles)
I lost your castle. Let down your rule.
(facing the Commoners)
And I failed each and every one of you.
(everyone)
Look, I don't even know what I'm doing anymore. But I know that I cannot let you all die out here. Not to the Partials, and not to each other!

Opal takes note of Maeve and the way she speaks. Listening.

CELIA
No one needs to die at all, girl.
Not if we take control of the rift.

ARRAN
Oh, because Callan put the Source to such great use, right?

MAEVE
ENOUGH!!!

Maeve's eyes FLICKER WITH WHITE LIGHT, which quickly disappears.

Opal notices.

MAEVE (CONT'D)
Is there even a rift here at all?

CELIA
We wouldn't be here if there wasn't, child.

ARRAN
Past the forest, further into the valley. Go see for yourself.

MAEVE

Not yet.

(to everyone)

Here is the deal! I will go with the people. The princess will go with the Council.

Opal looks at Maeve, mixing shock and confusion.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

We'll make camp on both ends of the field. We will talk amongst our own and reconvene before the night ends. Only then will we know if we travel together, or not at all.

Celia looks at Perstyn and Jasper.

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

Celia and Arran look at each other from their lines and nod, resentfully. An agreement.

BOTH SIDES lower the guns and back away toward their respective ends of the land.

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

Then they 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 further out into the valley.

In the distance, 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 know you'd throw me out there like that, back there.

MAEVE

Sorry. But they weren't gonna figure it out with their guns.

Opal acknowledges that. Fair enough.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

Opal. 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, my lady.
(beat)
I'll see to it.

Maeve walks off, emotional. Opal stays, cycling 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 is there, it's for his eyes only. For now.

After a moment in thought, he pockets the watch again.

He walks down near the brook, surrounded by Partial.

One Partial with TWO TEETHY HEADS sees the Protector -- who
GRABS it by both necks in one fist.

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, DESTROYING another Partial.
He SWINGS frantically, mindlessly 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 retracts his blade, raising his hand one more time.
The Protector's PALM glows enchantingly BLUE.
As it hovers in front of the Partial's face, its eyes glow the same 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.
This isn't magic. It's domination.
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

Yeah, I get it.

Beat.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

You say I'm the only one left, yet
here you are.

ARRAN

I didn't misspeak. I cut myself off
from the Source.

Maeve reacts. Shocked.

MAEVE

That's possible?

ARRAN

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

(beat)

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

Maeve isn't sure how to feel. Hasn't been her experience.

MAEVE

But I just found the Sanctuary. I
saw you nowhere.

ARRAN

Not every one here is from the
Sanctuary.

Maeve nods. Makes sense.

ARRAN (CONT'D)

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

Maeve is reluctant to say anything.

MAEVE

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, thinking on that.

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

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

ARRAN

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

For some reason, Maeve twists at that insult toward Opal.

ARRAN (CONT'D)

We had to take the fight to the Partial's. They only joined us when the problem came to their doorstep.

MAEVE

But they did join us! Yes, it was too little, yes, it was too late, but they joined. They joined my father! That matters! It has to.

Arran eases up at the mention of Owyn.

ARRAN

It might.
(beat)
It's still on them, Maeve.

MAEVE

If it's on them, it's on us, too.

Arran thinks about it.

ARRAN

Make peace with the bloody Haven?

MAEVE

Keep humanity alive.

Beat.

ARRAN

You're a lot like him. More than you know.

MAEVE

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

Maeve makes her leave. Maybe she reached Arran, maybe not.

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.

JASPER

Lady Opal, we respect your father
far more than you'll ever realize--

PERSTYN

He is resting with the High Lords,
my lady.

JASPER

Yes, resting well. And we respect
you just the same. But how could
you expect us to... share... with--

CELIA

How could we ever break bread with
a couple of beaten clan dogs and
the lost pups who follow them?

PERSTYN

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

And? Her kind lived like savages,
they died like savages. Is it
really 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

He was not concerned with others.
He was concerned with Old Reach,
with Lord Haven, and with you.

OPAL

If he cared for the Reach, he
would've fed her people. If he
cared for Lord Haven, he would have
fought for it, not hid in its
cellars.

(beat)

If he loved me, he would have
remembered my bloody nameday.

Celia's manner switches, forgetting her etiquette at once.

CELIA

Lord Callan had far 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

Oh, yes you are. And in case you've forgotten, they're the reason you got stuck in a whorehouse. Not that you could ever forget. You carried the stench of a hundred men walking into this tent.

Perstyn and Jasper are impressed by Celia's boldness. They say nothing. They laugh.

CELIA (CONT'D)

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 and Jasper look 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? Many didn't, of course. But I'd wager you never quite told him about you and my father, did you?

Celia doesn't argue on. No point. Opal addresses them all --

OPAL (CONT'D)

Everything you've ever done, you've done for yourselves. Cut deals, increase power, you did none of it for those you governed. You barely governed them. And when you finally did, the Partials had our world by the neck, and they choked it out.

(MORE)

OPAL (CONT'D)

Yet here we all are, undeserving,
ungrateful, with a miracle right
outside, and you mean to rob
mankind of it?

A damn long beat.

CELIA

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

OPAL

Me? I'm worse than any of you! I
left my father to die, abandoned my
home, ignored the people who
suffered as much as I did so that I
could hide. Survive.

Opal looks into her own hand. It curls into a fist.

OPAL (CONT'D)

And I forgot I'd still have to live
with myself.

The Council members look at her. Paying due attention.

OPAL (CONT'D)

Celia, what happened to your
husband-- What happened to everyone
the partials slaughtered, it will
happen to all of us, if we do not
protect all of them out there.

The Council members exchange difficult looks. Still unsure.

PERSTYN

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

OPAL

Perhaps she knows a few tricks.
(then)
Here.

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 others.

Opal slides her sword to the middle of the table -- equal
arm's reach for every one in the Council.

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. Thinking.

Growing a little 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 stand together, not too far off.

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 convinced differently.

Arran and Maeve eye each other from where they are.

ARRAN (CONT'D)
So I convinced the people. We work
together. Or we die.

Celia looks at Perstyn and Jasper. Their turn.

CELIA
Earlier, we were out here first. We
beat you here.

She weighs what to say next, whatever it'll be...

CELIA (CONT'D)
Now we are here together. So be it.

ARRAN
If the Source can't save every
one...

Arran extends his hand, offering it.

CELIA
...It saves no one.

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 stand oddly easy in each other's company.

They look out at the Source rift, which beautifully
illuminates the night.

OPAL
You changed your friend's mind. I'm
surprised. He seems a real mule.

MAEVE
Not as surprising as you talking
those pampered pricks into thinking
about their people for once.

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

OPAL
Well done, for a failure.

MAEVE
Such grace, for a whore.

They both turn their heads, both hiding near-smiles.

They watch the field as the two groups JOIN resources, horses, tents -- creating one large, connected camp.

OPAL

You don't suppose we might still
get them all to go back to the
Sanctuary? To safety?

Maeve looks back out to the rift in the great distance.

MAEVE

No, I think they're right where
they belong.

Maeve looks right at Opal. Unable to turn away.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

Together.

Opal meets her eyes. These two finally seem... comfortable.

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 the moonlight --

To reveal to all that he is in fact 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.

The Lord's Men prepare rifles. The Commoners prepare theirs.

Common and Noble families RUSH back into camp.

Those with swords unsheathe them, including Opal.

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

The rumbling gets louder, CLOSER, until people hear the sounds of nearing *screeches*.

Every one knows what comes next.

What they are not ready for is the WAVE OF PARTIALS that FLIES over the hillside: A MURDEROUS SWARM.

SOME PEOPLE turn and run -- the rest stand their ground, ready to go head to head with a horde from Hell.

The horde comes in SWINGING, overrunning them immediately.

A number of Partialsl SLIP PAST the defense.

MAEVE
No!

Maeve gets DECKED by a fast Partial, rapidly biting and clawing for Maeve's face.

She brings her dagger up, SLITTING THE THROAT of the Partial.

Opal SWINGS right into a Partial, cutting it open. She CUTS its legs off -- STABBING right into its chest. It dies.

The Lord's Men gun down as many Partialsl as they can.

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

Arran KICKS and SHOOTSl 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 on his armor.

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
I see. Perhaps if you whisper,
you'll startle yourself less.

Arran tries shaking off fear -- but he's still like a statue.

The Protector looks ever-so-slightly to Arran's right.

PROTECTOR (CONT'D)
Watch out.

Arran is TACKLED by two Partials.

MAEVE
Arran-- No!

The Protector puts Maeve in a chokehold, pulling her close.

PROTECTOR
He was a coward then. A coward now.

The Protector POPS the blade out from his bracer.

PROTECTOR (CONT'D)
I could merely cut across your
cheek and have so very, very 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 JASPER of all people is holding a smoking pistol.

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

The Partials beating on Arran are SPLIT IN HALF by THE PROTECTOR.

He reaches in, picking Arran up.

With both of them in his grasp, the Protector walks Maeve and Arran over to JASPER, 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 move. Can't breathe.

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

The Protector THROWS MAEVE right into Jasper, her GLOWING BARRIER completely HALVING the poor bastard.

The Protector moves Arran close to Jasper's REMAINS.

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

CELIA AND PERSTYN hectically SLASH at Partials without aim, defending themselves for now. They are not fighters.

They look over to the Protector and see the MESS Jasper left.

Before they can react, they are ran up on by MORE PARTIALS.

Then OPAL comes in, proficiently cutting the Partials down, saving the Council.

They all look at the Protector from afar, Arran in his grasp.

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

A prospect Celia and Perstyn have never been faced with.

CELIA

What? How???

OPAL

Kill as many Partial's as you can!

Opal rushes in.

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

PROTECTOR

Tell it.

Arran can't put the words together even when he can breathe.

MAEVE

Arran...?

ARRAN

He... killed almost all the others.

The Protector pushes IN on Arran's head. A threat.

ARRAN (CONT'D)

I was there. For every single one.

I was there. I ran. Maeve, I ran.

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 magic. Why I cut it out of me. So he couldn't cut it out first...

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.

She understands immediately as she STRUGGLES to break free.

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.

He does not see her roll away in the grass. Maeve DOES.

Her EYES begin to light up again -- this time, after a flicker, they STAY LIT. TINY YELLOW SPARKS PULSE FROM HER.

PROTECTOR (CONT'D)

What?

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

...But all she did was make him stand.

PROTECTOR (CONT'D)

Curious.

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

The Protector looks down at Maeve, genuinely surprised.

PROTECTOR (CONT'D)

Most curious.

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

EXT. CAMPGROUND - CONT.

THE MIDDLE OF CAMP.

Maeve lands in between a NOBLE WOMAN -- half of her -- and a TEENAGE BOY, with his stomach slashed open.

Maeve gets to her feet, shaking off the sights.

She looks into her hands. Her palms lightly SPARK.

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

She looks ahead, into the campground. Death EVERYWHERE.

Bits and 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 looks around, seeing all the bodies.

So many bodies...

She wipes away a solitary tear and makes for THE PEOPLE.

FURTHER INTO CAMP, Celia PIERCES a Partial from behind -- as she's TAKEN by another Partial. She stabs into its arm.

The Partial pulls HARD, threatening to RIP CELIA APART.

Then, PERSTYN runs in, driving his sword through the Partial's stomach. He stabs AND STABS until it stops moving.

Perstyn gets Celia up. She awkwardly nods, new to compassion.

Then a Partial's CLAWS drive through Perstyn's skull. Celia watches, too shocked to fight back. She's next.

Suddenly, OPAL shows up, cutting off the Partial's legs. She BEHEADS it then kicks it over.

Celia looks at Perstyn, regretful. Opal offers her a HAND up.

She accepts.

OPAL
Where's the Keeper?

CELIA
The girl? Was she not with you?

FLASHES OF LIGHT through the dust get their attention: it's Maeve, fighting with what little power she can muster.

MAEVE pushes through the camp, a tiny storm of WHITE-YELLOW ENERGY around her. Her daggers, enhanced by magic, SLASH through Partials at unnatural speed.

Suddenly, the light in and around her begins to FADE. She starts losing momentum, feeling the magic bleed out.

MAEVE
No. No!

As Maeve tries forcing more energy out, THE PROTECTOR SPRINTS RIGHT INTO HER, A LIVING CANNONBALL. MAEVE SPINS OUT.

She crashes into and destroys a whole SUPPLY WAGON. The Protector moves in, grabbing Maeve by the LEG.

PROTECTOR
You are a slow learner.

He full-body SLAMS Maeve into the GROUND, her GLOWING BARRIER cracking a bit on impact.

PROTECTOR (CONT'D)
I thought you had learned to stay
down when you are beaten.

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

MAEVE
Not... my style.

Maeve KICKS at the Protector, her strength giving him more of a shove than he's used to.

He looks down at a LITTLE GIRL, 7, unlucky enough in her confusion to run right into him.

PROTECTOR
Is that right?

The Protector GRABS the Little Girl BY HER HEAD.

MAEVE
Let her go!!!

Maeve BULLETS toward the Protector. He counters her with a FEROCIOUS SLAP, grounding her.

He lifts Maeve up by the NECK.

OPAL AND CELIA cut down a Partial together -- and then see Maeve again a few yards away, caught in her situation.

Before Opal can run to Maeve, Celia grabs her and points --

CELIA
Lady Opal!

-- To an incoming wave of PARTIALS, CRAWLING at terrifying speeds. They have to RUN further into camp.

OPAL
Go, go, run!

MAEVE grabs onto the Protector's armored fist, trying to pry herself free with all her strength. No avail.

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

MAEVE

(to the Protector)

Listen to me, please. Just listen.
Do what you want to me. Just let
the girl go. Please. Please!

PROTECTOR

Your pleading shows me only that
you have not learned.

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

No. Not like this. No! Please!

PROTECTOR

I will stop when you learn, girl.
When you are beaten, you lie down.

The Partials get even closer.

PROTECTOR (CONT'D)

When you lie, you stay.

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

Maeve STRAINS herself, feeling for anything within her, any
power at all, magic or not, to stop this. She finds NOTHING.

PROTECTOR (CONT'D)

When you stay... You die.

THE PARTIALS DIG INTO THE LITTLE GIRL, OPENING HER WITH EASE.
The Protector lets the Partials have at her mangled 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

Why do you not? 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.

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

Her ALLIES, FIGHTING, LOSING -- or DYING to PARTIALS.

Opal is overtaken by a giant three-Partial MUTANT.

Celia is back to back with a few FIGHTERS and their FAMILIES.

Arran is UNCONSCIOUS out in the field.

PROTECTOR (CONT'D)

You fought the wrong enemy, girl.
And 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 MORE BLUE then
before. He waves in the direction of the VALLEY.

Every single Partial STOPS what they're doing --

The Mutant Partial simply walks away from Opal.

The Partials leave Celia and the survivors alone.

Maeve looks at the Protector as A KICK comes down on her, a
final insult to agonizing injury.

EXT. CAMPGROUND - LATER

Maeve slowly blinks herself awake on a cot, head pounding.

OPAL
Keeper. Wake up, Keeper.

The two women see each other there. Speechless. Voiceless.
Arran stumbles in, going to Maeve's side.

ARRAN
Maeve.

Maeve takes Arran's hand, teary-eyed. Then, she thinks...
She pulls her hand free. Arran looks away, understanding.
There, they all sit. A crippled, humiliated lot.
Celia walks up, as decent as she'll be in Maeve's presence.

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
The people are wounded or dead.
Most of our guns destroyed.

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

They are all quiet for a moment.

ARRAN
We must retreat to the Sanctuary.

Celia looks at Opal, mulling something over.

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
No. 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 here. They don't
belong together. When people come
together, they die. Every time.
(beat)
I can't let that happen to anyone
else. I can't let it happen 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. 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. She looks like she may keep to it...

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

Hopeless, Opal turns toward camp -- spotting a few ROUGH-BUT-
INTACT HAVEN TROOP AND SUPPLY WAGONS. She considers them.

EXT. LOWER FIELD - NIGHT

Maeve rides away on a HORSE -- straight 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...

He holds his hand out over the LIGHT...

PROTECTOR (CONT'D)

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 again, looking -- AT A CIRCLE-CUT PHOTOGRAPH OF A WOMAN, A BOY, AND A MAN, whose FACE has been TORN out...

PROTECTOR (CONT'D)

It shall return to you.

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

Finding MAEVE at the end.

The Protector closes the WATCH, pocketing it again.

PROTECTOR (CONT'D)

You are too late.
(gesturing the Partials)
They now have back what is theirs.
You've once again lost what you
stole.

Maeve didn't come for words. She reaches for her dagger. Her crossbow. The weapons of her people. One last fight.

Maeve uses all her speed to RUN RIGHT AT THE PARTIALS. She moves in rhythm, her DAGGER dancing with her --

She maneuvers around and through the Partial horde quicker than she ever has, a bladed cyclone, KILL after KILL.

She's cut through THIRTY already, all alone.

But the Protector has MORE -- summoning them from his side, waving them toward Maeve, uncaring.

Maeve starts to get CROWDED --

But she FIRES her CROSSBOW around her as she SWINGS HER DAGGER, killing even more.

Maeve takes a breather -- until THE PROTECTOR starts to move.

She can go on for a while. She can't go on forever.

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

She eyes the Protector, ready for the 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 passion they have left.

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

The wagons SPIN, ROLLING, TIPPING OVER COMPLETELY.

Maeve watches the wagons, anxious. Until --

PEOPLE COME RUNNING OUT FROM THE CRASHES. OPAL and ARRAN lead the charge -- CELIA stays, shooting from a distance.

And she's about as bad with the rifle as you'd think.

Maeve LOOKS at the Protector, her momentum back.

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.

Maeve tries the same thing on his other leg, but the Protector BOOTS HER AWAY --

She CRASHES into a number of Partial's like a bowling ball.

Arran looks over, SEES THE PROTECTOR HEADING FOR MAEVE. He looks down at himself. Breathing heavy.

The Protector shoves the Partial's aside like nothing. Once he's over Maeve, he STOMPS DOWN ON HER.

Her BARRIER protects her, but it's CRACKING WITH EACH HIT.

PROTECTOR (CONT'D)

You learned nothing, girl--

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 Partial's suddenly pull him into a PILE, clawing at him.

MAEVE

No!!!

Maeve tries to get up -- then the Protector STEPS her back in, flattening her against the ground. She can't move.

But both Maeve and the Protector are SHOCKED 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 both stop and stare.

Then Arran STARTS SCREAMING AND SHOOTING, this time RUNNING NOWHERE but right at his enemy.

The Protector entertains this and steps off of Maeve.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

(gasping for air)

No... Arran...

The Protector IMMEDIATELY grabs Arran, SQUEEZING, destroying the pistol and his hand -- the Protector then STABS ARRAN, LIFTING HIM IN THE AIR, HOLDING HIM WITH HIS BLADE.

OPAL looks over, sees Arran dying -- but she quickly turns to more Partial's, needing to focus on the fight in front of her.

MAEVE RISES, running for Arran --

But the Protector BACKHANDS her, sending her SOARING --

Landing directly next to the SOURCE RIFT.

The Protector is preoccupied with Arran, prolonging his suffering as he keeps him up high.

Maeve leans over, looking INTO the beautiful, shining rift.

Only a foot down, Maeve reaches her HAND into the rift, FINALLY TOUCHING THE MAGICAL SOURCE, speaking directly to it:

MAEVE (CONT'D)

Whatever you are... Whatever you've
always been... I know you can feel
me. I feel you.

Nothing happens.

The Protector looks over, sees Maeve at the rift!

PROTECTOR

No. NO.

He DROPS Arran. The ground SHAKES from his incoming steps.

Maeve turns back to see the Protector closing in.

MAEVE

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

Maeve weighs her next words carefully.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

I'm... worthy. I am worthy. Please.
Return the power to me I once had!

Still nothing. The Protector NEARS behind her.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

I'm fighting for you. I'm here for
you! I worshipped you! I...

Maeve looks over, PAST the Protector, at Arran's body.

She looks inward and has a **MEMORY OF --**

OWYN AND HER. LORD HAVEN. SHE WALKS AWAY, UP ON THE WALL.

Maeve returns to the Source... Reciting her CLAN'S WORDS:

MAEVE (CONT'D)

My honor is my love...

And, at long last, she finishes them:

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

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

AS MAEVE BURSTS WITH INCREDIBLE WHITE LIGHT, SENDING THE PROTECTOR BACK ON HIS ASS.

He recovers, looking back to the rift:

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 FORWARD, but the Protector uses his arm blade to FIGHT THEM BACK.

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

AND SLAMMING HER, temporarily knocking her out of her surge.

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

He turns 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, in disbelief.

The Protector picks Maeve up, CHUCKS her 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, Maeve WATCHES this unfold. 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.

She looks at the Protector, and as she BLINKS --

SHE VANISHES INTO LIGHT ITSELF, MOVING WITH IT --

SHE REAPPEARS, LAUNCHING A GLOWING FIST AT THE PROTECTOR'S
HELMET.

He BOUNCES off the ground with the force of the hit.

MORE LIGHT TENDRILS spring out, holding the Protector down.

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 rest of the ARMOR is BURNED RIGHT THROUGH.

And now only the inner tech of the suit remains.

Maeve approaches the Protector, STANDING ABOVE HIM.

Opal follows behind.

MAEVE

All the fighting. The killing.
"Protectors".

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

MAEVE (CONT'D)

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

Maeve WRAPS HIS BODY IN LIGHT 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, exhausted. They lower their guards.

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! KEEPER!

In all her pain, Maeve recognizes OPAL beside her.

OPAL (CONT'D)

It's over! Let it go!

MAEVE

NO! I can... control it!!!

OPAL

It's killing you! Just let it go!!!

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, and the fire dies
down. She blinks in and out. Losing her balance. Collapsing --

Right into Opal's arms.

OPAL (CONT'D)

I've got you. I've got you.

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

OPAL (CONT'D)
So... that was your bloody power?

MAEVE
No. I've never felt anything like
that. That was... a burst.

Maeve looks back at the rift.

MAEVE (CONT'D)
It wanted me to feel that. Why --?

Before she continues, something pulls her back. Opal, too.

They both turn to the scene of the larger battle:

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

The people SHOUT for humanity's first victory in years.

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

She closes his eyes. Makes his hand a fist, resting it on his
shoulder.

She does the same for herself, only these words to offer:

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

Opal lays a gentle hand on Maeve's shoulder.

Maeve turns around -- the COMMON FOLK are here. Gathering
around Arran. Even Celia has come to show respect.

Maeve nods them on as she walks with Opal, returning to:

THE RIFT.

As Maeve approaches, the rift itself floats an ORB OF COSMIC
LIGHT up to meet her.

Maeve and Opal look at each other.

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 at Opal, amazed.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

Opal. The Source, it's everywhere.
Opening rifts throughout the realm.

Opal absorbs that.

OPAL

But what does it all mean?

MAEVE

I don't know, but... Lord Haven.
There are more Partials there now
than anywhere. It's untouchable.

Opal puts it together at the same time as Maeve:

OPAL

The rifts.

MAEVE

The Source is spreading itself out.
Giving us a chance.

OPAL

If you connect with them all--

MAEVE

I'll be strong enough to return to
Lord Haven. To feel that surge
again.

Maeve takes a firm look at the Source.

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

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

MAEVE (CONT'D)

It's not over.

She eyes Opal, the air about her all the lighter now.

Opal wills herself to smile.

EXT. GLADE - NIGHT

THE PROTECTOR'S ARMOR, shattered and burned through, sits piled in the back of a moving HAY CART.

A HULKING MAN in a gray gambeson, his face guarded by unkempt hair, wheels the cart through a CLEARING of thick grass.

This man could be 40, or deep in his 50s. What is clear, suit or no suit, is that this beast is THE PROTECTOR.

Not much further into the clearing stands AN OLD BARN.

INT. BARN - CONT.

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

The Protector turns, meeting ANOTHER PROTECTOR, IN RED ARMOR.

RED PROTECTOR
You found the Keepers, sir?

PROTECTOR
(re: his armor)
Partials did not do this.

RED PROTECTOR
No.

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)
The Keeper cannot reach the remaining rifts. If it does, it will return to Lord Haven. Reclaim the prime Source. Become unstoppable.
(MORE)

PROTECTOR (CONT'D)

(then)

Repair my armor within this moon.
Summon the Protectors.

The Protector turns, stomping his way out of the barn.

RED PROTECTOR

All of them, sir? For one Keeper?

PROTECTOR

For this Keeper.

The Red Protector 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 from his shoulder A GIANT DEER the size of a moose.

He removes his POCKET WATCH from a pouch. Holding it close.

He moves up the steps with a fair limp.

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

A WOMAN OF 40 and A BOY OF 8 wait at a candle-lit table -- the Boy rocking in place, the Woman drowsy as hell.

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

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

BOY

Father!

The Boy sprints to his father's arms like he was never tired.

WOMAN

By the Furthest Gods. We'd thought
you dead.

The Boy and Woman embrace the Protector, who holds them too.

PROTECTOR

Yet here I stand.

WOMAN

That many days for a bloody hunt?
Did you even catch anything?

PROTECTOR

Not what I was tracking. Though you should see what I've left outside.

BOY

Father, next time you go hunting, I want to join you so that I can protect you!

The Protector runs his hand through the child's hair.

PROTECTOR

I rest easier already, son.

The POCKET WATCH hangs from the Protector's hand.

Inside the OPENED CASE, the FAMILY PHOTO is visible again.

And the Boy and Woman in the Protector's arms ARE NOT THE SAME ONES pictured...

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?

MAEVE

Come in.

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

OPAL

I'll confess I knocked at quite a few tents before I found you.

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

MAEVE

There should be more tents here.

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

OPAL

Those that are, wouldn't be, if not for you.

Maeve rolls that around. She raises LIGHT from her fingers.

MAEVE

All the people this cost...

She lowers her hand and the light fades away.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

We will never be the same.

Maeve meets Opal's look. They give each other soft eyes.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

But now I have my gift back. And I shall use it to do as you have commanded of me. I will return to Lord Haven. Do what I must.

(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.

MAEVE

Very well, my lady.

Easy silence.

OPAL

You called it a gift.

MAEVE

My father did. So did my mother.

OPAL

What happened to her? Your mother?

MAEVE

She saved me. When I was not yet worthy.

OPAL

If she saved you, then you were always worthy. Seems she knew that.

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

Her eyes take her somewhere else. Somewhere long behind her.

She BLINKS herself back to what's right in front of her --

To Opal. Maeve gives a small, sincere nod.

Opal regards Maeve quietly. Understanding.

OPAL (CONT'D)

My mother, well...

Maeve gives Opal her full attention.

OPAL (CONT'D)

My first day was her last. Not sure my father ever forgave me for it. Talked of her so much, I knew her ghost better than I knew him. And--

Opal stops. Thinking with an almost troubled face.

MAEVE

What?

OPAL

The Protector. He told me I look just like her. My father guarded every relic of her. Photographs. Paintings. But he spoke of her like she was my mirror. He could hardly look me in the eye because of it...

Maeve watches Opal.

OPAL (CONT'D)

The Protector was right. My face, my hair, my eyes. They're hers.

Maeve thinks it over. But all she can come up with is:

MAEVE

Weird.

OPAL
Bloody weird. A mystery for the
future, clearly. Maybe we'll ask
the bastard when we beat him again.

Maeve cringes at the thought, but knows Opal is right.

MAEVE
Yeah. Again.

OPAL
We will beat him, Maeve.

Maeve perks up hearing Opal use her name for the first time.

OPAL (CONT'D)
And we'll beat him again, and
again, and again, until he's
finally dead, or we are.

Maeve goes from soft to serious. A *recognition* in Opal.

She nods -- appreciation, agreement, respect. List goes on.

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

What little peace they even know.

OPAL (CONT'D)
I don't know what else to talk
about. But I'm not sure how to
sleep, either.

MAEVE
I've not slept in years. Nightmares
are no different from being awake.

OPAL
Then we don't sleep. Don't talk.
Maybe we just lay here for a while.

Beat.

MAEVE
I'd like that.

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

They lay there. No bed to rock. No wine to drink.

Only the space they share. For now, that'll be enough.

THE END

JOHN CLEAVER