

EXT. CLIFFTOP - DAY

It's a wonderful day. Not a cloud in the sky, and the ambience of waves crashing upon the cliff is clearly present- a perfectly picturesque landscape.

ARIEN, 21, sits on the cliff, dangling feet. He's dressed like a sailor, with scruffy windswept brown hair. A voiceover begins.

ARIEN(VO)
So there I was, all those years ago. Good old days on Baxnear.

He hops to his feet.

ARIEN(VO)
It wasn't much of an island, really, the only notable thing about it was how not notable it was.

He looks down off the cliff. At first, it seems like open ocean, but as the horizon comes into view, the ocean itself is barely tilted- a tiny fragment of a gigantic whirlpool stretching beyond the horizon.

Zoom out to show how tiny Baxnear is, in this massive whirlpool, with a strange white dot at it's center.

ARIEN(VO)
And our location, I guess. Closest place to the vertex.

Match cut to Arien's sea blue eyes.

Arien turns around, and begins walking.

ARIEN(VO)
You'd think that made it a holy place. Nope. Closest don't mean close, so not much of a church presence out here.

He walks towards a town, all wooden and stone buildings with thatch huts.

ARIEN(VO)

But it's not a bad place. Nice and peaceful, plenty of people from the other islands. And for better or worse, it's my home.

INT. BAXNEAR - HENDERSON'S HOUSE

Arien pushes open the door to the house. It's a mess- not a total pigsty, but that holy symbol probably shouldn't be shoved in a crack in the wall.

ARIEN

Gramps! I'm here!

From upstairs comes Arien's Gramps, an old man with scruffy white hair. He's wearing what appear to be purple clergy robes.

GRAMPS

Where were you, Arien? Searching that cliff of yours?

ARIEN

Sorry gramps, I couldn't find your sanity.

GRAMPS

You found your sense of snark, brat?

ARIEN

Never lost it, you old geezer. I learned from the best.

Both of them break down laughing.

ARIEN

How's the church, gramps?

GRAMPS

Same old, same old. I'll get Miss Harvestar to give me the time of day if it's the last thing I do!

ARIEN

She's the oldest in town, so a perfect fit for you!

GRAMPS

And don't you know it!

Gramps pauses for a second.

GRAMPS

How's business on your end?

ARIEN

Same old, same old. Apprenticeship at the tannery isn't bad.

GRAMPS

Not even working with your beloved books?

ARIEN

Just because I like books doesn't mean I'm binding them much. A job's a job, in the end. I did promise the harbormaster I'd also try to learn bookkeeping from him, so I'm doing that if there's ever a boat.

GRAMPS

You like paperwork? I knew you were cracked in the head!

ARIEN

It's not as bad as all you old farts make it out to be.

GRAMPS

Ha, fair enough. Just be a priest, then!

ARIEN

You're a shitty priest, gramps.

GRAMPS

A shitty priest for a shitty island!

ARIEN

Hey, Baxnear isn't that bad! No pirates, and that cliff really does have great views.

GRAMPS

Do I need to get a rock formation to sign marriage contracts?

Arien blushes red.

ARIEN

Gramps!

Gramps just chuckles.

GRAMPS

You're still far too easy to
tease, my boy.

ARIEN

I'll get you back eventually, mark
my words.

GRAMPS

I'd like to see you try!

ARIEN

Anyway... why did you call me over?

GRAMPS

I was getting there, I was getting
there!

Gramps pauses, and goes over to a dresser.

GRAMPS

Ugh, where'd I put the damn thing..

Eventually, he digs out something wrapped in cloth, and holds
it aloft.

GRAMPS

Aha!

ARIEN

What's that?

Gramps walks back to Arien, and holds out the item.

GRAMPS

Something a parishioner told me to
give to you.

ARIEN

Me? Why?

GRAMPS

I don't have the ruddiest. The
fellow stood out, not every day
you see a blind man with dragon's
scales on Baxnear. He just told me
to "pass it on to yer son", then
he showed me a holy symbol from a
high ranking priest. I don't even

(MORE)

GRAMPS (CONT'D)
know if it was a threat or an
assurance.

ARIEN
Dragon's scales? There are people
with those? Would that be heresy?

GRAMPS
I don't even know.

ARIEN
And someone blessed by the dragons
wanted you to give it to me? A
town kid from Baxnear?

GRAMPS
He did. Specifically.

Arien slowly takes the item.

ARIEN
Do you... know what it is?

GRAMPS
Not a clue.

ARIEN
Useful as always.

Slowly, Arien unwraps the cloth.

It turns out to be a strange golden locket, composed of a
sphere with a circular indent in it. Inside the dent is a
keyhole.

Gramps and Arien both gasp.

ARIEN
What... what is this?

GRAMPS
No symbol the church knows, that's
for sure.

ARIEN
Think someone else on the island
might know about it?

GRAMPS
Doubt it. I'd never seen the fella
who gave it to me, yet we haven't
had a ship come by in two moons.

ARIEN
 Guess it'll have to remain
 unsolved then.

Arien subtly clenches his fist, the other holding the locket.

GRAMPS
 Unless you bother to solve it.

ARIEN
 You won't help me?

GRAMPS
 Not my locket, not my problem.

ARIEN
 Lazy ass.

GRAMPS
 Smart lazy ass! I can't provide
 any useful help anyway.

All of a sudden, the ringing of a bell cuts through the house, reverberating across town.

ARIEN
 The spire!

GRAMPS
 A ship already? The next merchant
 wasn't supposed to come for
 another moon!

Arien is already nearly out the door.

ARIEN
 What are you waiting for? Let's
 see what happened!

GRAMPS
 Damn younguns, no respect for the
 elderly..

Despite his sarcastic griping, he follows Arien out the door.

EXT. BAXNEAR DOCKS- DAY

On a normal day, these docks would be full of fishermen and not much else. Today is not a normal day.

At the edge of town, a crowd is clamoring around the docks, discussing the supposed ship. The excited gossip is palpable, as everyone tries to get a better view.

Arien weaves through the crowd, having left Gramps behind while trying to get to the front, overhearing bits of conversation.

BYSTANDER 1

So shiny...

BYSTANDER 2

Why would they come here?

BYSTANDER 3

Can you make out their flag?

Finally, Arien pushes to the front of the crowd, where he can make out the offending ship on the horizon- or not. Blinding light emanates from the ship, forcing him to squint.

As it comes closer, it gets easier to make out the details of the ship. It's covered in shimmering metal, and even the wood seems to sparkle. At the prow is a mermaid figurehead, actual water coming out of it's mouth. A more beautiful ship had never been seen... if it weren't for the sails.

Arien whispers, slightly paling.

ARIEN

Pirates...?

The sails unfurl, revealing an odd combination. Gray sails, yet the emblem on them is indubitably that of a pirate-a skull above a whirlpool, with a fancily adorned pirate hat on top.

BYSTANDER 1

Gray sails?

BYSTANDER 2

We're doomed!

BYSTANDER 3

Are those supposed to be pirates?

Suddenly, a voice cuts across the murmurs.

HARBORMASTER

Everyone off my damn dock!

The crowd parts to reveal another grizzled old man, missing an eye and walking with a rusty peg leg. He strides to the end and clasps his hands.

HARBORMASTER

Panic will do nothing. Go to your homes, and prepare weapons if you

(MORE)

HARBORMASTER (CONT'D)
must! I will see their intentions,
then we act!

Taking advantage of the opened path comes a stout little man, dressed finer than the rest of the town, with a little top hat. Not one person pays any attention to him, seemingly deliberately.

MAYOR
Yes, yes, thank you. Go back to
your homes, everything will be
fine.

Despite the mayor's assurances, nobody moves.

HARBORMASTER
They're gonna stay.

MAYOR
But it's safer in their homes!

HARBORMASTER
How do you keep getting elected..

Despite the two's bickering, the ship pulls into the dock. It's even more majestic up close.

On the railings of the ship, the crew is looking down, and they're a wild bunch. Elves, dwarves, goblins, and more- the motliest of motley crews, fashions matching absolutely none of each other.

MAYOR
Hello there!

DWARF ON SHIP
Whaddya want!

MAYOR
We were just wondering... Why did
you come here?

ELF ON SHIP
We needed to restock!

MAYOR
If it wouldn't be too much
trouble, could you perhaps do that
somewhere else?

ORC ON SHIP
Captain! This fellow's a rudder!

All of a sudden, from over the deck of the ship a rope swings down to the dock. SIONIA, appears 25, a female elf, slides down it. She wears a cape and a pirate hat, and of course, an eyepatch. Long blonde hair flows down her back- she has the ethereal beauty elves are known for.

SIONIA

So what did ye say that made my third mate decide ye were a rudder?

MAYOR

I was merely asking if it would be possible for your fine crew to... dock somewhere else?

SIONIA

Wow, ye really are stupid.

She promptly strides past him to the harbormaster.

SIONIA

Should I pay you the fare, then?

The mayor's face goes red, and he glares at the elf.

MAYOR

I was talking to you, miss!

The captain knees him in the crotch. The crowd collectively winces.

SIONIA

And I wasn't.

The mayor slumps over.

HARBORMASTER

No respect for fools, ey?

SIONIA

You calling yer mayor a fool?

HARBORMASTER

A fool or a moron.

The captain laughs, hearty and full of cheer.

SIONIA

Anyway, to business. Ye want our name and info to dock?

HARBORMASTER

Aye. I take it you aren't pirates,
then?

SIONIA

Do ye want us to be?

HARBORMASTER

It's a simple question. But if you
won't act like pirates then fine.

SIONIA

We prefer the term.. adventurers,
pirates- whatever makes ye the
most comfortable. We're no
pillagers, that's the one promise
I can give.

He turns and shouts to the crowd.

HARBORMASTER

Boy, I know you're somewhere in
there! Come help me out here!

Arien pushes his way to the front, and stands next to the
harbormaster.

Sionia's eyes widen and then narrow as she catches sight of
Arien's locket.

HARBORMASTER

Arien here's been learning from
me, he'll handle your paperwork.

SIONIA

So you're asking pirates to fill
out paperwork?

ARIEN & HARBORMASTER

You didn't say you were pirates.

SIONIA

Ha! Well, the name's Captain
Sionia. This here ship's the Wind
Liberator, Libby for short!

The harbormaster glances around at the bizarre crowd still
present, then back at his assistant.

HARBORMASTER

Boy, you take care of this.

He then turns to the crowd.

HARBORMASTER

Fun time's done! Get the hell off
my goddamn dock!

The crowd grumbles, and slowly starts to disperse. Meanwhile,
Arien goes through the necessary questions.

ARIEN

Any cargo?

SIONIA

Just me and me hearty crew!

ARIEN

Duration of stay?

SIONIA

Until we move on!

ARIEN

Purpose of docking?

SIONIA

Resupplying and exploring a new
island of course!

ARIEN

I guess... Anyway, think that covers
everything. Pay your docking fees
and you're good to go.

Sionia hands over a few coins.

SIONIA

Yer a weird one, laddie.

ARIEN

You're calling *me* weird? You can't
seem to decide if you're pirates
or not!

SIONIA

And what if we're somewhere
inbetween?

ARIEN

That doesn't even make any sense!

SIONIA

Does it have to make sense to you?

ARIEN

I'm just trying to do my job.

SIONIA

And I'm merely doing what I
consider to be mine.

ARIEN

Questioning random people merely
because you find them
'interesting'?

Sionia pauses, before going ramrod serious, and pointing at
the locket Arien is now wearing.

SIONIA

Anyone wearing that locket is far
more than interesting enough.

Arien steps back, more guarded than anything- this is still a
very dangerous woman.

ARIEN

You know about this locket?

SIONIA

It has a ... complicated history of
legends.

ARIEN

You going to elaborate on that?

Sionia makes a kinda dismissive gesture.

SIONIA

Let's just say that I'm not sure
you want to know what little I've
got about it. Keep it safe, and be
wary...

ARIEN

Well that's ominous. You must love
sticking your nose into the
business of those you've just met.

SIONIA

It's an adventurer's sworn duty.

ARIEN

Sworn on what?

SIONIA

Sworn on the flag, of course.

ARIEN

As if you'd listen to any oath.

SIONIA

Be wary who you insult, lad. We have our own honor.

ARIEN

Ok, ok. I'm sorry.

Both stare at each other, trying to gauge their opposition.

ARIEN

As I was saying, don't cause any trouble and there won't be any issues. I'll be going now, before you decide to prod me again.

Arien quickly walks off, to get away from the snarky captain.

SIONIA

That old locket, eh? Maybe that ancient geezer's advice has some merit after all...

INT. BAXNEAR CHURCH - AFTERNOON

Arien tiptoes into the church, where his Gramps is currently giving a sermon. The church isn't in the best of repair, what with the pews covered in scratches, chipped stonework, and whatnot. But the single stained glass window behind the pulpit has none of that, depicting a swirling whirlpool as an object of veneration. Framing the window are stone carvings of dragons in flight, each of them looking towards the center of the whirlpool.

GRAMPS

And so, the blessed Vertex came into being. She took her body and gave it forth unto our world, and then she spat out the islands like ole' Jiminy after three too many drinks at the bar.

The audience is various degrees of uninterested, one guy is slightly drooling. A woman shouts out from the audience, waving a prayerbook threateningly.

OLD WOMAN

That's not how the scriptures work!

GRAMPS

Who's telling this story! Me or you?

OLD WOMAN
IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE A SERMON!

GRAMPS
You've all heard this before! So
I'm spicing it up!

He pauses, and nobody sees fit to interject... this time.

GRAMPS
AS I WAS SAYING, the blessed
Vertex spat out our islands,
swirling endlessly within her
aquatic reach.

He pauses, glancing around the pews.

GRAMPS
But while she gave the land, there
were no people to put upon it. So
she went under the docks, did the
thing, and lo and behold, all the
races of the seas!

A tomato flies past his head, splattering on the wall next to
the stained glass window.

GRAMPS
You're cleaning that up!

MAN IN AUDIENCE
There are children here!

GRAMPS
Should I give them the
explanation, then?

Quietly, SILGRID, a dwarf, clearly from the pirate ship in
attire, speaks up next to Arien. He has a scar over his eye,
and a sword at his side, and a jacket full of pockets. He
must have shown up while Arien was waiting.

SILGRID(WHISPERING)
Wild church. It always like this?

ARIEN(WHISPERING)
Pretty much.

SILGRID
Damn. One strange priest you got
here.

Arien shrugs.

ARIEN

Someone's gotta liven it up, I suppose.

SILGRID

S'pose as long as everyone's enjoying it. Not that different than us voyagers.

ARIEN

It's very different!

SILGRID

If ya say so, if ya say so..

Meanwhile, Gramps has wrapped up his argument.

GRAMPS

And with that nasty business out of the way, the Vertex was almost done. But there was nobody to guide the races of the world, and she really wanted a nap- finally, she created the dragons, who guide us to not do anything too terribly moronic, and then she went to sleep, all of us nestled in her loving if much too tight embrace. Oh, and eventually the dragons took a nap too.

The audience just groans at the hilariously rushed ending.

With the sermon wrapping up, the churchgoers begin mingling. Gramps meanders over to Arien and Silgrid.

GRAMPS

Who's this?

SILGRID

Name's Silgrid.

GRAMPS

Two of you need something?

SILGRID

Nah, just exploring the town a little. Don't mind me.

He exits.

GRAMPS

You don't usually visit the church, Arien.

ARIEN

The captain of that ship
recognized the locket.

GRAMPS

She did?

ARIEN

Yeah. She gave me some sorta
cryptic warning. Gramps, what did
you get me into?

GRAMPS

Gut feeling.

ARIEN

What?

GRAMPS

I didn't just blindly give that to
you. I gave it to you because I
had a gut feeling.

ARIEN

You gave me a potentially
dangerous item because you had a
gut feeling.

GRAMPS

That's about the skinny of it.

ARIEN

That is even more irresponsible
than normal.

GRAMPS

Trust me on this one. I don't know
what danger it may bring, but I'm
certain it was the right choice.

ARIEN

You knew it might be dangerous and
still did it? Gramps, what the
abyss?

GRAMPS

Arien. Look me in the eyes.

Arien does so, as the previously carefree old man has gone
icily serious.

GRAMPS

There are strange things to this
world, and this is not my first

(MORE)

GRAMPS (CONT'D)
brush with them. I do what I do
because I want the best for you,
not because I do not care.

ARIEN
And if I don't believe you?

GRAMPS
Believe what you want. My words
won't change. You've always wanted
to set to sea, this is your
chance.

ARIEN
And I've always chosen not to
because I don't want to get killed
out there!

GRAMPS
Sometimes you have to look past
your fear, Arien.

Arien scoffs.

ARIEN
We'll finish this later. If you're
so set on being stubborn.

Arien storms out of the church, as Gramps looks up at the
stained glass, as clouds loom over the once shining window.

GRAMPS
If there is a later...

EXT. BAXNEAR CITY CENTER - MORNING

It is the next day. A worried crowd has gathered outside a
plain house. Quiet whispers circle the street. Arien is
amongst the crowd, as his gramps arrives.

GRAMPS
Can someone tell me what in the
name of the dragons is happening
here?

BYSTANDER 4
There was a murder!

GRAMPS
Then let me through so I can
perform rites, you lousy brats!

The crowd parts with a grumble, and gramps is let into the house.

INT. BAXNEAR MERCHANT'S HOUSE

A man and a woman in leather tunics, with swords at their side, are inside the house, clearly guarding the scene.

CITY WATCH 1

Ah good.

CITY WATCH 2

What did you pick up outside?

GRAMPS

Not much.

CITY WATCH 2

Good. It's a bit stranger than a murder, that's the real reason we called you here.

She shows him into the bedroom of the house- it's nothing special, with a simple straw bed. But much of it is covered in splatters, and the corpse of a merchant-

But the most terrifying thing is the message written on the wall in blood.

"It is here. Relinquish it, so the cycle may spin anew."

The blood visibly drains from the priest's face.

GRAMPS

Heresy. Speak nothing of this, if you can avoid it.

CITY WATCH 2

But what does it mean?

GRAMPS

All you need to know is that there is a crazed person seeking something that may be on this island. I will handle the rites, and then I will be in the church.

EXT. BAXNEAR CITY CENTER

Arien waits amongst the crowd, trying to get a peek.

SIONIA
So, what do you think?

He whirls around, to see that she has snuck up on him.

ARIEN
Where did you come from?

SIONIA
Same place as you. after all, a
crowd always means something
juicy.

Arien pauses, evaluating her.

ARIEN
Did you do this?

SIONIA
And what if I did?

ARIEN
I...

SIONIA
Are you scared of me?

ARIEN
I'm more concerned that you seem
to enjoy being insufferable.

SIONIA
Just because I don't fit into your
preconceived definitions of
pirate?

ARIEN
I don't give a dragon's turd if
you fit in or not, but you can't
seem to leave well enough alone! I
can't even decide if you did it to
play with me, or you're just
digging at me!

SIONIA
Well, I didn't.

Arien glares at her from the sheer whiplash.

ARIEN
And why should I believe you?

SIONIA

It's your choice, in the end. But I don't even know what happened in there. Don't you want to get a look?

ARIEN

And how are you proposing doing that?

SIONIA

This ain't a military island. Just gotta sneak around the back, and it's that simple for us to get a peek.

ARIEN

Us?

SIONIA

I'm going whether or not you choose to. Where's your curiosity?

ARIEN

Firmly behind my sense of not getting in trouble when there's a murderer on the loose.

Sionia grabs him by the wrist, and drags him around the edges of the crowd.

SIONIA

If you live like that, nothing will ever happen.

ARIEN

I'd rather live safe than go out and die.

SIONIA

If that's the lie you insist on telling yourself.

ARIEN

It's not a lie. Why are you so insistent on prodding at me?

SIONIA

If you want to know, why don't you make me tell you?

ARIEN

I-

SIONIA

Shhhh.

The two of them have successfully navigated to the back window of the house. They quietly peek in, and manage to see the ominous message written in blood.

ARIEN

By the vertex...

Arien yells without thinking, and a guard hears.

CITY WATCH 1

Who's there?

Thumping can be heard inside the house, coming towards the window.

SIONIA(WHISPERING)

Hide!

ARIEN

But-

SIONIA(WHISPERING)

Now!

She grabs Arien by the collar and slams him into the bushes.

ARIEN

I-

SIONIA(WHISPERING)

Be quiet!

She puts a hand over his mouth.

A few long seconds pass. The watchman looks around, before eventually just standing watch in the bloodstained room.

Sionia makes a beckoning gesture, and slowly, the two of them crawl out of the bush, covered in twigs.

ARIEN

What... *happened* in there?

SIONIA

Ye don't want to know.

ARIEN

There's a crazy murderer loose in my home, I've got a damned right to know!

SIONIA
If ye aren't fast enough to put it
together, ye don't want to know.

ARIEN
Are you seriously claiming I
should be able to tell what this
madman is after?

SIONIA
I warned ye, didn't I?

Arien pauses. His eyes light up as he realizes what it is.

ARIEN
The locket.

SIONIA
You figured it out.

ARIEN
Then why don't you tell me what in
the seas this thing is!

SIONIA
It's a dangerous artifact,
supposedly.

ARIEN
A dangerous artifact that a madman
wants! Well, he can have it!

SIONIA
Don't you dare hand it over!

ARIEN
Why not?

SIONIA
That thing came to you for a
reason. Giving it to a murderer
could do unheard of evils!

ARIEN
I only received it yesterday!

SIONIA
And how did you end up with it?

Both begin slowly sneaking back to the town square. Arien acutely shoves the locket under his shirt awkwardly, the bulge is still there.

ARIEN

Gramps said some strange blind man with a holy symbol asked it be given to me.

SIONIA

A different old geezer, then.

ARIEN

Do you know who that was?

SIONIA

Afraid not.

ARIEN

Then what do you know?

SIONIA

The sea has it's ways. Nothing happens for no reason. There's no coincidence that we arrived the day it happened.

ARIEN

Great, pirate superstition.

SIONIA

Maybe it's superstition. But the sea always guides us adventurers.

ARIEN

... That's right. You're a pirate. What's your business with all of this anyways?

SIONIA

This is some very serious bilge, and where there's serious bilge, there's an adventure.

ARIEN

I don't buy it. You show up, and a murder happens, as if perfectly timed to drive me into your confidence. I have no reason to trust you, even if I believe your claims of curiosity.

SIONIA

Yet you're curious too. I've seen enough of you- if you want it, there's a bunk for you on my ship.

ARIEN

I'm not going to take that, are you mad?

Arien storms off, disappearing into the crowd once more.

Sionia grins, an excited fervor in her eyes.

SIONIA

Even without the locket, you'd fit right into the crew. Just like her.

INT. BAXNEAR CHURCH - NIGHT

Gramps sits in a small office, filling out paperwork. It's nearly spartan, in contrast to his dwellings. Arien enters the room.

GRAMPS

Arien.

ARIEN

Gramps. What in the name of the vertex is going on on this island? What in all the seas is this damn locket?

GRAMPS

Walk with me.

He stands, and walks to the door, exiting into the main aisle of the church. Arien follows him, and they walk to in front of the stained-glass window.

GRAMPS

Yes. I did recognize the locket.

ARIEN

Then why on all the seas did you give it to me?

GRAMPS

Because I trust your choice on what to do with it.

ARIEN

What?

GRAMPS

You're not ready to settle down, nobody your age is. Go see the

(MORE)

GRAMPS (CONT'D)
world, and you'll have your chance
to decide what to do with it.

ARIEN
What? What are you even playing
at?

GRAMPS
Arien. Be honest with me. Do you
want to go out and see the breadth
of the seas?

ARIEN
Yes, but-

GRAMPS
No buts. I've raised you all these
years, I can at least do a halfway
decent job at reading you. Tell me
the truth.

ARIEN
It's terrifying. There's so much
out there, but so much I know
nothing about.

GRAMPS
Well, I can only tell you what
worked for me-

A loud knock echoes across the church.

GRAMPS
Hide!

He shoves Arien under a bench, and strides to the door,
opening it.

Outside is a hooded figure, in a cloak.

GRAMPS
What can I do for you this late at
night?

The hooded figure stalks forward. Gramps backpedals, trying
to hold his ground.

HOODED FIGURE
You have it. Give it to me.

GRAMPS
I'm afraid I don't know what
you're talking about.

HOODED FIGURE

Don't play the moron, old man. The
locket.

GRAMPS

Lock it? As evidenced by the fact
I opened the door, the church is
open to all.

The hooded figure draws a rapier from under his cloak.

HOODED FIGURE

Do not toy with me. I tracked it
here. Now where is it.

GRAMPS

It's...

The hooded figure nods.

GRAMPS

Up your arse!

He dives for one of the pews away from Arien.

HOODED FIGURE

Fool of a priest! You bring shame
to this noble church!

Rather than use the blade, he conjures up a fireball, and
lobs it at the pews. They light ablaze, illuminating gramps'
face.

GRAMPS

A priest's duty is to help those
in need! Decorum isn't part of the
job description!

HOODED FIGURE

Die, scum.

With a rush, he charges forward and stabs gramps in the
chest, splattering blood across the nearby pews.

ARIEN

Gramps!

GRAMPS

Arien, no!

The figure's head whips around. In the burning light, his
pointed ears are illuminated.

ARIEN
Shhh... you'll make it, Gramps.

GRAMPS
No. I won't. It finally caught up to me..

A single tear drips down from Arien's face.

ARIEN
Don't say that... we can get you out of this..

GRAMPS
My time has come. I'm sorry, my son..

ARIEN
Gramps...

GRAMPS
Arien. Be brave. Never look back..

His eyes close for the final time. Arien draws a holy symbol in the air, to mourn.

SIONIA
Lad, we need to flee!

She's been pushed back towards nearly on top of Arien, defending from a frenzy of attacks.

SIONIA
I can't cover you forever!

Arien shakily gets to his feet.

SIONIA
Get goin already! I'll be right behind you!

HOODED FIGURE
You think I'll let you escape?

SIONIA
Let? No.

Arien grabs onto the window and heaves himself out-

EXT. BAXNEAR CHURCH - NIGHT

Arien scrambles over the ruins of the stained glass window to find a crowd of villagers surrounding the church.

HARBORMASTER

Arien? What's happened in there?

ARIEN

Gramps- He-

Sionia comes sailing out of the window, landing in the dirt. She stands with aid of her blade, a nasty burn decorating her face.

SIONIA

Bastard! I can still fi-

ARIEN

Just run!

He grabs her by the wrist and drags her through the crowd.

ARIEN

Your damned bravado is going to get us killed!

SIONIA

I've fought through worse!

ARIEN

And what about the townsfolk?

SIONIA

... Tch. Fine.

At this point, they're running through an alley. Nobody seems to be following them. And there's a worrying lack of sound behind.

ARIEN

Are we clear?

SIONIA

There's not a chance.

ARIEN

He can't have gotten past everyone so easily!

They turn a corner, and skid to a halt. The ocean is in front of them, but between them and the docks is the hooded figure.

SIONIA

Well, rats.

With a whoosh, a circular wall of fire springs up between the three of them and the docks, catching a few houses alight.

HOODED FIGURE

You think you can escape me?

He surges forward with a thrust that Sionia barely manages to divert.

SIONIA

Have you considered we're in sight
of my ship?

HOODED FIGURE

I've ensured they're... occupied.

Arien backs up towards the wall, before stumbling over a pair of open barrels caught within the boundary.

HOODED FIGURE

Can't keep your own feet up...
worthless. Why do you defend him?

SIONIA

He hasn't even had a chance to
seek the seas, yet has this
destiny upon him?

HOODED FIGURE

So you know what the artifact is?

SIONIA

Just that it's dangerous, and
you're after it, and that's
enough.

HOODED FIGURE

Damnably sentimental pirates... If
you're so determined to die by my
blade, then I will ensure you do
so!

Their swords continue to clang, as Sionia springs off a pole, putting the opponent between her and the wall.

SIONIA

Now you're stuck between an elf
and a fiery place!

HOODED FIGURE

Your witticisms are terrible.

She unleashes a flurry of swings, successfully pushing the figure into his own fiery wall.

Yet he seems content to retreat, until he steps straight through the barrier.

HOODED FIGURE

Foolish child. You really thought
that you could use my own magic
against me?

SIONIA

Warlocks aren't exactly common,
you can't blame me for not knowing
the intricacies!

A rapier strike sails out of the flame, lancing across
Sionia's arm, leaving a small cut.

She jumps back to the center of the circle, on her guard.

SIONIA

Any ideas, kid?

ARIEN

We just need to get him off of us
long enough to get to the water!

HOODED FIGURE

I won't let you do that.

Arien grins, holding up a lantern grabbed from a nearby
house, and pulling out the candle, dripping wax perilously
close to the locket held in his other hand.

ARIEN

But can you stop me from jamming
the locket?

The hooded figure rushes into the center, trying to impale
Arien, but Sionia parries.

HOODED FIGURE

YOU DARE?

Arien smirks, while a few more flashes of blades occur- and
all of a sudden, a sizzling sound.

ARIEN

Actually, I just know the local
fire suppression response time. Be
glad we can't kill you, monster.

Just outside, a band of townsfolk has made a bucket chain to
the sea, and a hole in the wall has opened up, filled with
steam.

Sionia laughs, and pushes the mysterious figure back.

SIONIA
 Good eye, Arien! Let's get outta
 here!

Both of them run and dive into the sea, with the hooded man
 hot on their tail.

SPLASH!

Arien comes up, gasping for air.

ARIEN
 That actually worked..

SIONIA
 It was your idea!

ARIEN
 Forget that, we've still got a
 crazy murderous madman behind us!

The hooded figure is right behind them, bearing down with his
 blade-

All of a sudden a gunshot rings out, and both look up.

The hooded figure takes cover behind a ledge, with a smoking
 hole in the fabric of his robe, lightly tinged red.

The Wind Liberator has come around, the crew putting out the
 remains of a fire, and on the deck stands Silgrid with a
 still-smoking rifle.

SILGRID
 We ain't letting him close to ye,
 captain! Now get yerself and the
 lad on board!

SIONIA
 I knew he wouldn't keep ye busy
 for long!

SILGRID
 Not even a dragon could've slowed
 us down!

ARIEN
 A dragon? You took on a dragon?

SILGRID
 Just a metaphor, laddie! Now come
 on up!

ARIEN

I-

SIONIA

Come with us. Staying here is a fool's errand. The seas would be safer.

ARIEN

But-

SIONIA

There's no time. Make yer choice.

ARIEN

Alright.

Arien and Sionia climb aboard.

ARIEN

I think... I need to go to sleep.

Arien falls facefirst, far more tired than he lets on. The crew laughs.

SIONIA

Here's to a new crewmate! Silgrid, you get him a bunk?

SILGRID

Aye, of course.

The shimmering vessel sails off into the night, and from far above, the hooded figure looks down.

HOODED FIGURE

You truly are as wily as I thought, Sionia... But this isn't over.