

The Crystal of Truth
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Based on The Dark Crystal created by
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THE CRYSTAL OF TRUTH

BLACK

A legend emerges from the darkness:

Another World, Another Time... In the Age
of Wonder.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. THE CASTLE OF THE CRYSTAL - DAY

The three suns in the sky are overlapping. The Great
Conjunction of the three suns is moments away.

JEN'S VOICE

"When single shines the triple sun,
What was sundered and undone
Shall be whole, the two made one
By Gelfling hand or else by none."

HARD CUT TO:

INT. THE CASTLE - THE CRYSTAL CHAMBER (FLASHBACK)

KIRA wheels around, her back to The Dark Crystal, holding the
shard out like a dagger.

The SKEKSIS are flanking Kira, trying to surround her. She
turns quickly from side to side, jabbing the shard at them
menacingly.

JEN

No! Leave her alone!

SKEKSIL the Chamberlain tentatively extends his hand toward
Kira.

SKEKSIL

Give us the shard and you can go free.

KIRA

No!

JEN

Yes! Just don't harm her!

KIRA

No, Jen!

Kira clasps the shard in both hands.

KIRA

Heal the Crystal.

Behind her, SKEKZOK the Ritual Master draws his sacrificial knife...

JEN

Kira...

Kira throws the shard up to Jen...

In a high, slow arc, the shard glitters through the air.

SkekZok stabs his knife through Kira's back.

The shard curves into Jen's hand.

Kira falls.

Jen gasps, paralyzed with anguish.

Kira weakly raises herself up to look into Jen's eyes...

KIRA

Jen...

She slowly sags back to the floor, and is still.

JEN (O.S.)

Kira...

Jen is numb with despair. Kira was the last of his species. He'd loved her more than he'd ever loved anyone, because finally there was someone like him he could share his life with. Now, she is gone forever... and he is alone again.

Through the roof portal, the suns align, shining together fantastically bright...

SKEKSIS (O.S.)

(frantic, overlapping)

Gelfling... no! Gelfling, no!

A blinding column of light streaks down into the Crystal.

Jen, blinded by the light, raises the shard high over his head.

Then, with a HOWL of grief and rage, he plunges the shard down deep into the Crystal. A torrential explosion of energy hurls Jen from the Crystal like a rag doll.

The Skeksis recoil in agony as the Dark Crystal clears to a lucid transparency, shining with piercing brightness.

Dazed, Jen gets to his feet, staring forlornly at Kira, who lies lifeless on the floor below the great Crystal. He walks towards her in a haze of confusion and grief.

The Skeksis wander around blindly, disoriented...

The GARTHIM'S claws drop off. Their armor plates hit the floor with a clatter. Their purple eyes extinguish. Soon, nothing is left of the Garthim but heaps of shell.

The Podling slaves' milky eyes clear. They look around in bewilderment.

Jen kneels next to Kira. He weeps with grief as he cradles her lifeless body in his arms, oblivious to all around him.

The urRU stride into the quaking, brilliant chamber. The Skeksis scuttle away from them in terror.

EXT. THE CASTLE

The encrusted filth of centuries is beginning to fall away from the castle walls.

INT. THE CRYSTAL CHAMBER

The urRu form an arc on the chamber floor, below the Crystal.

Here, too, the filth is falling from the walls. Pure white light streams through the castle walls where the putrid rubble has fallen away.

Suddenly, light beams refract from the Crystal, piercing directly through the bodies of the urRu and onto the eight Skeksis. Each Skeksis is inexorably drawn toward his urRu counterpart, as though by a vacuum.

The filth on the walls falls away completely and disintegrates, revealing the pure, living rock of the Castle walls. The walls seem to glow from within.

As the beams force Skeksis and urRu to meet, the two begin to "melt" into one another in a wash of brilliant light.

Jen watches in wonder as each Skeksis and urRu fuse to form a single creature: an URSKEK... a being that seems distilled from silver light rather than made of substance. The urSkeks stand tall and erect in an arc below the brilliant Crystal.

AUGHRA and FIZZGIG arrive on the balcony. Aughra stares, elated at the sight of the urSkeks. Fizzgig barks excitedly at the new strangers in their midst.

AUGHRA

"What was sundered and undone
Shall be whole, the two... made one!"

Then, silence. Not even Fizzgig stirs. Finally, the urSkek in whom urIm the Healer and skekUng the Garthim-Master were united, speaks. IMUNG'S voice is carried on the energy of thought alone. His lips do not move.

IMUNG

And now, the prophecy is fulfilled. We
are again... one.

Holding Kira's body in his arms, Jen rises, and through his tears faces the urSkeks. ImUng looks down at him.

IMUNG

Many ages ago, in our arrogance and
delusion, we shattered the pure Crystal,
and our world split apart. Your courage
and sacrifice have made us whole, and
restored the true power of the Crystal.

ImUng nods to Kira.

IMUNG

Hold her to you. She is part of you, as
we all are part of each other.

Jen holds Kira close.

The urSkeks begin chanting, their deep voices reverberating throughout the chamber.

As the chant builds, Kira stirs... Jen looks down in astonishment as Kira's eyes flutter, then open, gazing into Jen's in bewilderment. He gazes into his love's eyes, elated. He looks up at imUng with a gratitude too deep for words. Kira looks up at imUng and the urSkeks in wonder.

ImUng gazes almost affectionately at the two Gelfling.

IMUNG

Now, we leave you The Crystal of Truth.
Make your world in its light.

Jen and Kira watch in awe as the urSkeks melt into orbs of spinning light. They rise upwards, swirling out through the portal in the roof.

Jen and Kira look down at The Crystal of Truth. The urSkeks have left them with an awesome responsibility: They are the keepers of the very heart of their world.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE CASTLE OF THE CRYSTAL

The castle is no longer the dingy structure it was. It is now a beautiful structure of pure crystal, shining in the brilliance of the three suns as they move out of their conjunction. The land surrounding is once again lush and green. A new age is dawning...

Over this appears the title:

THE CRYSTAL OF TRUTH

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RINDAAR RIVER WATERFALL - DAY

Sunlight sparkles off an extraordinarily beautiful waterfall. The water below is so clear, fish can be seen swimming below the surface that almost seem to be made of Crystal.

Jen sits on the shore, reading some sort of manuscript. He is completely absorbed by it.

Suddenly, a large shadow sweeps over him. He looks up, and his mouth drops open in astonishment. He stands.

Kira is flying above him. It is not the weak, fluttering down she did when she rescued Jen from the Garthim. She is swooping widely with confidence and grace.

She swoops down so gracefully that she seems to land, step towards him and fold her wings all in one fluid movement.

Kira wears a travel outfit, designed to be light to allow for extended flight. A skirt covers Kira's legs down to the mid-thighs. The skirt emphasizes and compliments the lovely brown spots that run the length of her legs.

JEN

Kira?

Kira enjoys his look of utter incredulity.

JEN

You can really fly!

KIRA

I know. My wings are getting stronger.
They've never felt like this before.
Things everywhere seem to be changing.

Jen takes a moment to examine Kira's folded wings. They are noticeably thicker and more hardy.

Kira points to the manuscript.

KIRA

What's that?

Kira steps behind Jen and puts her arms around him, sniffing his hair as he explains.

JEN

Oh. This is a book Aughra's writing.

KIRA

What's a book?

JEN

Remember writing? Words that stay? Well a book is something you can keep words in so you can carry them with you.

KIRA

Oh. What's she writing about?

JEN

The world. Everything that's happened. A history of our world, from the First Conjunction, which Aughra witnessed, until the Crystal was healed. She's writing it in Gelfling, since we were the only native species with a written...

When he turns to her, her face is almost touching his. He freezes, mesmerized by her gaze. Slowly, Kira leans towards him and gently touches her lips to his. She holds the kiss, savoring the moment.

When Kira finally breaks the kiss, Jen looks at her, puzzled at first... but he liked the way it felt.

Jen hesitantly turns and takes Kira by the arms, pulls her closer and awkwardly touches his lips to hers.

As the kiss grows longer, Kira opens her mouth. Jen pulls back, startled. Kira giggles. Slowly, Jen pulls Kira to him again and their lips touch and open. The kiss deepens. Jen trembles. He starts running his fingers through her long, soft hair, savoring the feeling.

His hand brushes something in her hair. He breaks the kiss to look at it: a wooden ornament, painted mauve, tied into a braid. It almost looks like two interlocking hearts.

JEN

What's this?

KIRA

A Gelfling clan emblem. My foster mother found it in my clothing when I was rescued from the Garthim.

JEN

Your clan?

KIRA

I assume.

JEN

Do you know their name?

Kira shakes her head.

JEN

I've never seen you wear this before.

Kira hesitates. She bites her lower lip thoughtfully.

KIRA

Jen... did your Master teach you anything about Gelfling mating?

Jen shakes his head.

JEN

The only thing he ever taught me about our people is our language.

Kira pauses to collect her thoughts.

KIRA

When Gelfling decide to become mates, the female adopts the male into her clan in a ritual called Bonding.

KIRA(cont'd)

The Bonding is a pledge between a man and a woman to be together always.

Kira's eyes lock with Jen's.

KIRA

I want us to be together. Always. I want us to be mates according to Gelfling tradition. To preserve at least a small part of our heritage.

JEN

Do you know this ritual?

KIRA

The Podlings taught me. They know little of our history, but they know much of our rituals and traditions.

Kira gently squeezes Jen's upper arms.

KIRA

Be my mate, Jen.

For a moment, Jen is stunned into silence. Then:

JEN

But... I don't know anything about being a mate...

Kira smiles warmly.

KIRA

You'll learn.

Kira leans towards him again. Their lips touch and open. Jen's arms encircle Kira and he pulls her body against him. Her arms envelop him in return. They embrace, drawing each other closer until they almost seem to be of one body.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RINDAAR RIVER WATERFALL - DUSK

Jen and Kira stand before the waterfall, facing each other, both nude. Kira still wears the "clan braid" in her hair. She holds another emblem of her clan in her right hand, braided into a necklace made from her hair.

Kira's body is a startingly beautiful symphony of gentle curves.

The brown spots run, not only along her legs, but also along her sides, her buttocks and her back in a lovely symmetrical pattern. Her wings fold so flat that they follow the contours of her body like a second skin.

About fifty Podlings sit in rows along the ground. They look on with rapt attention. Another Podling, sitting out in front, plays a haunting melody on a double-flute, like Jen's. Aughra sits alone to one side, watching with keen interest.

Kira takes Jen's hands in hers and he drops to one knee. She takes the necklace and places it around Jen's neck. A band of the hair is tied around the middle of the emblem, crossing in front of it (this is called a bonding knot).

Jen takes Kira's hands in his and he rises. Now, Kira drops to one knee. Jen takes her clan braid in his hand, fumbling awkwardly. Kira smiles affectionately and takes Jen's hands in hers, guiding him in tying the bonding knot.

Finally, Jen takes Kira's hands in his and helps her to her feet. They embrace gently and kiss, sealing their union.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RINDAAR RIVER WATERFALL - NIGHT

Jen and Kira in silhouette against the moonlight. They kiss, gently at first... then the kiss grows more passionate. Kira takes Jen gently by the arms and pulls him down to the ground with her, and out of our view.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RINDAAR RIVER WATERFALL - MORNING

Jen is asleep. Slowly, Jen's eyes flutter and open. He blinks against the bright sunlight. He reaches for Kira... but she's not laying next to him.

Kira is sitting on a log nearby, quietly sobbing. Jen sits up, and Kira turns, startled. She quickly wipes away some of the tears that have collected on her face.

Jen crawls up behind her and puts his arms around her.

JEN
What's wrong?

Kira inhales and sighs heavily, squeezing Jen's hands.

KIRA

I've always wanted to be a mother, Jen...
I never thought I'd have the chance.

JEN

Well... now you do.

KIRA

But maybe we shouldn't have children at
all.

JEN

Why not?

KIRA

It wouldn't be fair to them. There's no
way they could have a future here. Our
people are gone. Our children could
never find mates, and have children of
their own... we would just be condemning
them to our fate.

Kira's eyes are bright with tears.

KIRA

They would be alone in the world... just
as you and I are.

Kira weeps silently. Jen guides Kira's head onto his
shoulder and strokes her hair comfortingly.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BANK OF RINDAAR RIVER - BEHIND THE CASTLE - DAY

The Podlings are still hard at work. The largest seedling is
almost half uncovered. Podlings work tirelessly, digging
around its base. The work is progressing slowly.

Kira, wearing a dirty Podling-style coverall, digs away
alongside them. Though sweaty, she doesn't seem the least
bit tired. She's obviously used to physical labor.

INT. THE SKEKSIS ROYAL BED CHAMBER

Aughra cackles with glee, poring over notes left behind by
skekUng the Garthim-Master. She's waited a long time to get
a close look at the history the Skeksis left behind.

She pulls two large books down from a shelf and heaves them
with difficulty to a dingy desk in the corner of the room.

The desk is already covered with half read books from the shelves, and Aughra is hard pressed to find room for more.

Fizzgig suddenly jumps up on the desk, scattering the books. Aughra sweeps him off the desk, cursing at him in her native tongue. Fizzgig yelps as he hits the floor, then rolls off.

He tumbles past Jen, who is just coming in with Aughra's manuscript.

JEN

You're still no help.

Not wanting to disturb Aughra's work, Jen quietly lays her manuscript on the desk and turns to leave.

As he turns, something in one of the books Fizzgig knocked to the floor catches his eye. He pauses, gazing, then leans down and scoops up the errant book.

Aughra glances up.

AUGHRA

Can't read that, Gelfling. Aughra can read Skeksis. Gelfling can't.

JEN

What is this map?

Aughra scoffs and grabs the book from Jen impatiently. She squints, focusing her eye on the page.

On the page is map of a shoreline. Inland is the Castle of the Crystal. Dotted lines run from the Castle toward the shore, merging into a single line, terminating at the shore.

AUGHRA

Gelfling escape from the Castle.

Now Aughra has Jen's attention.

JEN

Escape?

AUGHRA

Skeksis bred Gelfling for their essence. Used to have dungeon. Thousands of Gelfling there. Once, almost all escaped. Had ships waiting to take them across ocean. To Fourth Continent. After that, Skeksis too scared to keep Gelfling. Killed them all. Hm!

Jen glares at Aughra, incredulous.

JEN

Why didn't you ever mention this?

AUGHRA

Gelfling all dead. Garthim found them,
killed them all. Destroyed their ships.
All dead.

Jen pierces Aughra with a meaningful look.

JEN

That's what you thought... before you met
me.

INT. THE CHAMBER OF LIFE - LATER

Jen, Kira and Aughra are there. Aughra is studying some of
the machines and devices left behind by skekTek the
Scientist. She's surrounded by a haphazard collage of
scrolls, books and mechanical parts.

KIRA

The Skeksis used to see faraway places
with the Crystal bats. Maybe we could do
the same thing to see the Fourth
Continent from here.

Aughra gets her finger caught in something she's
disassembling. She grunts and sucks on it to stop the pain.

AUGHRA

Don't know how. Yet. Crystal holds many
secrets, yes. Might learn them all
tomorrow... or never. Hm!

Kira bites her lower lip thoughtfully.

KIRA

Then we have to go there ourselves. If
there are more of our people there...

AUGHRA

Foolish Gelfling. A lot of ground to
cover, Fourth Continent. For what?
Gelfling all dead! Extinct! Nothing to
find there!

JEN

Kira and I survived. Maybe some of those
who escaped could've gotten off the
continent undetected.

KIRA

So long as there's any chance that more of our people still survive, we must try to find them. We belong with them.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CASTLE GATE - DAWN

Kira, wearing her travel outfit from before, stands before the Castle gate, affixing saddles to two landstriders. Kira's outfit has one addition. She carries a pack in front in which she carries her supplies. Aughra and Jen stand nearby, watching. Fizzgig jumps and barks at her heels.

Jen is wearing much the same outfit he was wearing when he set off to find the shard, except now he carries a large pack on his back. Jen watches Kira harness the landstriders into their saddles with fascination.

KIRA

These will make our long journey more comfortable.

Kira tightens one final strap, then turns to Aughra.

KIRA

Take care of Fizzgig for me.

Aughra looks down at Fizzgig, making a face. She's not looking forward to this.

Fizzgig just stares back up at her, barking excitedly.

Kira climbs up onto her landstrider and motions for Jen to do the same. Jen pulls himself up somewhat awkwardly, though once in the saddle, he seems quite comfortable.

Kira shouts a command to the landstriders, and they surge away across the field.

EXT. THE FIELD

The landstriders gallop swiftly over the land. The rushing wind whips Jen and Kira's hair back as the ground blurs by beneath them.

AT THE GATE

Aughra watches them go.

AUGHRA
(under her breath)
Good luck, Gelfling.

Aughra is snapped out of her reverie by Fizzgig's insistent barking. He looks up at her, jumping up and down excitedly.

Aughra shakes her head and rolls her eye.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FOREST - DUSK

The forest is dark and mildly foreboding, though it possesses a certain sombre beauty in its lush, drooping trees and clinging moss. Forest creatures can be heard all around.

EXT. SMALL CLEARING

Kira has constructed a lean-to out of branches, leaves and moss. An area is cleared in front of it for a fire. Jen is just bringing an armful of wood while Kira is trying to start a fire.

While she works, there is a rustling nearby. Kira's ears perk up and she turns towards the sound, listening and sniffing the air inquisitively. Jen heard it, too.

JEN
What is it?

Kira motions for quiet. She listens for a moment. Whatever it was seems to be gone now. Cautiously, Kira goes back to her work.

There's a loud SNAP of a twig. Kira lunges to her feet, again sniffing the air. She's caught a scent. Now she knows there's something out there. Jen looks on nervously.

There's a low, ominous growl, coming directly from the direction Kira is facing. Jen whips around, startled. Kira grabs his arm firmly, whispering into his ear:

KIRA
Be still. Make no sound.

Kira slowly moves Jen towards the lean-to and steps out into the center of the clearing, looking in the direction of the sound.

A nightmarish creature steps out from the shadows: a huge ape-like being covered in thick, black fur. It's about Kira's height, but bulky and powerful. It has fangs four inches long, and bright green eyes that almost glow. The creature regards Kira, growling and baring its teeth.

The color drains from Jen's face.

Slowly, Kira drops into a fighting stance.

Jen's eyes widen in horror when he realizes what Kira is planning to do.

JEN

Kira...

KIRA

(a harsh whisper)

Quiet! Stay back!

Kira and the creature circle each other. Kira's movements are smooth and practiced, presenting the appearance of a capable, experienced fighter.

The creature lunges, fangs bared. Kira sidesteps and grabs the creature, using its momentum to hurl it into a tree. The creature snarls in pain.

Jen blinks in bewildered amazement.

The creature circles Kira more cautiously. She never takes her eyes off it.

It lunges and swipes at her. Kira ducks and somersaults, avoiding the blow and getting back to her feet instantly.

The creature charges, lunging to bite her neck. Kira drops to the ground and rolls towards the creature with startling speed. Her spinning legs scissor one of the creature's as it races forward. It trips, hitting the ground face first with a resounding thud. Kira scrambles to her feet.

Enraged, the creature leaps up and charges again, swiping at Kira. She ducks, simultaneously spinning. As she comes around, she lashes out a foot that catches the creature squarely in the nose.

The creature howls. Dazed and hurt, its nose bleeding green, it staggers back from Kira's assault, then turns and runs in terror.

Kira watches the creature's retreat for a moment, not daring to look away until she's certain it is gone. Then she resumes her work as if nothing at all had happened.

Jen, on the other hand, is not nearly so composed. He looks as if he might faint.

JEN
What was that?

KIRA
A kamatu beast. I've met them before. They're big and powerful, but their noses are very sensitive. One blow is usually enough to drive them off.

JEN
Usually?!

KIRA
Jen, relax. You're safe with me. I know all the creatures here. Very few are dangerous, and those that are I know how to handle. It's all right. Trust me.

Jen trusts Kira, but he's still badly shaken. He moves to sit down on a nearby rock, but is shaking so badly he misses, rolling off the rock to fall flat on his back.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. OCEAN SHORE - MORNING

The blue-green ocean stretches off to the horizon.

Jen and Kira race along the sandy beach on their landstriders. Kira is looking up, searching the sky.

She sees a flock of huge winged creatures flying overhead, with wingspans of about fourteen feet. Their bodies are covered in thin, brown fur and they have eight inch black beaks that shine as if polished. These are WINDGLIDERS.

Kira whistles loudly to them.

They turn and look down, then a few of them swoop down towards the beach.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FLYING OVER THE OCEAN

Two windgliders carry Jen and Kira at dizzying speed over the sparkling water. Their talons are clasped together, almost forming seats which Jen and Kira sit in. Kira looks back to see the shore retreating into the distance, then looks ahead and watches the water rush by far below.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. OPPOSITE SHORE - FOURTH CONTINENT - DUSK

Jen and Kira, disheveled and tired on their windgliders, approach the shore. There is still some daylight coming from the setting Rose Sun, but it is getting dark. The Great Sun and Dying Sun have already set.

Kira looks out over the land and gasps in astonishment. Jen follows her gaze, and his jaw drops.

Inland, a palace can be seen atop a small hill. It's a majestic structure of golden sandstone that stands out clearly against the deep blue of the cloudless dusk sky. The orange rays of the sunset further enhance the effect, almost making the palace look as if it were made of gold.

Surrounding the palace is a village, and that in turn is surrounded by a high stone wall, forming a fortress, situated on the shore of a sheltered lagoon. In the lagoon, there is a harbor where many tall ships are moored to a massive wharf further down the beach.

Jen and Kira exchange a look of hope. Kira speaks to the windgliders. They turn and swoop towards the distant fortress.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. OVER THE LAGOON

Jen and Kira flying towards the fortress. They are guided only by the flickering torchlights in the village and the fading twilight behind them. A strong wind is picking up.

EXT. LOOKOUT TOWER - FORTRESS WALL

The silhouettes of three GELFLING stand in the tower. One of them is looking through a telescope.

The one with the telescope issues several rapid hand signals. The other two Gelfling scurry off quietly.

JEN & KIRA

stare off into the darkness at the village. Kira cocks her head as she sees something.

Several figures rise up over the fortress wall, flying towards them. From this distance the figures are indistinct black shapes. At first they almost look like huge bats, but as they get closer, they can see that they're much larger.

Jen and Kira strain to see in the darkness.

There is a faint "twang" sound ahead. Suddenly, Kira's windglider cries out in agony.

Startled, Kira looks up to see something sticking out of her windglider's chest. She reaches up to feel it: an arrow. Her hand comes away covered with blood.

The fatally wounded windglider plummets, unclasping its talons. Unprepared, Kira drops like a stone.

JEN

Kira!

Before she can open her wings, she slams into the water with stunning force.

UNDER THE WATER

Kira is momentarily disoriented. She doesn't know which way is up. She struggles.

ON THE SURFACE

Kira surges to the surface, coughing and sputtering, gulping in great lung fulls of air. A large wave crashes over her. She comes up again, choking, spitting out water.

Overhead, Jen calls down to her.

JEN

Kira! Are you all right?

KIRA

Go, Jen! They're trying to shoot us down! Go!

JEN

I can't leave you here!

Another wave crashes over Kira. She comes up coughing madly. Between coughs, she calls desperately to Jen's windglider. It suddenly veers away, carrying Jen away. He tries to get it to go back, but it doesn't understand.

JEN

Kira! No! Stop! Go back! Kira, NO!!!

Jen continues to shout, but his cries are lost in the wind and the waves.

Kira is drowning under the waves whipped up by the wind. Her only chance is to reach the shore. She swims for it desperately.

The further she goes, the weaker Kira's struggles become. The shore is in sight. It looks like she can almost reach it, but...

Just before she reaches the shore, Kira finally has no strength left to keep up the fight. She slips under the water. She holds her last breath for as long as she can, but she no longer has the strength to struggle to the surface.

Finally, her eyes roll back in her head and she begins to lose consciousness. Bubbles roll up from her mouth and nose as she slowly loses her last reserves of air.

Just as her eyes close, hands from above grab her and yank her towards the surface...

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. LAGOON SHORE

Kira's face. Another Gelfling's head (red haired) blocks our view and gives Kira a breath mouth-to-mouth. Then the Gelfling moves away and Kira's head jostles as if her chest is being pushed. Suddenly, a torrent of water bubbles out from Kira's mouth and she coughs violently.

The still not fully seen Gelfling rolls Kira on her stomach to allow her to expel the water. After several moments of coughing and gasping, Kira recovers enough of her breath to turn over and finally look up at her rescuer.

Her rescuer turns out to be only one of twelve Gelfling which surround her, holding torches. They are all wearing dark green and brown uniforms with distinctive black arm bands bearing emblems embroidered in white. They are obviously soldiers of some sort.

The rescuer, DORIA MARANEK, kneels next to her. Her uniform is decorated, implying high rank. Her jade green eyes are bright and piercing. She has a clan emblem with bonding knot in her medium length auburn hair. Unlike Kira or Jen, she has gracefully upswept eyebrows.

Doria glares at Kira suspiciously, bringing her torch closer to examine Kira's features. Doria's eyes narrow, and she snatches Kira's clan braid, staring at her clan emblem in disbelief.

DORIA
Kindala!

Kira is astonished.

KIRA
You know my clan...?

DORIA
Quiet!

Doria's voice is strong and authoritative. She fingers Kira's bonding knot.

DORIA
She's boned. The other one must've been
her mate. Find him.

Doria looks around to her soldiers and issues several hand signals, like the ones used in the lookout tower. Soldiers nod in acknowledgement. Two groups of soldiers run off in opposite directions. The third group, led by Doria, grabs Kira and hauls her to her feet. Kira struggles.

KIRA
Let go of me! What do you want...?

Doria turns to glare directly into Kira's eyes.

DORIA
Kindala... either be quiet, or I will
have you gagged. Your choice.

KIRA
What about my mate?

DORIA

We'll find him. But Jolen is going to have many questions for you.

EXT. THE PALACE - NIGHT

Now, with no light to illuminate it, the palace is dark and foreboding... almost threatening. Faint torch light glows and flickers through the windows.

INT. PALACE - THRONE ROOM

The cavernous room is lavishly decorated, dominated by the throne at the rear wall. Padded in red velvet, the throne is studded with precious stones and embroidered in gold with a large emblem (identical to the ones on the uniforms).

Two SOLDIERS stand guard on either side of the throne. Doria whispers into the ear of a regal, middle-aged Gelfling man on the throne: JOLEN MARANEK. His eyebrows shadow his dark and penetrating eyes. He wears five clan braids, and he plays with one of the emblems in his fingers absently.

One of his clan emblems is white, and again identical to the ones on the throne and uniforms. The others are tied with bonding knots. Three are black. The last, mauve in color, is identical to Doria's. A sash he wears is embroidered again with his white emblem, and decorated with many medals.

He looks up as the throne room doors open. A group of Soldiers enter, bringing Kira before the throne. (Most of the Soldiers also have eyebrows, but a few do not).

Jolen raises his eyebrows, surveying Kira curiously.

JOLEN

Release her.

His voice is husky, but strangely soft... almost hypnotic. Kira shrugs out of the Soldiers' grasp.

Jolen steps down off his throne and stands before Kira, carefully examining her face. He reaches out and takes her clan braid in his hand, examining her clan emblem. Kira slaps his hand away.

KIRA

What do you want with me?

Jolen glares at Kira icily.

JOLEN
I will ask the questions.

He examines Kira's face.

JOLEN
Who are you?

KIRA
My name is Kira.

Jolen raises his eyebrows.

JOLEN
A Podling name.

Jolen slowly walks around Kira, examining her from every angle as he speaks.

JOLEN
I have never seen your face nor heard your name before. How have you, a Kindala, managed to elude my spy network for so long? Perhaps the Trokaan have a base I am unaware of?

KIRA
I don't know what you're talking about.

Jolen smiles coldly, sending a chill up Kira's spine.

JOLEN
If you won't tell me what I want to know, I'll just have to find out for myself.

Jolen reaches out and forcibly clasps Kira's hand in his. Kira's eyes widen and Jolen's mind invades hers:

DISSOLVE TO:

DREAMFAST

Memories from Kira's mind, rapidly dissolving over one another. We see ONLY Kira's memories: none of Jolen's.

Kira's mother hiding her in the tree... a Podling carrying her into his village... her Podling foster mother feeding her... Garthim rampage through the Podling village...

A Podling teaches Kira to fight... to use a sling... Kira runs with Fizzgig... rides a landstrider...

rows a boat on a river... meets Jen in the swamp... takes him back to her village... he shows Kira the shard...

JEN
...before the three suns join in one...

Now, the images slow down, becoming more detailed.

The Gelfling ruins. Jen reading the prophecy:

JEN
"When single shines the triple sun..."

Jen and Kira riding the landstriders to the Castle.

In the Crystal Chamber. Kira holds the shard.

KIRA
No, Jen! Heal the Crystal.

She throws the shard to Jen, then is stabbed and falls to the floor.

KIRA
Jen...

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

Jen's face. Then the face of ImUng:

IMUNG
Now, we leave you The Crystal of Truth.
Make your world in its light.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THRONE ROOM

Jolen releases Kira's hand and slowly steps back, awestruck. He can barely believe what he's just seen.

JOLEN
You came from the First Continent. Our homeland.

KIRA
Yes.

Everyone in the room murmurs at this revelation. Jolen puts up a hand to silence them.

JOLEN

The Crystal... your mate healed it? The Skeksis are gone?

KIRA

Yes.

Jolen gazes at Kira in awe. He just stares at her, speechless for several moments. Finally, he steps forward and gently grasps her arms almost reverently.

JOLEN

Then you and your mate are the heroes of the Gelfling people and of the world of Thra itself.

Jolen crosses his arms so his fingertips touch his shoulders, then bows his head briefly (a traditional Gelfling salute).

JOLEN

Kira Kindala. I am Jolen Dellin-Maranek, Emperor of the Dellin Empire.

Jolen gestures to Doria beside him.

JOLEN

This is my Empress, and Iradah of the Gelfling armed forces, Doria Maranek. We are honored by your presence.

KIRA

"Honored?" You shot me down. Then you dragged me here, forced my memories from me...

JOLEN

We didn't know who you were. We thought you might be a spy planted by the Sandlings or the Trokaan Alliance.

KIRA

Sandlings? Trokaan Alliance...?

JOLEN

I will answer all of your questions, but first, please do Doria and myself the honor of joining us at dinner.

KIRA

What about my mate? We got separated when your people attacked.

JOLEN

I assure you, we will do everything we can to find him. Doria's troops are even now searching the shores and surrounding wilderness for him. I give you my word he will not be harmed. In the meantime, please, have dinner with us. I'm sure you've never had real Gelfling cooking before. And you must be hungry after your long journey.

Kira's anger softens a bit. She nods.

INT. JOLEN & DORIA'S PRIVATE DINING CHAMBER - LATER

Designed for two to four diners. The only illumination is from a candle chandelier above and a single candle on the table. The table is covered with a red tablecloth gold-embroidered with a pattern of Dellin clan emblems.

Jolen, Kira and Doria all have elaborate meals in front of them. Servants are just bringing in another dish. Kira, never having tasted true Gelfling food before, is enjoying it quite thoroughly. It's obviously far tastier than anything she's ever eaten before. Kira glances at Doria curiously.

KIRA

Doria, tell me something. When you saw my clan emblem, you knew right away what clan it was.

DORIA

Of course. Every Gelfling knows of the Kindala.

KIRA

Why? What's so special about my clan?

JOLEN

One of your ancestors, Maaldin Kindala, was the man responsible for organizing the first escape from the Castle. He was also our leader... the first ruler of our people here on the Fourth Continent.

KIRA

(astonished)

Your ruler?

Jolen nods, fingering one of his clan emblems as he collects his thoughts.

JOLEN

Shortly after he was elected, we encountered a species that call themselves Sandlings. We were having trouble growing food on this soil, so they had offered to share some of their farmland and food. But even with their help, food was scarce. We were starving. So Maaldin decided that we should take the Sandlings' more fertile land for ourselves. So he assembled an army and ordered an attack on the neighboring Sandling villages.

KIRA

Attack?!

JOLEN

He succeeded in capturing three villages before the Sandlings retaliated, destroying half our village and killing hundreds of our people. The Sandlings have been our mortal enemies ever since. After that, Maaldin was removed from the throne and I was elected to take his place. I banished him for his crimes.

KIRA

Where did he go?

JOLEN

Several of our people remained loyal to Maaldin and followed him into exile. He and his followers formed a rebel group: the Trokaan Alliance.

Kira leans forward slightly, hope and urgency in her voice.

KIRA

Does Maaldin still lead them? Is there any way I can meet him?

Doria starts to speak, but Jolen cuts her off.

JOLEN

Maaldin is dead. He was killed in battle long ago... but his legacy lives on. He is a martyr to the Trokaan. They still fight me in his memory to this day.

Kira lowers her eyes in bitter disappointment. She shakes her head.

KIRA

We escape from the Skeksis, only to suffer under a new enemy. My ancestor's actions have left us no better off than we were before.

JOLEN

That will soon change.

KIRA

What do you mean?

JOLEN

Ever since The Great Conjunction, I've been planning an expedition to return to the First Continent. The time has come for our people to return to our rightful homeland. Once there, we will be free of the Sandlings once and for all.

Jolen reaches out and takes one of Kira's hands in his. Doira freezes, watching this uneasily.

JOLEN

You will be our guide to lead us home.

EXT. HARBOR - DAY

The harbor on the lagoon, bustling with activity. Hundreds of Gelfling load carts of provisions onto eight tall ships moored along the massive wharves. Landstriders pull cart loads of crates up to the gangplanks.

The ships are all sizable warships armed with cannons. Seven out of eight of the ships are armed with 32 cannons each (sixteen per side with two gun decks). One of the ships is noticeably larger than the others, carrying 64 cannons (32 per side with three gun decks).

Jolen is walking along the wharf with Kira, taking her on a guided tour.

JOLEN

All together, these ships can carry more than a thousand people. Seven or eight trips should see the entire populace moved.

Jolen puts his arm around Kira and pulls her a little closer. This puts Kira on edge. She glances over at Jolen anxiously.

JOLEN

When we arrive, you will certainly be named our Empress.

Jolen strokes Kira's cheek. She turns, trying to pull away diplomatically without offending him. We hear someone clearing their throat. Jolen and Kira both turn.

Doria.

Jolen immediately lets his arms drop, but Doria has already seen what he was doing. She glares at him. Jolen quickly changes the subject.

JOLEN

Iradahn. How go the preparations?

Doria glares at Jolen for a moment before replying.

DORIA

We should be able to depart by midday tomorrow.

JOLEN

(re: Kira)

Any sign of her mate?

DORIA

Not so far. We're starting to investigate the forest surrounding the nearest Sandling villages. We're pretty certain he survived at least. If he had fallen in the lagoon, his body would have washed up somewhere by now.

KIRA

Lady Maranek, I've had extensive experience travelling in the wilderness. I'd like to help look for him.

DORIA

Can you ride a landstrider?

KIRA

Of course.

Doria nods and points.

DORIA

The stables are that way. Get yourself a mount. I'll be there shortly to assign you to a party.

Kira nods and walks off towards the stables.

Once Kira is gone, Doria turns to talk to Jolen. But before she can say a word, he speaks:

JOLEN
Raid the Sandlings.

Doria is taken aback.

DORIA
Raid them...?

JOLEN
We must find her mate before the Trokaan do. If they find out where he came from...

Doria is obviously reluctant to follow this order, but from the tone of Jolen's voice, discussion would be pointless.

DORIA
Understood.

Jolen turns to leave.

DORIA
Jolen... we need to talk.

He doesn't even turn.

JOLEN
Later.

Doria blinks, taken aback at being brushed off so abruptly. She glares after him for a moment, then turns and walks into the crowd towards the landstrider stables.

EXT. THE VILLAGE - DAY

Bustling with activity. Shop keepers are closing up their shops for the impending move. Carts pulled by landstriders move through the streets carrying provisions to the ships.

Jolen is walking through the village to the palace when a VILLAGER approaches him, salutes, and kneels before him.

VILLAGER
Lord Jolen, may I have the honor of a word with you?

Jolen stops and smiles at the Villager.

JOLEN

Certainly.

VILLAGER

I understand you're decreasing the food rations for the next cycle of the moon.

JOLEN

Yes. The ships need the supplies.

VILLAGER

But Lord, my mate just gave birth to our third child. We can't afford to have our rations reduced.

JOLEN

I'm afraid we have no choice.

VILLAGER

Lord, I do not mean to appear ungrateful, but we barely get enough flour to make one loaf of bread every four days, and the fruits and vegetables don't last long with five hungry mouths to feed.

Jolen smiles almost compassionately. Then he does something odd. He kneels before the Villager, taking his hand in his.

The Villager looks directly into Jolen's eyes, his expression glassing over at the very touch of Jolen's hand.

JOLEN

Very well. If you need an increase in your rations, you're welcome to it.

Jolen clasps the Villager's hand in both of his.

The Villager blinks, entranced.

VILLAGER

We have plenty of food, Lord. But thank you for your kind offer.

Jolen pats the Villager's hand... but he holds not just his hand, but the very soul of the man. Jolen has the ability to shape the thoughts of others in much the same way most Gelfling share thoughts in dreamfasting.

JOLEN

You're quite welcome, my friend.

Jolen rises and nods to the Villager who bows briefly and goes about his business as if nothing at all had happened.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

A group of four Gelfling SOLDIERS ride slowly through the forest on saddled landstriders accompanied by Kira.

Although the creatures on which they ride are obviously landstriders, there are appreciable physical differences. They're dark brown in color with much shorter ears, and their eyes are appreciably larger. They're also covered in thick hair, almost like a woolly mammoth.

A soldier from another nearby group quietly pulls up alongside her. Kira turns to look at him.

Jen. Wearing one of Doria's soldiers' uniforms.

Kira's eyes widen in surprise, and she starts to speak, but Jen raises a hand for quiet. He motions for Kira to follow him, and he turns his landstrider into the forest. Kira follows him, puzzled.

EXT. A VILLAGE OF MOSS HUTS

There, Jen and Kira are greeted by eight more riders on landstriders, only these are not Gelfling. They are about Gelfling height and muscular with tough, scaly bodies and powerful limbs. Their skin is deep green. Large spines run up their backs and over the tops of their heads.

Kira leans close to Jen nervously, whispering:

KIRA
Who are these people?

JEN
Sandlings.

Kira's eyes widen in shock.

KIRA
Sandlings? But...

JEN
The Sandlings are not our enemy, Kira, no matter what Emperor Maranek told you.

KIRA
How do you know about him?

JEN

Believe me. The name Jolen Dellin-
Maranek is very well known here.

A tremendous commotion near the outskirts of the village interrupts them. Bells ringing. Voices shouting in a foreign language, though one word is clearly recognizable: "Gelfling!" The din rises in volume, soon intermingled with the sounds of approaching hoofbeats.

Four of the Sandlings rein their mounts and turn to gallop towards the commotion. The other four motion for Jen and Kira to follow.

SANDLING SOLDIER

Come! Not safe here!

They turn at a tremendous clamor behind them.

Down the main street, Gelfling soldiers are tearing through the village. Mounted on landstriders, the Gelfling surge through the streets, swinging razor sharp lightweight swords with precision, expertly downing Sandling after Sandling in their path.

Gelfling females fly overhead, firing crossbows bearing flaming arrows into the grass roofs of the Sandling huts, setting them aflame.

The Gelfling are laying ruin to the entire village.

Kira is momentarily frozen in utter disbelief. She simply cannot believe what they're seeing. Gelfling are massacring everyone in the village.

SANDLING SOLDIER

Come!

One of the Sandling Soldiers is beckoning Jen and Kira to follow him. Jen rides up and shakes Kira by the arm.

JEN

Come on, Kira! Move!

Jen physically grabs the reins of Kira's landstrider and pulls. The landstrider obeys the command and begins following. They race for the nearby woods.

One of Jolen's Soldiers spots them fleeing. He whistles and hand signals to his group, and they all take off in pursuit.

EXT. FOREST

Jen, Kira and the four Sandlings ride at insane speeds, ducking tree limbs and vines to avoid being thrown off their mounts.

Four of Jolen's soldiers are in hot pursuit.

Up ahead, there is a group of eight Gelfling on landstriders, waiting, listening with apprehension to the distant battle. These Gelfling are armed like soldiers, though they don't wear any kind of uniform. Their clothing seems designed for camouflage more than anything else. They are TROKAAN.

Their leader, RAVAHN, sits at the point of the group. He is a plain looking man with a nasty scar running down the side of his face. He has eyebrows, but most of the rest of the group do not. Those few that do are mostly female.

Suddenly, Jen, Kira and the Sandlings burst into the clearing and come to a stop.

JEN

Ravahn! Maranek soldiers right behind us!

RAVAHN

Go!

Instantly, the Trokaan group turns and breaks into a gallop.

Jolen's soldiers bound out into clearing, pursuing the fleeing Trokaan. The Sandlings draw their swords and turn to fight, distracting the Soldiers and giving the Trokaan time to escape.

Ravahn motions for Jen and Kira to follow him.

RAVAHN

Come with me!

Jen, Kira and the Trokaan follow.

The Sandlings are keeping the Gelfling Soldiers busy, circling them and slashing with their swords, forcing them to defend themselves with their own swords and not giving them a chance to draw their crossbows or pursue the others.

One of the Gelfling stabs the landstrider his Sandling is riding. The landstrider topples to the ground, hurling the Sandling away.

The Sandling rolls on the ground, getting up to his knees barely in time to parry the vicious swipe of the Gelfling's sword as he rides past.

Another Gelfling is swept off his mount entirely by a particularly vicious swipe by a Sandling. The Gelfling Soldier hits the ground with a painful thud.

The other two Gelfling are able to get away from the Sandlings long enough to draw their crossbows...

Ravahn, Kira, Jen, and the Trokaan scramble through the woods, ahead of this commotion.

They break into a clearing dominated by a waterfall with a small pool beneath. Ravahn wades in. Jen, Kira and the Trokaan follow.

RAVAHN

Deep breath!

He takes a deep breath and dives under. The others follow.

In the forest further back, one of the Sandlings is now involved in spirited swordplay with a Gelfling soldier.

The two Gelfling who drew their crossbows, no longer pursued by Sandlings, ride up and fire darts.

The darts catch the swordfighting Sandlings in the neck and the arm. Startled, he claps his hand on his neck.

Taking advantage of the distraction, the Gelfling strikes him across the chin with the hilt of his sword.

The Sandling sprawls back on the ground, losing consciousness from the drug in the darts.

INT. UNDERWATER TUNNEL/CAVE

Ravahn, Kira, Jen and the Trokaan swim out of the tunnel into a large chamber. They head upwards.

INT. CAVE

Ravahn's head breaks the surface, followed by Kira. Kira gratefully gulps in several breaths of air as Jen and the Trokaan surface around them.

They step up out of the water onto the hard stone floor. A tunnel leads out of the cave.

Several Gelfling and Sandlings are coming down the tunnel to meet them with towels, ushering them out of the cave.

Ravahn turns to Jen, pulling him aside.

RAVAHN

Has she found out anything useful?

JEN

I haven't had a chance to talk to her.

Ravahn moves to protest, but Jen holds up his hand.

JEN

Please, get her some dry clothes first.
The questions can wait a few moments.

Ravahn pauses for a moment, then reluctantly nods. He turns to one of the Gelfling.

RAVAHN

Get us some dry clothing.

GELFLING

Yes sir.

As the Gelfling and Ravahn move off, Jen turns to Kira and embraces her fiercely. Kira gladly returns the embrace, all but weeping with relief at having found him.

Jen's demeanor immediately shifts. He looks into Kira's eyes with urgency.

JEN

Kira... there's someone here that wants
to meet you.

Kira looks at Jen questioningly.

INT. ANOTHER CAVE

MAALDIN KINDALA paces back and forth, waiting. Maaldin is an older man with thick, graying hair and gentle, light brown eyes. He wears two clan emblems, one white and one black. The white one we don't know, but the black one, tied with a bonding knot, is clearly the Kindala clan emblem.

Jen enters, holding Kira's hand. Maaldin turns.

Maaldin stares at Kira, disbelief tinged with hope. Her face looks so familiar to him. The resemblance is obvious. They both have the same "dip" in their upper lips, and their eye colors are identical.

Jen, not wanting to interfere, discretely leaves and closes the door.

Maaldin slowly walks up to Kira. He reaches out and gently touches her clan emblem, staring at it in astonishment. Then he looks up to meet her gaze.

She stares back at him, eyes wide with wonder.

Maaldin reaches for her hand.

Kira takes it...

DISSOLVE TO:

DREAMFAST

Kira and Maaldin's faces, side by side, superimposed over the first few seconds of the images from their minds.

Kira's first memories:

Fire. Her mother hiding her in a tree. The two huge arms grab her mother by the neck and pull her out of Kira's sight.

Maaldin's memories... the same event:

Kira's mother (SHAHNDI), struggling to get free, is being pulled away from the tree by skekUng the Garthim Master. She pulls and tugs, but she's not strong enough to resist. Terrified now, she cranes her neck around and calls out:

SHAHNDI
FATHER!!!

Maaldin, wielding a large two-handed sword, turns at her call. His features distort in rage, and he charges skekUng, yelling wildly.

SKEKUNG
Garthim!

A nearby Garthim turns, swiping at Maaldin. It knocks him aside as if swatting a fly. Maaldin's sword goes flying.

Maaldin slams into the ground. Dazed, he stumbles woozily to his feet just as Garthim claws seize him from behind.

He watches helplessly as skekUng's claws close around his daughter's neck.

SHAHNDI
 (a strangled whisper)
 Father...

Maaldin, being dragged away by a Garthim, can do nothing to help her. He screams:

MAALDIN
NO!!!

The dreamfast dissolves, leaving behind only the echo of Maaldin's agonized plea.

DISSOLVE TO:

KIRA & MAALDIN

Their hands slowly unclasp.

They stare at each other for several moments in shock as they absorb the enormity of what they've just learned.

Finally, tears well up in Kira's eyes.

KIRA
 Grandfather...?

Astonishment melts into overwhelming relief and joy. Maaldin closes his eyes and pulls Kira to him, embracing her fiercely. He buries his face deep into her hair and weeps.

Kira presses her face into Maaldin's shoulder, clinging to the only connection she's ever had to her Gelfling family... her last living relative.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM

A plain room with stone walls. The only furniture in the room is a single wooden chair. In that chair sits one of the SANDLING SOLDIERS. He stares ahead with glassy eyes.

Jolen is the only other person in the room, and he holds the Soldier's hand.

JOLEN
 You were never captured. You got lost in the forest. Go back to your people and find out what Maaldin plans, then bring that information back to me.

SANDLING SOLDIER

Yes...

INT. JOLEN'S THRONE ROOM

Doria is the only one present. Jolen enters, bars the door behind him, and marches in.

JOLEN

Report!

DORIA

We managed to capture two Sandlings. The other two and the Trokaan escaped... with Kira.

Jolen glares at Doria.

JOLEN

Your soldiers have never failed me before, Doria. See to it that they do not fail me again.

DORIA

Yes, my Lord.

JOLEN

Now the Kira is with the Trokaan, they will know I plan to sail to the First Continent. They'll try to get there first. Assemble a battle group to intercept them.

DORIA

Yes, My Lord.

Doria turns to exit, but Jolen grabs her arm and whispers in her ear.

JOLEN

Doria. The Trokaan must be stopped at all costs. Capture them if you can, but if you can't... destroy them.

Doria turns to Jolen in shock.

DORIA

Kill fellow Gelfling...?

JOLEN

Those are your orders.

Jolen turns to leave.

DORIA

No.

Jolen freezes in mid-step.

JOLEN

What did you say?

DORIA

I will capture the Trokaan for you... but
I will not murder our own people.

Jolen turns back, his eyes blazing with fury.

Doria, frightened now, says nothing.

Jolen stands before her for a moment, glaring into her eyes then, without warning, backhands her brutally across the face. Doria staggers back.

Jolen grabs his wrist, wincing in pain.

Doria, seeing his vulnerability, lunges forward and grabs his wrist in a vice-like grip, cocking her fist.

Jolen roars in pain, grabbing her hand with his good right hand.

Suddenly, Doria's eyes glaze over, just as the Villager's had previously. Her face falls and becomes blank. Her hands relax, and Jolen rips his sore wrist out of her grip, grabbing her hand in both of his.

JOLEN

If you cannot capture the Trokaan, kill
them. Do you understand?

DORIA

(dazed)

Yes, my Lord.

Jolen hurls her to the floor.

JOLEN

Go.

Doria meekly gets up and does as she's bidden. Just as she reaches the door:

JOLEN

Doria.

She stops, turns.

JOLEN

If you fail, don't bother to return.

Doria just stares back at him for a moment, then turns and leaves without another word.

Jolen stares after her, scowling.

EXT. THE FOREST - DAY

A group consisting Maaldin, Jen, Kira and roughly 50 Trokaan and Sandlings, are riding through the forest on landstriders. Two landstriders pull carts laden with supplies. It is a difficult journey through thick underbrush.

Maaldin, Jen and Kira are in mid-conversation as they ride:

JEN

How can Jolen make people do such awful things?

MAALDIN

He has learned to use his mind to shape thought itself. One touch, and he can make people believe, or forget anything he wishes. He can even force people to do things, with no memory of what they did.

KIRA

But some Gelfling must have stronger minds. Be able to resist him.

MAALDIN

Most of his staff are Gelfinina. Gelfinina tend to have weaker minds. They're easier for him to control.

KIRA

Gelfinina?

MAALDIN

There are two races of Gelfling. Gelfinina and Gelfinaya. You, Jen and I are Gelfinaya.

JEN

How can you tell the difference?

MAALDIN

Eyebrows. Body hair. Gelfinina have them. Gelfinaya don't.

KIRA

Wait... then Jolen is Gelfinina? But his mind powers...

MAALDIN

Once in a while, a Gelfinina will be born with unusually powerful telepathic abilities. Unfortunately, most such Gelfinina tend to be mentally unstable.

They break into the clear, on the edge of a hill overlooking a tiny lagoon. Four small ships are moored there. Maaldin leads the entire group down along a path which descends gradually around the lagoon to meet with the wharf on the opposite side.

The Sandling Jolen dreamfasted with in the interrogation room earlier is seen among a group in the background. He observes the four ships. One of the four, a small ship like a schooner or sloop, is loaded and being readied to sail. The Sandling notes this, then surreptitiously turns to ride back.

INT. THE SHIP (RIELLE) - A CABIN

A large book, bound with leather worn from long use, is placed on a desk. Jen traces his finger across the hieroglyphics on the cover, reading:

JEN (O.S.)

"The Book of the Crystal."

Maaldin is showing the book to Jen and Kira.

MAALDIN

Everything our people ever learned about the Crystal. Some of the text has been translated from documents dating back more than four thousand years.

Jen opens the book reverently, fascinated.

Maaldin reaches past Jen and turns the pages towards the end of the book. He stops on a page, pointing to a passage.

MAALDIN

Read this.

JEN
 "When Gelfling return to their shore,
 Spiral at the Crystal's core,
 Shall sing as never before,
 By Gelfling hand, one and one more."

Jen turns to Maaldin, fearful as he grasps the implications.

JEN
 Two Gelfling...?

MAALDIN
 Who can control the Crystal. Two Chosen
 Ones. Jolen believes he is one of
 them... and that I am the other.

Kira's eyes go wide with fear.

KIRA
 Jolen... with the power of his mind...

MAALDIN
 If he is one of the Chosen Ones, and if
 he manages to capture the Crystal, the
 entire world could be plunged right back
 into the darkness the Skeksis nearly
 condemned us to.

Jen and Kira's eyes widen in horror at the implications.

EXT. HARBOR - DAY

The Sandling from before is speaking to Jolen and Doria on the wharf. He speaks in a flat, emotionless voice, his eyes glassy and unfocused.

SANDLING SOLDIER
 One ship. Rielle.

JOLEN
 Only one ship?

DORIA
 Their fastest. They can't outgun us, but
 they can easily outrun us. And with no
 slower ships accompanying them, they can
 run at maximum speed.

JOLEN
 They're trying to get to the Castle
 first. Set up a defence.

DORIA

What defence? Rielle is only a small Kel Riika. Twenty to thirty crew at best. They wouldn't stand a chance.

JOLEN

Not on their own. But if they get to the Castle early enough, they can get help. There are Podling villages throughout that region.

DORIA

Podlings? They're not warriors.

JOLEN

Perhaps not... but they might have 10,000 of them by the time we arrive. We can only bring across maybe 1000 soldiers at a time. They'd outnumber us 10 to one.

DORIA

Then our only chance is to get there first.

JOLEN

Do we have any ships ready to sail?

DORIA

Four Valash class.

JOLEN

Assemble your crews.

ON A SHIP'S DECK

The CREW is scrambling to prepare the ship to sail. Crew members cast off the mooring ropes and haul on the rigging to unfurl the sails.

The sails billow in the wind.

EXT. LAGOON

Four Valash class ships (the 32 cannon type from before) sailing at full speed out of the harbour, crashing mightily through the swells.

EXT. DECK OF THE LEAD SHIP (THE MAK'TAAN)

INDAHN PELMAAR MARKEYEN is at the wheel. A Gelfinina, he's significantly bigger than the average Gelfling. A full head taller, muscular and athletic. Doria stands at his side.

EXT. RIELLE

Crew on deck scramble to hoist the sails. The moment the main sail goes up, it billows out, catching the wind and the ship leaps forward. She's fast and maneuverable. She seems to skip over the swells like a pebble across a pond.

The ship carries a crew of 24. She only carries four cannons, two on each side.

The First Mate, Ravahn, is at the wheel. Maaldin and Kira stand alongside him.

EXT. DORIA'S BATTLE GROUP

The Mak'taan in the foreground. In the background are the other three ships some distance off. All three are maintaining a loose "diamond" formation.

EXT. MAK'TAAN

A LOOKOUT scans the water with a telescope.

She spots Maaldin's ship, racing from the shore.

She calls down.

LOOKOUT
Vessel off the port bow!

On deck, Doria looks through her telescope.

She spots Maaldin's ship.

DORIA
Battle stations.

Markeyen issues several hand signals. Instantly, the sail crew goes to work adjusting the sails.

EXT. THE RIELLE

The lookout in the crow's nest squints through his telescope, and points:

LOOKOUT
Vessels dead ahead!

Maaldin raises his telescope.

He sees Doria's ship cutting cross his path. In the distance behind and on either side of her, he can see two more ships. He spots the mast of the fourth ship just over the horizon, trailing the formation.

MAALDIN
Four. Valash class.

He lowers the telescope.

MAALDIN
We don't have time to go around them.
We're going straight through.
(to Ravahn)
Full sails!

RAVAHN
Aye, sir!

KIRA
Straight through?!

Maaldin smiles.

MAALDIN
That's why we call these vessels "Kel
Riika:" "Blockade Runner."

BATTLE SEQUENCE

MARKEYEN ON THE DECK OF MAK'TAAN

MARKEYEN
All gun decks, stand by to fire!

Gunnery crew on the main deck scramble to load and position the cannons.

ON THE LOWER GUN DECK, cannons are hurriedly being loaded. Already loaded guns are being rolled into the gun ports.

The doors of the gun ports burst open as cannons are thrust through.

ON DECK, Doria looks ahead with her telescope.

The Rielle is charging directly for them.

DORIA
Hard-a-starboard!

Markeyen spins the wheel savagely to starboard.

IN THE RIELLE'S CROW'S NEST, the lookout reports:

LOOKOUT
Lead vessel is coming to starboard!

ON DECK, Maaldin gives a quick look through his telescope.

MAALDIN
Give me the wheel.

Ravahn steps aside and lets Maaldin take the helm. He spins the wheel to port.

MAALDIN
Load all guns.

IN THE MAK'TAAN'S CROW'S NEST, the lookout calls:

LOOKOUT (O.C.)
Enemy vessel is turning!

ON DECK, Doria looks through her telescope.

The Rielle zigzagging, just coming out of a turn to port, now swinging to starboard, but never turning broadside.

Doria lowers her telescope. The Rielle is now abeam of her on the port side.

DORIA
Lower the sails! Hold this position.
Prepare to fire. Aim for their masts.

Hand signals from Markeyen. The crew scrambles to bring down the sails and aim the guns.

DORIA
Upper gun deck... fire.

Markeyen makes a slashing motion to the gunnery crew.

There is a series of thunderous BOOMS as all of the Mak'taan's upper port guns fire at once. The ship rolls sluggishly under the recoil.

ON THE RIELLE, Maaldin sees the guns fire, and spins the wheel hard to port. A moment later, the BOOM of the guns' fire and the whistling of the cannonballs reaches them. Tremendous splashes along the starboard side an instant later. Every shot misses.

DORIA looks through her telescope on the Mak'taan.

DORIA
Lower gun deck, fire!

The lower guns are fired. The ROAR of the sound is awesome.

MAALDIN wrenches Rielle's wheel to starboard. Again the cannonballs splash harmlessly into the water.

DORIA looks over the Mak'taan's port beam.

The Rielle is closing fast.

DORIA
Fire at will!

The gunnery crew scurry to load the cannons. Each cannon is fired the instant it's loaded and positioned.

MAALDIN twirls the Rielle's wheel first one way, then the other, dodging the cannonballs as they whistle in. There are splashes all around them.

The nimble Rielle dances between the shots and the waves.

They're almost on top of the Mak'taan now. They can almost make out Doria standing on deck.

DORIA looks through her telescope.

DORIA
They're gonna ram us! Full sails! Hard over!

Markeyen spins the wheel to starboard...

ON THE RIELLE, Ravahn points:

RAVAHN
They're turning!

The Mak'taan is sluggishly trying to turn to get out of the Rielle's path, her sails only half set...

Maaldin holds the Rielle's course for a moment longer... then WRENCHES the wheel hard over.

The Rielle abruptly careens to starboard, swooshing past the Mak'taan less than ten yards aft of her.

MAALDIN

Fire port!

Rielle fires her two port cannons at point blank range. It's a direct hit on Mak'taan's aft. The impact shatters the ship's rudder and a section of the aft superstructure.

ON THE MAK'TAAN, the force spins the wheel, throwing Markeyen to the deck.

Mak'taan pitches and rolls, carrying half the crew off their feet. Doria slams shoulder first into the wheel. One Gelfling who was in the rigging falls, but manages to spread her wings before she hits the deck far below.

ON THE RIELLE, a rousing cheer goes up from the crew as they sail past the now crippled Mak'taan.

DORIA gets to her feet, holding her shoulder. Markeyen tries to turn Mak'taan's wheel, but it's jammed.

CREW MEMBER

Iradahn, we've lost the rudder!

Doria stumbles across the deck to the starboard railing.

The Rielle is sailing rapidly away. The other ships are closing on her, but it looks like she'll escape before they can reach her.

Doria turns to the crew and calls out:

DORIA

Air forces!

Suddenly, every Gelfinina female leaves her post and dashes for the starboard railing.

Doria spreads her wings and leaps over the railing, motioning for the others to follow.

The others swoop out over the water towards the Rielle in the distance. Including Doria, there are about 20 of them.

IN THE RIELLE'S CROW'S NEST, The Lookout points:

LOOKOUT
Incoming!

MAALDIN, on deck, spins around, training his telescope.

He sees the Gelfling females flying towards him.

MAALDIN
Prepare to repel boarders!

Maaldin's crew draw their swords.

DORIA'S AIR FORCES are closing rapidly.

Doria issues hand signals to the officers closest to her, then draws her sword. Those officers in turn signal the next officers in the formation, then draw their swords. This continues until all their swords are drawn.

ON THE RIELLE, Maaldin's crew look up into the sky at the approaching females, ready to fight.

But instead of landing on the deck, Doria and her soldiers land in the rigging, wildly slashing at the ropes.

MAALDIN
The rigging!

Maaldin's male crew scrambles up the rigging. The females spread their wings and fly up.

More and more of Doria's Soldiers land in the rigging and slash away. By the time Maaldin's people reach them, half the main sail flutters limply from the decimated rigging.

The Rielle is slowing down.

Maaldin's people slash at the Soldiers... but for each Soldier they manage to knock down, another lands and does more damage. There are too many of them to keep up with.

Suddenly, the remaining ropes SNAP and the main sail falls, blown out over the ship's side and into the water.

The Rielle comes to a near halt, drifting, at the mercy of the waves.

Doria and her forces drop rapidly to the deck, landing almost as one. Maaldin's crew charges, engaging the Soldiers. The sound of clashing swords rings across the water.

In the background, one of Doria's ships rapidly approaches.

Maaldin draws his sword and charges Doria.

Doria turns and intercepts his attack, deflecting his sword with the effortless precision of an expert. The fight is brief. Doria sweeps Maaldin's sword from his hand with a practiced flick of her blade. Instantly, she slams the hilt of her sword across his chin. He drops to the deck.

Doria doesn't see Kira rolling along the deck behind her... Kira's legs scissor Doria's.

Taken unawares, Doria falls backward, dropping her sword, but instead of slamming to the deck, she effortlessly rolls and jumps to her feet, turning, only to be rewarded with the bone shattering arrival of Jen, who slams into her midsection shoulder first, driving her against a wall.

Kira, on her feet now, swings at the dazed Doria. The punch connects solidly with her cheekbone. Kira swings again...

Suddenly, Doria twists in Jen's grip and deflects the punch, Kira's own momentum knocking her aside. Then, Doria brings up her knee, slamming Jen like a sledgehammer in his stomach. Jen immediately drops to the ground, groaning in pain, unable to breathe.

Kira recovers her balance and charges Doria with a wild kick to the head, like the one she used on the kamatu beast. Doria deflects the kick smoothly and counters with a jab, popping Kira in the chin. Dazed, Kira stumbles as Doria spins, delivering a gracefully brutal chop to her throat.

Kira grabs her throat, gagging. She drops to her hands and knees, struggling to breathe.

The fight's over in barely a heartbeat. The practiced, feral precision of Doria's every move demonstrates a masterful knowledge of the martial arts.

Lying face first on the deck, Maaldin sees a sword and lunges for it. Just as he reaches it, Doria kicks it across the deck out of reach. She hauls him to his feet and slams him into a mast, holding him there.

The approaching ship is now turning to pull up alongside. Her crew throws ropes over, which are grabbed by Doria's boarding party. They haul mightily on the ropes, pulling the two ships together beam to beam.

Soldiers surge over, swinging on ropes. Badly outnumbered, Maaldin's people are quickly captured and disarmed.

Jen and Kira are hauled to their feet by four soldiers and hauled away. Doria herself, with the assistance of another soldier, hauls up Maaldin and follows.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JOLEN'S THRONE ROOM - LATER

Jen, Kira and Maaldin, restrained by soldiers, are standing before the throne. Doria is beside them. Jolen is walking towards them, looking directly into Kira's eyes, twirling one of his clan emblems. He glances at Jen and Maaldin briefly, then his eyes once again lock with Kira's.

JOLEN

I am The Chosen One. I will be master of the Crystal. I... will control the fate of every living thing on this world. Now. You can either follow the current of fate... or be swept away by it. It's your choice.

He reaches out and strokes Kira's hair sensually. She turns away from him in disgust. Jen struggles a bit against his guard.

MAALDIN

There are two Chosen Ones.

Jolen turns to look evenly at Maaldin.

JOLEN

Only one matters.

MAALDIN

And you think that one is you.

JOLEN

It could only be me.

MAALDIN

You can't know that for certain.

Jolen slowly walks up to stare Maaldin straight in the eyes. A cold smile touches the corners of his lips.

JOLEN

Soon... we will know for certain.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LAGOON - DAWN

Seven of the original eight ships from before (minus the crippled Mak'taan) are sailing out toward the open ocean.

MONTAGE - INT. THE SHIPS

Each cabin holds four soldiers on two bunk beds. These cabins are situated in corridors that run the length of the ships below deck. Jolen was apparently not exaggerating when he said his ships could carry 1000 soldiers, and the cabins are all fully occupied.

In the cavernous holds on the lowest decks, there are carts and cannons mounted on wheels with harnesses for pulling by landstriders. Weapons of war abound: cannonballs, barrels of gunpowder, swords, bows, crossbows and arrows.

EXT. THE OCEAN

The Fourth Continent is left far behind as the seven ships plough powerfully through the waves.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE SHIPS - NIGHT

Rain pelts the ships in sheets. It's not a dangerous storm. There's not much wind, but there are occasional flashes of lightning and rolling thunder.

EXT. THE LEAD SHIP

The largest of the ships in the fleet. This is Jolen's flagship, the Kalara.

INT. KALARA - BRIG

A long corridor running the length of the ship on its lowest level. There are doors along the corridor on both sides, each a heavy wooden door with a barred window. There are 16 doors in all, eight on each side. There are two soldiers at each end of the corridor standing guard.

INT. CELLS

Maaldin, Jen and Kira lie together on uncomfortable bench/beds in their respective cells. These beds are the only pieces of furniture in the plain wooden rooms. There is a single barred window in each. Lightning occasionally flashes outside.

Maaldin is asleep.

Jen sits on the floor, halfheartedly chewing on some food he eats off a metal plate.

Kira, lying in her bed, awake and restless, gets up and goes to her window, grasping the bars, staring out across the rain swept ocean. Lightning illuminates her somber face.

INT. JOLEN AND DORIA'S CABIN

The cabin is quite plain, built, not for comfort, but to save space. There's a simple bed in the corner just big enough for two. There is a small work desk just below the sole window near the cabin door. A lamp, hanging from the ceiling burns brightly.

Jolen and Doria are in the midst of an argument. Jolen has The Book of the Crystal open on the desk. He looks mostly at the book, trying not to meet Doria's eyes.

DORIA

I saw the way you were looking at her.

JOLEN

You're imagining things.

DORIA

Did I imagine you stroking her hair in the throne room before we left... in front of everyone? You had no business touching her.

Now, Jolen turns to her, his voice a dangerous growl.

JOLEN

I had no business?

A shiver travels up Doria's spine at his tone. She's afraid... but her anger is stronger than her fear. She stands her ground.

Without warning, Jolen backhands Doria savagely across the face. She staggers. Again he winces, grabbing the wrist.

Enraged, nose bleeding, Doria grabs Jolen's sore left wrist. He cries out. She cocks her fist... but she freezes before she can throw the punch. She wants to strike him... but she can't make herself do it.

Jolen, though a haze of pain, glares at her, furious that she would dare even go this far. In an instant, his leg comes up and kicks Doria in the ribs, breaking her hold. He follows up with a brutal counterpunch with his good hand.

Doria swerves to avoid that blow as Jolen throws another, and another. Jolen is now favoring his right hand, trying to protect his left.

Doria gracefully ducks, swerves, deflects, blocks and evades the flurry of vicious blows, which come at astonishing rapidity, especially considering Jolen's age. It's evident that Jolen has martial arts training as well. Doria tries to counterpunch, but just can't make herself do it.

Finally, Jolen becomes frustrated. He can't land a single clean blow. Doria is clearly his superior in hand fighting skill. In a twinkling, he reaches under his tunic and produces a knife and slashes.

Doria automatically blocks, and his razor sharp blade slashes the palm of her hand. She cries out in surprise and pain.

This distracts her just long enough for Jolen to deliver a wild roundhouse kick full in Doria's mouth. The force carries her off her feet and into the wall behind her with stunning force.

Jolen lunges and pins her to the wall, his knife at her throat. For a moment, he just holds her, pinned, his razor sharp blade against Doria's throat.

The now terrified Doria weeps, looking into his eyes, knowing full well that he is unquestionably capable of killing her.

Slowly, Jolen draws the blade across the skin of her neck, not quite hard enough to draw blood. Doria shudders, her skin crawling at the touch of the blade. Her nose is beginning to bleed.

JOLEN

How many times must I warn you about questioning me?

He turns the knife so now it's sharp point rests directly under her chin. Totally terrorized, Doria closes her eyes, forcing two tears to fall down her cheeks.

Without taking his eyes off Doria:

JOLEN

Guards!

Two soldiers come in and stand at rigid attention. Jolen lowers the knife just in time for them not to see. Doria opens her eyes and meets Jolen's steady gaze.

JOLEN

Escort Iradah Maranek to the landstrider hold. She'll be staying there for the remainder of our voyage.

The Soldiers blink at Jolen, puzzled at this unusual order. But one icy glare from Jolen causes whatever objection was on their tongues to die stillborn. One of them nods.

SOLDIER

Yes, My Lord.

Jolen calmly turns and sits at the desk resuming his study of the book.

Doria straightens out her uniform, trying to reclaim what little dignity she has left. She allows herself to be taken away by the Soldiers.

INT. LANDSTRIDER HOLD - NIGHT

The barred door opens and Doria is guided inside. The door is locked behind her.

The landstrider in the stall moves away from her slightly as she moves to a corner. Without blanket or pillow, she lies down on the thick straw in the corner, bunching some under her head for a pillow and pulling some over her to keep warm.

Humiliated and miserable, Doria closes her eyes and tries to sleep.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE SHIPS - DAWN

An anchor is being dropped in the slashing rain.

The ships are anchoring just off the First Continent shore.

Boats carry cannons, cannonballs, gunpowder and supplies across.

In one boat, Kira, Jen and Maaldin are taken across with their hands tied behind their backs. Six soldiers guard them.

EXT. SHORE

The boat carrying Kira, Jen and Maaldin reaches the shore next to a wooden cage barely big enough to hold three prisoners. The cage has an iron lock. Maaldin, Jen and Kira's hands are untied and they're put inside. The door is locked. There's only barely room for them to sit upright.

Eight soldiers lift them up onto a cart to which a landstrider (now, the type of which we are familiar) is being hitched. In the background, Gelfling soldiers call over more landstriders and harness them to cannons and carts.

Maaldin and Kira exchange a silent look as the cart they are on begins to move.

Jolen's army of over a thousand marches across the shore towards the forest in the distance. The soldiers are on foot, some guiding landstriders that pull the heavy cannons and carts of supplies.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE FOREST - DUSK

It's still raining. Thunder rolls. There's enough light to see by, but that is all.

Jolen's army has camped for the night. There are several massive tents set up, each glowing with a fire at its center. Smoke billows up through holes in each roof. Landstriders are unhitched from their carts and tied to trees. A few soldiers stand guard outside the tents.

INT. MAALDIN, JEN & KIRA'S CAGE

Kira presses her face to the bars and looks around.

There are not many guards around now. Most everyone is asleep or sheltering in the tents from the rain.

They are in a relatively small clearing, just big enough for the camp. There is dense forest all around.

Kira suddenly grins as an idea forms. She turns to Jen and Maaldin:

KIRA
Get ready to run.

JEN
What...?

KIRA
Just do it.

Kira turns and presses her face to the bars, yelling:

KIRA
CAMALAYA!!!

Maaldin jumps up, startled, grabbing for Kira's mouth. Kira holds him back.

MAALDIN
Shhh... what are you doing...?

KIRA
Trust me.
(shouts)
CAMALAYA!!!

Several Soldiers from nearby come running over.

SOLDIER
Quiet!

KIRA
CAMALAYA!!!

One of the Soldiers draws her sword and whacks the top of the cage, as a warning.

SOLDIER
I said quiet...!

In the next instant, a swarm of birds dives down like kamikaze pilots, attacking the Soldiers at the cage. Taken unawares, the Soldiers stagger back, swinging wildly at the birds with their swords.

The birds are only the beginning. Within seconds, the clearing is filled with rampaging animals of every description. Confused and unprepared, Soldiers dash every which way trying to regain control of the situation.

THE ESCAPE

JOLEN AND DORIA run out of their tent to see a scene of utter chaos. Animals and Soldiers dashing back and forth in all directions. Doria pushes Jolen out of the way just in time to avoid being run over by a rampaging landstrider.

BACK IN THE CAGE, Maaldin is astonished.

MAALDIN

How did you...?

Kira holds up a hand. Her attention is focused on a nearby landstrider. She calls it. It turns and comes dashing over.

KIRA

Get back!

MAALDIN

Wha...?

Kira shoves Maaldin and Jen back just as the landstrider rears up. Before Maaldin realizes what's happening, the landstrider's front legs SMASH through the roof of the cage less than a foot from him. Maaldin cries out, startled. They're all showered in splinters of wood and driving rain.

The landstrider backs away, leaving a gaping hole for them to climb through.

KIRA

Come on!

Kira grabs Maaldin and drags him with her through the hole in the cage roof, smashing down the shattered bars as they go. Jen scrambles to follow.

Kira jumps up onto the landstrider and, trilling her tongue, calls over two others.

KIRA

Get on!

Maaldin and Jen jump onto the other two landstriders.

KIRA

Go!

The trio's mounts surge ahead into the gathering storm.

The Soldiers attempt to pursue them. The ground forces make little headway with the animals and the dense forest, but the air forces manage to continue the pursuit as Maaldin and Kira enter the surrounding forest.

Doria and Jolen run up. Doria carries a crossbow.

They see Maaldin, Jen and Kira disappear into the foliage.

Doria spreads her wings and flies up to join the others, struggling to gain altitude in the driving rain.

Maaldin and Kira ride at full gallop through the dense foliage. They duck and swerve to avoid being knocked off their mounts by overhanging branches and vines.

Suddenly, the forest thins out. There are still trees, but now there are great gaps in the canopy of branches above.

Kira looks up.

Two Gelfling Females (one of them Doria) see them and turn to close in. Several more further back are coming fast. All the airborne females are struggling to stay aloft on their rain lashed wings. Though a bit unsteady, they're still considerably faster than the landstriders.

Kira takes out her sling and spins it over her head. She releases it towards their pursuers.

It strikes Doria's partner in the arms, knocking her crossbow out of her hands. She looks back to see where her crossbow landed. Not looking where she's going...

...she crashes into a tree. It flexes with the impact and whips back, breaking the soldier's grip. She tumbles down, bouncing off branches on her way to the ground.

Doria looks back briefly at the fallen soldier, then flies on, aiming her crossbow. She tucks in her wings and dives down head first, almost free-falling straight in.

Maaldin and Kira are approaching a thicker patch of trees...

Doria fires, opening her wings, struggling to swoop up...

Maaldin's mount is hit in the rump. It yelps.

The rain drives Doria to the ground. She manages to land feet first, but her momentum carries her off her feet and she tumbles uncontrollably across the muddy, mossy forest floor.

Maaldin's mount is slowing down, becoming groggy... just as it's about to fall...

Kira slows down, pulling Maaldin off his mount and onto hers.

They ride on together with Jen, leaving Maaldin's mount behind as it staggers and falls to the ground.

Doria runs up, dishevelled and covered in mud and moss. She stops when she sees the abandoned landstrider on the ground. She looks ahead.

She just catches the last glimpse of the trio disappearing into the dense forest.

Doria stands, soaked to the skin by the rain and mud, grimly watching them escape. Several female soldiers land around her.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE CASTLE OF THE CRYSTAL - DAWN

The rain has stopped, but the land around is still glistening wet. The wetness on the Castle sparkles beautifully with rainbow colors.

Maaldin, Jen and Kira ride up to the Castle gate and dismount. They're all a complete mess. Their hair, full of leaves and grass, straggles around their faces. Their clothing is tattered and torn. They ride straight through the Castle gate, not even taking time to dismount.

EXT. JOLEN'S CAMP - DAWN

Soldiers are hurriedly packing up the tents and hitching up the landstriders, preparing to depart.

Jolen and Doria are poring over maps of the Castle on a small table while the rest prepare to leave.

DORIA

Our attack should be led by the air forces. We can fly up...

She points to the roof portal over the Crystal Chamber.

DORIA (CONT'D)

... and drop through here directly into the Crystal Chamber. Once we have the chamber, we have the Castle.

JOLEN

Taking the Castle won't be difficult. They have no army, and no time to build one.

DORIA

Still, they have a head start. They may have booby traps set. But they can't booby trap the air.

JOLEN

Very well. Brief your troops.

Doria turns to leave, but Jolen grabs her by the arm.

JOLEN

Remember this. I am only giving you this one last chance because of your proven battle skill. You failed me last night when you let the prisoner's escape. You failed me when you allowed Kira to be captured by the Trokaan. Do not fail me again. I will give no more chances.

Doria nods sheepishly, unable to meet his gaze.

EXT. THE CASTLE - DAY

Podlings from Kira's village behind the castle are setting up booby traps, digging holes in the ground at strategic points in the field surrounding the castle, then covering them with sods. The Podlings align the sods perfectly so the holes are virtually invisible.

INT. THE CRYSTAL CHAMBER

Maaldin, Kira, Jen, Aughra and Fizzgig. Fizzgig is bouncing around at Jen and Kira's feet, growling. He chews nervously on Jen's shoe. Jen shakes his head, looking down at him with irritation. Maaldin and Kira are in mid-conversation.

MAALDIN

If I had more of my men, we might stand a chance. But the booby traps by themselves aren't enough. They won't stop Jolen's people. They'll just slow them down.

JEN

Is there nothing else we can do?

MAALDIN
Podlings...?

KIRA
We can't get enough of them. Not in
time.

MAALDIN
They're better than no defence at all.

AUGHRA
May be one way...

All turn to Aughra expectantly.

EXT. THE CASTLE - ON A BALCONY

Kira steps up and looks down over the land. Fizzgig leaps up
beside her. Aughra hobbles up behind them.

AUGHRA
Call them, Kira.

Kira leans back her head and cries:

KIRA
CAMALAYA!!!

Fizzgig begins barking and yelping, adding his voice to hers.

EXT. THE SURROUNDING FOREST

Kira's call echoes faintly between the trees.

A few animals look up, listening. A few of the smaller ones,
like snakes and birds, start heading towards the Castle.

KIRA'S VOICE
(in the distance)
CAMALAYA!!!

EXT. THE CASTLE BALCONY

KIRA
CAMALAYA!!!

Kira looks out over the field.

There are a few animals responding, but not nearly enough.
Her voice just isn't carrying.

Kira tries again, this time almost screaming:

KIRA
CAMALAYA!!!

AUGHRA
Not with your voice, Gelfling! Stretch
out with your mind!

Kira closes her eyes, reaching her hands to the sky, calling out...

KIRA
CAMALAYA!!!

INT. THE CRYSTAL CHAMBER

Maaldin looks up at a faint, high pitched ringing in the air. There is a steadily brightening glow behind him. He turns.

The Crystal is glowing and getting brighter.

KIRA'S VOICE
(outside)
CAMALAYA!!!

Maaldin steps closer for a better look.

In a window in the Crystal appears image after image of animals moving through forests.

EXT. THE FORESTS

Suddenly, the forests are alive with animals bounding, slithering, flapping, and galloping through the forests.

EXT. THE FIELD

Animals are coming out in droves from the surrounding forest, converging on the field. There are animals of every description. Landstriders. Windgliders. Snakes and lizards of all colors and shapes. Birds. Bats. Even a few kamatu beasts are among them.

KIRA'S VOICE
(distant, from the Castle)
CAMALAYA!!!

INT. THE CRYSTAL CHAMBER

The Crystal is now glowing blinding white, ringing out strong and pure. Maaldin stares at the Crystal with slack jawed amazement.

MAALDIN

Kira... is a Chosen One...

EXT. THE BALCONY

Jen, Kira and Aughra, hearing the ringing of the Crystal within, exchange looks, and run inside. Fizzgig stays on the balcony, barking at the frantic activity below.

INT. CRYSTAL CHAMBER

Jen and Kira run up onto the balcony surrounding the Crystal.

They stare in astonishment at the brightly glowing Crystal. Kira is awestruck. After a moment, the awe on her face gives way to resolution.

She spreads her wings and leaps down from the balcony. When she lands, she holds up her hands to the Crystal and closes her eyes, concentrating.

The Crystal glows even brighter, ringing out, the sweet crystalline sound reverberating throughout the Castle.

Aughra arrives on the balcony to stand next to Jen, looking on with jubilation.

EXT. THE FIELD

Animals of all description pour onto the field before the Castle. The animals charge straight for the Castle entrance.

The animals on the ground form an enormous circle, completely surrounding the Castle on all sides. It looks as if every animal in the immediate area has congregated to form a virtually impenetrable barrier around the Castle, and more animals continue to arrive in waves from all around.

Animals in the air circle around near the portal in the roof which admits sunlight for the Crystal. More flying beasts can be seen coming in all the way to the horizon.

INT. THE CRYSTAL CHAMBER

Kira opens her eyes.

In a window in the Crystal, she can see the virtual wall of animals surrounding the Castle on the ground and circling the Castle from the air. Now, it looks as if they have a force worthy of Jolen's forces.

Kira closes her eyes again. She stands before the Crystal, hands aloft, letting its power soak through her.

Without opening her eyes or taking her mind off the Crystal, Kira speaks:

KIRA
Grandfather. Do you speak Podling?

MAALDIN
Fluently.

KIRA
There's a Podling village behind the Castle. Get the people out and bring them inside. They'll be safer in the Castle.

Maaldin nods and runs off to do Kira's bidding.

EXT. A FIELD - ON A HILL

Jolen's army has stopped just over the crest of the hill. There are three distinct rows of forces: the ground forces at the front, the cannons in the middle, and Gelfinina females, the air force, in the rear. There are far fewer air force females than there are of the other soldiers.

Doria and Jolen are mounted on landstriders. Doria looks over the crest of the hill with her telescope.

She lowers her telescope, totally dumbfounded by what she sees on the field before the Castle.

DORIA
Animals!

Jolen raises his telescope and takes a look for himself. Thunderstruck, he lowers his telescope, staring off towards the castle.

JOLEN

Maaldin. He is a Chosen One, as I'd always feared. He must be using the Crystal to control them.

Doria takes another look through her telescope.

DORIA

There must be thousands of them. Even with our weapons, our forces wouldn't stand a chance.

JOLEN

There's one chance. The power of the Crystal depends on sunlight. He won't be able to control the animals once the final sun sets. That's when they'll be most vulnerable.

Doria looks dubious as she lowers her telescope, still looking towards the field of battle.

DORIA

Even so, there'll be plenty of stray animals in the area. Many of them dangerous. Perhaps we should wait until we can get reinforcements.

JOLEN

No! We can't give Maaldin time to learn more of the Crystal's secrets. We must attack now, while we still can.

EXT. THE FIELD

The animals wait, watching over the hill.

EXT. THE TEETH OF SKREESH

The same entrance Jen and Kira used to enter the Castle before the Crystal was healed. Maaldin is guiding the Podlings from Kira's village inside, unseen by Jolen's forces.

INT. THE CRYSTAL CHAMBER

Kira still stands before the Crystal, her arms outstretched, her eyes closed. She's silent now, concentrating on the Crystal. The Crystal continues to glow ice-white. Jen and Aughra are there.

JEN
Kira? Can you see what's happening?

KIRA
They're waiting. Just over the hill.

JEN
What are they waiting for?

EXT. THE SUNS

The Great Sun is setting. The dying sun is already gone.
The Rose Sun hovers just above the horizon.

As we watch, the Great Sun slowly slips below the horizon and disappears, leaving only pale yellow twilight. The only light now is by the Rose Sun.

INT. THE CRYSTAL CHAMBER

Kira flinches... then staggers, but manages to keep her feet.

Jen runs over to her.

JEN
Kira...?

KIRA
The Great Sun has set.

AUGHRA
Crystal has no power without suns.

Maaldin enters the chamber with several Podlings following.

MAALDIN
The village is evacuated.

EXT. THE FIELD

Jolen watches the Rose Sun setting with anticipation.

The Rose Sun is dipping to the horizon now. It begins to slip down below our view. The light becomes dimmer.

INT. THE CRYSTAL CHAMBER

Kira squeezes her eyes shut tight. She staggers again. Her breathing is becoming deep and heavy, her face a grim grimace of concentration and pain.

EXT. THE FIELD

Jolen watches the horizon intently.

The Rose Sun is sinking lower.

INT. THE CRYSTAL CHAMBER

Kira drops to her knees, groaning with effort. Jen drops down with her and grabs onto her.

EXT. THE FIELD

Jolen puts his hand on the hilt his sword, anticipating...

Only the tip of The Rose Sun is still visible now, like a brilliant pink diamond... then it dims, fades, and finally sets. Deep rose twilight is all that remains.

INT. THE CRYSTAL CHAMBER

Kira gasps, and passes out. Jen catches her.

EXT. THE FIELD

The animals immediately begin to scatter.

Jolen draws his sword...

JOLEN
ATTACK!!!

EXT. THE FIELD/INT. THE CASTLE - THE BATTLE

Jolen's forces storm over the hill.

The wall of animals is rapidly dissipating, but some of the more violent and dangerous ones, attracted to the movement of the oncoming army, charge forward, heading right for Jolen's ground forces.

MAALDIN, in the Crystal Chamber. His ears perk up at the faint sound of the battle outside.

ON THE FIELD, Jolen's forces charge. The animals in the sky are scattering far more quickly than those on the ground, and Doria's air forces fly through with next to no resistance.

The ground forces are another matter. There are still a significant number of large animals on the field, and their attacks are slowing the progress of Jolen's people.

Some of Jolen's forces, along with several of the animals, fall into the booby traps set by the Podlings.

One group of three falls though with an animal. With nowhere to run in the tiny pit, the animal charges them. They desperately evade and slash with their swords, attempting to defend themselves.

Doria looks back, seeing the situation on the ground. She issues several hand signals to the soldiers around her, and they in turn pass on the orders to several others.

Several groups of female Soldiers break off their flight towards the Castle and turn back.

In groups of three, Gelfling females tuck in their wings and dive for the animals on the ground (the same technique Doria used earlier) firing their crossbows as they dive in, then swooping away. Several of their shots find their mark. Animals fall dead instantly with precision arrow hits.

Those soldiers who have fallen into booby traps quickly whip out grappling hooks and toss them over the edges above, quickly climbing out of the traps like professionals. The traps slow them down, but they don't stop them.

Maaldin turns to the wall and opens a small hidden panel revealing a dingy lever. He pulls it.

A MASSIVE STONE DOOR slides over the portal. It is much darker than the walls, obviously not the "living rock" of the mountain. It rumbles closed and locks into place with a resounding BOOM.

JOLEN, mounted on a landstrider, looks through a telescope. Pelmaar Markeyen is beside him.

Jolen sees the door sealing off the portal. He signals to Markeyen, who in turn issues hand signals to the gunners.

THE CANNONS fire with a deafening boom.

IN THE CRYSTAL CHAMBER, the distant rumble of the cannons' fire. Maaldin's eyes widen.

MAALDIN

Down!

Maaldin dives for the floor. Following his lead, Jen and Kira do the same. Aughra shields her head with her arms. Fizzgig rolls up and hides against Kira's body.

OUTSIDE, the first cannonball strikes the wall near the portal.

FROM INSIDE, the sound of the impact is a DEAFENING CRASH that shakes the entire room. Tiny chunks of white rock and dust drop down from the ceiling.

THE AIR FORCES encounter a few stray Windgliders. One of them slashes wildly at one. She hits it. It screams and plummets, spiraling onto the bank of the Rindaar River.

KIRA'S eyes light up with an idea. She turns and runs from the Crystal Chamber. Maaldin and Jen follow. Fizzgig barks after her.

JEN

Kira...?

OUTSIDE, half of the air forces are swooping over the field, "dive bombing" the animals around the Castle entrance.

The other half circles around far above the roof portal, waiting for one of the cannonballs to find its mark. Doria is leading this group.

KIRA runs up onto a balcony, flanked by Jen and Maaldin. Fizzgig brings up the rear, barking frantically. Kira calls out:

KIRA

CAMALAYA!

She calls down towards the few remaining animals on the field below, near the Castle entrance.

Hearing her voice, the animals turn and attack Jolen's oncoming soldiers. Jolen's soldiers are forced to slow down and fight just short of the Castle entrance.

A cannon fires.

The cannonball arcs directly for the roof portal.

It hits the heavy stone door dead center.

THE ROOF PORTAL DOOR SHATTERS with an ear-splitting CRASH.

IN THE CRYSTAL CHAMBER, Aughra throws herself against a wall and protects her head with her arms as chunks of rock and dust crash down into the chamber.

ON THE BALCONY, Jen, Kira and Maaldin turn at the sound as they not only hear it, but feel it resonate throughout the Castle.

The biggest piece of the door crashes to the floor.

Through the thickening dust, the silhouettes of 30 Gelfling females drop through the roof portal in waves.

Kira, Maaldin and Jen dash inside. Fizzgig follows.

The first wave of females lands surrounding the Crystal in a neat circular formation.

Arriving on the balcony above, Jen, Kira and Maaldin look on with dismay. Maaldin leans to Kira, whispers:

MAALDIN

Don't tell them you're the Chosen One.

KIRA

What...?

MAALDIN

Jolen must not know that you can control the Crystal...

The next wave of Gelfling lands on the balcony surrounding the Crystal. The two landing closest to Jen, Kira and Maaldin train their crossbows on them instantly.

The last female to land stands in silhouette, facing Kira.

Kira turns to face her.

The silhouette steps out of the dust to reveal her face:

Doria.

Kira and Doria lock eyes for a long moment.

Fizzgig growls at Doria menacingly.

Doria looks down at him, her piercing eyes burning with annoyance.

Fizzgig meekly whimpers, hiding against Kira's leg.

AT THE CASTLE ENTRANCE, Jolen and his forces have slain most of the animals. Without Kira's control, they're not much of an obstacle.

Jolen smiles, a sadistic gleam in his eye. He cries:

JOLEN
CHARGE!!!

Instantly, Jolen's forces surge forward, storming into the Castle. The remaining animals don't even slow them down.

IN THE CASTLE CORRIDORS, Jolen's forces, led by Jolen himself, storm through the corridors of the Castle.

INT. THE CRYSTAL CHAMBER - MOMENTS LATER

Kira, Maaldin, Jen and Aughra look around grimly at the Gelfling females holding them at bay with crossbows. They turn, hearing the sounds of footsteps.

Jolen and his soldiers enter the chamber.

The others all scowl at Jolen as he signals with his hand. The soldiers all lower their crossbows, grab Kira and the others, and start to take them out of the chamber.

Jolen's eyes catch Kira's on the balcony as she's taken away. He smiles smugly at her.

Kira says nothing. She just glares at him. The guards behind her shove her onward.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE CASTLE DUNGEON

Left over from the Skeksis rule, the dungeon is a vast complex of cells, each barred by dingy iron bars. Like the rest of the castle, these walls glow ice-white, but the bars are dark and filthy. The contrast makes it appear as if the bars are simply floating in the ice white material.

Soldiers open cell doors and put Kira, Maaldin, Jen in separate cells, locking the doors behind them.

Kira stands at the door of her cell, holding the bars, feeling helpless to do anything.

A small sack, tied at the top, is brought in and placed in another cell. Something is wriggling ferociously inside, and from the barking, it has to be Fizzgig. The sack effectively muffles Fizzgig's barks. After a few moments, Fizzgig stops struggling and goes silent with a whimper.

Cells all along this corridor contain prisoners... mostly Podlings from Kira's village.

Pelmaar Markeyen walks down the corridor, inspecting the cells.

At the end of the corridor, Jolen steps out from a side passage and grabs Markeyen by the arm.

JOLEN
I'd like to have a word with you.

EXT. THE CASTLE OF THE CRYSTAL - RINDAAR RIVER - DUSK

The sky is completely clear. The castle sparkles golden in the orange light of the setting suns.

In the foreground, along the bank of the Rindaar River, there are thousands of Gelfling settlers hauling wagons and supplies, approaching the Castle.

Doria and about 50 soldiers are waiting to meet them.

INT. THE DUNGEON - KIRA'S CELL

Kira sits on the floor of her cell, curled up with her head on her knees, weeping softly. There's the sound of a key in a lock. She looks up.

A Soldier opens Kira's cell. Another waits outside. The one who opened the door marches in and pulls Kira to her feet.

Without a word, the Soldiers escort Kira from her cell.

INT. JOLEN & DORIA'S CHAMBER (FORMERLY THE SKEKSIS ROYAL BED CHAMBER)

For the first time, Jolen is without his usual royal decorations. His sash is off and he has removed most of the decorations and leather armor. He's dressed in a simple tunic and pants. He's just taking off his shoes.

Just then, there is a knock at the door.

JOLEN

Come in.

As the door opens, Jolen surreptitiously picks up the key from the desk and holds it in his closed fist.

The Soldiers bring Kira inside.

JOLEN

Leave us.

The Soldiers turn and close the door behind them.

Without a word, Jolen steps over to the door and locks it. He puts the key in the pocket of his tunic.

Kira watches this with apprehension. She instinctively takes a half step back from him.

Jolen smiles warmly. Kira scowls.

KIRA

What do you want?

JOLEN

Just to talk.

KIRA

I have nothing to say to you.

Jolen steps towards Kira. She edges back a little more. They continue to move slowly as they converse:

JOLEN

Why do you fight me? I only want what's best for you, and for the Gelfling people.

Kira laughs mirthlessly.

KIRA

You've turned us into savages. Warriors. That's not the Gelfling people the Podlings taught me of. Our people were peaceful traders and farmers...

JOLEN

We were weak. The Skeksis almost destroyed us. But under my leadership, my people survived. We weren't afraid to fight for our survival.

KIRA

Fighting for survival is one thing. But your people are brutal and cruel. They don't fight for a cause. They fight only for the sake of fighting. They attack the Sandlings without provocation...

JOLEN

The Sandlings are our enemy.

KIRA

No. They're your enemy. They have nothing against our people. Their grudge is with you.

Kira has run out of room. She backs up against a wall, and Jolen slowly steps up to her. He reaches out and gently takes Kira's hand in his.

JOLEN

Kira... I know I'm not perfect. And I know these solutions are not perfect, either. But at least we've survived. Survived and prospered. We're climbing back from being a defeated people. That requires some ruthlessness.

KIRA

Why? Why not simply accept the help of the Sandlings?

JOLEN

The Sandlings are primitives. Inferior. They can't help us.

KIRA

If they're inferior, then why do you fear them?

JOLEN

I do not fear them.

KIRA

But you fight them.

JOLEN

Because they had what we needed. The land to grow our food. Now, we will need land here. And, from what I understand, the Podlings control some of the most fertile land in this area.

Kira's eyes widen at the implications of what Jolen is saying.

JOLEN (CONT'D)

You were raised by them. Hopefully, you can convince them to be more reasonable.

Kira's eyes harden.

KIRA

No. It is their land. I'm not going to help you take it.

Slowly, Jolen tightens the grip on Kira's hand.

JOLEN

But I need your help, Kira.

Kira's eyes begin to cloud over... then suddenly her eyes widen. She sees Jolen is trying to do. Her expression abruptly darkens. Then, in a flash, she grabs Jolen's hand in both of hers, squeezing tightly.

Startled, Jolen brings up his other hand and clasps Kira's. Now, all four of their hands are joined.

Kira's eyes burn with concentration. Sweat breaks out on her forehead as she fights Jolen's mind.

Jolen's eyes are wide with fear and astonishment. He begins to sweat as well, trembling...

Kira squeezes Jolen's hands tighter, quaking, her face a grim grimace of effort. Nothing else in the world exists. She is focused entirely on their battle of wills.

Jolen squeezes his eyes shut tight, groans as if in pain...

JOLEN

...No...

Kira closes her eyes... focusing...

Suddenly, Jolen's head snaps back.

A FLASH...

DREAMFAST

A rapid series of images... like the dreamfast Kira had with Jolen earlier, except this time, the memories are Jolen's.

A Garthim killing a Gelfling woman... trampling a Gelfling man... a battlefield... Gelfling charge an advancing wall of Garthim and are run down... Jolen, as a child, weeps over a fallen boy... then standing among hundreds of Gelfling bodies in a field... then cradling a dead girl in his arms...

JOLEN'S VOICE

NO!!!

Then, Jolen as an adult. Flashes of a battle on a beach. Gelfling struggle to get into boats. Ships wait out on the ocean. Garthim storm the beach.

The images slow down. One memory comes through in vivid detail:

Jolen runs with a beautiful red haired woman (TALSI), holding her hand, pulling her into the water. They swim out towards the boats which have been driven off the shore. Suddenly, Talsi screams, and Jolen turns just in time to see a Garthim pull her under.

JOLEN

Talsi!

Jolen starts to swim back, but another Gelfling pulls him back. Maaldin.

MAALDIN

You can't help her! Come on!

JOLEN

NO!!! TALSI!!! LET ME GO!!!

He struggles to get free, but Maaldin drags him away.

FADE TO BLACK:

Jolen's voice echoes:

JOLEN'S VOICE

TALSI...!

FADE IN:

A bonding ceremony... Jolen bonds with a DARK-HAIRED FEMALE... then he dreamfasts with a soldier... then kneels before his mate dead next to her grave. He removes her clan emblem... then paints it black and wears it.

Another ceremony, this time with a BLOND-HAIRED female. He dreamfasts with a Soldier, then performs the funeral rites.

Another bonding, this time with a BROWN-HAIRED FEMALE.
Another dreamfast with a soldier, then the funeral rites...

Flash. Now, he's bonding with a red-haired female: Doria.
Then, Jolen takes Pelmaar Markeyen aside in the dungeon, as
we saw before. He clasps Markeyen's hand. Markeyen's eyes
glass over:

JOLEN

Doria will be coordinating incoming
settlers along the Rindaar River in three
days. Drown her. Make it look like an
accident.

Markeyen nods blankly.

FLASH...

INT. JOLEN & DORIA'S CHAMBER

Jolen abruptly pulls away from Kira, breaking the dreamfast.
Kira just stares at him, stunned. Infuriated, Jolen savagely
backhands Kira across the face. She stumbles into the wall
behind her and slides down to the floor, dazed.

He roughly hauls her up, slamming her against the wall.

KIRA

You killed your mates...? Why?

JOLEN

I didn't want them anymore. I could not
bond with a new mate until I was rid of
the old one, and debonding with a mate is
a dishonor I did not wish to bear.

KIRA

So you killed them?

JOLEN

The Skeksis killed millions of us. The
death of three or four more Gelfling will
make no difference.

Kira looks at him with conflicting emotions: pity and stark
terror. He grabs Kira by the hair. She winces.

JOLEN

You will be my next mate.

KIRA

Jen is my mate.

JOLEN

And if you cooperate and give yourself over to me, I will merely banish him, which will give you an honorable way to debond with him. If you do not cooperate... I will have him killed, too. Either way... you're mine.

He hauls her by the hair to the door and throws her on the floor. He takes out the key and unlocks and opens the door.

The Soldiers come in, and Jolen hauls Kira to her feet and passes her to them.

JOLEN

Take her back to her cell. Have her bound and gagged. No one is to have any contact with her.

SOLDIER

Understood.

The Soldiers cuff Kira's hands behind her and take her out.

INT. THE CORRIDOR

The weakened Kira desperately tries to warn the Soldiers as she's dragged along:

KIRA

Please listen. You must take me to see Doria. She's in great danger! He plans to have her killed...

SOLDIER

Quiet!

KIRA

You must listen to me...!

SOLDIER

I said quiet!

KIRA

Please...

The Soldier suddenly whips out a tranquilizer dart and jabs it into Kira's neck. Kira falls silent, unconscious.

EXT. THE CASTLE - AT THE GATE

Pelmaar Markeyen is guiding a landstrider out through the Castle gate. He mounts his landstrider and rides towards the river.

EXT. RINDAAR RIVER RIVERBANK

Doria stands beside the Rindaar River, SETTLERS passing by. She and the other Soldiers are all carefully inspecting everything being brought in by the Settlers. The water of the river rushes by in the background.

Doria's just about to step up onto a cart to inspect it when:

MARKEYEN (O.S.)

Iradah?

Doria turns.

Indahn Markeyen is just dismounting from his landstrider. He motions for a nearby Soldier to take it.

MARKEYEN

May I have a word with you?

DORIA

Certainly.

Doria steps down. Markeyen takes her down towards the water, as if taking her aside.

Markeyen's eyes suddenly go blank and he juts out a foot. Doria trips, and Markeyen shoves her hard towards the bank.

Doria falls, tumbling pell-mell thirty feet down to the bottom of the bank, unable to get a purchase on the soft grass to stay her fall. She lands in knee deep water below.

Markeyen slides quickly down the steep slope after her.

Doria gets to her feet, soaked. She glares at Markeyen as he lands in front of her.

MARKEYEN

Are you all right?

DORIA

You did that deliberately.

Markeyen seems genuinely unaware he did anything.

MARKEYEN

Did what?

DORIA

Tripped me.

MARKEYEN

I was nowhere near you.

Markeyen's eyes start to glass over again...

DORIA

I felt your foot...

Suddenly, he grabs Doria and plunges her into the water.

UNDER THE WATER/ON THE SURFACE

Startled, Doria struggles to get loose.

Markeyen gets on top of her and holds her down.

Under the water, Doria tries desperately to buck him off. She manages to wriggle out from under him.

Her head breaks the surface, and she coughs and chokes, but as she tries to take in a breath, he plunges her under again.

Under the surface, there's a torrent of bubbles as she chokes on a mouthful of water. She renews her struggle to get away.

Markeyen holds her down, his eyes a complete blank.

She manages to struggle towards the shore and get her head up. She starts to shout, but he grabs her head and shoves her down again, her shout cut off abruptly, reduced to a gurgle. There's not enough water to cover her head, but he holds her face down in the water.

Under the water, Doria's fingers fumble for her knife... she gets hold of it...

She slashes Pelmaar's hands at the back of her head. Startled, he releases her and she manages to crawl forward on her hands and knees to the bank. She tries to yell, but she's still choking on the water she inhaled.

Pelmaar lunges forward, grabs her hips, and hauls her back.

She turns and stabs for him.

He sidesteps and shoves her into the water again. He tries to hold her down, but he doesn't have a good grip this time. She wriggles free.

But in the process, she gets thrown out into deeper water. The current grabs her and drags her down river.

Pelmaar Markeyen watches her go, blankly at first... but his face gradually reforms into mounting horror. Suddenly he turns, scrambling up the bank, holding his bleeding hand.

RINDAAR RIVER

Doria is weighed down by the heavy leather armor she is wearing. She struggles to stay on the surface in the churning water, but her armor keeps dragging her down. Finally, she gives up the fight and lets herself sink.

ON THE RIVERBANK

Markeyen climbs up and shouts for attention.

MARKEYEN
Help! I need help down here!

RINDAAR RIVER - UNDER THE WATER

Doria struggles to get out of her armor. She's getting desperate, clawing at the straps and buckles to remove it. One by one, she unfastens the buckles, but one is stubborn. She can't get it loose.

Doria can't hold her breath any longer. There's a torrent of bubbles as she exhales. She fights not to inhale...

Suddenly, the offending buckle lets go.

She rips the armor off and throws it aside, clawing desperately for the surface.

UPRIVER

The Soldiers desperately search the water, but by now, Doria has been swept well beyond the point where she originally fell in.

SOLDIERS
(overlapping, calling)
Iradah! Iradah Maranek!

DOWN RIVER

Doria breaks the surface and gratefully gasps in a breath. The current forces her under briefly, but she comes back up, coughing and choking. She frantically swims for shore.

She swims against the current for a shallow pool of calm water off to one side. The current almost drags her past it, but she manages to get hold of a jutting rock and pull herself out of the current.

Wearily, she drags herself through the calm pool to the shore. She gets up on her hands and knees and heaves, vomiting up water. She gurgles, coughs and sputters, gasping desperately for breath, then she drops to the ground, face down, exhausted.

She turns her face to one side and lays, gasping and coughing. A white hot rage smoulders behind her weary eyes.

INT. DUNGEON

Kira, in her cell, is bound, her hands tied behind her back and her feet tied together. There is a gag in her mouth. Her eyes are filled with tears. She shuts them tightly, trying to will the pain, grief and fear away.

INT. THE CRYSTAL CHAMBER

Alone in the chamber, Jolen walks slowly around the Crystal, gazing at it in awe tinged with a faint smile of anticipation. He knows, probably better than anyone, what the Crystal represents, and the potential power it could bring him.

Jolen steps up to the Crystal, reaches out, and touches it gently with his fingertips.

At the point of his touch, the Crystal darkens slightly. A faint tinge of the dark violet color of the Crystal before the healing. Tiny bolts of energy dance at his fingertips.

Jolen smiles coldly, closing his eyes, feeling the power flow through him.

A soaked to the skin Soldier enters.

SOLDIER

Lord.

Jolen lets his hand fall. The Crystal returns to its usual lucent transparency. After a moment to center his thoughts, Jolen turns to look evenly at the Soldier. Then he blinks in surprise at the Soldier's dishevelled appearance.

JOLEN
What happened to you?

The Soldier hesitates.

SOLDIER
My Lord... Doria... is dead.

Jolen's eyes widen in such thoroughly convincing shock that, if we didn't know better, we'd believe it ourselves.

JOLEN
Dead...? How?

SOLDIER
She tripped and fell in the river. The current was too strong, and her armor... I'm sorry My Lord.

Jolen looks around, putting on a perfect facade of numbed shock, as if he doesn't know what to do. He picks up the Maranek clan emblem around his neck and looks down at it, twirling it in his fingers. His mouth twitches, as if he's fighting to hold in tears.

He bites his lower lip, looking strained. Then he marches towards the door.

JOLEN
I'll be in my chamber.

As he marches, he presses his lips together tightly, keeping his face rigidly unemotional.

INT. PASSAGE

In the passage leading from the chamber, he passes FOUR SOLDIERS (all female) standing guard. He motions for them to go into the Chamber. They turn smartly and march in.

Once no one can see his face, a faint smile creeps across his lips.

INT. MARKEYEN'S OFFICE

Doria, half naked and drenched, slams Pelmaar Markeyen onto his desk, sending his administrative papers askew. Despite his large size, Doria is soundly manhandling him.

DORIA
Why did you try to kill me?!

Markeyen looks at her, dazed.

MARKEYEN
What...?

She slams him onto his desk again.

DORIA
Why did you try to kill me?!

Markeyen looks at Doria with concern, touching the side of her head, examining it. His hand is bandaged from the cut.

MARKEYEN
You'd better see the physician. I think you may have hit your head when...

DORIA
I did not hit my head! Look at your hand! I cut it! Remember? You were drowning me. I slashed your hand to get away from you.

Now, Markeyen's furious. He shoves Doria off of him. He rolls off the desk and faces her, indignant:

MARKEYEN
You fell in the river! I cut myself on a sharp rock trying to save you! How dare you accuse me of such a thing?! You've been my commanding officer almost since the day I joined the service! How could you think that I...?

His voice breaks and he stops, at a loss for words. The burning fury and outrage in his eyes is quite genuine.

Doria starts to back away from him, for the first time realizing that he genuinely doesn't remember anything about the incident.

Markeyen just glares at her, confused and hurt.

Suddenly, her eyes darken with anger, but this time tinged with hurt so powerful that you can't be sure if she'll fly into a rage or burst into tears.

Ultimately, she turns and marches out of Markeyen's office without another word, leaving Markeyen staring after her. He looks down at his bandaged hand, balling it into a fist.

INT. JOLEN & DORIA'S CHAMBER

Jolen is just sitting down at the small desk. He has his Maranek emblem off and is poised over it with a paint brush and black paint. Suddenly, his door bursts open. He turns.

Doria barges in.

There is a brief flash of shock and dismay on Jolen's face, but he covers it up. He jumps to his feet and runs to meet Doria, "deeply relieved."

JOLEN

Doria...!

Before he knows what's happening, he's carried off his feet by Doria's vicious backhanded blow. He lands squarely on his back with such force that he skids several feet.

He lays there dazed for a moment, then finally manages to prop himself up on his elbows.

Doria just glares down at him.

DORIA

Why?

JOLEN

What...?

Doria lunges forward and hauls Jolen off the floor. She slams him into the nearby wall.

DORIA

You tried to have me killed.

JOLEN

Doria...

DORIA

Markeyen tried to kill me... but he doesn't remember doing it. It's the same mind technique you use on our prisoners. To make them spies.

DORIA(cont'd)

You're the only Gelfling alive who knows this technique. So Pelmaar must've been acting under your orders!

JOLEN

Doria, my love...

Jolen starts to take one of Doria's hands...

Doria sees what he's trying to do. She grabs his arm by the wrist and twists it behind him, throwing him to the floor and getting on top of him, pinning him face down with his arm immobilized behind him. He cries out in pain at the twisting of his sore wrist.

DORIA

I'm going to tell the people. Tell them everything you've done.

Jolen laughs derisively.

JOLEN

Who will believe you? Your mind is weak, Doria. You have no telepathic or empathic power. You can't even dreamfast. Over the years, I have used my own powers to carefully condition your mind to hide all of my "secrets." That's one of the reasons I took you as a mate. With you I could do anything I wanted, make you believe anything I wanted... and you'd never know the difference.

Doria cannot believe what she's hearing. For the first time in her life, she's truly seeing the man she loves for what he is. She lets go of Jolen's arm and steps back, her eyes filling up with anguish and disbelief.

DORIA

Then why would you want Kira? She's a Kindala. If her mind is even half as strong as Maaldin's...

Jolen turns, pinning her with his gaze.

JOLEN

Once I have the power of the Crystal, it won't matter.

DORIA

And what becomes of me?

Jolen just smirks smugly. He says nothing.

Doria's mouth quivers. Tears stream down her face. Suddenly, she turns and dashes from the room. Jolen throws back his head and laughs.

INT. THE CORRIDOR

Doria runs, Jolen's mocking laughter echoing down the corridor, ringing in her ears.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE CASTLE OF THE CRYSTAL - MORNING

The Great Sun and the Rose Sun have risen, and the Dying Sun is just coming up over the horizon.

INT. DUNGEON - KIRA'S CELL

Kira is bound and gagged. She's laying on her side, trying to sleep. A key rattles in the lock. Kira's eyes open.

A Soldier comes in with a tray of hot porridge and water. She sets it down on the floor.

Kira sits up. The Soldier comes over and removes Kira's gag, then brings the food.

Instead of untying Kira, the Soldier feeds her. She starts by giving Kira a drink. Then she takes a spoonful of the steaming porridge and gives Kira a bite.

Without warning, Kira spits the porridge out with such force that it strikes the Soldier square in the eyes.

The Soldier reels back in shock and pain, grabbing her eyes.

In a flash, Kira is rolling along the floor...

Her spinning legs kick the Soldier's out from under her and she lands flat on her face.

Kira quickly brings her legs up, and slams them down on the back of the Soldier's head, knocking her out cold.

Kira rolls to the Soldier, her back to her, and grapples for her sword, awkwardly sliding it part way out of its scabbard with tied hands. She rubs the ropes against the sword, and the razor sharp blade quickly slices through. Her hands freed, Kira draws the sword out to cut the binds on her feet.

INT. DUNGEON CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Kira comes out wearing the Soldier's uniform. Her hair is tucked into the back. She carries the empty dishes.

The Soldiers at the end of the corridor glance at Kira, but pay little attention. Kira moves to Maaldin's cell.

Maaldin looks up, and recognizes Kira's face. His eyes brighten, and Kira gestures for quiet.

Kira tries to unlock the cell door. The keys are big and awkward, designed for Skeksis hands. The first one doesn't work. She tries the next one. Not that one, either.

The guards begin to get suspicious, glancing down the corridor toward her.

Now, Kira is frantic. She tries another key. No good.

The Soldiers exchange a look, then start down the corridor.

Kira tries another key. This one works. She opens the cell.

KIRA

Come on!

Maaldin dashes out of his cell. They run down the corridor.

SOLDIERS

Stop!

The Soldiers draw their swords and break into a run.

Kira and Maaldin sprint around a corner.

The Soldiers dash up and turn the corner...

...then they stop cold. Kira and Maaldin are nowhere to be seen, and there's nowhere they could go. The Soldiers exchange a look.

Behind them, they don't see a large door silently closing. Once it's closed, it looks like part of the wall. The Soldiers turn, looking right at it, not realizing.

INT. A TUNNEL - BEHIND THE DOOR

KIRA

What is this place?

MAALDIN

This Castle is full of these tunnels. They were used by Garthim to get quickly from one part of the Castle to the other. We used to use them as escape routes.

Kira thinks for a moment...

KIRA

If we can get to the Crystal, I think I can call enough animals into the Castle to overwhelm Jolen's soldiers.

MAALDIN

It'll be guarded.

KIRA

Can you create a diversion?

MAALDIN

Does Jolen know you can control the Crystal?

KIRA

I don't think so.

MAALDIN

Good. So long as he still believes I am the Chosen One, his people will be under orders to capture me first at all costs. I should be able to draw them away and give you the time you need. I'll need that equipment pouch.

Maaldin indicates pouch built into the belt of the uniform Kira wears. Kira starts unbuckling the belt...

INT. CASTLE THRONE ROOM

JOLEN

What do you mean they escaped?!

Jolen is scarlet with rage, screaming at Doria standing unemotionally before him. Pelmaar Markeyen and several other high ranking soldiers look on.

Jolen glares at Doria contemptuously.

JOLEN

You have failed me for the last time.

Jolen turns to Markeyen.

JOLEN
Pelmaar Markeyen. You are now Iradah. Find those prisoners.

Markeyen turns and motions for several Soldiers to follow him. They all march at speed out of the Crystal chamber.

INT. THE CRYSTAL CHAMBER

The Four Soldiers still stand guard around the Crystal.

A hidden door in the wall slides silently aside. Maaldin stands in the door, unnoticed for the first few seconds. The door closes behind him. He reaches into the pouch, drawing out a handful of hand darts.

One of the Soldiers turns. She sees him. Her eyes widen.

He throws a dart.

It hits the Soldier in the shoulder. She yelps.

The other Soldiers turn to see her fall.

Maaldin throws another dart.

A second soldier takes a dart in the neck. In a moment, she has fallen, too.

Maaldin throws again.

The third Soldier sidesteps the incoming dart, just as a fourth dart streaks into view. The fourth Soldier tries to duck, but catches the dart in the arm. At first, there's no effect, but as she draws her crossbow she starts to get dizzy. The crossbow drops.

Maaldin runs out from his hiding place, heading straight for the corridor to the Throne Room.

The Soldier hit in the arm finally drops to the floor, and the final remaining Soldier gives chase. She fires her crossbow, just missing Maaldin as he runs from the chamber.

As she leaves the room, the door in the wall opens again and Kira steps out. She looks around for a moment, then scurries for the Crystal, raising her hands to it...

MARKEYEN (O.S.)

Stop!

Startled, Kira looks up.

Markeyen stands on the balcony, a crossbow trained on Kira. He issues a hand signal, and 32 Soldiers immediately come out of hiding all around the balcony, crossbows trained on Kira.

Kira hears the sound of footsteps in the passage to the throne room. She turns...

About 24 more Soldiers, accompanied by Jolen and Doria, bring in Maaldin. Two Soldiers hold him while the remainder draw their swords and surround Kira.

Jolen looks up at Markeyen on the balcony.

JOLEN

Good work, Iradah.

He shoots a meaningful glance at Doria.

Jolen smiles coldly and turns to Maaldin, held by the two Soldiers. He pauses for a moment, glaring, then draws his sword and puts it against Maaldin's throat.

JOLEN

I'll offer you this chance only once. Join me. You and I are the only people alive who can use the power of the Crystal. Together, we can usher in a new era for our people.

MAALDIN

What new era? An era of slavery with you as their master?

JOLEN

Not slavery. Unification. We can unify the Gelfling people. Help them focus on rebuilding our civilization.

MAALDIN

Noble words. I've heard them before. That's exactly the promise you made to the people when you ousted me as ruler. The people are still waiting for you to fulfill your promises.

JOLEN

Once I have the power of the Crystal, I will have the means to do all I have promised. And more.

MAALDIN

Throughout your rule, you have used the power of your mind, not to benefit our people, but to tighten your grip on your power. I see no reason to believe that will change now.

JOLEN

So... you refuse to join me?

MAALDIN

I will not join you.

Jolen stares at Maaldin for a long moment... then he nods respectfully, accepting his refusal. Without another word, Jolen lowers his sword and thrusts forward, driving it straight through Maaldin's body.

Maaldin's eyes widen in shock and pain.

Kira gasps.

Jolen's Soldiers are all numbed into shock. They cannot believe what they're seeing.

JOLEN

Then I cannot afford to let you live.

Jolen glares coldly into Maaldin's eyes, holding his blade in Maaldin's chest for a moment longer. Then, he yanks it out and steps back.

Maaldin sways unsteadily for a moment, then drops to a knee.

KIRA

Grandfather!!!

Kira rushes forward. The Soldiers are too shocked at what they're seeing to stop her.

She rushes to Maaldin's side, kneels and rolls him over on his back, cradling him in her lap. Blood flows from his gaping wound. His blood streaks Kira's hands.

Jolen just watches with a cold look of satisfaction.

Maaldin looks up at Kira, wide eyed, frightened and in pain. There is blood in his mouth. The front of the uniform Kira wears is stained with Maaldin's blood.

KIRA

Grandfather...

Maaldin's eyes soften for a moment, and he takes Kira's hand in his, squeezing. A trickle of blood flows from the corner of his mouth. Then slowly, his grip loosens, falters... and his hand and arm go limp. The life drains from his eyes. His last breath sighs out of his body.

Kira throws back her head, screaming in anguish.

KIRA

NO!!!

Her cry of agony echoes throughout the Castle, and is the only sound. Everyone else is shocked into absolute silence.

Kira buries her face in Maaldin's hair, crying bitterly, cradling his lifeless body.

Jolen is on the verge of laughing with satisfaction.

Kira is quaking now... from grief, rage or both, we cannot tell. She carefully lays Maaldin's body on the floor, then reaches out and gently closes his eyes.

Kira gazes down upon the dead body of her last living relative. Slowly, her face begins to distort in rage. Her trembling increases. Suddenly, with a howl of fury, she draws the sword from her stolen uniform and rushes Jolen.

Startled, Jolen brings up his sword only barely in time to meet Kira's vicious attack. Kira holds her sword with both hands, slashing at Jolen wildly.

Suddenly, Jolen slashes wildly, not at Kira but her sword. There is a resounding CLANG as the force of Jolen's swipe tears the sword from Kira's hands. It skitters across the floor and out of reach.

Jolen pulls back his sword, and thrusts for Kira's heart...

From out of nowhere, a sword deflects the thrust, wrenching Jolen's sword from his hand. In a flash, the mystery sword is at his throat. Shocked, he turns to see the owner.

Doria.

Kira stares at her, astonished.

Jolen glares at Doria, furious.

JOLEN

You have no right to interfere. She attacked me.

JOLEN(cont'd)

By law, her attack is considered a challenge against my rulership.

DORIA

Yes... but the Charter of the Dellin Empire also states that a civilian, unschooled in swordplay and the martial arts, must be allowed one cycle of the moon to be trained for the challenge.

JOLEN

Who would train her?

DORIA

I will.

Kira's blinks, rocked back on her heels.

Jolen's eyes widen in astonishment and rage. He steps towards Doria and stands nearly nose to nose with her.

JOLEN

I will not allow it.

DORIA

You have no choice. You made the law, but you're not above it. If you violate your own law, the people would be within their rights to remove you from power.

Jolen's mouth curls downward into a smouldering frown. She has him, and he knows it. Finally, he speaks, his voice a growl of tightly controlled fury.

JOLEN

Very well. You may have one cycle of the moon to train her. One. And you had better train her well. If she loses her challenge, you will suffer her punishment by her side.

Doria flinches inwardly at the cruelty of the man she loves... but she holds his gaze resolutely.

Jolen turns to Kira.

JOLEN

Kira Kindala. Our challenge will take place 41 days from now at the zenith of the Great Sun. Agreed?

Kira sneers at him, her eyes filled with loathing. She locks gazes with him for a moment, then nods once in agreement.

Jolen turns and sweeps from the room, retrieving his sword as he goes. He is accompanied by several of the Soldiers.

Kira watches Jolen go. Her eyes blaze with primal hatred and rage. It's a disturbing contrast to her delicate features.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE CASTLE OF THE CRYSTAL - IN THE FIELD - DAY

A mass funeral rite for all the Gelfling killed in the battle. Soldiers stand or kneel over the open graves of dead friends. Some of the bodies, wrapped in shrouds, are still laying beside the dug graves. Others are being lowered by slings into the holes. Still others are being filled in.

Kira is among them, kneeling next to the body of Maaldin, wrapped in a shroud buttoned along the front up to his chest. Doria stands in the background with four Soldiers, watching.

Kira reaches into the shroud and gently lifts up Maaldin's head. She removes the Kindala clan emblem from around his neck and gently sets his head back down.

Then, she lays the clan emblem aside, and begins buttoning up the death shroud.

Tears course silently down her cheeks.

She buttons the last button, sealing it.

She picks up the clan emblem. The Soldiers with Doria step forward and take a rope at each of the corners of the shroud. They gently lift it over the grave. Then, they slowly begin lowering the body into the ground.

Kira grips the clan emblem tightly in her fist. Her mouth quivers and tears fall.

Doria gazes at her sympathetically. He steps up and gently places a hand on Kira's shoulder.

Instantly, Kira whips around and knocks Doria's hand away, glaring at her. Then she turns and marches towards the Castle without another word.

Doria's eyes drop to the ground sadly.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. A FIELD - DAY

The suns are blazing, swelteringly hot. There is no wind. In the distance, Kira runs through the vast expanse of tall grass, surrounded by dense forest.

She wears a sleeveless tunic, short skirt and moccasin-like shoes. She runs flat out, soaked with sweat, pushing herself to the limits of her endurance.

EXT. RINDAAR RIVER WATERFALL

Kira swims hard and fast laps in the pool under the waterfall. She swims with strong, powerful strokes. Her clothes sit on a rock nearby.

She swims to shore and climbs out of the water just as Doria flies up and lands on the shore. Kira ignores her as she starts to dress. Doria looks Kira over, admiring her body.

DORIA

You're in excellent shape. Especially for a Gelfinaya.

Kira continues to dress, unmindful of Doria.

DORIA

Your training starts tomorrow at dawn. We'll start with hand fighting, then work up to swordplay.

KIRA

I know how to fight.

DORIA

Do you?

KIRA

I've fought animals. Many times.

DORIA

Fighting a Gelfling is almost nothing like fighting an animal. Jolen knows how to fight. He was once a soldier. He could defeat you easily.

KIRA

I don't want, or need, your help.

Kira is finished dressing. She turns to leave.

Without warning, Doria grabs Kira in mid-step, pulling her arms and kicking her legs out from under her. Kira slams face first into the ground.

She rolls over and looks up at Doria.

DORIA
That's the best you can do?

KIRA
You surprised me.

Doria drops into a fighting stance.

DORIA
I'm not surprising you now.

Kira slowly gets to her feet and drops into a fighting stance. Her stance and Doria's are distinctly different in style. Kira circles Doria warily. Doria keeps her eyes locked on her.

In a flash, Kira hits the ground and rolls towards Doria, reaching out to scissor her legs.

Doria jumps Kira easily, and gives her a light boot in the midsection for good measure. Kira grunts.

Chagrined, Kira jumps to her feet and circles Doria, this time watching her much more closely. Doria continues to watch Kira with unwavering eyes.

Suddenly, Kira throws a kick at Doria's head. Doria sidesteps, dropping down to sweep Kira's support leg out from under her with a smooth swipe of her leg. Kira slams onto her back, and frantically scrambles back to her feet, spinning to face Doria.

Kira circles Doria again, flustered. Doria is still calm and composed, carefully measuring Kira's every move.

Kira lunges, throwing a punch for Doria's midsection. Doria blocks and counters with a quick jab to the chin. Kira stumbles back, dazed, but otherwise unhurt.

Frustrated, Kira lunges, throwing punches. Doria stands her ground, easily deflecting or evading blow after blow.

Finally, Doria snatches one of Kira's incoming punches, twisting her arm. Kira's flips head over heels, landing savagely on her back, knocking the wind out of her.

Doria's foot lashes out, and stops just before smashing into Kira's face. Doria's boot fills Kira's vision.

DORIA
You're dead.

Doria slowly puts her foot down next to Kira's head. Kira lays there, frozen, terrified, humbled. Doria reaches down to her. Kira takes Doria's hand and she hoists her up.

DORIA
Jolen won't be so easy on you.

That finally brings Kira to her senses. She nods.

EXT. THE CASTLE OF THE CRYSTAL - DUSK

A gentle rain falls, wetting the land and bringing out the bright green of the rich foliage in the surrounding land.

INT. DUNGEON - JEN'S CELL

Jen and Kira are in the midst of an argument, shouting:

JEN
Are you out of your mind? He'll kill you!

KIRA
Doria's training me.

JEN
You think one moon cycle's training is going to make a difference? He's probably been learning those skills his whole life!

KIRA
I have no choice.

JEN
Of course you do! You can withdraw your challenge.

KIRA
No!

JEN
Kira...

KIRA

He killed a member of my family! He must pay for that.

Kira turns away. Jen lets Kira's last thought hang in the air a moment before he speaks again.

JEN

Look. I understand how you feel...

KIRA

No, you don't. You couldn't.

JEN

I've lost family, too.

KIRA

None you remember. The Mystics sheltered and protected you in the valley your whole life. You've never had to watch people you love murdered...

JEN

I watched you murdered by a Skeksis.

KIRA

I survived.

JEN

But in that moment, I thought you were dead! You're all I have, Kira! I have no family! The Mystics are gone! How can you force me to watch you die all over again?! What can this fight possibly accomplish?!

Suddenly, Kira whirls on Jen, wild-eyed.

KIRA

All my life, I've lived in terror. Always expecting Garthim to come bursting into my home and take my loved ones away. Now that the Skeksis are gone, I thought I could finally live without fear. But now, I face living in fear again. Not in fear of the Skeksis or the Garthim, but in fear of my own people. My own people under Jolen's rule. He terrorized the Sandlings. He killed all his previous mates. He tried to kill Doria. He killed my Grandfather. Now, he's threatening to kill you so he can force me to become his mate.

A shiver runs up Jen's spine. He had no idea.

Kira's voice rises to a scream of rage. Jen shrinks back.

KIRA

I will NOT live the rest of my life living in fear! I am sick of living in fear. I will not allow this man to drag me back into a life of fear!

Kira's eyes burn into Jen's. She lowers her voice, but she speaks with grim intensity:

KIRA

It doesn't matter if I kill him, or if he kills me. Either way, I don't have to live in fear anymore.

Jen locks gazes with Kira, quaking, silent, his eyes wide, terrified at the power of the anger and hatred in Kira. He's never seen this side of her before. It's hard for him to believe Kira is capable of such hatred.

DISSOLVE TO:

MONTAGE - COMBAT TRAINING

Doria trains Kira in physical combat first, flipping and throwing her to teach her how to take a fall.

Then, Doria begins teaching Kira the basics of blocking, deflecting and evading attacks. Kira, already an experienced animal fighter, picks up the skills easily.

Then, Doria moves on to the first swordplay lessons. She teaches Kira some warm-up exercises first without the sword.

Then, once they've donned some protective equipment (it looks hand made), she begins to teach Kira the basic parrying techniques with wooden practice swords.

A series of images, both day and night, show Doria teaching Kira both hand fighting and swordplay, the exercises becoming progressively more difficult as they progress.

Eventually, Kira begins to show confidence in her new skills, occasionally getting the upper hand with Doria. She flips Doria to the ground with a vicious arm twist, just like the one Doria used on her earlier.

EXT. A FIELD - DUSK

A swordplay exercise between Doria and Kira. At this point, Kira's moves are becoming polished. Doria comes at Kira with a vigorous series of attacks which Kira sweeps aside with graceful sweeps of her wooden blade.

Suddenly, Doria lunges, slipping in under Kira's blade. But Kira brings her sword down like lightning, catching and deflecting Doria's blade with such force that it is ripped from her hand. Kira's sword whips to Doria's throat.

Doria looks at Kira in surprise and admiration.

DORIA
You're a good student.

Kira nods her thanks. She lowers her sword.

DORIA
I think that's enough for today. Go eat,
and get some rest. We'll be working on
hand fighting tomorrow.

Doria turns to walk to the castle. Kira calls after her:

KIRA
Why are you doing this?

Doria stops, hesitates. She doesn't turn.

DORIA
What?

KIRA
Why are you helping me?

Again, Doria hesitates. She can't meet Kira's gaze.

DORIA
If I don't, Jolen will kill you.

KIRA
Why do you care what happens to me?

Doria closes her eyes, trying to will away her anguish.

DORIA
Jolen is dangerous. He must be stopped.
You're the only one with the courage and
conviction to face him.

KIRA

If you know how dangerous he is, then why can't you face him? You'd stand a better chance.

DORIA

I can't.

KIRA

Why not?

DORIA

Everyone else I ever cared about died in battles here, against the Skeksis. Jolen is the only person in my life who's always been there. The only person who was in my life long enough for me to get close to. Life with him is the only life I've ever known. I could never hurt him. Even if I wanted to.

Kira is beginning to understand what Doria is trying to say.

KIRA

You still love him. Even after all he's done.

Doria squeezes her eyes shut tighter. She opens her mouth as if to reply, but then realizes she really doesn't know what to say. After a moment, she spreads her wings and flies away towards the castle.

KIRA

Doria...

Doria doesn't look back.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. A CASTLE BALCONY - DAY

Jolen stands, looking down from the balcony wall.

Below, near the castle gate, we can make out Kira and Doria on the field, sparring.

Jolen watches them for a moment, then turns to go inside.

INT. THE CRYSTAL CHAMBER

There are four (female) guards on duty around the Crystal. Jolen enters and signals for them to leave. They salute and march out of the chamber.

Jolen walks up to the Crystal and places his hand on it. The same crackling energy and darkening we've seen before, only this time, a window opens on the Crystal next to where his hand touches, showing Kira and Doria in their practice fight.

Jolen closes his eyes.

EXT. THE FIELD/INT. THE CRYSTAL CHAMBER

DORIA AND KIRA practice on the field. Suddenly, Doria simply stops in mid-punch and takes a step back.

The unexpected move startles Kira.

KIRA

Doria...?

Doria's eyes glass over. She takes a step towards Kira.

Kira, sensing danger, retreats.

JOLEN'S concentration deepens. A smile creeps across his lips.

DORIA lunges at Kira with a vicious punch. Kira is just able to swerve out of the way, but in doing so, her head is carried right into Doria's brutal spinning heel kick. The force carries Kira off her feet. She lands flat in her back.

Kira looks up just in time to see Doria diving for her. She manages to roll out of the way just in time, but as she tries to rise to her feet, Doria grabs one of her legs, tripping her, bringing Kira down into the grass savagely, face first.

Kira scrambles desperately to get away, but Doria hauls herself on top of her. Soon, she straddles Kira's stomach, holding her down. Without any expression or emotion, Doria places her hands around Kira's throat and starts to squeeze. Kira gags at the pressure.

AT THE CRYSTAL, Jolen opens his eyes, watching Doria strangle the life out of Kira in his window in the Crystal. He laughs chillingly, enjoying every moment.

KIRA, beginning to fade, desperately grasps Doria's hands at her throat, looking right into Doria's eyes.

JOLEN suddenly squeezes his eyes shut, groaning slightly as if he had felt a sudden pain.

DORIA's eyes, although still glassy, begin to register confusion. Her hold on Kira's neck slackens.

The moment the pressure's off, Kira snatches one of Doria's hands and holds it tightly in both of hers. Trembling, Kira's gaze burns into Doria's.

JOLEN, his eyes shut tight, grabs the Crystal with both hands, focussing all his energy into his attempt to retain control of Doria.

KIRA closes her eyes, trembling. Her face is a grim grimace of absolute focus.

Suddenly, Doria blinks, and her eyes are clear again.

AT THE CRYSTAL, there is a flash at the point of contact between Jolen and the Crystal. Jolen's head snaps back and he cries out, stumbling back from the Crystal.

The crackling energy and window in the Crystal instantly vanish. There is a faint, fading glow where they were.

He glares at the fading energy in the Crystal. Rage and fear dance across his face as he tries to comprehend what just occurred. Jolen staggers back a bit, attempting to recover his wits. Finally, he turns and runs from the Chamber.

IN THE FIELD

Doria kneels down next to Kira, helping her sit up. Doria, deeply concerned, checks Kira's face for broken bones. Kira grimaces in pain slightly, but it looks like she'll have nothing more than a nasty bruise.

DORIA
Are you all right?

KIRA
I think so...

DORIA
What happened? I don't...

KIRA
I have to fight him tonight.

Doria blinks, taken aback.

DORIA

Tonight? Kira, you need all the training you can get if you're going to win this. You still have a right to seven more days...

KIRA

Every moment, Jolen is learning to do more and more with the Crystal. In seven days, he may be too powerful to stop.

DORIA

If you're not ready...

KIRA

Doria... I am the other Chosen One. Not Maaldin. Now, Jolen knows that, too. He'll never let me live until the challenge.

Doria's eyes widen as she registers the implications.

Kira and Doria hear approaching footsteps. They turn.

Jolen marches out through the Castle gate, accompanied by four Soldiers. They walk up to Doria and Kira and stop. Jolen points to Kira.

JOLEN

Arrest her.

Doria steps between the Soldiers and Kira.

DORIA

Arrest her? On what charge?

JOLEN

Espionage.

DORIA

Espionage...?!

JOLEN

I have reason to believe she's sending information back to the Trokaan.

(to Soldiers)

Take her.

The Soldiers move past Doria to take Kira.

In a flash, Kira is holding both Soldiers' hands. They freeze, their eyes glassing over.

KIRA
 (to Jolen)
 Order them back... or these two find out everything I know about you.

Jolen's expression darkens. He steps towards Kira.

KIRA
 Stop! I can do this in an instant.

JOLEN
 And I can undo it in an instant.

Doria steps forward.

DORIA
 To do that, you'd have to subdue them both... and me along with them.

Jolen knows that he's outmatched. Doria alone is his better in combat, much less her and two more trained Soldiers. He frowns and backs away.

Kira releases the Soldiers' hands. They blink, disoriented for a moment before they recover and stand at attention.

JOLEN
 We will have our challenge tomorrow.

KIRA
 Tonight.

Jolen blinks. He wasn't expecting that. There is the briefest flicker of fear in his eyes, but he covers it.

JOLEN
 Anxious are we? Why tonight?

KIRA
 Why not tonight? Are you afraid to face me without the Crystal?

Jolen scowls. In his mind, he can't back down now without looking like a coward in front of the Soldiers. He nods.

JOLEN
 Tonight.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE CASTLE OF THE CRYSTAL - NIGHT

Rolling thunder. Flashes of lightning in the distance. A light rain is falling.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE CRYSTAL CHAMBER

Hundreds of Gelfling, both civilians and Jolen's soldiers, have gathered in the chamber to watch the challenge. Most of the spectators are on the balcony. A few soldiers are on the chamber floor. There is animated chatter throughout the room. The glow of the walls is the only illumination.

Aughra is among those on the balcony.

Doria stands off to one side with two Soldiers holding swords in scabbards.

Jen, bound by handcuffs and leg irons, is brought in by two Soldiers. One of the Soldiers gestures for Jen to stand against the wall. He obeys. The two Soldiers stand on either side of him as guards.

Kira enters, wearing her travel outfit. She has her hair tied back in a ponytail. There is a noticeable bruise on her cheekbone.

Jen sees her pass.

JEN

Kira...

Kira's head turns slightly. She heard him, but she doesn't acknowledge him. She keeps walking.

Jen reaches out to her beseechingly... but then drops his arm and lowers his eyes sadly.

Doria sees Kira coming and goes over to her, taking her aside to speak to her. She whispers in her ear:

DORIA

Remember. Jolen is older than you. He'll get tired faster. Use that. And the fact you're right handed gives you an advantage in swordplay. Most Gelfling are left handed. Your moves will be the opposite of what he's used to. And don't forget the soreness in his left wrist.

Kira nods. She squeezes Doria's hand gently.

KIRA

Thanks.

Doria nods. A faint smile of reassurance and affection passes between them.

Kira turns and walks towards the Crystal. She stops, standing before it. She bends her knee and begins stretching her legs, warming up.

Then, Jolen sweeps into the room. The only decoration he wears is his emperor's sash. Aside from that, he is undecorated and wearing a lightweight soldier's uniform.

Jolen's entrance attracts the attention of everyone in the room. All eyes are on him as he strides purposefully across the floor to stand before the Crystal.

The chatter falls away to hushed whispers.

Jolen begins stretching and warming up.

Kira has stopped stretching to glare at Jolen coldly.

Jolen feels her eyes on him and looks up to meet her gaze. His only response is a chilling smile and a glint in his eye.

A shiver travels up Kira's spine.

Doria steps into the center of the room and holds her hands up for silence. The whispering dies down, then fades away.

Doria looks from Jolen to Kira.

DORIA

Combatants, stand ready.

Jolen and Kira step forward, moving to face each other before the great Crystal. Doria issues a hand signal to the Soldiers carrying swords. They walk up to Jolen and Kira and hold out the weapons.

Jolen draws his sword. The Soldier turns and marches away.

Kira and Jolen's eyes lock. A tinge of fear touches Kira's eyes as the full enormity of what she's about to do is beginning to register. She glances over to Jen.

Jen looks at her beseechingly, begging her with his eyes not to do it.

She hesitates, uncertain. She turns back to Jolen.

Jolen glares at her with cold satisfaction.

As Kira's gaze meets his, the fear quickly melts away, replaced by cold hatred that drops over her eyes like a curtain. Without taking her eyes off him, she reaches over and draws her sword. She's made her choice.

Jen's eyes drop in disappointment.

Doria steps back and out of the way.

DORIA

Begin!

Jolen and Kira snap into sword fighting stances. Jolen holds his weapon left-handed. Kira holds hers right-handed.

Jen looks on, terrified.

Doria watches with rapt attention.

The spectators, Soldiers and civilians alike, all go dead silent, not wanting to disturb the concentration of the combatants. Their eyes are riveted to the action.

Among them, Aughra looks on breathlessly.

Jolen and Kira circle each other, warily at first, measuring each other, looking for an opportunity to strike.

Without warning, Jolen lunges, his sword slashing at Kira's throat with deadly precision.

The ringing clash of metal against metal fills the room as Kira skillfully deflects Jolen's blade.

Jolen steps back for a moment, surprised and impressed.

Kira's gaze is locked with his, carefully following his every move.

Jolen twirls his sword menacingly... then lunges...

Kira sidesteps, deflecting the blow, instantly bringing her sword up to slash at Jolen's face. The tip of her blade grazes Jolen's cheek, drawing blood.

Kira presses her advantage, advancing on Jolen in a furious counterattack. Startled, Jolen is driven back. He is able to block Kira's onslaught with practiced precision, but her attack drives him relentlessly towards the chamber wall.

Finally, Jolen runs out of room, back against the wall. Kira makes a wild slash for his head, which he blocks. Kira presses down with her blade, pushing Jolen's blade closer and closer to his neck.

Jolen looks at Kira with new respect. Doria trained her far better than he had anticipated.

Kira continues to press the blade ever closer.

Jolen's eyes narrow. Enough games. With a grimace of rage, Jolen shoves his blade forward, hurling Kira's blade away.

Now, Jolen slashes at Kira with an attack far more ferocious than his first. He's using all of his skills now. The battle is truly joined.

Kira retreats from the fury of Jolen's onslaught, deflecting his blurring blade with awkward, inexperienced parries. Now, Kira is showing true fear, uncertain with her new skills against the full brunt of an experienced warrior's attack.

Doria tenses. Her hands are balled into tight fists.

Aughra watches anxiously from the balcony above.

Jen watches Jolen's attack in helpless terror.

Kira continues to defend herself. A few times, Kira tries a lunge or a slash at Jolen, but he skillfully deflects each attack and counterattacks with another furious series of slashes and lunges, forcing Kira back on the defensive.

Kira is being driven relentlessly towards the opposite wall. Soon, she's backed against it, fighting for her life. She tries to defend herself, but there's no more room to retreat. She's relying totally on her sword to stop Jolen's attack.

Jolen slashes for Kira's face.

He makes a glancing blow on her chin.

Jen gasps.

Kira grimaces at the bright pain as blood dribbles down from the fresh cut. She slashes at Jolen in return.

He deflects the blow, panting heavily. He slashes again.

Kira's blade intercepts Jolen's, sweeping it aside. Her eyes narrow as she looks into his.

Jolen is out of breath and soaked with perspiration. He takes another desperate swipe.

Kira ducks the attack and lunges, driving her blade towards his chest.

The exhausted Jolen is able to bring his sword down to deflect Kira's thrust just a hair away from running him through. Before he can recover, he finds Kira's blade sweeping for his face. He ducks, then brings up his sword to deflect another attack that instantly follows.

Tired from his ferocious assault, Jolen is unprepared for Kira's offensive. Her attacks are constant. She isn't giving him any room to breathe. He begins to retreat.

Kira attacks relentlessly, not wanting to lose her advantage.

Jolen sweeps one of Kira's thrusts aside and slashes wildly for her neck.

Instead of parrying, Kira ducks and lunges. In his wild sweep, Jolen carried his blade too far to bring it up in time to meet the attack. He steps back quickly, but the tip of Kira's sword penetrates his chest. It's only a flesh wound, but it underscores how much trouble Jolen is in.

Kira presses her attack. Jolen retreats around the Crystal, desperately ducking, swerving and parrying to keep Kira's sword in check. He's quickly running out of strength.

Kira slashes hard, sweeping Jolen's sword out of the way for the final lunge for his heart...

But Jolen brings his sword down to meet the thrust, slashing and twisting at Kira's blade.

The force of the parry carries Kira's sword clean out of her hand. It hits the floor and skitters away.

Jen, eyes wide, lunges off the wall. The Soldiers hold him back.

Kira, unarmed, looks Jolen in the eyes, suddenly terrified.

Sneering in satisfaction, Jolen smiles coldly and thrusts...

But Kira sidesteps and grabs his sword arm, slamming Jolen's sore wrist hard over her knee. Jolen cries out in agony, and his sword drops from his grip. Kira kicks it away.

Furious, Jolen yanks his arm free and swings to backhand Kira across the face.

Kira ducks under the blow and counters with a powerful blow to Jolen's midsection. Jolen doubles over. Kira brings up a knee, smashing him in the face, driving him upright to meet her fist as it hammers into his jaw.

Now, Kira is in her element. Physical fighting is more like what she's used to with wild animals.

Kira swings again with her left fist, catching the now dazed Jolen on the nose. His nose bleeds.

On her next swing, Jolen blocks Kira's blow and brings up a fist, uppercutting her square under the chin. Stunned, Kira stumbles back. Jolen lunges forward, swinging for Kira's head.

Still tired, Jolen isn't able to throw the punch fast enough and Kira easily swerves to avoid it. She counters with a series of jabs to Jolen's chin. The blows rock his head back and he begins to bleed from the mouth. Jolen is becoming dazed and disoriented from the rapid fire blows.

Before Jolen can gather his wits, Kira delivers a straight kick clean on the point of his chin. The force carries him off his feet, and he slams onto his back with stunning force, skidding across the smooth, hard floor.

Jolen skids right up to one of the dropped swords.

Kira's eyes widen. She lunges forward.

Jolen sees it through punch-drunk eyes. He snatches it up and lunges woozily to his feet.

Kira freezes, scared now. She backs away.

Jen's eyes widen in stark terror.

Furious and humiliated, Jolen charges, slashing wildly. He's still stumbling, dazed and tired, but he is carried by the adrenaline of the moment.

Aughra grimaces with each of Jolen's slashes.

Kira, unarmed, has no choice but to retreat around the Crystal.

Doria balls her hands into fists, biting her lower lip.

Jolen gets ever closer, slashing and thrusting with his sword, enraged.

Kira catches a glancing blow on her left arm. Blood stains her sleeve. In desperation, she glances towards the Crystal, looking at the top.

It was only a glance, but the momentary distraction allows Jolen to slash Kira's chest. His blade slashes a neat cut in her tunic, only barely clearing the skin. Kira was very fortunate.

Kira backs away, moving subtly towards the Crystal.

Jolen slashes and thrusts wildly again and again. His face is distorted with maniacal fury.

Suddenly, Kira opens her wings, leaps and flaps hard, avoiding the next slash and carrying herself into the air.

She lands to stand precariously atop the Crystal.

Jolen looks up at her fiercely.

Kira looks around.

She catches sight of the other sword on the floor.

Jolen slashes wildly for her, striking the Crystal with a resonant CLANG. At the same instant, Kira folds her wings and leaps down off the Crystal.

She lands hard, somersaulting rapidly towards the sword.

Jolen comes charging around the Crystal, roaring with rage.

Kira grabs the sword and rolls smoothly to her feet.

Jolen charges Kira, roaring madly, slashing wildly.

Instead of meeting his attack, she drops to the ground and scissoring his legs. He plunges face-first, landing heavily, skidding face-down, carried by his own momentum.

Kira snaps immediately to her feet.

Jen shakes a fist in satisfaction, stopping only just short of cheering out loud.

Jolen is humiliated. He's being bested by an inexperienced fighter in front of hundreds of people. He rolls, scrambling to his feet, charging Kira, bellowing in fury.

In a burst of desperate strength, Jolen brings on a ferocious assault. Kira backs away, startled, parrying his attack.

Red faced with effort, Jolen drives Kira towards the Lake of Fire below the Crystal. Several of his blows make it through Kira's parries. Kira manages to duck and swerve to avoid the blade, but it misses by a hair each time.

The entire audience: Jen, Doria, Aughra, the Soldiers and the civilian spectators on the balcony are on the edge of their seats. Anticipation crackles in the air.

Kira retreats around the Lake of Fire, desperate before Jolen's vicious onslaught.

Jolen's face is a mask of maniacal wrath and hate. He slashes at Kira again and again.

Jen's hands are balled into fists, squeezing so tightly his knuckles are white.

Jolen, driven by his fury and his sheer force of will, never lets up. His face and hair are soaked with perspiration.

Kira is afraid, but strangely calm, accepting her fate with dignity. Another of Jolen's slashes makes it through. Kira swerves, and the whipping blade just glances off Kira's cheek, leaving a small nick.

SLOW MOTION:

Jolen slashes wildly.

Kira sidesteps one, two, three slashes.

Jolen thrusts for Kira's chest.

Kira sidesteps and kicks Jolen in the sore wrist.

Jolen grimaces.

Kira slashes wildly at Jolen's blade.

With a resounding CLANG, the force of the blow tears the sword out of Jolen's hand. It skitters across the floor and into the shaft below the Crystal.

His sword falls down the shaft into the Lake of Fire, disappearing into the liquid hot magma far below.

RESUME NORMAL MOTION:

Jolen stands before Kira, unarmed, her sword at his throat.

Kira glares at him with a wide-eyed fury bordering on insanity. Her whole body quakes with rage.

For the first time, there is true fear on Jolen's face. His life is in her hands, and he knows it.

Kira presses her sword against Jolen's throat. He winces.

KIRA

You can either follow the current of fate, or be swept away by it. It's your choice.

Jolen remembers the words. Having them thrown back at him humiliates him. He raises his hands and drops to one knee, truly terrified

Kira doesn't lower her sword. She doesn't move. She just continues to glare at him, quaking, holding her glistening blade to his throat. Her free hand is balled into a fist, which she squeezes ever tighter.

Jolen looks up into her eyes, terrified, humiliated, defeated.

Kira glares at him for a moment longer... then scowls and flings her sword away.

It follows Jolen's, spiralling into the Lake of Fire.

Jolen scowls at her. His fear is slowly dissipating, being replaced once again by his rage. He kneels, perfectly still.

Kira steps back as Doria walks up to the kneeling Jolen. Without a word, she grasps his emperor's sash and lifts it from his shoulders. He looks up at her with undisguised hate and disgust.

Doria's gaze locks coldly with his for a moment, then she turns around to Kira and brings the sash to her. She reverently places it over Kira's shoulder.

Doria steps back, and salutes. Then she turns and signals to the Soldiers. They begin unlocking Jen's chains.

But then, Kira lifts off the sash, and drops it to the floor.

Everyone freezes, staring at her in disbelief. Is she refusing the position of ruler?

Kira looks around to every Gelfling... the soldiers on the floor and the civilians on the balcony.

KIRA

I will not be the leader of an Empire responsible for the suffering and deaths of countless innocent people.

A soft murmur ripples through the room. Kira waits for it to subside. After a moment, the murmur subsides and there is silence again. Every eye is on Kira.

KIRA

I was raised by the Podlings. They taught me that this land was once known by our people as the Country of Rindaar. It was our land, taken from us by the Skeksis, just as they have taken everything our people once had. It is time for us to reclaim Rindaar, and all the other lands we've lost.

(beat)

I will not be the Empress of your Empire... but I will lead you... as your Queen. It is time to return to the ways of our ancestors. To rebuild what we have lost. To take back this land. To reclaim our heritage.

(beat)

Who will join me?

Kira looks over the faces of the Gelfling people, waiting for their response. The silence is deafening. Kira looks anxiously around. What will be their answer?

The silence seems to last an eternity... but finally, there is a sound of ripping cloth. Everyone turns.

Doria rips the Dellin Empire emblem from the armband on her sleeve, dropping it at her feet.

Jolen looks at her in utter shock, unable to believe the evidence of his own eyes.

She just glares back at him coldly.

After a moment, the other Soldiers begin to rip off their Dellin Empire emblems, slowly, one by one. The room is filled with a cacophony of ripping cloth.

Jolen looks around in stunned disbelief as his people totally abandon him.

Kira looks around at the people. Her people. Kira is finally at peace with herself and her world.

This is the kind of world she's always wanted, and she was a part of that. She cannot help but swell with pride. She has earned the right to be proud.

KIRA

People of Rindaar: Welcome home.

A cheer rises up from the room of such overwhelming elation that the very air is charged with it. The Gelfling people have taken the first step to regaining their civilization.

Kira turns and motions to two of the Soldiers. They step forward and haul the still kneeling Jolen to his feet.

Kira steps up to him, glaring darkly into his eyes.

KIRA

Never set foot on my land again.

Kira nods to the Soldiers. They move to take Jolen away, but Doria steps in front of them and holds up a hand. They stop. She walks slowly up to stand toe to toe with Jolen, her eyes locked with his.

Without a word, Doria reaches up and grabs the Maranek clan emblem around Jolen's neck and yanks it off.

Jolen's eyes are wide with stunned disbelief.

A murmur of astonishment ripples through the crowd.

Doria reaches up and unties the bonding knot in her hair.

Jolen's eyes blaze with hate and humiliation.

This is the most difficult moment of Doria's life. Still, she stands tall before Jolen, gazing evenly into his eyes:

DORIA

The man I loved... never existed.

Jolen just glares back, speechless. He has lost everything.

After a moment, Doria turns smartly on her heels and marches away from him without a backward glance.

SLOW MOTION:

Jolen scowls in rage. He pulls free of the Soldiers and pulls out the knife hidden in his tunic.

Doria, her back to them, doesn't see.

Jolen charges.

Kira sees him.

KIRA
Doria! Look out!

Doria turns.

Jolen brandishes the knife.

Instinctively, Doria draws her sword.

Jolen lunges for her.

Doria sidesteps, grabbing Jolen's arm. Jolen's momentum carries him onto Doria's extended sword, driving it clean through his chest to the hilt.

Jolen cries out in pain and shock.

RESUME NORMAL MOTION:

For a moment, Doria freezes, holding her sword in Jolen's chest. Things happened so fast, Doria isn't yet fully aware of what she's done.

Jolen backs slowly away, looking down at the sword hilt in his chest. He grabs the hilt in both hands and looks up at Doria in shock and astonishment.

Doria's eyes widen as she takes in the sight of Jolen, her sword sticking through his chest. The reality of what she's done is sinking in. She trembles.

Jolen wheezes a ragged breath. Blood stains his teeth. He staggers, then drops to his knees. He struggles to stay upright, but then loses his strength and falls on his side. His hands slip from the sword hilt.

In the last moments of life, Jolen stares at Doria, wide-eyed, accusing.

Doria, unable to move, can only watch helplessly. The man that she has loved her whole life is dying at her feet... from a mortal wound she inflicted.

Finally, the light leaves Jolen's eyes, leaving only the look of accusation and disbelief, forever frozen on his face. His final breath rasps from his body, and he is still.

Doria crumbles to her knees before Jolen's lifeless body. She leans down close to him, stroking his hair tenderly.

Everyone in the room looks on, thunderstruck.

Kira watches Doria with profound sadness. She, more than anyone else, understands the pain of Doria's loss.

Doria grabs Jolen's body and drags his head into her lap. Gripping him fiercely, she throws back her head and howls in rage and guilt. Her voice reverberates through the cavernous interiors of the Castle.

Doria squeezes her eyes shut tight, and buries her face in Jolen's hair. No one moves. The room is silent, save for Doria's agonized weeping and the decaying echo of her cry.

Doria weeps over the body of the man who was once her world. Now, her world is gone.

She is alone.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. THE CASTLE OF THE CRYSTAL - DAY

Cloudy, but not overcast. The suns peek out from the clouds.

INT. A SEED POD - DAY

One of the pods the Podlings make their homes out of. This one has been made into a one-room home. In one corner is a bed. In another corner is a few comfortable-looking straw-padded chairs. In another corner, a small kitchen area with stone fireplace and wooden cupboards.

Kira is in the corner, working in the kitchen area. She's heating a kettle of soup over a fire. She ladles soup into a bowl on a tray a wheeled cart. Next to the bowl is a plate with a pile of green stringy vegetables and a sandwich of some sort. A glass of some kind of milk fills out the meal.

Jen enters, walking over to Kira, putting his arms around her from behind, taking in the scent of her hair. Kira smiles faintly, continuing to ladle soup into the bowl.

JEN

Did she eat at all yesterday?

Kira's face falls into a frown of worry. She shakes her head.

JEN

Maybe she just needs some time.

KIRA
 She hasn't eaten in three days. I'm
 getting really worried.

Jen squeezes her reassuringly.

JEN
 I don't understand how she can resist
 your cooking...

Kira can't help but smile. She turns to Jen and holds him
 close. He returns the embrace.

After a moment, Kira's face falls again. She pushes back to
 look into Jen's eyes.

KIRA
 Jen... I'm sorry.

Jen's taken aback.

JEN
 For what?

KIRA
 For the way I acted towards you. When
 you were trying to talk me out of
 fighting.

JEN
 It's all right...

KIRA
 No, it's not. I should have been more
 considerate of your feelings.

JEN
 You were angry.

KIRA
 That's no excuse...

JEN
 Kira... it's all right. After what you'd
 been through, you were entitled to a
 brief period of... insanity...

Kira can't help but smile... a little...

KIRA
 Maybe...

Jen gently pulls Kira to him and holds her close. Kira closes her eyes, enjoying the feeling of his arms around her.

INT. DORIA'S CHAMBER

Doria lays on her bed. She still wears her uniform, wrinkled and unkempt, like she's been sleeping in it. Her hair is a mass of tangles and cowlicks. The bedclothes are in disarray. She lays on her side, staring straight ahead.

There is a knock at her door. Doria doesn't react.

The chamber door opens. Kira enters, wheeling in the cart with the tray of food on it.

Doria doesn't even look at her. Indeed, Doria doesn't move at all. Her eyes remain fixed and staring.

KIRA

Doria...?

If Doria knows Kira's there, there is no sign of it.

Kira slowly walks around in front of Doria. She stands directly in Doria's unwavering gaze.

KIRA

Doria...

There is no reaction at all. If it were not for the soft sound of her breathing, she might be mistaken for dead.

Kira sits on the side of the bed. She gently strokes Doria's hair comfortingly, then withdraws her hand when she realizes she is not reacting.

KIRA

I'll leave the food. Try to eat something. I'll be back to check on you.

Finally, Kira rises and moves to the door.

DORIA (O.S.)

Why didn't you kill him?

Kira freezes in mid-step. She turns back.

Doria still lies there, exactly the same as before.

KIRA

What...?

Slowly, Doria sits up and swings her feet to the floor. She turns and gazes directly into Kira's eyes.

DORIA

You had him on his knees, your sword at his throat. You could have killed him right there. Why didn't you?

Kira looks away in shame.

All at once, Doria's face curls in rage. She leaps swiftly to her feet, marches up to Kira and grabs her by the tunic. Startled, Kira yelps. Doria's face is nose-to-nose with Kira's. Doria's voice is low and intense:

DORIA

You wanted to kill him.

KIRA

I couldn't...

DORIA

But you wanted to.

Kira looks away. Doria grabs her by the face and forces her to look back up at her.

DORIA

Didn't you?!

Kira closes her eyes tight.

DORIA

DIDN'T YOU?!

Suddenly seized with rage, Kira grabs Doria and hurls her away. She glares at her with unmitigated fury.

KIRA

YES!!! I wanted to kill him!

Breathing hard with fury, Kira glares at Doria for a moment. Then:

KIRA

When I had my sword at his throat, I wanted to kill him so badly, my entire body tingled with anticipation. I wanted to. More than I've ever wanted anything.

Guilt drops like a curtain over Kira's eyes. She looks away.

KIRA

I've never wanted to kill before. I've had to kill animals in self defence, but never have I ever wanted to kill... until now. When I realized what I was doing...

Kira's closes her eyes, trying to shut away the guilt.

KIRA

The worst part is, if I had killed him... I think I would have enjoyed it. I would have enjoyed it...

Doria regards Kira a long moment. She's finally beginning to see just how much this experience has affected her... and Doria is beginning to feel responsible. She lowers her eyes in shame.

DORIA

I'm a coward. I made you fight the battle I should've fought myself long ago.

Kira looks at Doria sympathetically.

KIRA

You didn't make me do anything. I would have fought him with or without your help. You saved my life. You taught me the skills I needed to survive.

DORIA

Too little, too late. I've known for a long time what Jolen was capable of. If I had had the courage to face him earlier... your grandfather would still be alive...

Kira reaches out to squeeze Doria's shoulder.

KIRA

Doria... don't...

Doria shrugs roughly out of Kira's grip.

KIRA

It wasn't your fault.

DORIA

How can you even look at me?

KIRA

You're my friend.

The simple sincerity of the statement bores right through to Doria's soul. In that moment, Doria is destroyed by her shame.

KIRA
It wasn't your fault, Doria.

DORIA
I could've stopped it...

KIRA
No...

DORIA
I should have...

Kira reaches out and takes Doria by the arm. Doria flings her arm violently out of Kira's grasp. Kira grabs it again, pulling Doria towards her.

DORIA
Don't touch me!

Refusing to give up, Kira eventually manages to get a firm enough grip on Doria's arms to pull her into an embrace. Doria, even in her weakened state, is a handful to hold onto.

DORIA
Let me go! Let me go!

Doria, too disoriented and weak to use her martial arts techniques to break away, struggles vainly in Kira's work-strong arms. Kira holds onto her fiercely, pulling her close, trying to soothe her.

Finally, Doria gives up the struggle. All the strength seems to go out of her at once, and her legs begin to buckle under her. Gently, Kira lowers Doria to sit on the side of the bed, all the while holding her in a comforting embrace.

Unable to hold back any longer, Doria begins weeping openly. Sobs wrack her body. For the first time in her life, all her barriers are down, and all the feelings of guilt, rage, and sorrow she's kept bottled up for so long are at last finding some release.

Kira pulls Doria closer, resting her head on her chest, gently stroking her hair and rocking her comfortingly. Kira weeps quietly along with her friend.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DORIA'S CHAMBER - DAWN

Doria and Kira lie on the bed together. Kira still holds Doria comfortingly in her arms. Kira is awake, watching the golden rays of the rising Great Sun spilling in through the window. (There is something subtly different about Kira, but we can't quite put our finger on it...)

Doria stirs and slowly opens her eyes. She looks up, and is astonished to see that Kira is still there.

DORIA
You stayed with me all night?

Kira nods.

KIRA
You needed a friend.

Doria is overwhelmed. This is the first time in her life someone has ever shown so much concern for her feelings.

Slowly, Doria turns to face Kira, leans forward and gently, lovingly, kisses Kira on the cheek, just next to her lips. Then, her arms go around Kira and she holds her close. Kira returns the embrace in kind. Finally, Doria pulls back to gaze into Kira's eyes.

Kira's subtle smile and kind gaze returns Doria's affection more effectively than words.

A cacophony of frantic barking at the door breaks the moment. They both turn.

Jen stands at the door with Fizzgig barking frantically at his feet. Jen smiles affectionately.

JEN
(to Kira)
I thought you might be here.

Jen looks down at the frantic Fizzgig. He glares at him, then scoops him up and clamps his hands tightly above and below him. The pressure keeps Fizzgig from opening his mouth. Fizzgig growls and whimpers, squirming in frustration.

Kira doesn't approve.

KIRA
Jen...

Jen sighs heavily... then releases Fizzgig. He immediately jumps down with a yelp and tumbles into the room, growling and yapping.

Doria's eyes follow him as he tumbles past Kira. Her eyes lock on Kira's legs.

DORIA
Kira...! Your spots!

Kira looks down at herself.

For the first time, we realize what's different about Kira. The lovely spots that normally adorn her legs are gone.

Kira slaps her hands on her thighs, startled. She looks up at Doria, a little frightened.

Doria breaks into a wide grin.

DORIA
Congratulations!

KIRA
Congratulations...?

Doria raises her eyebrows in surprise.

DORIA
You mean you don't know what it means
when a woman loses her spots?

Kira shakes her head.

Doria smiles a knowing smile. She gently pats Kira's belly.

DORIA
You two had better start thinking of some
names.

JEN
Names...?

DORIA
For your baby.

Jen and Kira just stare at Doria blankly for a moment. Finally, the meaning of what she's said starts to register. Their mouths drop open in shock. They look at each other then, all at once, they start to laugh, overwhelmed with excitement and unbridled joy.

Jen leaps forward and clasps Kira to him tightly, picking her off the ground and twirling her around in his arms. They both laugh out loud, elated by the realization that they finally have the lives they had always dreamed of.

Finally, Kira turns to Doria, who looks on with a sad smile. She's happy for them, but she longs to share in their joy. Kira smiles at her friend, then both her and Jen reach out to Doria, drawing her to them to share their embrace.

Doria closes her eyes, swept up in the tenderness of the moment.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE CASTLE OF THE CRYSTAL - THRONE ROOM - DAY

A red carpet has been laid leading up to two thrones. The thrones are wooden with plush velvet cushions and decorated with crystals of all shapes and sizes. The thrones sit on a raised platform with four steps up.

Hundreds of Gelfling are assembled. There is a chatter of anticipation. The assembled Gelfling form two huge groups on either side of the red carpet. Rows of Soldiers (wearing their uniforms, but not the Dellin Empire emblem) stand in rows all along its length.

Doria stands before the thrones, her hair brushed to a sheen and wearing her best uniform. A Soldier stands on each side of her, each holding an exquisite crown made of crystal. The points of the crowns are reminiscent of the castle's spires.

Aughra watches from within the crowd holding Fizzgig in her arms. Fizzgig barks excitedly. Aughra shushes him.

Jen and Kira slowly march down the carpet. Both wear beautifully elaborate outfits made of a white silk-like fabric embroidered in gold with a lovely, interconnecting spiral pattern. The outfits are studded with bits of crystal which glint and tinkle as they walk.

All eyes in the room are on Jen and Kira as they walk slowly towards Doria before the thrones.

When they reach Doria, they each fold their hands before themselves and bow their heads.

Doria reaches to the soldier on her left. He hands her his crown. Doria takes it gently in both hands and reverently places it on Kira's head.

Kira looks up and meets Doria's gaze. Their eyes lock

Doria smiles at Kira warmly.

Kira returns her smile and nods.

Doria closes her eyes, crosses her arms in front of her so her fingertips touch her shoulders, and bows her head in traditional salute.

Then, Doria steps in front of Jen and reaches to her right. The other Soldier hands her his crown, which Doria then places on Jen's head. He raises his head, and Doria respectfully salutes him.

Then, Doria steps aside. Jen and Kira unclasp their hands and step forward, stepping up onto the platform. They turn, and reverently sit on their thrones before the assembly.

The moment they are seated, the crowd cheers, throwing hats into the air in jubilation.

In the excitement, Fizzgig breaks away from Aughra's grasp.

Fizzgig tumbles down the aisle and excitedly leaps into Kira's lap, barking up at her happily. Kira smiles, gazing down at her beloved pet affectionately. She scratches his head, and Fizzgig whimpers appreciatively.

Jen and Kira sit proudly upon their thrones... the new rulers of the restored Gelfling Kingdom of Rindaar.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE CASTLE OF THE CRYSTAL

The three suns glint majestically on the castle's beautiful crystalline exterior. And perhaps the suns seem to burn just a little brighter than before, for balance has once again returned to the world.

FADE OUT.

THE END