

The Caravan

by

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SCENE 01 - INTRO

INT. STEPFATHERS CHAMBERS - DAY

KRISTIAN knocks on the door of his STEPFATHER's chambers.

STEPFATHER

Enter.

KRISTIAN

You sent for me, sire?

STEPFATHER

Yes. Close the door and listen carefully. We received urgent word from Lord VINTER of Vitfäld. He reports of a...

Kristian motions to sit down at on of the chairs.

STEPFATHER

Did I give you leave to sit?

KRISTIAN

N-no sire.

Kristian immediately rises again. A brief moment of silence.

STEPFATHER

Lord Vinter reports of a merchant caravan rumored to have been attacked in our lands not far from here.

STEPFATHER

Due to the ongoing war he is not able to spare any men to aid us in the investigation, and we are short on capable soldiers as well.

STEPFATHER

You will ride north and try to locate this caravan. See if you can find out what happened and how you can be of help. Any important discoveries you will report immediately and to me only. I had your equipment prepared. You can find it at the armory.

KRISTIAN

As you command. Is there anything else?

STEPFATHER

At once!

KRISTIAN

Yes sire!

Kristian promptly leaves the chamber. A woman, the MOTHER, is revealed sitting in the room with the Stepfather.

MOTHER

Must you be so harsh with him?

STEPFATHER

He needs it if he is to become king
some day.

Fade out.

SCENE 02 - ARRIVAL AT CAMP

EXT. SURVIVOR CAMP - DAY

Kristian arrives at the camp's entrance where he is intervened by the GUARD CAPTAIN.

GUARD CAPTAIN

Who goes there?! Identify yourself!

KRISTIAN

Greetings. I am Kristian of Verdenia. I have been sent to help your caravan. How is the situation?

GUARD CAPTAIN

Thank the gods! We are in a bad shape. We lost many men, most of our goods were stolen. The horses too! They attacked us at night.

KRISTIAN

I saw the remnants. It's awful and I am truly sorry. How many survived?

GUARD CAPTAIN

Just a handful, not counting me.

KRISTIAN

How can I help?

GUARD CAPTAIN

Something strange is going on. We were fine for a few days, but now some folk are getting sick and we don't know why. The food seems fine, but some suspect it's poison. Others are on edge, claiming to see monsters in the forest.

KRISTIAN

Monsters?!

GUARD CAPTAIN

Yes. I am not sure what to do and I can't leave my post. Could you ask around the camp and see if you can find out more?

KRISTIAN

1. Absolutely.

GUARD CAPTAIN

Thank you. Let me know if you have anything.

SCENE 03 - POISON PARANOIA

EXT. SURVIVOR CAMP - DAY

Kristian approaches a FEMALE MERCHANT who sits amongst a couple of other merchants visibly in pain.

KRISTIAN

You don't look very well. Are you in pain?

FEMALE MERCHANT

Not me. But look around. People are getting sick left and right. It's poison I tell you. As if the attack wasn't enough.

KRISTIAN

What makes you think it's poison?

FEMALE MERCHANT

The food. Haven't touched it in days. Do I look sick to you? It's in the food. I am hungry though. You don't have some normal food with you, do you?

KRISTIAN

I am sorry, no. But I can take a closer look at the supplies and see if I can find any traces of poison.

FEMALE MERCHANT

Go on then! Bet you will.

Kristian investigates the scene and finds a mysterious bottle near the cooking pot. He consults with the guard captain

GUARD CAPTAIN

What can I help you with?

KRISTIAN

I found this odd bottle near the supplies while investigating the poison. I can't make anything of it. Does it look familiar to you?

GUARD CAPTAIN

Hmm, can't say I have seen this before. But we have an alchemist with us. You should ask for his advice. He

is by the tent over there underneath
the shades.

(Optional interrogation): Kristian approaches the cook near
the food pot.

KRISTIAN

Are you in charge of food around here?

COOK

That would be me, yes. How can I help
you? Would you like some stew?

KRISTIAN

PROMPT 1: You look healthy. Many
people here are really sick, but you
don't seem to be. Do you enjoy your
own food?

COOK

REPLY 1: Why of course! It may not be
the most delicious but I am very proud
of my stew, given the circumstances.
Are you sure I can't interest you?

KRISTIAN

PROMPT 2: Recognize this bottle? I
found it near your supplies. Maybe
adding a little extra flavor to the
food?

COOK

REPLY 2: What are you implying? I have
never seen this bottle before. I only
use natural ingredients for my stew.
It's really good!

KRISTIAN

Thank you for your time.

Kristian approaches the ALCHEMIST at his tent.

KRISTIAN

Are you the alchemist?

ALCHEMIST

Ah, greetings, sir. You are new here.
Yes I am the alchemist. How can I be
of service? Perhaps a potion to ease
your pain or calm your worries, hm?

KRISTIAN

No thank you. I am investigating reports of poisoning and I found this mysterious bottle near the supplies. Will you be able to determine its contents?

ALCHEMIST

Let me see. Oh, hmm, fascinating. Yes I can analyze it, but it will take some time. Come back in an hour or so.

Kristian returns to the alchemist in less than an hour.

ALCHEMIST

I need more time. Please come back later.

Kristian comes back in more than an hour.

KRISTIAN

Any news? Were you able to identify it?

ALCHEMIST

Oh yes. *chuckles*.

KRISTIAN

What is it? Is it dangerous?

ALCHEMIST

No, it is perfectly harmless. It's meant to, let's say, spice up certain acts of affection. I do wonder though who it belongs to. But no, it's not poison.

KRISTIAN

Thank you for the assistance. You can keep the bottle.

Kristian returns to the FEMALE MERCHANT with news.

FEMALE MERCHANT

T'was in the food, wasn't it?

KRISTIAN

Actually no. I had a thorough look around and whatever is causing this, it's not in the food and likely not poison either. You should grab

something to eat.

FEMALE MERCHANT

If you insist. Thank you for your
help.

SCENE 04 - MONSTER MADNESS

EXT. SURVIVOR CAMP - DAY

Kristian approaches a merchant crouched at a tree, shivering and speaking to himself.

KRISTIAN

I don't mean to interrupt you, but you look frightened. Will you share with me what worries you?

MALE MERCHANT

Worries me? What worries me he asks! Can't you see? They are lurking everywhere. Waiting to strike.

KRISTIAN

Who is? The monsters?

MALE MERCHANT

Monsters, yes. Monsters did this. Big and hairy. And those fangs. They are taking us all one by one. Just like they did with the horses.

KRISTIAN

I had a look at the carcasses. They were killed by bandits and there were no signs of monsters.

MALE MERCHANT

He doesn't believe me. See for yourself. In the woods, if you dare. You will see.

Kristian follows through the lead and kills the wolves, before he returns to the merchant.

MALE MERCHANT

He's alive! Alive, yes, and unharmed. I wasn't lying, you see. Did you find them?

KRISTIAN

I have found a horribly mutilated carcass in the woods and it intrigued me.

MALE MERCHANT

See?! He saw. The monsters, I can feel

them breathing down my neck.

KRISTIAN

But when I followed the tracks nearby, they led me to a den of wolves. They were hungry, yes, but just regular wolves. The horse must have gotten lost during the ambush and wandered into the woods. The wolves found it.

MALE MERCHANT

Wolves he says? Not monsters, then.

KRISTIAN

No. How about you join the others and get some company.

MALE MERCHANT

We will, thank you.

SCENE 05 - TRAITOR FORESHADOWING

EXT. SURVIVOR CAMP - DAY

Kristian approaches a merchant who is visibly injured.

KRISTIAN

Good day sir. That injury doesn't look good. What happened?

TRAITOR MERCHANT

Had better days. Bastards got me during the attack. Pierced straight through here. A little more to the right and they would have gotten my liver, heh.

KRISTIAN

Lucky you! Do you need any aid?

TRAITOR MERCHANT

No, I am okay for now. I only need rest. Take care.

SCENE 06 - BACK TO CAPTAIN

EXT. SURVIVOR CAMP - DAY

Kristian concludes the investigation at camp and returns to the captain.

GUARD CAPTAIN

Kristian, how goes the investigation?

KRISTIAN

Progress is steady, but despite pursuing every lead I cannot find any solid proof of poisoning or signs of a monster. I see the symptoms but I cannot determine the cause.

GUARD CAPTAIN

How very odd. I have never seen something like that. I thank you for your aid in this matter.

KRISTIAN

It is my duty, captain.

GUARD CAPTAIN

Listen, Kristian. I have been meaning to ask. When you arrived you mentioned you have been sent here to help us. How did you come to know of our misfortune?

KRISTIAN

What do you mean how? Lord Vinter received word of your distress, but unable to spare any men, he requested help at my house. I came as soon as I heard.

GUARD CAPTAIN

We never send any call for help. After the attack we gathered what was left and sought refuge. Our plan was to wait for the next caravan to arrive and then travel to Vitfäld under their protection.

KRISTIAN

But the letter carried his seal. Why would he lie to us?

GUARD CAPTAIN

Do you think he is responsible for the ambush?

KRISTIAN

There is only one way to find out. I must to ride to Vitfäld and speak with him.

SCENE 07 - TO VITFÄLD

EXT. VITFÄLD GATE - DAY

Kristian rides north to Vitfäld to speak with Lord Vinter. At the gate, the GATE GUARDS stop him.

GATE GUARD

HALT! Please state your name and business.

KRISTIAN

Greetings. I am Kristian of Verdenia and I seek audience with Lord Vinter in regards to the urgent letter he sent us.

GATE GUARD

We have no knowledge of any messenger having left these gates recently.

KRISTIAN

But it bears your seal. Look.

Kristian demonstrates the letter with the seal imprinted in wax. The guards look at each other.

GATE GUARD

Very well then. You may enter. Lord Vinter is currently located at the training yard.

The guards step aside and the gate opens for Kristian to enter.

SCENE 08 - LORD VINTER

EXT. LORD VINTERS HOME - DAY

Kristian makes his way through the courtyard and approaches Lord Vinter at the training yard.

LORD VINTER

Kristian! HA! My old friend. How'd you persuade the guards to let you through? I jest! Come here!

Kristian and Lord Vinter hug.

LORD VINTER

But truly, what brings you here? You must have a good reason to ride all this way in such dire times. How's the old man?

KRISTIAN

He is not my father, but he is indeed aging well. He is the reason I am here as you might imagine.

LORD VINTER

How so? Did something happen?

KRISTIAN

He gave me this letter you supposedly sent.

Kristian shows the letter to Lord Vinter.

KRISTIAN

A merchant caravan heading here has been attacked badly and you asked for our aid in the investigation. When I went to assist, I learned that they never send for help. How did you know about the attack?

LORD VINTER

Kristian, I swear I know nothing of this letter. I have never laid my eyes on it nor did I send it to you.

KRISTIAN

Then how do you explain the seal?

LORD VINTER

I can't. Someone in my house must have stolen the stamp and forged the letter. Wait, so you have been to the site of the attack? What have you learned?

KRISTIAN

I have yeah. It's awful. Many died and strange things are going on.

LORD VINTER

Strange how?

KRISTIAN

I can't really explain it, but the survivors suffer symptoms of sickness, paranoia and even vile visions. There is no cause to discern.

LORD VINTER

By the gods. Kristian, what I am about to tell you must remain between us.

KRISTIAN

What's going on?

LORD VINTER

For years I was searching for a mysterious artifact. An artifact so powerful, it would change the tide of war. It is said to contain the power to manifest your greatest fears. Recently I learned of its whereabouts and paid a heavy price for having it delivered from the east. My intend is to strike fear among our enemies and let them handle themselves from the inside.

KRISTIAN

My god... Lord Vinter!

LORD VINTER

If what you are saying is true, those who attacked the caravan must have gotten the artifact and somehow infected the survivors.

KRISTIAN

That would explain their behavior.

It's not just illusions, people are suffering! I have to warn them.

LORD VINTER

Kristian. I must implore you, please head back at once and find the artifact if there is still time. It cannot fall into the wrong hands.

SCENE 09 - BANDIT STRUGGLES

EXT. AMBUSH SITE - DAY

Kristian arrives back from Vitfäld where he encounters a group of bandits who are looting what's left from the attack.

BANDIT

Here for the spoils too? Not going to happen. Turn around or die!

SCENE 10 - THE WARNING

EXT. SURVIVOR CAMP - DAY

Kristian returns at the camp and speaks with the captain immediately.

GUARD CAPTAIN

You have returned at last! What have you learned?

KRISTIAN

There is no time to explain. The camp is in danger. We must separate the people and monitor everyone closely. No one enters or leaves until I have resolved the matter.

GUARD CAPTAIN

I get right on it, but there is one more matter.

KRISTIAN

What is it?

GUARD CAPTAIN

In your absence, we apprehended a woman sneaking around the camp. She shouted something about us being blind to our true enemy. When we tried to interrogate her, she remained quiet. She seems to have a distrust towards people from the east. Could you please speak with her? Find out what she knows.

KRISTIAN

I'll see what I can find out.

SCENE 11 - PRISONER

EXT. SURVIVOR CAMP - DAY

Kristian approaches the PRISONER who is kept locked up in a cage.

PRISONER

You're not one of them, aren't you, stranger? What got you mixed up in all of this?

KRISTIAN

I am Kristian and I am here to uncover what happened. They caught you sneaking around. Why?

PRISONER

They can't be helped anymore and are looking in the wrong place.

KRISTIAN

And you were looking in the right place by sneaking around here?

PRISONER

I had to make sure he's here.

KRISTIAN

Who is?

PRISONER

The bastard who crippled my brother. Bandits came to our house for a hideout. Our father wouldn't have it, my brother got hurt intervening. We made them leave, but I followed them.

KRISTIAN

What then?

PRISONER

I heard them argue over a chest. A fight broke out and one got wounded. The others took the chest and left. The wounded one, the one who hurt my brother, disappeared. I tracked him to this camp, disguised as a merchant.

KRISTIAN

Where did the others go?

PRISONER

They mentioned they'll try the chapel next. The one with the graveyard, not far, west from here.

KRISTIAN

Thank you, I will head there and see what I can find.

SCENE 12 - SHOWDOWN

EXT. CHAPEL - DAY

Kristian arrives at the chapel when he is interrupted by the traitor merchant.

TRAITOR MERCHANT

Did you really think I'd let you take the artifact to your father, Kristian?

KRISTIAN

You... from the camp! What do you mean my father?

TRAITOR MERCHANT

Who do you think ordered the attack? I didn't think he'd send you to intervene.

KRISTIAN

Liar! People died. He would never!

TRAITOR MERCHANT

It was not supposed to happen this way. We were meant to retrieve the artifact for him. But those idiots had other plans. I got wounded, so I had to hide and recover. And now look at them.

KRISTIAN

You got exposed to it, didn't you? And then you infected the camp!

TRAITOR MERCHANT

You've seen the horrible things it does. I can't let you have it. Forgive me.

SCENE 13A - RETURN TO STEPFATHER

EXT. STEPFATHERS AND KRISTIANS HOME - DAY

Kristian decides to head home and confront his stepfather with the artifact. He is agitated.

KRISTIAN

Why, father?!

STEPFATHER

So you have it with you?

KRISTIAN

You're not even denying it?

STEPFATHER

There is nothing to deny. It had to be done, Kristian.

KRISTIAN

Why? So many people have died for this. Others suffer horrible consequences. For what?

STEPFATHER

It can't be undone and I will have to live with those consequences. But think about the deaths and the suffering you helped avoid. Lord Vinter mustn't have the artifact! You've seen what it does. We can't allow that to happen to thousands, if not more.

KRISTIAN

Why didn't you tell me truth and let me retrieve it?

STEPFATHER

You're too goodhearted! You wouldn't do what it takes. Those deaths seemed likely, but I had faith you'd uncover the truth. You needed to look Lord Vinter in the eye when he tells you about his plans and understand the severity.

KRISTIAN

No one should wield such power!

STEPFATHER

That's right, and now the burden is on you. If you want to be king some day, you have to face the difficult choices.

SCENE 13B - RETURN TO LORD VINTER

EXT. LORD VINTERS HOME - DAY

Kristian decides to head back to Vitfäld and deliver the artifact to Lord Vinter.

LORD VINTER

Welcome back! What news do you bring?
Do you have it?

KRISTIAN

I have the artifact, but I paid a heavy price for it as well.

LORD VINTER

What price? I can repay you.

KRISTIAN

Not this one. I lost respect and trust for my stepfather. He orchestrated the whole plot, costing dozens of lives to get the artifact for himself. And for what?

LORD VINTER

I suspected as much, but hoped it wasn't true. He is the only one I told about the artifact. We were meant to win this war together! But I see now. Thank you for entrusting me with this Kristian. Leave the chest on the table. I will take it from here.