

THE DARK OF NIGHT

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EXT. MOUNTAIN VILLAGE - NIGHT

Two moons--one red, one yellow--hang in a star-speckled sky above a smattering of small houses made of wood and stone set slightly up the side of a mountain. Most of the houses' glass windows are dark. The only lights in the village come from a blacksmith's forge near the center and a small house set close to the surrounding trees.

INT. SMALL HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Candles set on shelves and tables light the inside of a small dining room decorated sparsely with rundown furniture. MORGAN, 17, redhead, independent, stares open-mouthed at her mother sitting across from her.

MORGAN

You want me to do what?

CARISSA, 42, brown-haired, emotionally-distant mother, sighs.

CARISSA

It's only natural for a mother to arrange the marriage of her daughter.

MORGAN

If her daughter wants to get married!

Carissa frowns.

CARISSA

That's simply not how things are done.

MORGAN

What I want doesn't--

CARISSA

What would you have me do? You have no prospects.

MORGAN

I don't want any--

CARISSA

You have no father.

MORGAN

That's not my--

CARISSA

And your manners leave something to be desired.

Morgan rolls her eyes.

MORGAN

My manners?

Carissa glares.

CARISSA

Aehn willing, your soon-to-be husband will be able to educate you properly.

Morgan's jaw tightens.

MORGAN

I'm not marrying him.

Carissa smiles.

CARISSA

That's simply not how things are done.

EXT. MOUNTAIN VILLAGE - NIGHT

Morgan stalks through the empty, moonlit streets. The scattered houses on either side of her are quiet and dark.

She stomps toward the sound of CLANGING metal. The source is a moderately-sized house near the center of the village. Flickering, orange light spills out from the forge on the side of the house.

HANK, 51, personable, village blacksmith, BANGS a hammer on the red-hot blade of a sword.

Morgan leans against a barrel of assorted weapons and waits.

Hank straightens up. His eyebrows raise when he sees her.

HANK

Well, if it isn't Miss Morgan.

He frowns at the two full moons in the sky.

HANK (CONT'D)

Bit late for ya to be out 'n about, isn't it?

Morgan kicks at a pebble near her foot.

MORGAN

Had to get out of my house.

Hank sets his hammer down on a bench. He rubs his greasy hands on an oil-stained cloth.

HANK

And ya came to see an old, boring blacksmith?

Morgan smirks.

MORGAN

You're not boring, Hank. You're the only tolerable one in this village.

Hank looks down and smiles.

HANK

Kind words.

He clears his throat as he sits on the bench next to his hammer.

HANK (CONT'D)

What're ya troubles, then?

Morgan blows out a breath.

MORGAN

Oh, y'know. My mother pretends to want the best for me when she really just wants to be rid of me.

She shrugs.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

The usual.

Hank raises an eyebrow.

HANK

Has t' be more than that.

Morgan presses her lips together.

MORGAN

She's trying to marry me off.

Hank nods.

HANK
Can't say as I'm surprised.

Morgan crosses her arms.

MORGAN
I told her I won't do it.

Hank's eyebrows furrow.

HANK
It's village custom for parents to
make this decision--

Morgan throws her hands up.

MORGAN
It shouldn't be! If I don't want to
be married, I shouldn't have to
marry.

Hank twists his fingers together.

HANK
Ya could...

Morgan frowns.

MORGAN
I could, what?

Hank rubs the back of his neck.

HANK
Well, ya can't marry someone if
you're not here.

Morgan's lips part.

MORGAN
You mean leave.

Hank shrugs.

HANK
I didn't tell ya a thing.

Morgan leans back, bumping the hilt of a sword sticking out
of the barrel behind her.

She tilts her head.

MORGAN
Can I take a dagger with me?

EXT. MOUNTAIN VILLAGE - NIGHT

Morgan creeps through the shadows under the trees toward a large house on a hill a small ways from the edge of the village.

All the houses are dark behind her.

She circles the large house as she nears it. A window at the back is open, curtains fluttering in the breeze.

She peeks over the sill.

The room is dark and quiet--filled only with the silhouettes of boxes.

She hoists herself through the window.

INT. MORGAN'S FIANCE'S HOUSE - STOREROOM - NIGHT

Morgan lands with a soft THUMP on a box. She stills and waits before slinking around boxes to the closed door across from the window. She opens it and sneaks out into the empty

HALLWAY

and toward the first door on the left.

It's empty.

She checks behind each door until she finally slinks through a doorway and into her

FIANCE'S BEDROOM

where LOUIS, 20, naive, son of the richest family in the village, sleeps in an oversized bed under plush blankets.

Morgan moves to his bedside and covers Louis' mouth with her hand.

He starts awake with a muffled cry.

MORGAN

It's just me.

She pulls her hand away when he stills.

He blinks at her, frowning.

LOUIS

Morgan? What're you--

MORGAN
My mother said we are to marry.

Louis sits up.

LOUIS
Not tonight! Aehn's sake, Morgan,
it's--

MORGAN
Late, I know.

She smiles.

MORGAN (CONT'D)
I wanted to speak with you. Alone.
You know they wouldn't allow it.

Louis rubs his eyes.

LOUIS
This is highly irregular.

Morgan shrugs.

MORGAN
It's fine. No one will know.

Louis stares at her, then closes his eyes and sighs.

LOUIS
What did you want--

She cuts his throat.

His eyes snap open. His blood GURGLES and spills down the front of his white bedclothes.

MORGAN
I don't want to marry you.

He falls back as his eyes lose focus.

Morgan wipes her dagger on his bedsheets, smearing red blood on the expensive cloth.

MORGAN (CONT'D)
And why should I have to leave?