

THE SILT VERSES, SEASON 3 CHAPTER 6

CAR, INT, DAY

Silence. HAYWARD is driving, CARPENTER is in the passenger seat. It's raining outside.

It's a slightly awkward quiet.

A click as HAYWARD turns the radio on. Jaunty music plays.

RADIO ADVERT:

(Cheerily)

Struggling to get your faith off the ground?

Too few disciples for a decent congregation, too little cash for the licensing agreements - let alone that first all-important sacrifice?

Ever thought about hiring a god to advertise your god?

The saints of the Promo Supremo can be found at every good shopping centre and crossroads, shrieking your commercials aloud through broken teeth to advertise all of the hot new faiths.

We know it's hard starting a small business, and that's why we don't charge upfront; for each new disciple, and each new sacrifice, we'll automatically bill you for a small cut of the action.

(As if concluding)

The Promo Supremo.

(Unexpectedly starting again, just as cheery as before)

And for added benefit, try our new Premium subscription service, which includes our remarketing scheme.

(Growing quickly more sinister)

If a potential disciple shows interest in your god, but doesn't commit to an act of conversion, the saints of the Promo Supremo will follow them home, screaming your values and your brand messaging at them, peering through the glass of their front-room windows, rattling their doorknob, trying to find a way in at all costs, day and-

A click as CARPENTER reaches across and turns the radio back off.

Silence.

HAYWARD:

(Making conversation)

So. How did you pass the time, way back when?

CARPENTER:

Hm?

HAYWARD:

When you were on the road for the Parish all those years. "Birdwatching."

If you don't like the radio, how did you pass the time back then?

Did you discuss philosophy? Did you play I-Spy?

CARPENTER:

(Disbelieving)

I-Spy?

Silence.

HAYWARD:

Just want to make the journey comfortable for both of us.

(Chatty)

When I was on the road, I didn't have anybody.

I was alone - I mean, I'd sometimes talk to Felix, or I'd listen to the radio, but it'd just be me and my thoughts, and that could get real tough.

Emotionally, I mean. I-

CARPENTER:

(Sharply)

Reminiscing was strictly forbidden, I can tell you that much.

Penalty of drowning.

Silence.

HAYWARD:

(Joking)

Oh, that's **so** interesting, Carpenter. Tell me more about it.

Silence. CARPENTER is not engaging.

HAYWARD:

If you can't come up with another way of keeping me company while I'm driving, I am absolutely gonna reminisce.

CARPENTER:

(Amused)

Don't you fucking dare reminisce in front of me-

HAYWARD:

I'm gonna reminisce so godsdamned hard.

(Taking a breath, performative)

"So when I come to think of it, I really think my spiritual and emotional journey began back in-"

CARPENTER:

(Abruptly)

I spy. With my little eye.

(Staring directly at HAYWARD)

Something beginning with I-F-W.

Silence.

HAYWARD:

(Confused)

I-F-W?

CARPENTER:

The first word is 'irritating.'

HAYWARD:

(Catching on; she means something rude, likely 'irritating fuck-wit').

...that's real unkind.

Silence.

CARPENTER:

I spy. With my little eye. P.A.C.M.F.

Silence. HAYWARD considers.

HAYWARD:

...punk-ass...

He figures it out.

HAYWARD/CARPENTER:
 (Overlapping, both amused.)
 Punk-ass cop motherfucker.

Silence.

HAYWARD:
 I - I spy. With my little eye.
(Staring at CARPENTER)
 M.O.B.

CARPENTER:
(That one's too easy)
 Mean ol' bitch.

I spy, with my little old eye, a T.C.L.A.M.

HAYWARD:
(Pretending to get it wrong)
 What- a terrific, cool-looking, awesome motorist? Carpenter, thank you!
 That's so sweet of you.

This gets a chuckle out of CARPENTER. She sinks back.

CARPENTER:
God, I really didn't want to end up liking you, Hayward.

Silence.

HAYWARD:
(Deadpan, taking it on the chin)
 Okay.

CARPENTER:
 I mean, where does it end? Seriously. You turn out to be a decent sort,
 maybe everyone's good at heart.

What a dreadful outcome that would be.
(A little more softly and seriously)
 There have to be some monsters, don't there?

Because otherwise how could all of this be happening? Why wouldn't
 someone have put a stop to it yet?

How could we possibly make sense of the evidence of our eyes if there was kindness and courage buried deep in all of us and all we had to do was listen to it?

Wouldn't it be just truly fucking awful if it was only people out here and nothing else?

Silence.

HAYWARD:
You do like me, though.

CARPENTER:
Starting to. Don't get too excited.

Silence. HAYWARD keeps driving.

CARPENTER twists in her seat. She's watching for the CAIRN MAIDEN.

HAYWARD:
We being followed?

CARPENTER blinks.

CARPENTER:
Mmm?

HAYWARD:
You keep looking in the rear-view mirror.

CARPENTER:
(*Lying*)
Just a little jumpy. Parish is active along this stretch of the river.

HAYWARD:
(Supportive)
We'll turn off onto the highway in a couple of hours.

Silence.

CARPENTER:
(*Staring out of the window*)
If we stayed on this road heading south, we'd make it down to Marcel's Crossing by nightfall.

Another day's driving, and we'd be at the Paraclete's Gulch.

Silence.

HAYWARD:

That's where your old partner's at, right?

(Trying to lighten the mood)

Bet they don't have excellent games of I-Spy going on down at the, uh, Paraclete's Gulch.

Silence.

HAYWARD:

(Sympathetically)

He's on your mind, still, isn't he?

CARPENTER:

Hard to get him out of it, really.

Silence.

HAYWARD:

(Making conversation)

Wonder what he's doing now.

Silence.

CARPENTER:

(Idly)

Screaming as he dies, maybe.

We can only hope.

We cut straight to-

DREAMING POOLS, INT, DAY

-the sound of jangling manacles and a SACRIFICIAL VICTIM who is, indeed, screaming for help, water lapping around his ankles. He sounds as if he's in some kind of pit.

Overhead, RANE and FAULKNER are looking on.

RANE:

(Apologetically)

The tide is lower than I've ever seen it, Katabasian Faulkner.

The sacrifices have been bound to the waiting-posts since late last night, and yet the angels have still not come in to feed.

FAULKNER:

(Calmly)

Lay them flat on their bellies. Let the river come to them.

Silence.

RANE:

(Working up the courage)

May I be honest with you, Katabasian?

FAULKNER:

Of course, Sibling Rane.

RANE:

There's...a certain amount of doubt lingering amongst the faithful.

They've been asking whether the Trawler-man has spoken to you.

Whether he has an explanation for all of this.

The waters are all but fled from us, and when the river rises, it does so in anger.

FAULKNER takes this in.

FAULKNER:

Let them know the truth.

The Trawler-man is furious. He says that there are enemies amongst us, plotters and tricksters seeking to undermine the fabric of our faith.

He does not seek to punish us, but rather to reveal their treachery, as a drought tide reveals the hidden treasures buried in the silt of the riverbed.

When these matters are dealt with, the waters will run deep and clear once more.

Will you pass that on to them?

RANE:

Yes. Yes, of course.

FAULKNER:

Is everything ready for High Katabasian Roemont's arrival?

RANE:

Everything is prepared, Katabasian.

FAULKNER:

Good.

Below, the SACRIFICIAL VICTIM continues to scream.

FAULKNER tuts in irritation, crosses to the edge of the pit and climbs the ladder down.

He ignores the SACRIFICIAL VICTIM entirely and examines the prayer-marks chalked on the floor of the pit.

FAULKNER:

(Annoyed)

Look at that.

No wonder the Trawler-man has so little interest in his offerings, Sibling Rane, when we can't even get the words right.

Someone's drawn a Guilefather's Ward here, not a Canticle of Sanctioned Flesh. This is clumsy, Sibling Rane.

That first mark may be used to guard oneself against the Trawler-man's angels, but it plays no part in summoning them.

I'm going to need a little chalk.

RANE:

(Calling out)

Chalk for Katabasian Faulkner!

A box of chalk is tossed down; FAULKNER catches it.

He begins to carefully amend the prayer-mark.

FAULKNER:
 You have to be careful. Precise.
(To the SACRIFICE)
 -stop squirming, please-

Get the words right and the river itself will dance to your command,
 Sibling Rane.
(Busily sketching)
 Two demi-circle teeth. The feeding-sigil. And the Marks of Twin Mouths.

And right away, if the angels are near, we should see-
 (Taken by surprise)
 Ah!

We begin to hear the sound of rushing water.

FAULKNER makes a run for the ladder and quickly ascends.

The SACRIFICIAL VICTIM screams as hundreds of tiny CRAB-ANGELS come swarming up to devour his flesh.

Above, FAULKNER scrambles up.

FAULKNER:
 Help me out, please.

FAULKNER steps up out of the pit and admires his handiwork.

We can still hear the CRAB-ANGELS below.

FAULKNER:
 (Proud of himself)
 There. You see, Sibling?

We are still capable of remarkable things.

HIGH KATABASIAN'S CHAMBERS, INT, DAY

A page turns.

Again, and again.

GREVE:

(From the doorway)
Roemont?

ROEMONT returns the book to its shelf.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

Come in, Greve.

(Vaguely)

Just looking over some of my old treasures. Mason had this mounted for me - a splinter from the Gulfwalker's wreck.

(Reading from the plaque)

"A moment that shall live on eternal in the hearts and minds of the Parish."

Lovely sentiment.

I don't suppose the...fanatics of Brother Faulkner have room in their hearts and minds for moments like these.

(Jokingly, but wounded behind it)

I wonder if they'll even recognise me when I arrive.

GREVE watches him closely and with something like pity.

GREVE:

You don't...**have** to go, Roemont.

ROEMONT crosses to the other side of the room and begins latching up his suitcase.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

Who would I be if I did not?

(Distractedly)

A little risk now, a little excitement - and the entire faith will be better for it later on.

I must show courage, for the sake of us all.

My people are with me, and Grenshaw is ready to make his sacrifice on my behalf.

Fleck gave up body and spirit outright for the good of his people, after all. This is very little by comparison.

I must focus. Thoughts are on past triumphs when they should be upon the victory that's to come.

Convoy's ready?

GREVE:
Waiting for you outside.

ROEMONT picks up his coat.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:
I'll contact you as soon as Faulkner is dead..
(With a sigh)
Well, let's get to it.

ROAD, EXT, DAY

Birdsong and running water. We hear the doors of ROEMONT's car slam - and then the convoy begins its journey.

We listen to the river change - from slow delta to fast mountain river - as we follow their progress upriver.

Underneath it all, the sound of the Drowning Song rises.

And HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT and FAULKNER both begin to offer duelling narration. They speak with the cadence of holy verse; each man is offering their own interpretation of events up to the Silt Verses themselves.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:
(Narrating)
These are The Silt Verses.

The Book of Roemont. Chapter Twenty-Nine, Verse Twelve.

FAULKNER:
(Narrating)
These are The Silt Verses:

The Book of Faulkner. Chapter Six, Verse Forty-Eight.

And I name our disciples thus, **Méabh de Brún Jimmie Yamaguchi, B Narr, HR Owen.**

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

(Narrating)

I name **our** disciples thus: **Steve Hendrickson, Sophie Lynch, and Adam Cassley.**

FAULKNER:

(Narrating)

And it came to pass upon the Day of the Fiddler-Crab's Feast that High Katabasian Roemont journeyed far north to the Paraclete's Gulch in person and with a great many attendants, to honour the prophet Faulkner with the wreath of kelp and the Katabasian's rank formally bestowed, and to applaud the disciples who had bravely defended that place against a far greater foe, as well as those who had gathered there since.

Slowly, under the narration, we hear the banging of drums, cheering - a ceremonial march, we might imagine, as ROEMONT is formally received.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

(Narrating)

-and the High Katabasian was received at the Paraclete's Gulch with great honour, and the admiring faithful gathered around him in multitudes to receive his blessing and to touch the hem of his vestments-

-the sound of the Gulch's doors swinging shut. The celebrations fade.

And slowly, we begin to hear rain falling all around us.

FAULKNER:

(Narrating)

-and upon his arrival the High Katabasian went to visit the battle-site and the locations of that siege's numerous miracles, and he expressed great wonder at the many things that had been accomplished there-

THE PARACLETE'S GULCH, INT, DAY (RAMPARTS)

-and as the rain hits the ceiling overhead, we hear the clatter of footsteps.

RANE is showing HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT and his entourage around the Paraclete's Gulch.

RANE:

-and these, High Katabasian, are the ramparts.

It was here that the prophet Faulkner bid us stand together, united as one family, with a speech that inspired the Gulch's defenders to miraculous feats of courage and strength.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:
(Clearly not engaged with the topic)
 Mm-hm.

RANE:
(Leading him onwards)
 Several of our sculptors spent weeks working upon this mural after the battle - some of the bullet holes were incorporated into the design.

You'll see that it depicts the prophet Faulkner and the assembled faithful, their rifles raised, a great and furious flood descending over the heads of our foes.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:
(Dully)
 So it does.
(Suspicious)
 I, I notice that the fortifications have been not simply rebuilt, but somewhat significantly expanded.

RANE:
 Naturally, High Katabasian. Our numbers have swollen, as you've seen.

It has been centuries, I hear, since so many gathered at the Paraclete's Gulch.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:
(A little tightly)
 Yes, indeed.

RANE:
 The prophet Faulkner's first order was that we should prepare ourselves for further attacks, given just how many of us there are in hiding now.

The lawful authorities' war against the north is failing; the Legislatures' next move will be to pursue their drafting-raids in earnest amongst the hidden faiths.

No doubt you have made similar provisions in the south.

HIGH KATABASIAN:
 No doubt.
(Moving on)
 What do you have to show me next?

THE DREAMING POOLS, INT, DAY

-and suddenly their voices are echoing as they descend into the Gulch's vaults.

We can hear the faint wailing of JELLYFISH-SAINTS in their tanks.

RANE:
 And it was **here** that the prophet Faulkner fought in hand-to-hand combat with the leader of the government troops - a most ferocious god-hunter and riflewoman.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:
(Drily)
 Oh. Do we know who came out on top?

RANE:
(Not getting the joke)
 The prophet Faulkner prevailed, thanks to the grace of the Trawler-man.

In the final desperate moment when all hope seemed lost, the Father in the Water sent a great man-o'-war angel up from the Garden Below to aid Katabasian Faulkner in his fight.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:
(Softly, rolling his eyes at the melodrama of it)
 Oh, good gods.

FAULKNER'S CHAMBERS, INT, DAY

RANE is now showing ROEMONT FAULKNER's room.

RANE:
 -and these were Katabasian Faulkner's chambers.

It was here at this table, now certified as a relic of the faith, that he planned the defence of the Gulch with his closest advisors-

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

(Abruptly)

This was **also** where Katabasian Mason was murdered, wasn't it?

RANE pauses for a split second before launching back into a monologue about FAULKNER.

RANE:

Yes, High Katabasian, precisely - it was here that Mason gave his life to save Katabasian Faulkner from harm-

ROEMONT can't restrain himself. He slaps a hand down on the table.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

(Infuriated)

Stop. Stop.

An awkward silence.

ROEMONT takes a few steps forward towards RANE.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

(Trying to ask it innocently)

Where do you honour Katabasian Mason in all of your murals and your relics, Sibling Rane?

RANE:

I don't, er-

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

(Growing coldly angry)

I'm sure you **do** honour him. He was a great man, after all. He deserves remembrance.

He, he was instrumental in reclaiming many of the northern temples, he assembled and managed many of our most storied pilgrims of this past generation-

RANE:

(Placatory)

Of course. I believe his name is one of those upon the mural, if you'd care to accompany me back to take a second look.

(Almost impudently, as a reproach)

We seek to honour all who fought and died at the Miracle of the Gulch, your eminence.

Without fear or favour.

ROEMONT just stares at RANE for a moment.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

(Drily sarcastic)

Yes, that's the impression you'd given me.

THE PARACLETE'S GULCH, INT, DAY

The sound of the Drowning Song rises - and faintly, behind it, the sound of celebrations. The welcome feast is beginning.

And we hear those duelling narrations again.

FAULKNER:

(Narrating)

But the High Katabasian had come to fear the prophet Faulkner.

And he envied the prophet for his power, and for the love shown by the Trawler-man's people.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

(Narrating)

-and as the High Katabasian walked in the corridors of the Paraclete's Gulch, he saw that the disciple Faulkner had constructed a grand palace and temple to his own glory and not the glory of the Trawler-man.

And he feared, in that moment, that the disciple Faulkner's hubris might bring the young man great suffering, and the High Katabasian prayed to the Trawler-man to let his disciple Faulkner regain an honest sense of faith-

FAULKNER:

(Narrating)

And so he plotted, that night, to have his enemy killed-

FEASTING HALL, INT, DAY

A gong sounds. We hear raucous celebration. Rising cheers - hundreds of cheers. Stamping feet.

FAULKNER is walking out across the stage to his people, to give a reading.

The hubbub eventually dies down.

FAULKNER:

And as Fleck-

(Trying again)

And as Fleck stood among his chosen followers, they were overcome with fear and with doubt, for their enemies were all about them and there seemed no possibility of escape.

And one of the disciples approached Fleck, and said unto him,

'Great one, our strength is spent, and the tides have dwindled to sludge in the riverbed, and we have nowhere left to turn. We urge you, reach out to our foes. Surrender to them, beg for our lives.'

Fleck replied, 'Are you so cowardly as to return to our sworn enemies, murderers of our people, anathema to the Father in the Water, and crawl upon your belly begging for their mercy?'

'Tis better,' the disciple said, 'to live upon our bellies than to die upon our feet.'

'Let it be so, then,' Fleck replied, and at once the disciple was transformed into a monstrous eel that writhed and squirmed in the empty river bed.

'Let there be no doubt,' Fleck said, addressing the other disciples, 'that our god is a god of miracles. And he will aid us, if we are only bold, and audacious, and if we remain true to him.'

In the foreground, RANE approaches ROEMONT, who is eating.

RANE:

More wine, High Katabasian?

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

Uh, yes.

Thank you.

(Sour and distracted)

Sibling Rane. Can I ask you for an honest opinion?

RANE:
Yes, High Katabasian?

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:
(Gesturing towards FAULKNER, perhaps a little recklessly)
What are you people all seeing that I'm not?

Seriously, I mean?

RANE:
I'm not sure I understand.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:
(Thinking better of it)
It doesn't matter.

RANE just stares down at him.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:
Leave the carafe, please.

Thank you-

As FAULKNER's reading ends, we hear rapturous applause once more.

Then FAULKNER's voice comes into focus once more.

FAULKNER:
High Katabasian Roemont.

The last time we met was at your home.

Now you've come to ours.

I hope I can only extend to you the same hospitality and kindness that you showed to me.

We're a community here, a fellowship of equals, and a community is far more than just one of its members.

(Inviting him to speak)

But in times of crisis, and times of change, it's only natural that we look to our leaders for their wisdom and their words - it reminds us, after all, why we allow them to lead us.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT gets to his feet, his chair scraping back.

The applause is less enthusiastic as he takes his place onstage.

As he speaks uncertainly and off the cuff, we hear a few faint unimpressed murmurs and coughs.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

(At first hesitant, improvising as best as he can)

Well, now. I, er, don't know what to say. Katabasian Faulkner, soon-to-be, has caught me off guard.

(Clearing his throat)

Today is - Today is the Day of Going Forth, the same day when the Promised Bride first gazed into dark waters and saw a reflection that was not her own.

It's a holy day of journeys, and rebirths, and revelations.

For most of my life, the Paraclete's Gulch was only a ruin.

We never thought we'd retake it - I certainly never thought I'd be looking upon it again in a state of such magnificence.

(More candid than he should be)

So when I come here, and it's all been rebuilt so quickly, with so many hundreds gathered here, and these earnest young people are talking with such excitement about the Wither Mark rediscovered, great battles, and Prophets of the River, it can all be a little disconcerting.

You begin to feel like time is slipping away from you, like something's fallen out of your grasp, like you don't recognise what you're seeing in the water's surface. You begin to long for the old simplicities.

(A little sorrowfully)

I wonder how much has already been forgotten here.

(Building his confidence)

But our god has always been a god of change

In our rebirth, we shrug off death. We outlast decay.

And it's a wonderful thing, seeing the rebirth of a great man in our prophet Faulkner.

(Getting a round of applause just for mentioning FAULKNER's name)

It's also, inevitably, a little sad - because all rebirth is a kind of sacrifice, a hallowing in its own right.

The original person departs from us. He fades.

And all we're left with is footnotes, and mysteries, and conjecture. A paper man, a hollow statue, an impression.

Our loss, not his.

So. Here's to our prophet, to my dear friend, and to a young man I admire very much indeed.

Let's bid farewell to the Brother Faulkner we knew - the shell, the first edition.

And together let's greet the great man, the prophet, the glory, the Katabasian, as he takes his first steps forth today.

We should all be very proud of him.

A moment of silence.

And then a DISCIPLE in the crowd stands up and yells out,

DISCIPLE:

A toast! A toast to our prophet Faulkner!

Yet more wild applause and cheering breaks out from the assembled faithful.

It doesn't really matter what ROEMONT has said.

ROEMONT'S CHAMBERS, INT, NIGHT

ROEMONT is sitting in brooding silence. We can hear the rain falling against the window.

GRENSHAW, the would-be assassin, nervously approaches him.

GRENSHAW:

(Gently)

Your eminence?

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

(Startled)

Mm?

GRENSHAW:

All's ready, your eminence. Room's swept clean.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

Good, well done. Let's take a look.

He walks over to the centre of the room.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

(Fussing)

Everyone else is downstairs, aren't they?

And you've been up here since the feast. Nobody saw you come in. You stayed out of sight when they came to stoke the fire and turn the sheets.

GRENSHAW:

(Reassuring)

I've been very quiet, your eminence. Nobody's seen me.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

Good, good. Just as it should be.

(Stage-managing GRENSHAW)

So. Faulkner will sit here, in the centre of the room.

I will proceed in a clockwise circle around him, sowing silt to either side, calling upon him to confess his past flaws and failings to the water.

When I say aloud, 'The river rises,' it will be just when I have passed behind him, giving you a clear shot at the back of his head.

You will step forth from behind the curtain, and fire as many times as required to kill him - no fewer than two, I should think, BANG, BANG - followed by a wild series of shots that will hit the wall or ceiling, at your discretion.

BANG-BANG-BANG-BANG-BANG.

This will represent our struggle for the gun. That will be concrete evidence, and we can overturn the table as well.

(Still fretting and seeking validation)

You know what you'll say? Good lines, aren't they?

Is there anything else, is there anything else...

No. Nothing else. No need for delay, is there? You're ready, and so am I.

Let's do it. Let's summon him. You can get into position.

GRENSHAW:

Yes, your eminence.

GRENSHAW goes and gets into position behind the curtain.

ROEMONT walks to the other side of the room and rings the bell.

He waits.

A thought occurs to him - he jogs hurriedly back to the curtain.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

(A thought occurring to him)

You will shout, won't you? When you step out from behind the curtain.

Some CLS slogan, words of outrage and contempt.

(Fussing over the thought)

I'll tell them later that you shouted, but just in case someone is close enough to hear it, it's important that you do actually shout.

I'll shout as well. Words of protest.

GRENSHAW:

(Behind the curtain, perhaps losing his patience)

Of course I'll shout, your eminence.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

(Unravelling rapidly)

And when you step out from behind the curtain, you must use your free hand to toss it forcibly to one side, hm? To avoid stumbling.

GRENSHAW:

(Behind the curtain)

I will, your eminence.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

Of course.

What am I saying? I'm fretting unnecessarily. I know you're capable, Grenshaw, I-I'm just trying to...

Mason would have taken care of this once, you know? This level of detail, the grace notes that bring solidity, reality.

He had a real eye for it.

ROEMONT: returns to the bell and rings again.

He waits.

Another thought occurs to him.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

Uh - Grenshaw?

(Nervously)

Do **you** understand what people see in him?

I mean, it's obvious, isn't it? That the man's a liar, a fraud? As clear as day.

GRENSHAW:

(Behind the curtain)

...yes, your eminence.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

(Needily, uncertainly)

Yes, yes. Of course.

People can always feel it in their gut, can't they?

When they're being tricked, when they're being lied to?

ROEMONT sags.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

(Frustrated, to himself)

But if that's true, then why have so many come?

Why is the Gulch packed with bodies, and why is it **his** name upon their lips?

(A little tiredly)

I wish Greve was here.

I feel bereft amongst these people.

She thought I was a fool to come, she warned me against it, but if anything, Grenshaw, I feel more resolved.

We have a duty, a, a sacred duty, to put a stop to this before it goes any further.

He returns to the bell and rings it for a third time.

Still nobody comes.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

(Paranoia rising in him)

There's...no way he could know.

Not unless...

Grenshaw, I can trust you, can't I? I **know** I can trust you.

GRENSHAW:

(Behind the curtain, roughly)

You can believe in me as you believe in the Father himself, your eminence.

Neither he nor I shall fail you.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

(Relieved)

Of course. Of course, forgive me-

I feel a little adrift, Grenshaw. All of these plotters and these false prophets, conspirators in every corner-

(Fervently, but mostly trying to reassure himself)

Makes you long for simpler times, hm?

It will all become simple again.

Once Faulkner is taken care of, I promise you, it will all become simple again.

He takes a breath and regains his calm.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

I'll go and find someone.

He crosses back to the door and unlocks it.

We hear the door slowly creak open as ROEMONT exits.

CORRIDOR, INT, NIGHT

ROEMONT steps out, locking the door behind himself.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:
(Calling out)
Hello?

Nobody answers.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:
Damned dark out here.

Hello?

He waits for a moment, and then begins to feel his way down the stairs.

FEASTING HALL, INT, NIGHT

Rapturous cheering as a MUSICIAN takes to the stage.

They begin to perform The Promised Bride by Skip Kent-Davy for the assembled crowd:

MUSICIAN:
A woman comes down to the water's edge
Down to the river comes she
Says, "There's nowhere so lonesome as the river's edge,
And no woman more lonesome than me."

And back in her home waits a long white veil
There lays her wedding dress
The promised bride comes wild eyed
Down to the river's edge.

A woman hopes by the waters edge
That her end might come to set her free
The woman look o'er the river's edge
And into dark water she weeps.

Oh sing of flesh and silt
The tide rises as it will-

CORRIDOR, INT, NIGHT

-and we hear ROEMONT's footsteps echoing. We can faintly hear the music somewhere beneath us.

He's been wandering for some time. He is now beginning to actively panic that he is about to be assassinated.

We can distantly hear the sounds of partying from downstairs.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

(Calling out)

Hello? Hello?

Hello?

He stops walking - and quite suddenly, a door opens next to him.

RANE:

(Stepping out)

Your eminence!

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT yelps in fear and stumbles.

RANE:

(Approaching)

I'm sorry, your eminence. I didn't intend to startle you.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

(Recovering)

That's...that's quite all right.

(Peevish and suspicious)

I couldn't find anyone, Sibling Rane.

I called for an attendant, and nobody answered me, and nobody seems to be down here as well-

RANE:

(Patiently)

Your attendants said that you were to be left alone in your chambers to prepare for the Drowned Man's Hearing, your eminence.

Without disturbance. Everyone is enjoying the feast, as you instructed them.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

(Calming down)

Of course.

Of course, that's...that's right and proper.

I...was looking for the prophet Faulkner's chambers.

RANE:

(As if politely talking to a fool)

It's the other direction, High Katabasian.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

(Realising)

Of course it is.

(Trying to regain a little dignity)

I was here quite often when I was young, you know. Eleven or twelve.

Before it was lost. I used to know these stairwells better than I knew myself.

Could you...could you please find the prophet Faulkner, and tell him I'm ready to see him for the expurgatory rites?

RANE:

I should be glad to, your eminence. I believe he's still down at the feast.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

Thank you.

RANE turns and descends to the feasting hall.

Their footsteps disappear into the darkness.

ROEMONT waits for a moment - and then turns and begins to jog back to his chamber.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT'S CHAMBERS, INT, NIGHT

-and ROEMONT unlocks the door and steps back into the room.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

(Hushed)

All right, they're bringing him now. I-

And, abruptly, we hear a voice from the darkness.

FAULKNER is seated in the centre of the chamber.

FAULKNER:

Here as requested, High Katabasian.

ROEMONT, confused and increasingly worried, stops dead in his tracks, staring at FAULKNER.

A long silence between them.

FAULKNER:

...for the Drowned Man's Hearing?

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

(Weakly)

I- I don't understand, Faulkner.

How did you beat me back here?

FAULKNER stares back at him for a moment as if surprised - then seems to realise something.

FAULKNER:

Ahh, you must have taken the long way around via the eastern stairwell.

(A little pointed)

If you know the passageways of the Gulch well, it's not actually far at all from my chambers to yours.

Rane really should have shown you the correct path - I'm sorry about that.

I should also apologise for letting myself in uninvited, your eminence.

I expected to find you already here, and when you did not respond to my knock, I grew concerned for your safety.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

That's...quite all right.

(The thought occurring to him)
How did you get in, though?

FAULKNER:
Oh, I have keys to everything.

ROEMONT stares warily at FAULKNER, trying to figure out if GRENSHAW is still in hiding.

FAULKNER:
(Prompting ROEMONT)
The expurgation rites, High Katabasian?

I'm seated already. The rest is up to you.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:
(Pulling himself together - clearly FAULKNER has not spotted GRENSHAW)
Uh. Yes.

Yes, of course. Just give me one moment.

He takes a breath, steels himself, takes a few votive objects from the side-

-and then begins to walk, slowly, in a circle around FAULKNER, spilling silt as he goes.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:
(Intoning the well-rehearsed words of the ritual)
Who stands at the whirlpool's heart?

FAULKNER:
Faulkner, of the Parish of Tide and Flesh.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:
Who lingers at the river's edge?

FAULKNER:
Faulkner, of the Parish of Tide and Flesh.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:
(Still a little absent)
To become a Katabasian of the Trawler-man is to lose sight of light and love beneath dark waters; it is to renounce one's past, to forget one's old loyalties of family and fellowship; to become naught but a vessel of faith floating upon the currents of the divine.

Speak now of the man you will leave behind, the man you have been.
Gaze deep into his reflection.

Confess his weakness, his crimes, his frailties.

Renounce this man; strip his flesh free from your flesh; drown him in the
river's depths.

And be rid of him.

FAULKNER considers before he responds.

FAULKNER:

(Sincerely)

To confess honestly is a rare opportunity.

The man I have been, these past few years...is, increasingly, someone I
have become frustrated with, your eminence.

He has lied. To others and to himself. He has done untold harm in pursuit
of his own ambitions.

Truth has meant very little to him. Friendship and care have meant a
great deal to him - but even so, these are things he has discarded when it
mattered most.

He wanted to be a great man, but he's failed so far even at being a good
one.

And he's lonely, too. More than anything else, he's become lonely.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

The river rises.

Silence.

*Nothing happens - GRENSHAW does not burst forth to assassinate FAULKNER. ROEMONT
stops walking and stares.*

FAULKNER:

(As if in agreement)

The river rises.

ROEMONT has no choice, as FAULKNER continues talking, other than to keep pacing in a circle.

FAULKNER:

Your speech moved me at the feast tonight, your eminence. About how a great man leaves his past selves behind.

It made me think for a moment that I might have found someone equally lonely.

When I was young, you know, I genuinely believed that I was the, the chrysalis or larval form of a great man; that I had been chosen by our god for some audacious purpose, and that in time and through action the essential truth of my greatness would become visible to all the world.

It has become very clear to me now, as I have encountered great men like Katabasian Mason and yourself that...precisely the opposite is true.

Every step I take towards my own greatness is a step away from the original truth of myself, a step into the endless monotony of performance.

And the more successful my performance is, the more of myself I'm going to lose.

So yes, perhaps he does deserve to perish, this man I'm stepping out from.

I'll mourn him - all the same.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

(Experimentally, a little loudly and desperately, trying to get GRENSHAW's attention)

The river rises.

Silence.

FAULKNER:

(Calmly)

Yes, it does.

Nothing happens. FAULKNER picks up his confession. An increasingly frightened and baffled ROEMONT keeps walking.

FAULKNER:

I had a good friend, once.

Perhaps my only friend. And even before I came to know her well, I could see that her faith was dying in her heart, one day at a time.

At first I despised her for that. Then I began to pity her.

It's only now, I think, that I'm beginning to understand her.

High Katabasian, I am beginning to feel most strongly and most compellingly that the Trawler-man does not have a plan for you or for me.

That there's nothing coherent to be found in the depths of the White Gull.

That what you or I may believe to be divine guidance is merely the mercurial movements of the dark water - or a mouth in the depths, rising mindlessly to swallow the food that's been left floating for it on the river's surface.

That all of us have been tricked.

I used to pray that I would prove myself a worthy vessel for the Trawler-man, but increasingly I wonder if he is not an inadequate vessel for our people and our community.

But the irony is this. The less I can be certain that I **do** love the Trawler-man, or that indeed there is anything in our god that can be loved...

...the more urgent the performance becomes, for the sake of our people.

The more absolute the necessity that I assert his sacred truth and that I assert myself as the messenger of his truth.

(Softly)

You heard them calling my name down there, didn't you? "Faulkner. Faulkner."

Once upon a time that would have tickled my pride and my ego.

Now my name in their mouths comes with a weight to it; it's a grave reminder of my responsibility. Because they have hope now, and that is a great and precious thing.

If I **am** to be great, then it seems apt that I will be required to make the greatest of all sacrifices; I will sacrifice my personhood for the good of those all around me.

I will pretend to be righteous, I will pretend to be guiltless and fiery and faithful, so that all of these dear people can have a figurehead who's deserving of their worship.

ROEMONT has stopped pacing some time ago. He's quietly astonished to hear the 'fanatic' admit to doubt.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

(As if trying to scold FAULKNER, his heart not really in it)

It seems very brave and perhaps a little foolish - to confess your loss of faith at the very moment you wait to be admitted into the Katabasians' council.

(Almost as an afterthought)

The river rises.

FAULKNER just smirks.

FAULKNER:

(Calmly, casually)

Why should I be afraid of honesty, your eminence, at the moment you intend to murder me?

The river rises.

ROEMONT stops walking.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

What?

Silence.

FAULKNER:

(Scornfully)

You keep **staring** at the curtain, Roemont.

Are you trying to figure out whether your assassin, perhaps, has been assassinated?

(Calling mockingly out)

The river rises!

Silence.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

Katabasian Faulkner. I feel as if perhaps you, ahm-

FAULKNER:

Grenshaw is downstairs with the rest of your men. Disarmed, bruised and battered, but alive.

(Shrugging)

Although, again, you were going to let him die. Weren't you?

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

(Stiffly)

I really don't know what you're talking about, Faulkner.

If this is some kind of joke, it certainly isn't a funny one, and there's certainly no respect in it.

FAULKNER:

(Amused)

I disagree.

I find it a little comic that you came all of this way to flatter me before you killed me, but you couldn't even bring yourself to flatter me **well**.

You called me 'prophet' all night like you were laughing at it. Where's the respect in that?

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

(Trying to summon up his outrage)

I am an **elder** of the faith-

FAULKNER:

(With impatient hostility)

Yes, you're older than me. Not worthier, not better-loved.

But you are older.

Why should you deserve respect for being born before me, your eminence - when all it means now is that you're standing in my way?

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

(Coldly)

I think you need to leave my chambers, Faulkner. At once.

FAULKNER:

(Calmly, menacingly)

I disagree. But I **do** think I've confessed enough, your eminence.

I think it's your turn now.

So come. Confess to me.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

I don't-

FAULKNER:

(Bellowing)

CONFESS.

Silence between them.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

(Trying to act confidently, but with audible weakness in his voice)

This changes nothing. For either of us.

You'll leave this chamber, and tomorrow you'll be crowned as a Katabasian. Just as we agreed.

I'll forgive and forget these...paranoid accusations of yours, and you won't raise them with another living soul.

What other options do you have?

FAULKNER:

Kill you, perhaps.

This takes ROEMONT's breath away.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

You'd be despised.

Our people would turn on you, every one of them. You'd have nowhere to hide. Your name would be the lowest joke, the worst insult.

FAULKNER:

You prize our people's fidelity, High Katabasian. I'll gamble on their fury.

Downstairs in the banqueting hall, Sibling Rane is talking to your retinue members.

Telling them the truth - the entire truth - about your plot to legalise us.
About your cowardice, your surrender.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:
I don't-

FAULKNER:
(*Firmly*)
They'll be given a choice.

They can go home to the lower delta, the Katabasians' Council and your new allies in the Legislatures, or they can stay here with us, and fight back.

Are you confident, your eminence, that every member of your retinue will want to go home?

And if you can't be certain of **them**, then how about the many hundreds whose names you do not know?

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:
(*Weakly*)
You godsdamned fool. It'll be a schism.

You've created a schism. You've split us in two.

FAULKNER:
When the pure is separated from the rotten, your eminence, that's not a schism at all. It's a cleansing act.

ROEMONT is seething - and finally he can be honest.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:
(*Forcefully*)
Laughable.

You do realise how laughable it is, don't you? The...the temerity of it.

To call yourself pure.

You are a **rotten** thing, Faulkner. A canker that's dug into the flesh of our people and our faith.

(Feeling the wounds of his own past.)

You didn't live through the last raids, so you don't remember.

You don't have a clue about what's coming for us all if we don't make our peace with them.

This new draft will consume us. They'll show no mercy; they'll round us up like dogs.

Our people will be hunted into extinction.

Will you then be satisfied?

FAULKNER:

(Calmly and forcefully)

Our people **will** survive, Roemont.

I'll keep them safe.

Silence.

FAULKNER:

I'm truly, truly sorry it's come to this.

If you hadn't come after me, Roemont - no matter what you did, I'd never have thought to put the two of us at odds.

ROEMONT:

(Simply)

I don't believe you.

Silence.

FAULKNER:

I think under the circumstances it's probably best if you crown me with the kelp wreath now, instead of waiting until the ceremony tomorrow.

It's over there in the case, isn't it?

I'm ready whenever you are.

ROEMONT hesitates - then gets up, opens the case, and tosses the wreath over.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

(Weakly, sullenly)

Here you go.

FAULKNER:

(Drily)

Thank you. The shortest ceremonies are often the most meaningful, aren't they?

A long silence.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

Who told you?

FAULKNER:

Did you think yourself subtle?

ROEMONT realises all the same.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

(Weakly, wounded)

Greve.

Greve told you. She-

FAULKNER:

Her faith in you was wanting, High Katabasian.

Silence between them. ROEMONT is utterly defeated.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

(Hoarsely)

What happens now?

FAULKNER gets to his feet - and then crosses to the bell and rings it.

He takes out his own set of keys and unlocks the doors.

FAULKNER:

I already told you. Now you go home.

Without delay, and with any of your retinue who still want to accompany you.

Your cars are waiting at the gates.

Once you're gone, I'll tell my disciples the truth.

That you made an attempt on my life, that it was clumsily executed, and that it was carried out in the name of your efforts to push through with the covert and undemocratic legalisation of our faith.

You're free to return home and tell your people whatever story you like, but I hope it's a convincing one, because **my** truth will spread like the tide.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

(Weakly)

What about the ceremony?

FAULKNER only shrugs.

FAULKNER:

We have the kelp wreath. We have the driftwood rod. We know the words.

Why would we need you?

(Gently)

Come. Let's get your coat. It's raining out.

He goes to pick up ROEMONT's coat. Careful listeners might hear the very brief sound of rustling paper.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

Faulkner.

You're...you're really not going to kill me?

FAULKNER just stares at him.

FAULKNER:

(As if surprised and amused, with a double meaning)

I just did.

THE PARACLETE'S GULCH, EXT, NIGHT

The gates of the Gulch noisily squeak open.

ROEMONT staggers out into the rain, lifting the hood of his coat.

GRENSHAW is waiting by the car. It's not clear if anyone else has chosen to return south.

GRENSHAW:
(Distressed, calling out in the rain)
 I'm so sorry, your eminence! I let you down!

ROEMONT walks right past him without a word and gets into the car.

The car doors slam and the humiliated convoy begins driving away.

Behind them, the Gulch doors slam shut once more.

CAR, INT, NIGHT

*As the car drives on through the rain, the PROMO SUPREMO advert begins to play on the radio
 - before ROEMONT, like CARPENTER before him, turns it off.*

He sits in silence.

CAR, EXT, NIGHT

-and the car draws to a halt. Ahead, we can hear rushing water.

CAR, INT, NIGHT

ROEMONT looks up, confused.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:
 Why are we stopping?

Grenshaw? Where's the ford?

ROEMONT taps on the glass partition.

GRENSHAW speaks over the tannoy.

GRENSHAW:
 (Over the tannoy)

Ahead of us, your eminence.

Flash flood, it looks like. Must be all of the rain.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

(Perturbed)

I've never seen the waters this high.

Silence.

GRENSHAW:

(Over the tannoy)

We can go east, your eminence - to the next bridge.

ROEMONT considers.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

(Firmly)

No. Drive on through it. We need to get home as quickly as possible.

(Trying to appear strong)

The, the waters will part to speed our passage.

GRENSHAW:

(Over the tannoy)

Of course, your eminence. Hold on tight.

CAR, EXT, NIGHT

The car rolls onwards. We hear it splash into the water.

CAR, INT, NIGHT

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

Well done.

The car rolls onwards.

And then GRENSHAW sees something through the rain. The car slows to a halt.

GRENSHAW:

(Over the tannoy, awed)

Look, your eminence.

There are angels walking in the ford.

It's a **sign**, your eminence. A sign that the Trawler-man has not forsaken us.

ROEMONT sits forward to look.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

(With a sudden rising sense of dread)

There are...there are a great many angels in the water, indeed.

CAR, EXT, NIGHT

-and up close, we hear the CRAB-ANGELS chittering angrily as they walk.

CAR, INT, NIGHT

We can hear the distant cries of the angels growing closer and closer.

And ROEMONT realises something.

There's a bit of paper in his pocket.

He reaches for it slowly, unfolds it. Stares at it.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

(Horried)

Grenshaw, there's...there's a prayer-mark in my pocket.

He...he's planted a mark on me. They're coming for us.

Get us out of the water, quick. Get us moving.

The car revs- but the water and the mud is deep. It stalls in place.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

Grenshaw? Grenshaw, what's happening?

GRENSHAW:

(Yelling over the tannoy)

We're stuck!

The crab-angels are getting closer and closer. The car begins to rock and jolt - ROEMONT gasps.

GRENSHAW:

(Frantic)

You need to get out and run, your eminence!

(More harshly)

High Katabasian! You need to r—

SMASH. The bonnet is caved inwards. We hear the sound of GRENSHAW's tearing flesh, and the chitter of hundreds of swarming tiny angels as they enter the car.

ROEMONT, gasping in horror, opens the door and stumbles out into the ford.

FORD, EXT, NIGHT

ROEMONT breathes hard as he hits the water, hyperventilating. The CRAB-ANGELS are still gathering around the car, ignoring him for now.

He begins to swim.

COUNTRYSIDE, EXT, NIGHT

ROEMONT drags himself up out of the water.

We hear him stumble, and gasp, and struggle to get back to his feet.

Ahead of him, the trees begin to shake - and another, huge CRAB-ANGEL emerges from the woods, looking down at him.

ROEMONT yells out, his voice frail and echoing in the rain.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:

(Defiantly and in great distress, close to tears)

No! This has gone more than far enough!

No, you will not touch me! You will not harm me!

The Trawler-man knows me as first amongst his faithful! **You** will know me! You are my servants, as you are his!

I was the first High Katabasian to lay my hands upon the wreck of the Gulfwalker. I was the first to read the Pishing translations.

I gave the order for the reclamation of the Gulch!

This was not nothing, do you hear me?

I am not nothing!

He pauses. The ANGEL steps closer, looming over him.

HIGH KATABASIAN ROEMONT:
(Losing his courage, weakly)
 Don't you...don't you recognise me?

Don't you know who I am?

A moment of silence as the ANGEL stands over him - and then it strikes.

A brief scream as ROEMONT is torn bodily apart.

We hear the body parts land.

The ANGEL hisses, satisfied.

FAULKNER'S CHAMBERS, INT, NIGHT

We can hear the muffled rain falling above. FAULKNER is sitting alone.

A phone begins to ring.

A slight pause - and then GREVE picks up.

FAULKNER:
(On the phone)
 It's over.

KATABASIAN GREVE:
(On the phone)
 Good.
(Lying)
 It's getting late - I'll share the news with our people downriver first thing tomorrow.

We'll declare a period of general mourning. Any politicking over the death, any hostilities, can wait until next week at least.

FAULKNER:

Since tomorrow you and I are to be enemies, Greve, let's at least be honest with one another tonight.

A moment of silence.

KATABASIAN GREVE:

(On the phone)

Fair enough.

It's already done.

We announced the murder of High Katabasian Roemont four hours ago.

You've been named as the assassin.

FAULKNER is struck by this.

FAULKNER:

You already-

GREVE:

(On the phone)

I'm afraid we had to get ahead of you.

FAULKNER:

(Trying to rally)

I must have impressed you a great deal, Greve, to have inspired that kind of confidence in me.

KATABASIAN GREVE:

(On the phone)

You didn't impress me at all.

Roemont lost his footing years ago. A great man once, but no longer.

When the water gets deep enough, you start to think about betting on the salmon and not the bear.

Besides, it was the best approach.

A schism was always inevitable, but it'll be far easier to keep the reasonable people onside with legalisation when they hear that you murdered the High Katabasian.

FAULKNER:

(Retorting)

He didn't die in my halls.

It seems far more likely that the Legislatures assassinated him.

KATABASIAN GREVE:

(On the phone)

Sure, that sounds plausible.

And upriver, I'm sure some of our people will believe you.

The frothing and fervent disciples who aren't thinking too hard about just how many of our leaders keep dying around you.

Silence.

FAULKNER:

It's my truth against yours. Are you feeling confident?

KATABASIAN GREVE:

(On the phone)

You'll burn brighter for a while, I'm sure. You've got followers flocking to your banner, and all of that.

But do you know what your problem is, Faulkner?

FAULKNER:

Go on.

KATABASIAN GREVE:

(On the phone)

They believe in you.

You're a holy man. A direct conduit to our god. A perfect, flawless, shining thing, not like Roemont or me.

What happens when that graven image begins to fracture, I wonder?

When reality rears its ugly head from the black water, and something happens that you cannot possibly spin in your own favour?

Or what happens when your fanatics prove too rabid even for you - and they get a glimpse of the hesitation, the terror, in your eyes?

Silence for a moment.

FAULKNER:

The Trawler-man has favoured me this far.

KATABASIAN GREVE:

(On the phone)

Oh, no doubt, no doubt.

(*Drily, sarcastically*)

And I have to say, I can't wait to see how he'll favour you next.

How are the waters upriver, Faulkner?

FAULKNER:

(*Lying*)

Clear, deep and hungry.

KATABASIAN GREVE:

(On the phone, also lying)

The same down here.

Good luck in the war to come, Faulkner.

Sooner or later, I think you'll find the lies begin to run just as dry.

FAULKNER:

You're-

GREVE chuckles and hangs up.

FAULKNER breaths out and sits back.

For a moment we only listen to the rain.

END OF EPISODE.