

TRANSCRIPT - THE SILT VERSES, CHAPTER 25

RIVER DOCK, EXT, DAY

We can hear birdsong. The gentle lapping of water.

GAGE is sitting at the end of the dock.

They raise their flute to their lips - and gently begin to play.

It's a slow, lilting, melancholy tune, and when it ends, they sit in silence, apparently enjoying the quiet.

Until-

MERCER:
(Distantly)
Gage? Gage?

The creak of MERCER's footsteps approaching on the dock.

MERCER:
(With concern)
I couldn't find you in camp this morning. I missed you.

Sibling. What are you doing out here?
(A little hurt)
Why won't you talk to me?

GAGE resents MERCER being here.

GAGE:
(Sullenly)
I came out here, sister...for some time alone.
(Reluctantly)
I'm trying to think.

MERCER stands there in silence for a moment - and then, not taking the hint, settles down beside GAGE on the dock.

MERCER:
(Dreamily)

I dreamt of it again last night. It was loose in the foundling-centre, rampaging through the corridors.

Just born and still dripping with the sloughings of birth, white teeth breaking through pink gums.

It pursued me through the hallways and stairwells, battering through the bathroom door where we used to hide together, and frightened as I was, trapped as I was...

...it was beautiful. It was so beautiful.

The details of it are coming into focus more with every night.

(Encouraging)

Did you dream?

A long silence.

MERCER takes another tack.

MERCER:

Gage, I think this coursing, this god-hunt, it may be the one that helps to bring the Beast to life - I truly do.

We just need to find the ringleaders. Find them, and the hunt can begin again in earnest.

She places a folder down on the dock invitingly between them. She leafs through it.

MERCER:

There's not much to go on. Grainy photographs. A couple of smudged mugshots, a few witness sketches. Names and aliases.

(Firmly)

We **will** find them all.

We will hound their steps, we will corner them in the darkness, we will pluck their bone-trophies free from the carrion cages of their flesh, and we will offer them up to the Beast as it lurches forth into existence.

(With satisfaction)

And then, once it's done, before we offer up our own selves...

...Adjudicator Shrue will be next.

Silence.

GAGE:
I don't want to talk about the Beast today.

MERCER:
What else is there?

A long silence. GAGE is working up the confidence to explain themselves.

GAGE:
(A little weakly)
Do you remember what I used to **do**, sister?

MERCER:
(With laughter in her voice)
Excuse me?

GAGE:
Before the coursing began.

Before the Beast found us. When we were in the foundling-centre.

It's hard to remember now, but I'm certain I must have been good at *something*, I had a particular talent.

I was praised for it.
(Settling on something)
Maybe I could sing.

MERCER:
(Laughing at GAGE)
You **couldn't** sing. You can play the flute.

GAGE:
The flute belongs to the Beast, though.

MERCER:
Everything does.

GAGE:
I'm trying to think of something that doesn't.

MERCER:
(Genuinely baffled)

Why?

GAGE:

(Persisting)

There must have been something else I could do back then.

(Almost pleading)

Everyone has something, don't they?

Do you remember what I had?

MERCER stares at them for a long hard moment. She does remember.

MERCER:

(Reluctantly)

You used to roll marbles.

You used to play with the other foundlings at rolling marbles down the corridors.

That's what you were best at, before the coursing began.

GAGE thinks about this for a second. It's not a very impressive skill.

GAGE:

(Despondently)

I don't know if that's anything.

I'd like to know if there's something I could do with my life - just for a little while, just for a breather - if the Beast doesn't come.

MERCER:

If the Beast doesn't come, we keep hunting.

GAGE does not respond.

MERCER gets to her feet.

MERCER:

I understand the problem.

We've been idle here too long, sibling. It's unfocused you.

GAGE:

No, that's not it-

MERCER:

(Trying to encourage GAGE)

I have some good news for us, Gage, some very good news.

I've found us fresh quarry.

GAGE:

The politico said-

MERCER:

(Interrupting them confidently)

Quarry so wretched, Gage, so illicit, so foul, that nobody could possibly have cause to complain about us.

There's always a way forward, sibling, if you only know where to look.

Come on.

You could lose your life in dreaming. I'm going to show you something **real**.

She turns and strides away.

GAGE remains on the dock.

After a moment, they raise the flute to their lips - and once again, they begin to play.

HOLIDAY VILLAGE - REC ROOM, INT, DAY

We're in a large rec room - and someone is just finishing an acoustic guitar solo, to cheers and applause.

The sound ebbs as THE REVEREND TOES calls for silence - plucking a chord to get the crowd's attention.

He's in his element here - a confident, good-hearted and laid-back young community leader.

THE REVEREND TOES:

(Cheerily, chuckling)

All right, all right!

Welcome, all of you, to our annual big weekend! It's a delight to have all of you with us - and so many first-timers too.

A SMALL CHILD runs out in front of the REVEREND TOES, happily blowing a party horn.

THE REVEREND TOES:
(Kindly ushering the CHILD back.)
Hi. Hi.

SMALL CHILD:
(Happily)
Hello!

The crowd laughs. So does the REVEREND TOES. It's all very genial and warm.

THE REVEREND TOES:
For the purposes of this weekend, you may address me as The Reverend Toes, as that's where we'll be beginning.

At the back of the crowd, the BUZZSAW WOMAN excitedly revs...some kind of automatic tool.

BUZZSAW WOMAN:
(Perhaps a little buzzed herself)
Whooo!

There's laughter, and a few eye-rolling roans. The REVEREND TOES keeps going.

THE REVEREND TOES:
After, of course, we give a big thank-you to Geoff -
(Correcting himself)
- I apologise, Mr Righteye - and everyone at Leaning Larch Holiday Village for accommodating all of us - we have the complete run of the place.

They are of course taking a considerable risk by taking us in, year after year. We know that, we value that.

Let's repay them by tidying up after ourselves before we get back on the coach and, of course, lights off by ten tonight.

AUDIENCE MEMBER:
Boo!

More laughter, including from the REVEREND TOES.

THE REVEREND TOES:

(To an assistant)

Mrs Tongue, Mr Kneecap - please bring in the gurney with the first looking-glass on it, when you're ready.

He takes a moment to let the silence sink in.

THE REVEREND TOES:

I just want to address a few words to the little ones who are joining us here for the first time.

I don't know if all the secrecy around this weekend's excursion is exciting to you. I don't know if it frightens you - and of course, there's nothing wrong with being a little frightened.

But I want to emphasise something to you.

(Heartfelt)

Tonight matters.

He reaches for his guitar, and begins to strum it for emphasis as he speaks.

THE REVEREND TOES:

The things you will accomplish tonight, the sights you will witness, will alter you - although not as crudely, violently, or permanently as other faithful may be altered by their gods.

Our relationship to pain, to suffering, is perhaps the most meaningful lesson we can ever learn about ourselves.

(With quiet passion)

Look to the corners of the room, when the ceremony begins. Keep your eyes on the shadows where uncertainty lies.

Any one of the Five-In-Snuff may appear to you tonight.

You may catch the curved, blade-like silhouette of the Filthy Child That Cries out of the corner of your eye, and you'll feel the spark of schadenfreude awaken in you - the impish delight and joy at our looking-glass's writhing pain.

Hold on to this joy. It will be useful to you.

Perhaps you'll see The Bold Adventurer doffing his hat towards you, and you'll discover within yourself a burning new curiosity, a desire to

experiment, to push the boundaries of agonising dis-assembly further than ever before.

Perhaps you'll see The Sobbing Sister, foetal and fragile, her eyes melting in tears of bluest flame - and you'll discover empathy within you, feeling each cut to the flesh of the looking-glass as if it had been administered to you.

(As if anticipating some scoffing)

And there's no shame in that. **No shame** - although she may be the least of our gods.

Empathy is crucial, truly crucial. Society can't function without it.

(Building to a sermon)

Once you are grown, you will meet countless others across the face of this world who commit their harm unthinkingly.

Those who hurt others every day of their lives, in gross stupidity and in thoughtlessness and with no sense of the weight of their cruelty.

And this ignorance, it eats away at them.

We alone - braver in our misunderstood, experimental empathy than any other faith - accept that burden.

We alone, we happy family, acknowledge the harm we commit, unflinching and clear-headed.

(Building to a crescendo)

This knowledge, this shared suffering, the looking-glass and we with tools who descend upon it...it unites us.

All around him, the CARVING CHAPTER begin to roar and whoop in approval.

THE REVEREND TOES:

It elevates us!

It shapes us!

(Climactically)

Praise be to the Five.

Let there be Snuff!

Roars and cheers.

The REVEREND TOES keeps strumming his guitar.

THE REVEREND TOES:

(Still announcing)

These are the Silt Verses.

These are our disciples, in order of their appearance.

Daphne Nitsuga

JV Hampton Van-Sant,

Méabh de Brún,

B. Narr,

And Harlan Guthrie.

He puts the guitar down - and steps to a nearby rack. A clink as he picks up something sharp and nasty.

THE REVEREND TOES:

(More thoughtfully)

And these are the instruments we'll use to take them all to pieces.

The doors burst open behind him.

We hear a gurney being wheeled into the room - and on it, muffled and terrified, BROTHER TAPPER is pleading.

THE REVEREND TOES:

(Approving)

Get used to that sound, that final coherent pleading. Whether it thrills you or saddens you - you mustn't deafen yourself to it.

(Warningly)

Those who numb themselves to suffering have no place within our faith.

(More cheerful)

Now, we all have our roles to play tonight. If any of you young ones are uncertain about where your assigned body part may be, just ask a grown-up; don't be shy about it. This can be instructional as well.

We have plenty of instruments, so don't be afraid to get loose with it and try something new.

(Indulgently chuckling towards a particular child)

And I understand that someone was upset about being Little Miss Armpit, but remember - there are no insignificant roles, only unique challenges.

We have two looking-glasses to begin with. Then we'll take a break for refreshments. And after that we have two left.

We do need to pace ourselves today, but in my experience it's inevitable that someone will get over-excited or a little bit clumsy when we get to work on the first looking-glass, so this one is more of a practice run.

(Cheerily)

It happens, it happens. It's nothing to worry about! Every great explorer is allowed a false start or two.

He approaches the gurney where BROTHER TAPPER is whimpering.

THE REVEREND TOES:

(To TAPPER, reverently)

Sssh-ssh.

(Reciting)

Your pain is my pain.

It's a ritual, it seems - and as the REVEREND TOES speaks, the CARVING CHAPTER clap their hands and stamp their feet.

The REVEREND TOES fumbles for TAPPER's boot.

THE REVEREND TOES:

My eyes are your eyes.

I am naked on a gurney, and you will look down upon me - and watch me come apart.

In my collapse, you will build anew.

He reaches for a pair of shears - and snips them enthusiastically in the air.

THE REVEREND TOES:

(Cheerfully)

Now.

Toes.

HOLIDAY VILLAGE - MAIN SQUARE, EXT, DAY

Birdsong.

From inside the rec room, we hear a sudden burst of applause and cheering - and the revving of a buzzsaw.

A GUARD walks past, and we follow them through the holiday village-

-past the animatronic LONGFINGERED LARCH, which activates as the GUARD walks by.

THE LONGFINGERED LARCH:

Well, hello, there, campers, and welcome to Leaning Larch Holiday Village! I'm the Long-Fingered Larch, and I've been worshipped in these woods for...oh, four hundred years or so.

You can find my totems dotted here and there throughout the village. Just press my nose for some useful facts about our surroundings-

The sound dies away.

And as the GUARD walks, we begin to hear a sudden, insistent banging from the inside of a door-

CARPENTER'S ROOM, INT, DAY

-and we hear CARPENTER, hammering on the door from the inside.

CARPENTER:

(Yelling)

Hey! Let me out of here!

Hey! Hey!

Do you hear me? Let me out!

She gets up. Gives up, taking a moment to look around her surroundings.

The creak of her footsteps.

A rustle as she picks up a brochure from the desk.

CARPENTER:

(Reading under her breath)

'All of Leaning Larch Holiday Village's special 'holding rooms' are windowless for maximum comfort while retaining absolute security for all of your sacrificial needs.'

'Each room comes with two single beds, industrial-quality door and a shower unit as per standard.'

For a small additional fee, upgrade to one of our No-Hassle No-Noise Deluxe rooms, which emits a debilitating siren-sound to disable the sacrifice in the attempt of escape.'

CARPENTER hesitates - and then with a grunt, kicks the door harder.

Silence. It's not alarmed.

CARPENTER:

(To herself)

Hm. Cheapskates.

(Continuing to read)

'Whatever you choose, all of our holding rooms have been designed by the experts for complete inescapability, leaving you free to enjoy your stay at Leaning Larch Holiday Village and our renowned amenities, such as the Roiling Rapids Water Park.'

Yeah, we'll see about that-

We hear the muffled whine of the HOMESICK CORPSE from his rucksack.

HOMESICK CORPSE:

Please. I have to get home...

CARPENTER:

(Wearily)

They left me with you, did they?

HOMESICK CORPSE:

I have to get home to the water. They're waiting for me there-

CARPENTER:

Took every other damn thing I could use and left you behind.

She sits on the bed.

HOMESICK CORPSE:

They're waiting for me. Down by the water, they're waiting for me-

CARPENTER:

I don't care. They're long dead, just like everybody else. Just like I'll be soon enough.

I should never have agreed to take you. I don't know what I was even thinking.

CARPENTER sits on the bed with a creak.

HOMESICK CORPSE:
Please.

I have to get home, I have to warn them-

CARPENTER:
(Erupting)
Your home is gone, wherever it was! It's probably burnt to the fucking ground!

What you want doesn't matter! What you need doesn't matter! It's all lost, it's all ashes, and you can't ever go back!

You'll never get to where you think you're going, and you'll never understand!

You and I, we're going to die here in the dark so **just stop fucking bleating at me!**

Silence. CARPENTER sits back.

And then we hear something muffled through the wall.

A steady tapping.

CARPENTER:
...is there someone there?

She goes to the wall and knocks back.

CARPENTER:
Hello?

And we hear-

FAULKNER:
(Muffled, through the wall, very faint)
Marco.

CARPENTER:
(Slowly, bewildered)
...Polo.

FAULKNER knocks through the wall. CARPENTER knocks back.

FAULKNER:
(Muffled)
Marco.

CARPENTER:
Polo!

BATHROOM, INT, DAY

CARPENTER opens the bathroom door and steps through, drawing the shower curtain to one side.

The knocking (and FAULKNER's voice) is now more distinct.

FAULKNER:
(Muffled but clearer)
Marco!

CARPENTER:
Polo!

FAULKNER:
(Muffled)
Carpenter?

CARPENTER:
Faulkner?!

FAULKNER:
(Muffled)
I'm in a bathroom. Are you in a bathroom?

CARPENTER:
Yes. Yes, I am. Grab the shower-head.

It's a stud-wall.

She unwinds the metal shower-head, pauses for a second - and then hits the wall with it.

CARPENTER:

Chip away around the tiles by the shower on your side, come on. See if you can break through.

She hits again - and this time we hear a satisfying crack.

On the other side of the wall, FAULKNER does the same.

We can hear the exertion in both CARPENTER and FAULKNER's voices as they smash away throughout their conversation.

FAULKNER:

(Muffled)

I thought you were dead!

CARPENTER:

(Almost laughing hysterically)

I thought you were dead.

FAULKNER guffaws.

FAULKNER:

(Muffled)

Carpenter.

It **is** you, isn't it? I'm not dreaming, I'm not dead.

CARPENTER:

(Laughing to herself a little)

I think it is me, yeah.

FAULKNER:

Serendipity. A favourable tide.

CARPENTER:

Or another bad joke, at least.

(Just unable to believe it)

What the hell are you doing out here, Faulkner?

She's through to the stud wall itself - dropping the shower-head, she begins to prise the plaster free.

FAULKNER:

I was on a mission for the Parish, I was with a clutch -
(His voice becoming less muffled)
-ah, I'm through, I'm through!

We hear the two of them clearing tile rubble and plaster. There's now a face-sized hole visible between the two rooms. FAULKNER's voice becomes clear.

FAULKNER:
Bait and flesh, but it's a joy to see your face again.

CARPENTER:
You too, Faulkner. You too.
(Taking a breath)
All right. So what have we got ourselves into? Any ideas?

FAULKNER:
(Unhappily)
Some.

These people belong to the Carving Chapter, Carpenter.

Worshippers of the Snuff Gods.

CARPENTER understands what that means.

CARPENTER:
All right, so we're in deep shit. What are we going to do about it?

FAULKNER:
I don't know. There's a guard on patrol outside.

I tried picking my door lock earlier - couldn't get through.

CARPENTER:
Yeah, I don't know if I'm going anywhere either.

FAULKNER:
I guess we could keep chipping away at this wall, make a hole big enough to fit through.

But then we'll just be in deep shit, together.

CARPENTER:
(Chuckling wearily)

Story of our lives.

FAULKNER's voice takes a more serious tone.

FAULKNER:

Carpenter, I've...got people here with me. Children of the water -

(Deflating slightly)

-just a couple of kids. Tapper and Thurrocks. Mason sent them out with me.

The rest of the clutch, they...

(Cutting off)

Whatever we do, I need to get them out of here unharmed.

(Self-flagellating)

They were looking to me to lead them.

CARPENTER:

(With sympathy)

Of course we'll find them, Faulkner.

All right. All right, let's think.

Has anyone come to bring you anything? Food, water?

FAULKNER:

No, nothing like that.

There's some snacks in the mini-fridges if you need to eat. Bottled water, too.

CARPENTER:

Very obliging of them,

FAULKNER:

I think they'll only unlock the doors once they're ready to come and collect us. Not sure how long that gives us.

CARPENTER:

And they'll come in force, no doubt.

OK, so we try and widen the hole, see if we can get both of us in the same room.

One of us waits in hiding when they unlock the door.

If they're only expecting one of us, and if we pick the right room,
we...might be able to overpower them.

(Throwing up her hands)

That's all I've got.

The Trawler-Man sent you any miracles lately, Faulkner?

FAULKNER:

(Happily)

Not until you showed up, sister.

CARPENTER takes a breath.

CARPENTER:

(Decisively)

Well, then. Let's work with what we have.

FOREST, EXT, DAY

Birds singing softly.

GAGE and MERCER are watching the holiday village from a position in the trees.

MERCER is excited and eager. GAGE is still sullen and out-of-sorts.

MERCER:

Gage. Binoculars.

(Looking through them, with disdain)

All right. They've got a couple of armed lookouts posted. Just civvies with
shotguns.

And they're circling around the holiday rooms. They're watching inwards,
not out.

Guessing they've got hostages down there they're keeping an eye on.

(With sudden venom)

These people revolt me, you know?

The "Snuff Gods."

No true saints, no true angels.

All they do is pick the living to pieces.

She unrolls a map.

MERCER:

All right. So we've got the main holiday village out front.

We start in the car park, drive them back from there so they've got no place to run.

I say we push them westwards through the village, into the, uh-

(Reading the sign and chuckling to herself)

- 'Roiling Rapids Water Parks.'

(A little hurt)

You're not laughing, sibling.

GAGE:

I'm just out of sorts, sister.

MERCER:

Then let's remedy that.

Even our mewling politico wouldn't complain about us running this filth to ground - would they, now?

(Prompting)

The pipes, Gage.

GAGE hesitates, and then begins to blow on their pipes-

HOLIDAY VILLAGE - REC ROOM, INT, DAY

-which becomes the sound of cheering, roaring, party horns, and yes, buzzsaw revving.

The ceremony is over, and TAPPER is dead.

We hear the squeak of the gurney as it's wheeled away.

THE REVEREND TOES:

(Tired and elated)

Whew! That was quite bracing, wasn't it? High-fives all around.

(High-fiving)

Well done, well done, well done.

(Scanning the crowd)

And I can see - I can see from our shining faces that we've had more than a few visions of the Five already.

That's just marvellous!

And Miss Ringfinger, I know you whispered to me that you thought you sensed another knife amongst us on the cutting-table. Actual physical presence.

OK, we're going to take a break for just a few minutes while we bring in the second looking-glass. If you want to process your emotions alone, please feel free to go for a short walk.

If you'd prefer to talk them through with someone, then by all means find a partner-

We hear a gunshot outside.

And, a moment later, the return fire of a shotgun. Someone is distantly screaming for help.

THE REVEREND TOES:

(With absolute horror)

It's the law.

The lawful authorities are upon us.

(Taking charge)

Get the children and the elderly out of here. Quickly. The back entrance, through the canteen.

(With genuine bravery)

The rest of you, with me. Bar the doors. Come on, now.

Running footsteps. Screaming.

The sound of the BUZZSAW WOMAN, enthusiastically yelling as she charges forward.

THE REVEREND TOES:

Let's give our people as long as we can.

(Under his breath, as a prayer)

And if we die in pain today - may our suffering enlighten our slaughterers.

The door to the rec room is slammed shut-

BATHROOM, INT, DAY

-as CARPENTER and FAULKNER pull the wall to pieces, we hear those same gunshots.

CARPENTER and FAULKNER stop what they're doing.

CARPENTER:
(Primed and wary)
We still can't be far from the river.

Mason's people come to rescue you?

FAULKNER:
(Wryly)
Yeah, that sounds like him.

No, I don't know. I don't think it can be any of ours-

From outside, closer now - we hear an unhappy scream of the GUARD, suddenly cut off by more gunfire.

FAULKNER:
Carpenter, I don't like this-

CARPENTER:
(Urgently)
They're coming my way. Get down low and don't make a sound.

She closes the shower curtain and steps out into the hotel room, shutting the bathroom door behind her-

CARPENTER'S ROOM, INT, DAY

-and as she does so, we hear the groaning of the wounded GUARD outside.

Footsteps approach, stepping over him.

We hear MERCER trying the lock from the outside. She snarls in frustration, turns - and beats the GUARD to death, retrieving the keys from his belt.

The keys jangle, and-

WHAM! The door to CARPENTER's room slams open.

MERCER is standing there, rifle in hand.

MERCER:
(Overlapping)
Don't fucking move-

CARPENTER:
(Overlapping)
I'm a hostage, I'm a hostage!

MERCER stops.

MERCER:
(Carelessly sarcastic)
Well, thank the gods we found you in time - you could have been in real trouble.

You alone in here?

CARPENTER:
(Covering for FAULKNER)
Yes.

GAGE:
(Distant)
Sister. We need to keep moving.

MERCER hesitates.

She's seen CARPENTER's face from the dossiers on the Trawler-man's faith, but she hasn't realised that yet.

MERCER:
Do I know you from somewhere?

CARPENTER:
No, I don't think so.

MERCER keeps staring at CARPENTER.

Then a burst of gunfire wakes her up.

MERCER:
Stay in here. Keep the door closed and don't come out until you hear we're gone.

Step out too early and you're liable to get shot.

And, uh, if you survive this and you talk to the newspapers afterwards, make sure you tell 'em this was thanks to the heroic efforts of this spineless shit by the name of Adjudicator Shrue.

She turns and goes to the door.

MERCER:
(To CARPENTER, as a farewell)
Adjudicator Shrue!

Remember that name on election day.

The door swings to behind her - but it isn't locked.

A moment later, we hear MERCER's distant voice-

MERCER:
(Distant)
Hey! Hey, there's another one-

A distant rifle shot.

CARPENTER:
(Quietly)
They're gone.

FAULKNER:
Not Mason's people, then.

CARPENTER:
(Still a little shaken)
No, not at all. I don't know what they were.

Let's get out of here, Faulkner. Quickly.

I'm coming around to your side, all right?

FAULKNER:
Be careful.

The door creaks open.

HOLIDAY VILLAGE - MAIN SQUARE, EXT, DAY

We can hear screams and distant gunfire.

CARPENTER stands still for a moment, breathing hard, and then takes the keys from the door and begins to walk, carefully and quietly.

The LONGFINGERED LARCH is still whirring and calling out announcements as she passes it.

THE LONGFINGERED LARCH:

Musical performances take place right here in the village square every day from two to five.

Don't miss out!

Someone runs past CARPENTER, sobbing.

She stops, then keeps walking until she reaches Faulkner's room.

We hear the bolts slide open. The door unlocks.

CARPENTER:

All right, come on-

She grunts as FAULKNER steps out and grabs her in a bear hug.

CARPENTER:

(Trying to mock him, but pleased)

Oh. We're hugging now, are we?

FAULKNER pats her on the shoulder.

FAULKNER:

(Confident and cheerful)

Come on, Carpenter.

Let's find our people.

Check the other rooms with me.

You take the left, I'll take the right.

(Calling out)

Brother Tapper? Sister Thurrocks?

CARPENTER follows FAULKNER's lead.

Both of them begin knocking on doors on either side as they pass them.

CARPENTER:
(Calling out)
Hey! Anyone alive in there?

Hey!

FAULKNER:
Can you hear me? Brother? Sister?

CARPENTER:
Speak up if you're alive in there!

A moment later, we hear a muffled pounding on a nearby door.

SISTER THURROCKS is still alive in one of the rooms. FAULKNER runs back.

THURROCKS:
(Muffled, wounded and yelling through the door)
Katabasian! Katabasian Faulkner!

FAULKNER:
It's this one, it's here-

CARPENTER:
(Gently pushing him back)
OK, out of the way.

She fumbles with the keys - and opens the door.

THURROCKS' ROOM, INT

FAULKNER rushes in.

THURROCKS is on the bed, wounded.

THURROCKS:
(Lying on the bed, woozy and badly wounded)
Katabasian Faulkner!

Katabasian Faulkner, thank you, thank you for finding me-

FAULKNER:

(Soothing her)

That's okay, Sister Thurrocks, it's okay. That's what I'm here for-

He gently pats her - and SISTER THURROCKS winces.

FAULKNER:

You're bleeding.

THURROCKS:

(Winning)

The children said...they said they wanted to practice-

FAULKNER:

(Calling back)

Carpenter, she's wounded! Come in here and help me with her!

CARPENTER steps into the room.

CARPENTER:

(Overlapping)

They're coming back this way, Faulkner. We need to move.

Come on, let's get her up.

THURROCKS gasps as she takes in CARPENTER for a second. (She, of course, knows CARPENTER as a dead hero of the faith.)

THURROCKS:

(Awed and half-hallucinating)

By the sacred current...it's a miracle.

Oh, it's a miracle-

CARPENTER:

(Taken aback and a little annoyed)

What?

THURROCKS:

(Babbling to herself)

Father in the Water, we thank you for your offering returned, Sister Carpenter, risen from the garden to save us, your servants, from our enemies' grasp-

FAULKNER:

Sister Thurrocks, there'll be time for that later. Let's get you up.

Do you know where they're holding Brother Tapper?

THURROCKS:

They already took him, Katabasian. To the main compound building, the...the rec room, they said.

FAULKNER:

How long ago?

THURROCKS:

Maybe...two hours...

A brief moment of horrible silence.

CARPENTER:

(Intervening)

Two hours. That's far too long, Faulkner.

FAULKNER:

We could still-

CARPENTER:

There's not going to be anything left of him by now.

We look to the living first.

Let's focus on getting this girl out of here in one piece.

FAULKNER sighs - but agrees.

FAULKNER:

All right. Help me with her. On three...

One, two, three-

Both of them grunt as they lift her up and walk to the door.

Distant gunfire can still be heard outside.

As they stand there, a thought occurs to CARPENTER-

CARPENTER:
...did she call you **Katabasian**?

ROILING RAPIDS WATER PARK, EXT, DAY

We hear another LONG-FINGERED LARCH animatronic, whirring cheerfully-

LONG-FINGERED LARCH:
Please remember not to run as you approach the water-slide.

-and the BUZZSAW WOMAN whoops and roars excitedly as she charges forward towards the government troops, hefting her buzzsaw-

-and she's met with a hail of gunfire.

She moans, gasps, drops her buzzsaw...and then topples into the water.

LONG-FINGERED LARCH:
Please remember not to run as you approach the water-slide.

The Carving Chapter are losing the battle, clearly.

We hear the footsteps of MERCER and GAGE as they stroll on through the village.

MERCER is now sulking.

MERCER:
Whatever you had, I think you've passed it on, sibling.

I feel...low. Unsated.

She calmly lifts her rifle and shoots a fleeing disciple of the Snuff Gods.

MERCER:
This isn't the right coursing. It isn't the right god.

GAGE:
(Correcting her)
Gods.

MERCER:

Whatever they are, there's no pleasure in killing their people.

Fucking Shrue. That lousy, cowardly, shape-shifting politico.

(Imagining violence, with frustration)

If I could just...

If I had them in a room alone, I'd...

We hear the doors of the rec room burst open. And THE REVEREND TOES steps out.

THE REVEREND TOES:

Stop! Stop!

Please! I'm unarmed!

MERCER:

(Quietly observing)

Blood on your hands. And on your apron.

You're not a hostage.

THE REVEREND TOES:

(Agitated)

I'm here to negotiate.

My name is Alan Grassley.

I'm a civil servant, I work for the government. I can show you my credentials.

And if you only knew these people, these kind, thoughtful people-

MERCER:

(Interrupting him, repeating his words)

You work for the government?

THE REVEREND TOES:

Yes, yes - I work for the government! I'm part of-

MERCER:

(With satisfaction)

Good.

WHAM! Gunshot as she shoots him, sending him back against the door.

THE REVEREND TOES collapses, gurgling-

MERCER shoots him again.

She breathes out, relieved and enlivened.

MERCER:

Ohhh, the Beast provides, Gage.

Just like gunning down the real thing. Come on, let's head inside.

She steps inside. We hear a distant gunshot and screams as she finds the final members of the Carving Chapter.

GAGE remains where they are.

From the ground, the REVEREND TOES gurgles softly and breathes hard - and tries to crawl forwards.

He gasps as he finds himself staring down the barrel of GAGE's rifle.

GAGE:

(To the REVEREND TOES - perhaps not quite believing this)

You deserve to die like this.

A crunch as GAGE steps on the REVEREND TOES' hand.

The REVEREND TOES cries out.

GAGE:

And your gods - twisted and depraved as they are - they deserve to perish at the hands of something greater.

REVEREND TOES:

May...may...

(Getting out one final, kindly prayer)

May you...come to know yourself...better in my pain.

A moment's silence.

The REVEREND TOES gasps - and dies.

GAGE stands alone in the silence.

They speak out a weary confession to the dead man's body,

GAGE:
I don't know how to tell her.

A moment later, we hear a muffled shriek from within the hall.

MERCER:
(Distantly)
Fuck!
(Louder)
Gage? Gage?

MERCER re-emerges.

GAGE:
(A little guiltily)
Mercer?

What's wrong?

MERCER:
(Breathless with excitement and fury)
The woman in the room. I **knew** I'd seen her before.

She was in Shrue's dossiers.

She's one of the Trawler-man's people, one of the ringleaders - we've found them!

Serendipity! Oh, the Beast provides!

GAGE:
Sister, you're going to have to be-

MERCER runs past GAGE, back out after CARPENTER and FAULKNER.

MERCER:
Come on, Gage!
(More distant)
The Beast provides! The Beast provides!

GAGE:
(Quietly, to themselves)
You're going to have to be sure.

CAR PARK, EXT, DAY

We hear CARPENTER, THURROCKS and FAULKNER breathing heavily as they limp out of the holiday village and into the car park.

They pass by another animatronic, activating it.

THE LONGFINGERED LARCH:
(Rapidly becoming fainter)
Welcome to the car park, campers! Remember to display your parking ticket somewhere in the windshield of your vehicle-

FAULKNER:
That way, that way, there's a coach!

They keep running, coming to a breathless halt in front of the coach.

FAULKNER:
Just take her weight for a second, I'll try the locks.

CARPENTER:
(Breathlessly marvelling)
Look at that. Just look at that.

They brought a fucking coach-

FAULKNER:
(Distantly calling back)
It's open!

We hear the doors open.

FAULKNER:
(Distantly calling back)
They shot the driver.
(Seeing something horrible)
Key's in the ignition! I-

As CARPENTER catches her breath, she notices the tyres of the coach.

CARPENTER:

(Calling out)

Hold up, hold up.

The tyres have been slashed, Faulkner.

I don't know if we can drive on these.

It might be better to-

BANG. We hear a rifleshoot puncture the glass windshield. CARPENTER and THURROCKS fall together.

MERCER is advancing across the car park. We hear her distantly screaming:

MERCER:

(Yelling out)

Hey! The river rises!

(Yelling out a taunt in a sing-song voice)

The river riii-iiiises!

MERCER shoots again.

CARPENTER:

(To FAULKNER, panicked)

Help me get her inside. Help me get her inside.

FAULKNER:

Come on, come on!

COACH, INT, DAY

CARPENTER scrambles into the coach with THURROCKS.

MERCER shoots again. The windshield shatters.

CARPENTER:

Drive, Faulkner.

Drive!

FAULKNER scrambles into the driver's seat and turns the keys in the ignition.

The engine stalls - but the radio begins to blast out some very cheerful soft-rock.

FAULKNER:

Shit-

CAR PARK, EXT, DAY

We hear the music distantly, from MERCER's perspective - she cackles delightedly at it, and steps forward, firing again.

We hear the coach wheel around with difficulty, skidding as it goes - and then it swings away into the road.

MERCER fires again.

A hubcap comes away, but the coach vanishes into the distance - our heroes have escaped.

MERCER screams out hysterical laughter.

MERCER:

(Screaming after them, like a prayer)

Do you feel it? Brimming eye and trembling fur, the quiver of terror in the hunt's first flush?

The quarry **knows!**

The quarry knows there's no escape!

Silence.

MERCER turns. She's only just realised that GAGE is missing.

MERCER:

...Gage?

CARPENTER'S ROOM, INT, DAY

We hear a door quietly creak open.

MERCER is sour.

GAGE is in the corner, leaning over something.

MERCER:

They got away.

(Angrily throwing down her rifle)

The mud-worshippers got away.

(Accusatory)

Where were you, Gage? What's been happening to you? Why didn't you follow me?

What are you looking at?

GAGE:

(Fascinated)

Come take a look at this, sister.

We hear the familiar rattling breath of the HOMESICK CORPSE.

HOMESICK CORPSE:

Please. Please. I have to see them-

The HOMESICK CORPSE continues to quietly babble to itself.

MERCER:

(Disturbed)

What is it?

GAGE:

Some kind of saint, I think.

It speaks.

As the HOMESICK CORPSE babbles, GAGE examines it closely.

MERCER:

(Annoyed)

Gage, get away from that thing.

We can burn it later.

Come on, now. Leave it alone. We need to get back on the road.

GAGE:

Sister. Wait. Just wait.

GAGE clicks their fingers experimentally in front of the CORPSE. It doesn't respond, but continues to babble.

GAGE lifts their flute - and begins to play the same tune we heard them practicing by the riverside.

It is, we might gather, an old song of the Parish - because the CORPSE falls silent, moaning quietly to itself in happy remembrance.

GAGE pauses - and then asks their question.

GAGE:
Where...exactly...is your home?

END OF EPISODE.