

THE WHEEL OF TIME

EPISODE 101: "LEAVETAKING"

Written by

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Based on Robert Jordan's series *The Wheel of Time*

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THE WHEEL OF TIME

SEASON ONE / EPISODE ONE: "LEAVETAKING"

EXT. THE WHITE TOWER - BALCONY - NIGHT

CLOSE ON GITARA MOROSO. 70's. Beautiful, confident, powerful. Think Carmen Dell'Orefice. She stares out into the night, a STRONG WIND whipping white hairs loose from her bun.

The thing that's most noticeable about her though are her eyes. They're covered in a milky film, almost completely white.

She's blind.

GITARA MOROSO

Tell me. Please.

And as CAMERA SPIRALS around her, pulling back -- we truly see the scene for the first time -- Gitara's standing on a balcony nearly a thousand feet up, jutting out of the side of a majestic WHITE TOWER in the midst of an island city in a river.

It's breathtaking in the moonlight, medieval Paris meets Tatooine. Our focus, though, is on Gitara and the WOMAN at her side --

MOIRAINÉ. 40's. Refined, practical, strong. But she's tense, almost... unsure of herself.

MOIRAINÉ

The sky's turning. The east is already black, but the west still has... a glow of blue or -- or yellow, I don't know how to -- I'm sorry. Siuan's much better at this. I -- I'm not good with words.

GITARA MOROSO

You're doing just fine, child. I can almost see it...

Gitara reaches out and sets her hand on Moiraine's, squeezes it. Moiraine looks down at it, notices the older woman's spotted, wrinkled skin, so thin it's like paper stretched over the tendons and bones of her hand.

It's clear these women care for each other deeply, even if we don't know their relationship. And both of them wear a golden ring... a serpent eating its own tail.

Moiraine looks at the older woman for a moment. Gitara has a smile on her face, like she's remembering what the sky looked like. Sadness creeps across Moiraine's expression, then curiosity --

MOIRAININE

What *do* you see?

A long beat, then --

GITARA MOROSO

No one's ever asked me that.

MOIRAININE

I didn't mean to --

GITARA MOROSO

Just... black.

(a beat)

And at the edges there's a light,
like it's trying to fight its way in.
Or the dark's trying to push it out.
Sometimes I wonder if the light goes
completely... then maybe I'll see
more somehow. The same way we can't
see the stars until there's darkness.
Even though they're always there.

Moiraine glances back out over the city, notices a half-blanket of stars. They're only shining in the dark of the east, the lit-up west is still starless.

GITARA MOROSO (CONT'D)

Some people, they think balance is an evenness between two things. That grey is the balance of white and black. But true balance is when each thing is strong, but contains its opposite. Like those pinpricks of light on a blanket of darkness. Like blindness... which only exists if you know sight. Even death can't exist without life. Every life starts with the seed of death inside it.

MOIRAININE

All right. Now you're depressing me.

Gitara smiles, laughs. She pats Moiraine's hand. Moiraine takes the old woman's hand with both of hers, squeezes.

GITARA MOROSO

Have the fishermen all come in from the river?

Moiraine looks down at the river at the base of the tower, searching for boats when --

CRACK!

Gitara SCREAMS, bracing herself against the balcony. The scream is PRIMAL, horror and pain. Like she's being *torn in half*.

FLASH -- Gitara's face in the wilderness. She's PREGNANT now, in labor, PUSHING with everything she has --

MOIRAININE

What's happening? What's wrong?

CLOUDS float across Gitara's eyes. She SCREAMS again, DRAGGING her nails across the stone of the balcony, TEARING them off, leaving bloody chunks on the white marble.

MOIRAININE (CONT'D)

What are you seeing?

ANOTHER FLASH -- BLOOD on the dirt. A mess of PLACENTA and AMNIOTIC SAC, and in it -- a baby, squirming. The woman who is and is not Gitara lifts up the baby -- looks at it --

GITARA MOROSO

No. No...

MOIRAININE

What do you see? Tell me.

ANOTHER FLASH -- POV of the mother, looking at her baby. We cannot see its gender. It squirms. But there is something about it that feels... *wrong*.

GITARA MOROSO

(harsh, broken whisper)

The Dragon. The Dragon is born again...

Moiraine's face goes completely still. Horrified.

GITARA MOROSO (CONT'D)

The world will be broken, I see it...

ANOTHER FLASH -- BLOOD still pouring out of the mother, covering the ground as her skin goes pale and her hands go limp.

Then BACK WITH Gitara. *Terrified*. Tears slip down her face. There's blood in her mouth now, her voice barely a whisper --

GITARA MOROSO (CONT'D)

Find the baby, Moiraine...

(almost inaudible)

Kill it.

Then Gitara's eyes go still. Her body goes limp. She's dead.

MOIRAINÉ

No...

Moiraine goes to Gitara, shakes her, but she's gone.

OFF Moiraine, shaken, stunned, looking out across the city, tears in her eyes. And behind those tears, determination --

SMASH TO TITLE CARD:

"THE WHEEL OF TIME"

Then WHITE FILLS the screen... and WORDS appear --

CHYRON: 20 YEARS LATER...

A few BUBBLES pop at the surface of the white, revealing that it is actually some kind of VISCOUS LIQUID.

Then a WOMAN'S FACE emerges from the white, GASPING for air.

We see the young woman slowly stand up, her body and GAUZY DRESS completely covered from head to toe in the white.

This is **EGWENE AL'VERE**. She appears to be about 20 years old, the same amount of time that's passed since the Teaser.

NYNAEVE (O.C.)

In this world, a woman must be all things.

Standing around her in a circle are TWO DOZEN OTHER WOMEN. They're all shapes, sizes, colors and ages. And they all have their eyes on Egwene.

Egwene's in the middle of a natural rock pool filled with the white liquid on the edge of two almost impossibly green-blue rivers cutting through an Alpine valley (not unlike the Valle Verzasca or Soca Valley).

We see the speaker now as she wades into the white pool with Egwene. This is **NYNAEVE**. Early to mid-20's, but a bearing that dares you to challenge her. She has a LAMB in her arms.

NYNAEVE (CONT'D)

First and foremost, she must be strong.

Nynaeve has a LONG BROWN BRAID resting on her shoulder and running over her chest. In fact, all of the women have their hair in a long braid except Egwene.

NYNAEVE (CONT'D)
 Strong as the trees that have stood
 in this valley for centuries.

Another woman steps into the pool with a WOODEN BUCKET in her hands and she SPLASHES the contents of the bucket onto Egwene -- GREEN PAINT. It leaves a gorgeous SWATH OF EMERALD against the white covering Egwene's skin.

NYNAEVE (CONT'D)
 Wise as the Earth itself.

Another woman wades into the white pool, SPLASHES Egwene with BROWN PAINT. The colors don't mix when they hit Egwene's skin, each leaves its own distinct swath of brilliance against the white.

Nynaeve continues as woman after woman steps into the pool --

NYNAEVE (CONT'D)
 And willing to use that wisdom to do
 good.
 (a SPLASH OF BLUE)
 She must have the patience of the
 stones that watch the world pass by --
 (a SPLASH OF SILVER-GREY)
 -- because within her exists the
 power of creation itself. The
 ability to give life --

Another woman (who we'll come to know as MARIN AL'VERE, Egwene's mother) steps into the pool and SPLASHES Egwene with the most brilliant color we've seen yet -- BRIGHT SAFFRON YELLOW.

NYNAEVE (CONT'D)
 And take it.

Then, before we even have time to prepare for it, Nynaeve CUTS the neck of the lamb with the broken leg.

THICK BLOOD LEAVES A SPATTER of BRIGHT RED on Egwene's body. With each dying surge of the lamb's heart, another spray HITS Egwene. But she does not flinch.

She stands still, young but fearsome, like a many-colored god, a primal warrior painted for battle.

Nynaeve nods with a little half-smile, can't help but be proud --

NYNAEVE (CONT'D)
 Come.

Nynaeve gently sets the lamb into the pool, its dying face quickly disappears beneath the white.

Then she slowly walks out, leaving white footprints in the bright green grass. Egwene follows, then the rest of the women behind her.

IMAGISTIC POPS of the women walking silently through the gorgeous springtime Alpine countryside -- along the green-blue river, through a stark alpine forest, and finally to --

EXT. THE TWO RIVERS - THE WINESPRING BRIDGE - DAY

-- a beautiful stone bridge, with two graceful arches (for inspiration, check out the Ponte dei Salti in Lavertezzo). Egwene stands at the bridge's edge, river below her, looking out over the entire valley, cradled between granite peaks.

NYNAEVE

Now let us welcome you to the Women's Circle.

Nynaeve has a long lock of hair in her hand that appears to be her own. She gently tucks it into Egwene's hair, begins to BRAID --

NYNAEVE (CONT'D)

As each of us braids our hair into yours, remember that you are a part of us and we a part of you.

As Nynaeve continues to speak, the other women each walk up for a moment, braiding their own lock of hair into Egwene's.

NYNAEVE (CONT'D)

To be a woman is to be always alone and never alone.

(a beat)

So when the Dark surrounds you and you see no Light, feel this braid and know that we all stood before you. We all stand with you.

Egwene takes the long braid in her hands, touches it. Then she lets it rest on her shoulder, running down her chest. With the colors of the paint and the other women's hair woven together, it looks like a rainbow-painted shawl.

Then Nynaeve leans in just over Egwene's shoulder and whispers, her voice losing its ceremonial tone --

NYNAEVE (CONT'D)

Be strong, Egwene.

(a beat)

You can do this.

WHAM! Nynaeve PUSHES Egwene off the bridge.

The young woman SCREAMS in shock as her body TUMBLES nearly 20 feet through the air, finally SMASHING into the surface of the roaring blue-green river.

UNDERWATER, we watch Egwene shake her head, try to regain her senses, but she can't tell which way is up or down.

Finally she stops struggling, looks at her braid. It's floating up and to the left of her body... *that must be the surface.*

Egwene swims in that direction until she BREAKS the surface, gasps for air. She looks around, trying to get oriented, but just as soon as she does, the current has carried her into THE RAPIDS.

The turquoise water rushes around and over white and grey boulders. Egwene moves with it, trying to avoid the rocks, but it's impossible. She SMACKS into one after another after another.

Egwene fights just to stay alive -- slipping over a WATERFALL, PUSHING a heavy stone off of her foot when she gets stuck, etc.

Finally, though, she just puts her feet out in front of her and floats, weathering the battering storm of the rapids. And when she reaches the end, it spits her out into a tranquil, gorgeous section of slow-flowing turquoise water.

She uses what strength she has left to swim to shore, dragging herself up onto the rocky beach. Gasping for air, she finally turns over onto her back, looking up at the sky.

OVERHEAD SHOT of our heroine. The paint is gone now, replaced by bruises, cuts and scrapes. But the braid remains.

EXT. THE WESTWOOD - DAY

We're higher in the mountains, spring's touch hasn't reached here yet. Trees are bare, patches of snow dot the ground.

An OLD CART filled with SMALL WOOD BARRELS and BALES OF WOOL makes its way through the wood, pulled by a shaggy BROWN MARE. TWO MEN walk on either side of her, father and son.

This is TAM AL'THOR, 50's, an aging shepherd with the watchful eye of a warrior. Thick chest and broad face, there's a masculine solidness to him, as though a flood could wash around him without uprooting his feet.

Next to him is his son, **RAND AL'THOR**. Like Egwene, he is about 20 years old. And he's physically incredibly striking -- 6'4" with an unruly mess of red hair and eerily grey-blue eyes.

Tam is carrying a large, steel-tipped SPEAR, using the wooden base as a walking stick. And Rand has a BOW in his hands, a QUIVER OF ARROWS at his waist. They're both tense.

TAM AL'THOR

I remember when this road was just a little deer path... winding between the trees.

RAND

How'd you get the wool to town?

TAM AL'THOR

Carried it.

RAND

And the brandy?

TAM AL'THOR

That stayed home.

(smiles)

Your mother could drink.

Rand smiles too. There's something about the interaction that makes you think Rand never really knew his mother. But the relationship between father and son is tight, born of an entire life together far from town.

CRACK.

A twig snaps about 30 feet away from them and Rand has his bow drawn and aimed straight at it in less than a second. It's clear he's good with the weapon.

It's just a STAG though, staring back at them through the shadowed forest. It bounds onward. They walk on.

RAND

More wolves now.

Tam shakes his head, something gnawing at him as he glances up at the granite peaks surrounding the valley --

TAM AL'THOR

Bears too. Something's been pushing them down from the mountains...

Rand nods, looking back out, hand tight on the bow, ready for whatever it is that scares bears and wolves. He looks strong, confident, mature. Tam notices, muses --

TAM AL'THOR (CONT'D)

When you were just tiny we'd let you out in these woods alone to search for berries. You'd bend over at the waist, straight-legged with your little cheek pressed against the ground to look under the leaves.

(MORE)

TAM AL'THOR (CONT'D)

(a beat)

You'd always save a basket of them in the barn to take to Egwene when we went into town. Your mom didn't have the heart to tell you they'd go bad, so she'd go out and pick a whole new basketful first thing in the morning before we walked down.

RAND

(with a wry smile)

Sounds like I used to be a real sap.

Tam smiles back at his son with a little eyeroll. The two slip back into comfortable silence, walk forward together, their eyes always searching the woods for wolves or bears. Then Rand catches something out of the corner of his eye --

-- A RIDER on a BLACK HORSE, about 100 feet behind them.

But the second Rand's eyes focus on the rider, time seems to slow. The person's face, hidden beneath a black hood almost comes into focus as DARK, EVIL-SOUNDING WHISPERS sneak into the soundtrack.

Then Rand blinks, and suddenly, the rider and horse disappear.

RAND (CONT'D)

What the --

He spins, bow drawn, searching.

TAM AL'THOR

What? What is it?

RAND

I -- I don't know. I thought I saw --

Rand shakes his head. *Did that just happen?* Tam holds his spear tighter as he looks behind them, checking both sides of the empty road. But it's all clear.

RAND (CONT'D)

I guess it was nothing.

Rand shakes off his sense of unease and walks with the cart down the road. They approach a wagon-wide STONE BRIDGE leading into the VILLAGE ITSELF, perched right at the confluence of the two mountain rivers with granite peaks in the distance behind.

But as they walk into town, CAMERA CATCHES a glimpse of something horrifying in the wooded distance behind them -- The Rider in Black in the middle of the road.

INT. PERRIN AYBARA'S FORGE - DAY

CLOSE ON **PERRIN AYBARA**, also around 20, but the physical definition of masculinity -- 5'10", 220 pounds of muscle, with a healthy beard and smattering of chest hair.

He's using massive TONGS to heft a large piece of metal out of a GLOWING ORANGE FORGE. His BICEPS and FOREARMS bulge with the effort. At the BELLOWS is his wife, **LAILA**. She's just as strong, toned and muscular, her BRAID tied up on her head.

They're lit up by thin beams of sunlight peeking between the wooden clapboard walls. And there are WEAPONS on the walls and floor. They're the town blacksmiths.

Perrin CARRIES the orange-hot chunk of metal to the anvil with a huge effort, setting it down. Then Laila walks over, lifts a large BLACKSMITH'S HAMMER into the air and brings it down hard on the metal. We see both of their wedding rings as they work.

PERRIN

Weren't you supposed to go to
Egwene's ceremony today?

At the mention of Egwene's name, Laila's face darkens for one moment, but then she shakes it off, hits the metal again --

LAILA

Too much to do before tomorrow.

He looks at her, something more to say, but doesn't say it. It's clear these two are both the strong, silent type.

OFF husband and wife working, something clearly unsaid between them.

EXT. TWO RIVERS - MEADOW - DAY

Egwene's walking alone through a beautiful meadow of yellow flowers now, a little limp in her left leg. Her body's speckled with bruises and cuts; her dress is in tatters.

She rounds a corner and finds Nynaeve sitting on a stone with a bundle in her hands. She looks nervous.

The second she sees Egwene, her whole face lights up, but she quickly reins it in, her tone low, dry and un-emotional --

NYNAEVE

Good. You made it out before the
second rapids. Some women don't come
back from those.

She walks toward Egwene, hands her a NEW DRESS to put on. Egwene snatches it --

EGWENE

Oh? You think we're still talking?

Egwene SLIPS off the shredded remains of her old dress and pulls the new one on over her head. Nynaeve allows herself a quick smile while Egwene's putting on the dress and can't see her, then is all business when they meet eyes again.

NYNAEVE

Let me see your arm.

Egwene stares her down for a second, but Nynaeve's twice as stubborn as anyone else in the Two Rivers and has no intention of explaining her actions. Finally Egwene puts out her arm.

Nynaeve pulls a small GLASS JAR OF PASTE from her satchel, applies some of it to the cut. Egwene winces, but Nynaeve gently rubs the other woman's hand as she applies it, comforting her.

When she's done, she looks very seriously at Egwene, emotion and pride coloring her voice --

NYNAEVE (CONT'D)

You did good today.

Egwene nods back to Nynaeve -- *thank you*. The two walk back toward town together through the meadow. A long, quiet beat and then --

NYNAEVE (CONT'D)

Have you thought any more about what I asked?

Egwene's *not happy* about this.

EGWENE

You really want to talk about this now?

NYNAEVE

I'm not known for my patience.

This gets a little smile and eyeroll out of Egwene.

EGWENE

Rand's coming down tonight. Let me talk to him first.

Nynaeve knows she shouldn't say more, but can't help herself --

NYNAEVE

It's your decision. Not his.

Egwene just shakes her head, keeps walking. Faster now. Nynaeve keeps pace with her.

OFF the two women walking together through the field of wildflowers. The reds and oranges of the setting sun reflect off the giant white boulders that dot the field.

EXT. TWO RIVERS - TOWN SQUARE - SUNSET

The TOWN SQUARE. A mix of white paving stones and ancient trees, surrounded by old river-stone buildings. It's dominated by THE WINESPRING INN with its stone first floor and soaring, white-painted walls above that. Rand and Tam's cart is tied out front.

Warm firelight, laughter and singing filter out the Inn's doors --

INT. THE WINESPRING INN - NIGHT

The tables of the Winespring Inn are full of people, mostly gender segregated. We see many of the characters we've already met --

-- Marin and BRAN AL'VERE (Egwene's parents) are the Innkeepers, keeping everyone happy and full of drink. Especially TWO TABLES full of the women from Egwene's ceremony who are drunk and rowdy. Perrin's wife, Laila, is with them, but a little more reserved.

-- Rand and Tam are at a table with the young and middle-aged men (and one woman), who seem to be playing some game of dice. Perrin's with them too. But all of their eyes are focused on --

MAT CAUTION. Our final 20 year old. He's Perrin's physical opposite -- gangly and charming, his hair a wild but somehow still handsome mess. He's dramatically shaking DICE, standing up --

MAT

Gentlemen, and lady, I want to thank you all so much for bearing with me tonight. I imagine it can't be easy to part with all your money, but...

Rand and Perrin roll their eyes to each other as Mat ROLLS THE DICE... watching them land on... DOUBLE ONES.

His face falls.

Rand pats him on the back, as the one woman at the table slowly sweeps up the money. This is **DANYA**. Elegant, 30-something, raven-black hair. And she looks rich already, she's got a beautiful GOLD BRACELET on her wrist. She smiles at Mat --

DANYA

You'll get 'em next time.

It seems like this loss really hurts Mat, though. And we start to notice that his clothes aren't as nice as Perrin's or Rand's (and certainly not Danya's) -- more wear, more patches. But he puts on a big smile to Danya --

MAT

Next time? How about right now?
 (to the men)
 Eh?

Everyone shakes their head, they're spent. Danya takes her winnings over to the women's table with a little smile to Mat and the group disperses except for Rand, Perrin and Mat. Perrin takes a long drag of his beer.

MAT (CONT'D)

One game for the three of us? Old time's sake?

PERRIN

We're talking.

MAT

About what? You're married, your life's over. Rand's cold in the mountains, pining over Egwene, only sheep to keep him warm --

Perrin pushes past it, looks seriously at Rand --

PERRIN

Did you hear already?

RAND

Hear what?

PERRIN

A few folks went down to Taren Ferry with the wool last week. Town was full of soldiers and mercenaries headed South.

RAND

What? Why?

PERRIN

They said there's war... in Ghaeldan.

MAT

(rolls his eyes)

It was Daise Conger. She'd piss in your mouth and tell you it's raining.

(a beat)

So, come on. Let's play? No? Fine. Enough of you guys.

Mat eyes Danya at the bar, grabs his dice and heads toward her. Perrin and Rand exchange an amused glance, but then suddenly there's a loud STOMPING AND YELLING from the table of drunk women.

They look to the door and see Egwene, backlit by the very last light of the sun. Her braid rests on her shoulder, her dress pulled in tight at the waist. There's an undeniable sense of maturity about her.

Nynaeve follows a step behind, letting the younger woman have her moment. Rand and Perrin stop talking, just staring at Egwene. They're both dumbstruck by how beautiful she looks.

Then we see Perrin's wife, Laila. She watches Perrin watch Egwene, and it's 100% clear on her face -- she thinks her husband's in love with another woman.

Danya grabs Egwene and drags her over to the table, right past Rand. He looks at her, waiting for her to stop... but she doesn't. Egwene doesn't even meet his eyes. He's surprised.

DANYA

Marin! A drink for your daughter!

Marin smiles, grabs a beer for Egwene and walks it to the table, setting it down in front of her daughter as she takes a seat.

But we GO OFF Rand, as he keeps looking to Egwene, shocked that she won't look back at him --

EXT. TWO RIVERS - NIGHT

The Stone Bridge leading into town. It's raining now, the ancient cobblestones slick and wet.

Then we see a BLACK HORSE'S HOOF hit the stone. Then another, and CAMERA MOVES UP AND BEHIND a Rider in Black, hood up against the rain, riding a MASSIVE WARHORSE into the quiet town of Two Rivers.

INT. TWO RIVERS - STABLES - NIGHT

The pitter-patter of the rain on the thatched roof of the stables. Horses stomping and neighing, nervous. Then a MOAN.

DANYA

Yes...

CAMERA MOVES through the darkness, and we see two silhouettes against one of the walls. Danya's holding onto one of the ceiling beams with her strong arms, her legs wrapped around a man's shoulders. He's shirtless, head hidden beneath her skirt.

[**NOTE:** All sex scenes in 101 will be focused on the pleasure of the women. Likewise, the female body should be seen as strong and in control in these scenes.]

DANYA (CONT'D)
 Oh light... yes. I'm close. Mat,
 I'm so close.

He pulls back for a moment, moves the skirt to look up at her with his charming, slanted smile. A beat, then --

DANYA (CONT'D)
 Mat?

He grins, knows exactly what he's doing when he says --

MAT
 Oh, sorry, did you want me to keep
 going? You know, I can't hear much
 when I'm --

She PUSHES his face back under her skirt and between her legs.

CLOSE-UP of her right hand clenched in his hair, pulling, pushing.
We see again the beautiful WOVEN GOLD BRACELET around her wrist.

As Mat brings Danya closer and closer, we see him take her hands in his. Their fingers INTERTWINE against the wall as he pushes against her and she rides him, moving rhythmically over and over.

DANYA
 Yes... there... yes.

As she comes, he pushes her hands against the wall, sliding his fingers along hers... and her golden bracelet falls off.

She breathes out for a long moment, eyes closed, heaving. Then slowly, she slides down the wall, her body brushing along his lips the entire way. Her stomach, her breasts, finally her lips.

She moves to continue down to her knees. But he glances at the ground beneath, sees it's muddy from the rain... and the golden bracelet is down there. He stops Danya.

MAT
 Why don't we say you owe me one?
 Don't want your knees getting muddy.

DANYA
 (smiles, rolls her eyes)
 Makes me feel like a taker.

MAT
 You? Never.

She smiles, kisses him again, heads back toward the Inn. Mat stands in the darkened shadows for a long beat as the rain gets stronger on the roof.

He looks down at the golden bracelet for a long beat, then picks it up and slides it into his pocket.

INT. THE WINESPRING INN - MAIN HALL - NIGHT

The mood is a little darker now as people gather around the fire, the rain sounding loud against the roof.

CENN BUIE (O.S.)

Nynaeve!

Nynaeve WHIPS around, defensive. It's as if she's always ready for a fight. CENN BUIE, 60's, beady eyes and face like a gnarled root dominates the chairs around the fireplace with a group of old men. He stares hard at Nynaeve --

CENN BUIE (CONT'D)

Didn't see this rain coming, girl, did you? So much for 'listening to the wind'.

Nynaeve walks toward him, stands up straighter, daggers in her eyes, voice hard as stone --

NYNAEVE

I'm sorry, old man. I didn't hear you. If you have something to say, then speak up so we all can hear it.

The rest of the people in the Inn get quieter, watching Nynaeve and Cenn square off. She's making this a challenge. A public one. And it seems like the people respect Nynaeve more than Cenn.

Finally, Cenn harrumphs and returns to his drink.

Nynaeve nods once, confidently, and tugs on her braid, then flips it over her shoulder. The din of people talking quickly grows back and the small moment's forgotten.

Rand watches Egwene as she moves around the room efficiently, smiling and handing out drinks. She meets his eyes for a moment, then she looks away. *What the hell is going on with her?* Perrin's next to him a moment later --

PERRIN

How'd her thing go today?

RAND

I don't know. She -- we haven't talked yet.

This seems strange to Perrin --

PERRIN

I'm sure she's just busy.

RAND

Yeah. I'm sure.

Then Rand sees something outside the Inn that makes his blood run cold -- through the thick, sheeting rain... a RIDER in a black cloak on a black horse. Just like the one he saw earlier.

Rand moves quickly to the door. Marin sees what's happening, notices the Rider approaching the Inn.

MARIN AL'VERE

Who is that? Rand?

RAND

I don't know, stay back.

Tension immediately cuts through the entire group as they look to the door. Nynaeve quickly pushes up near the front with Tam and Rand as they move to the door --

NYNAEVE

Name yourself, stranger.

The rider dismounts, steps up into the light coming from inside the Inn and pulls back their hood --

LAN

I am Lan Mandragoran.

-- and we get a good look at **LAN MANDRAGORAN** for the first time. A warrior born and bred, his long black hair is tied by a *hadori* and he wears a KATANA-LIKE SWORD across his back. A moment later, another horse arrives behind him and its rider dismounts.

LAN (CONT'D)

And this is Moiraine.

Moiraine (the woman from the Teaser) steps in. She looks barely a day older than she did 20 years ago. She wears a weathered but gorgeous BLUE TRAVELING CLOAK that seems to indicate she spends a great deal of her life on the road. The whole town stares at her.

Unlike the women of the Two Rivers, her hair is long and loose, brown waves spilling out of her elegant cloak, some tied with silver bands. A loose circlet of silver rests on her forehead too, a beautiful BLUE STONE hanging above her brows.

She looks like a Queen amongst our villagers. She immediately approaches Marin, as if she knows already who the Innkeeper is --

MOIRAINE

We'll need stables for our horses and
a room for the night.

Marin just stares at her, not sure what to say, but she tries to lift her speech a little. Talking "up-class" --

MARIN AL'VERE

I, uh -- the only thing we have to --
to suit a Lady of your standing would
be my husband and my own chambers.

(a beat)

If you'll give me an hour, have some
drink and bread, I'll prepare them
for you.

MOIRAINE

You mistake me. I'm no Lady.

This seems like an important part of how Moiraine sees herself.

MOIRAINE (CONT'D)

Two beds, fresh linens. That's all
we need.

Then Marin notices something on Moiraine's finger -- THE GREAT SERPENT RING. A golden snake eating its own tail. Pay attention to this as we'll be seeing it often in The Wheel of Time and it signifies something very important about the women who wear it.

Marin bows her head to Moiraine, deferential now and *almost afraid?*

MARIN AL'VERE

Of course, Moiraine Sedai.

The word "Sedai" sends a shockwave through the entire room. People start whispering to each other, mixed fear and awe --

VILLAGERS

Aes Sedai? / An Aes Sedai here?

Moiraine takes it all in, Lan always standing a step behind her, looming over her shoulder but never taking away from her presence.

As she looks around, she quickly picks out each of the twenty-somethings in the room -- Egwene, Rand, Perrin, Nynaeve.

Everything she does, every movement her eyes make seems purposeful, as if making some mental log. Planning something. Then she looks at the gathered group, all staring at her --

MOIRAINÉ

Never seen a stranger in town stop
people from drinking the night before
Bel Tine.

People laugh nervously, unable to tell if that's an order or a
joke. They try to start up conversation again and drink. But
every one of those conversations is about Moiraine and Lan.

Marin leads the two strangers upstairs. Rand and Perrin stand
near the bar, floored --

PERRIN

She's so... small. I thought an Aes
Sedai would be -- I don't know --

RAND

Quiet. Who knows what she can hear.

PERRIN

What do you think she's doing here?

RAND

I don't know. Maybe she's headed to
the war in the South?

Nynaeve cuts off the conversation as she approaches --

NYNAEVE

Don't care much what she's on her way
to, but we'll all be happier when
she's there.

It's clear Nynaeve feels no love for the Aes Sedai, but we don't
yet know why. Then she turns to Perrin, says pointedly --

NYNAEVE (CONT'D)

Where's your wife?

Perrin looks around, surprised to see Laila's gone.

NYNAEVE (CONT'D)

Probably at the forge. A lot still
to be done before tomorrow.
(glares at Perrin)
Iron's hard to work alone.

Perrin nods to himself, glances at Egwene, then back to Rand and
Nynaeve.

PERRIN

Give Egwene my best.

Nynaeve nods once, firmly, watches Perrin go --

EXT. THE WINESPRING INN - STABLES - NIGHT

Mat's walking back toward the Inn, lost in thought, when suddenly a WOMAN stumbles toward him --

-- this is NATTI CAUTHON, his mother. She was beautiful once, but she's had a hard life, thin hair, teeth missing. And she's drunk, her braid so messy that it's almost undone, her words slurred together --

NATTI CAUTHON

Why you have that look on your face,
boy?

Mat looks over at her, snaps out of it --

MAT

Mom. What're you doing here?

She nods her head to the sounds of everyone drinking and laughing inside the Inn --

NATTI CAUTHON

Same thing as anyone else.

MAT

Where's Dad?

She sneers, inclines her chin to a man across the square, ABELL CAUTHON, who looks like Mat in 15/20 years -- tall, thin, handsome.

But he's just as drunk as Natti and talking very closely with a YOUNGER WOMAN under an eave, his hand on her hip --

NATTI CAUTHON

Right where the whole town could see
him, the prick.

MAT

Who's with the girls?

She shrugs it off, eyes her husband, tears threatening --

NATTI CAUTHON

That pig.

MAT

C'mon, Mom. Time to go home.

NATTI CAUTHON

I'll go wherever I want.

But Mat's not taking no for an answer. He props her up on his shoulder and walk/drags her through the streets --

INT. THE WINESPRING INN - BATH ROOM - NIGHT

STEAM FILLS the room. There is a BATH drawn in a MASSIVE WOODEN BARREL that's more like a hot tub than a bath tub, with a wooden row of seats around the inside edge.

It's rustic, but beautiful, the water full of milky soap and oils, tons of FRESH HERBS (lavender, thyme, lemon verbena, etc) floating on the surface.

Moiraine SLIPS into the water, CAMERA tastefully missing her nudity. Her hair's up now, a few brown ringlets still fighting their way loose to hang free.

She watches as Lan climbs into the tub, sitting across from her. She's clearly seen him naked a million times, but there's no sense of anything sexual between them. Almost like brother and sister?

LAN
Could be warmer.

MOIRAININE
I'm impressed they have this at all.

Lan shrugs --

LAN
Could be warmer.

Moiraine smiles, shakes her head, then delicately runs her fingers across the surface of the water, her Great Serpent Ring on display. There's a focus in her eyes. She waits a moment, then looks at Lan, a little more steam now coming off the water's surface --

MOIRAININE
Better?

LAN
Much.

He rests back as we wonder what just happened. *Did Moiraine do something to the water? Is that what an Aes Sedai is?*

A long beat between them, he just stares at her. Then --

LAN (CONT'D)
What?
(a beat, surprised)
One of them? Really?

A long beat, it's clear there's some conflict within her.

MOIRAININE
I wish it wasn't.

An ominous look fills her eyes. Whether she's conflicted or not -- *she's determined to do what needs to be done.*

Lan nods to himself, still trying to process what this really means. Then Moiraine closes her eyes and rests back, trying to enjoy the bath. OFF Lan, looking at her, almost afraid --

INT. PERRIN AYBARA'S FORGE - NIGHT

Laila's at work in the forge, wearing a LEATHER APRON and THICK LEATHER GLOVES. She's got massive shoulders and muscles rippling down her arms. She PULLS on the BELLOWS of the FORGE, heating up something inside.

Then behind her, the door opens. It's Perrin. They connect eyes for a minute, but neither really wants to talk.

Against all odds, though, Perrin does --

PERRIN

I love you. You know that, right?

LAILA

Of course I do.

But her voice betrays the pain she feels inside. He goes to her, holds her from behind in his strong arms, kisses her neck. She melts into it, her fears about Egwene fading.

She closes her eyes and wraps her hand around his pinky, holding it tightly. Clearly something she does often. He looks down at her, some conflict in his eyes.

Then he pulls her closer, kisses her gently on the head.

INT. CAUTHON HOME - NIGHT

Mat drags his mom in through the front door. There's still a little bit of VOMIT dripping from the side of her mouth.

Mat and Perrin are opposite ends of the spectrum in terms of wealth. Mat's house is the definition of poverty -- barely 10 feet by 10 feet, dirt floor, one small bed.

TWIN GIRLS (BODE and ELDRIN), barely five years old, sit in the dirt, playing with a few carved wooden sticks.

MAT

Why're you still up? It's late.

BODE

Matty. What's wrong with Mom?

NATTI CAUTHON
I'm fine, you little cu --

MAT
She's all right, don't worry.

Mat lays his Mom down in bed. She rolls over, tossing and turning. Finally she looks at her son, puts her thin hand to his cheek. She's emotional, tears in her eyes, equal parts angry and sad --

NATTI CAUTHON
You gonna be just like him. I know
it. Damn prick like him.

Mat smiles tightly. But this comment cuts him right to his very core. Because he believes it. Then he stands up, walks over to the girls, crouches down to their level --

MAT
You two wanna sleep with me tonight
instead of Mom and Dad? That'll be
fun, right?

The girls look at each other, then nod excitedly.

MAT (CONT'D)
C'mon, then.

He PULLS a folded, RATTY OLD BLANKET out from under the bed. Lays it out on the dirt floor. This is his bed.

He lays down on it, puts his arms under his head. Then his little sisters crawl in on either side of him, snuggle against his chest.

INT. THE WINESPRING INN - MAIN HALL - NIGHT

Egwene, Rand, Tam, Marin and Bran are cleaning up the hall, picking up mugs, wiping down the long tables. It's quieter now, just lit by the large hearth fire and a few candles about.

The five of them have an easy rapport with each other. These families have clearly been close for years and years.

EGWENE
What's happening?

MARIN AL'VERE
What do you mean?

Egwene levels her mother with a serious look. It's clear she's not going to put up with bullshit.

EGWENE

An Aes Sedai here? Rumors of war in the South? I hope you don't think you raised an idiot.

Her mother sighs, knows she can't gloss over anything. Especially now that Egwene's a part of the Women's Circle. Then she reveals what's really going on --

MARIN AL'VERE

A man in the South's organized an open rebellion against the Queen.

This sits heavy on the group.

EGWENE

A rebellion? How? Who'd follow him?

TAM AL'THOR

Lords who know they can never sit the throne simply because they're men.

Marin cuts in, her words intended to end the conversation --

MARIN AL'VERE

A thousand wars have washed over the lands down-mountain, and Two Rivers folk don't have any more need to pay attention to them now than before.

(a beat)

War is just fools killing other fools for foolish causes.

Bran sees this is upsetting his wife, steps in --

BRAN AL'VERE

Rand, Egwene, why don't you two finish up the dishes? We could all use some rest, Light knows tomorrow's going to be busier than tonight.

Rand and Egwene exchange a brief glance, Egwene smiling tightly and then breaking it as she responds to her mother --

EGWENE

Of course.

Bran, Marin, and Tam all head up the stairs as Rand and Egwene move to the sink, start washing dishes together in silence. Rand smiles at Egwene. They have an easy, comfortable relationship with each other --

RAND

You've been avoiding me.

EGWENE

Or biding my time until I could get you alone?

RAND

I'd say avoiding.

She smiles and shrugs, fair enough. The two work in harmony with each other, like they've done this a thousand times before. Egwene's tense though, uncomfortable. Rand notices, asks quietly, thoughtful --

RAND (CONT'D)

How'd it go today?

EGWENE

You know I can't talk about --

RAND

It's me. You can at least say if it was good or bad, can't you?

Egwene takes a long beat, really thinking about that answer. *Maybe thinking about her conversation with Nynaeve too?* A thousand things she can't say to Rand.

EGWENE

It was... good.

They keep washing. It's clear there's something uncomfortable between them now. Egwene's whole body is so tense.

EGWENE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, it's just -- I'm thinking about --

But before she can finish her sentence, Rand grabs her and lifts her up onto the wood counter, kissing her aggressively.

They kiss for a long beat, until he finally feels her tense body relax into it. Then he pulls back --

RAND

Sometimes you think too much.

She smiles, laughs to herself, relieved.

EGWENE

I missed you.

She kisses him back and they start making out more aggressively, hungry for each other's touch after a long time apart.

Rand lifts up Egwene again, carrying her across the room as they kiss. He lays her down on the sheepskin rug in front of the dwindling fire. Puts his body on top of hers.

He pulls back from their kiss and their faces are just inches apart now, the fire casting soft light on them --

RAND

You know, my Dad said I used to pick baskets of berries to bring to you when I was a kid. Like some lovesick puppy.

EGWENE

Sounds sweet to me.

Rand pulls a small RASPBERRY from his pocket with a rogue-ish smile. He runs it down her nose and drops it sensually between her lips. She eats it, and then leaves her lips on his fingers, sucking on them for a moment.

EGWENE (CONT'D)

Very sweet.

He smiles and then moves his hand down her body, hiking up her dress as he slides the wet fingers inside her. She moans and arches her back. OFF Egwene and Rand, kissing as he fingers her --

INT. THE WINESPRING INN - MAIN HALL - LATE NIGHT

Egwene's curled up on one of the chairs, staring into the dying fire, her knees tucked up underneath her chin. She's lost in thought as Rand sleeps naked on the sheepskins on the floor.

CRACK -- a log shifts suddenly in the fire, startling Egwene. She gasps and Rand pushes up from the floor, rubbing his eyes.

RAND

You let me fall asleep.

EGWENE

You act like I had some say in the matter.

She looks back to the fire. Rand stares at her for a long beat, can tell something's going on --

RAND

What happened out there today?

EGWENE

It wasn't today. It was before.

She shakes her head, emotion breaking into her voice --

EGWENE (CONT'D)
 Nynaeve. She asked me to become her
 apprentice.

This catches Rand by surprise. He's more upset about it than
 really makes sense --

RAND
 What? No, you --

EGWENE
 She asked. I didn't say yes or no.
 (a beat)
 She thinks I'll be able to listen to
 the wind if I work with her.

RAND
 Really?

Egwene nods. Both of them sit in silence for a long beat. Then
 Rand speaks, revealing what's really bothering him --

RAND (CONT'D)
 It's a lonely life, being a Wisdom.
 No husband, no kids.
 (a beat)
 Certainly hasn't made Nynaeve
 happier.

Egwene smiles --

EGWENE
 I don't know if anything would make
 Nynaeve happy.

Rand shakes his head, can't believe she's joking about this. He
 pulls on his pants, then stands and pulls on his shirt --

RAND
 I should get up to bed.

EGWENE
 Rand --

He pauses, waiting, but doesn't turn to look at her. Each of them
 is about to say something... but doesn't. He continues upstairs.

CAMERA HOLDS on Egwene still curled in the chair, staring into the
 fire, thinking, then CAMERA PULLS BACK --

-- OUT OF THE WINDOW and into the town square. It's still rainy
 and foggy, but we can just make out something standing in the
 square, looking at Egwene through the window.

It's massive, crouched over... hairy? But we can see the rise and fall of its back as it breathes. OFF this --

EXT. TWO RIVERS - THE WAGON BRIDGE - EARLY MORNING

The sun rises, and we hear the sound of CLANGING POTS AND PANS. Horses' hooves on cobblestones. Then a WAGON filled to the brim with every manner of JUNK. It's clattering its way toward the bridge leading into town.

Sitting on the front of the wagon is PADAN FAIN, a pale, skinny fellow with gangly arms and a hawkish face.

He WHISTLES to himself as he goes, a song that's got an eerie, haunting flavor to it. But he SMILES as he whistles it.

EXT. TWO RIVERS - TOWN SQUARE - LATER

Padan Fain PARKS his wagon off to the side of the Winespring Inn, FOLDING its sides down to reveal HUNDREDS OF PAPER LANTERNS and CANDLES amongst the junk.

It's still very early, a little bit of mist hanging in the streets. No one's out yet. But then the peddler hears footsteps coming toward him. He looks out and sees --

PADAN FAIN

Mat Cauthon. My best customer who never buys anything.

MAT

Good to see you too.

PADAN FAIN

What do you have for me this year?

Mat looks around the square, makes sure no one's around. Then he pulls Danya's golden bracelet out of his pocket. Padan's eyes light up for a second, but he tries to downplay it --

PADAN FAIN (CONT'D)

Bring it here, then.

Mat hands him the bracelet.

PADAN FAIN (CONT'D)

Simple. But nice.
(he bites it, tries to bend it)
Not real gold, sadly.

MAT

Yes it is.
(looks around nervously)
It's worth three marks at least.

PADAN FAIN
Perhaps. But will I be able to sell
it here in town?

Mat looks down, shakes his head slightly.

PADAN FAIN (CONT'D)
I'll give you one mark.

Mat snatches the bracelet back.

MAT
Two.

They hear some people approaching through the fog, then Padan Fain fishes out THREE PAPER AND WOOD LANTERNS. Holds them out to Mat --

PADAN FAIN
Half a mark. It'll buy you three
lanterns and you'll be lucky to have
them.

Mat eyes them, then snatches them and hands over the bracelet.

MAT
Screw you, Padan Fain.

PADAN FAIN
Pleasure, as always.

Mat shakes his head and walks away as other people begin to move toward the Peddler's Wagon and the fog clears.

INT. THE WINESPRING INN - GUEST ROOM #2 - SAME

It's early, light just beginning to creep through the shuttered windows into the room. Tam Al'Thor is already awake though, washing his face in a small basin, looking at himself in the mirror. The wrinkles on his face. *Something's on his mind.*

Then he hears a light KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK at the door.

TAM AL'THOR
Come in.

Egwene PUSHES OPEN the door. She's carrying a beautiful HAND-CARVED WOODEN TRAY loaded with FRESH-BAKED BREAD, HOMEMADE BUTTER and JAMS, TWO GLASSES of milk.

EGWENE
Too early for breakfast?

TAM AL'THOR
Never too early for your mom's bread.

He takes the tray from her with a smile, sets it down on the small wooden table. But Egwene's eyes are already on the second bed in the room. Rand's. It's made-up and empty.

TAM AL'THOR (CONT'D)

He left before I woke up.

Egwene nods to herself, clearly disturbed by this, but trying to play it off as nothing.

TAM AL'THOR (CONT'D)

She loved you, you know, my wife. Do you remember her at all?

EGWENE

A little. I remember her eyes, so blue, just like Rand's. And her hair was red, like his.

TAM AL'THOR

When your mom and dad were rebuilding the Inn after the fire, they sent you up-mountain to stay the Summer with us. She'd spend all day with you, holding you, playing with you, like you were her very own daughter.

EGWENE

You must miss her so much.

TAM AL'THOR

I do, of course, I do. But there's something about death that's... clean. Final. And a clean cut, even if it's three times as deep, will always heal better than something ragged. Something messy and raw.

Egwene and Tam just stare at each other for a long beat.

TAM AL'THOR (CONT'D)

You've got his heart in your hand, girl. Be gentle with it. He's all I have.

OFF Egwene --

EXT. MOUNTAIN RIDGE - DAY

Rand walks alone along a gorgeous ridge line, lost in thought. To his right is the verdant Alpine valley of the Two Rivers. To his left -- the wide world beyond.

EXT. TWO RIVERS - TOWN SQUARE - DAY

Moiraine moves through the square like she owns it, taking in everything around her. Lan walks at her side, a step behind.

Everyone's busy moving the tables out of the Winespring Inn, setting them up under the trees of the Town Square, hanging lanterns and garlands of flowers along the buildings. There's a festive note in the air.

Villagers are talking with the peddler, Padan Fain, buying and selling things at his wagon. Especially the LANTERNS Mat bought earlier, and candles to go in them. Moiraine takes it all in, missing nothing. Then she turns to Lan --

MOIRAINE

You didn't sleep last night.

LAN

Do you need me today?

Moiraine looks at Lan. He seems perturbed, as anxious as he gets.

MOIRAINE

You think He beat us here?

Lan shrugs. Then Moiraine makes the barest hand motion; like a command -- "go".

MOIRAINE (CONT'D)

(grim)

I have my own work to do.

He nods, moves toward his horse, hops on and heads down a side street. As he disappears, he raises the hood on his cloak.

CAMERA STAYS with Moiraine, though, watching her in silence as she moves through town, looking at its people, making us wonder what calculations she's making.

Then she approaches Padan Fain's cart. Smiles with no warmth behind it --

MOIRAINE (CONT'D)

Hello. Do you know where I might find the Wisdom?

OFF this --

INT. PERRIN AYBARA'S FORGE - DAY

Perrin's sleeping, curled in Laila's arms, head on her chest. She's awake though, watching him.

The morning light pours in through the gaps in the wood slats, filtering through the gauzy curtains that block their bed from the rest of the forge.

She looks at him with such love in her eyes. Then finally, she wraps her hand around his pinky, holding it tight.

EXT. MOUNTAIN RIDGE - DAY

Rand is sitting on the ridge now, at a point where it's so thin that it's only about two feet across. The mountains falling off sharply on both sides are almost dizzying.

He stares back over the Two Rivers. From up here, he can see the beautiful blue-green waters curving through the mountain valley, the town itself perched where the two rivers meet.

Then suddenly someone sits down next to him. It's Egwene.

EGWENE

Thought you might be here.

She sits facing the other direction, looking out on the Sand Hills, the Waterwood, and in the far distance... other towns and cities? Much larger than the Two Rivers.

EGWENE (CONT'D)

It's crazy, how far it goes. Sometimes, I look at it all and it makes my chest tight. All those people, cities. But the longer I stare, the smaller it looks from up here. Manageable, somehow...

As Rand responds, his voice is firm, solid. He's an oak, just like his father. Stable and stubborn to the core.

RAND

When I come up here, you know what I wonder about? I wonder about my life **here**. In the Two Rivers. About the house I'll build. The wife I'll have. About my kids running through these woods, just like I did.

The two sit for a long beat, staring in opposite directions. Then Egwene says definitively, like she's tearing off a band-aid --

EGWENE

I'm going to --

RAND

I know. I already know.

He puts his leg on the other side of the ridge, so he's straddling it, then lets Egwene rest back against his chest.

He wraps his arms around her, and holds her there for a long beat as the winds swirl around them, blowing their hair.

EXT. THE TWO RIVERS - WOMEN'S CIRCLE - DAY

Nynaeve's in the Women's Circle, where Egwene's ceremony took place. She's knee deep in the white liquid, bent over, moving her hands along the bottom almost like she's --

-- suddenly, she LIFTS UP the little lamb whose throat she slit during the ceremony. It's impossibly white now. Even its eyes and the pinks of its lips and mouth.

Nynaeve's incredibly gentle with the creature. She never lets emotion show on her face when others are watching her, but now -- when she's alone -- she lets some sadness come into her eyes.

MOIRAINE (O.C.)

The guilt is so much worse when it can't fight back.

Nynaeve GASPS and WHIPS UP her head. She looks at Moiraine, who's standing calmly at the edge of the pool. Because the pool is set down into the earth, Moiraine towers over Nynaeve. The power differential is dramatic, the tension high.

It gives the eerie feeling that only one woman's going to walk away from this.

NYNAEVE

What are you doing here?

MOIRAINE

I wanted to walk.

NYNAEVE

Here. In the Two Rivers.

As Nynaeve tries to exit the pool, Moiraine very casually moves, blocking her way, almost like she's keeping her trapped down there.

MOIRAINE

I could ask the same of you. You're not from here, are you?

(no response from Nynaeve)

The Old Wisdom brought you here with her. A baby whose parents passed. But no one seems to remember exactly when. That's the thing about these little towns, no one keeps track of anything. Births, deaths...

NYNAEVE

That doesn't mean we don't remember.

Nynaeve pushes up out of the pool, not caring that Moiraine's in her way --

NYNAEVE (CONT'D)

That old Wisdom, the woman who raised me, when she was only 13, and realized she could listen to the wind, she went to the White Tower. She walked. From here. It took her months. And when she got there, your sisters took one look at her ragged clothes, her peasant accent... and turned her away.

(stops herself)

She was small, yes, and from a *little town*, but she remembered. Until the day she died. And so do I.

MOIRAINNE

See, everyone says you're too young to be Wisdom. But I disagree. I think you're strong, even if you've only had your braid for a year or two.

Nynaeve's temper snaps as she pushes up out of the pool --

NYNAEVE

I've had it for five.

Moiraine finally stands aside, lets Nynaeve pass --

MOIRAINNE

That must make you 25, 26...

NYNAEVE

Doesn't mean I can't do my job. And that's to protect this town. From you, if I have to.

(a beat)

Aes Sedai don't just show up. Not by accident. Not here. And I know you're probably used to walking into a place and throwing around your money, your great serpent ring, and everyone just gets scared and gives you what you want.

She stands up tall, even a little taller than Moiraine, lowers her voice --

NYNAEVE (CONT'D)

Well, I'm not scared.

Moiraine doesn't blink, not for one second. She just stares Nynaeve straight back, then smiles and turns and walks away.

Nynaeve stands still for a second, hand on her braid, the only sign she's remotely nervous. Then she huffs, FLICKS the braid over her shoulder and picks up a SHOVEL, SLAMS it into the ground.

We GO OFF her, slowly digging a grave for the little lamb.

EXT. THE TWO RIVERS - TOWN SQUARE - DAY

Mat walks into the square. It's pretty much completely set up for the Bel Tine festival now. Tables, candles, flowers all around. Then Mat sees Rand and Tam packing up their wagon --

MAT

Rand! Where are you going?

RAND

(mouth tight)

Shouldn't leave the sheep another night.

Mat gives Tam a confused look, but Tam nods his head, supporting Rand's story.

MAT

No. Nope. Not yet. You come and sit with your friends and have a drink. Then we'll see.

RAND

I can't. We have to go.

Rand puts up a stubbornly strong front, but it's clear the conversation with Egwene rattled him. Mat can tell, puts a hand on Rand's shoulder --

MAT

One drink. The sheep can wait.

TAM AL'THOR

Go on. I'll finish packing the cart.

Rand begrudgingly moves away from the cart as Mat grabs three mugs of beer from the barrel, spies Perrin sitting at one of the tables. He and Rand head toward Perrin, sit across from him.

MAT

Perrin! Look what I found.

There's a comfort amongst them, despite what they're all going through.

MAT (CONT'D)
 Cheers, boys. We've made it through
 another year of this shite.

Rand and Perrin begrudgingly smile and cheers with Mat. They drink for a beat, then Mat turns to Rand --

MAT (CONT'D)
 All right. Out with it.

Perrin's a little surprised by this, looks at Rand --

PERRIN
 Out with what?

RAND
 Nothing.

MAT
 My ass. Something happened with
 Egwene.

Rand's jaw tightens. Perrin chooses his words carefully --

PERRIN
 What happened?

Rand shakes his head, shrugs.

MAT
 Damn. That bad?

Rand gives a half-smile, nods. Mat pours his beer into Rand's, stands up to get another one.

EXT. TWO RIVERS - THE WINESPRING BRIDGE - SUNSET

BEAUTIFUL SHOT of Egwene standing on the arching stone bridge where she got her braid at the beginning of the episode. The setting sun turns everything purple and red. She's emotional, thinking about the ceremony, Rand, everything.

But she listens to the wind whistling up the valley, trying to really hear it. Then she hears SFX: footsteps, coming up the bridge. She turns and sees Nynaeve approaching --

EGWENE
 You better believe I'm not going to
 let you walk up behind me.

NYNAEVE

I'd hope not.

Nynaeve stands next to her, looks out across the river valley. A long beat as we hear WIND WHISTLING UP the valley, blowing around the women. There's something ominous about it.

NYNAEVE (CONT'D)

Do you hear that?

EGWENE

It sounds... wrong.

They both attune their ears, close their eyes, listen to the wind. The two women look iconic together, each with their braid resting on their shoulder, eyes closed, wind blowing.

EGWENE (CONT'D)

What does it mean?

But Nynaeve's shaken by what she hears, what she feels --

NYNAEVE

I -- I don't know. I've never heard anything like it.

EXT. THE WOODS -- SUNSET

The sun is setting now as Lan moves through the woods stealthily, quietly following tracks through the mud and leaves and trees. He makes no sound, moving almost like he's a part of the wild, his KATANA-LIKE BLADE always visible strapped to his back.

Finally, he comes out at a farm. But there's something off about it. The setting sun, the dead tree with a swing hanging from it... something is wrong here.

Lan SMELLS it before he sees it, YANKING HIS SWORD from his back almost so fast that we don't see it happen.

He moves forward and reveals something HORRIFYING on the ground --

-- a brutally slaughtered FLOCK OF SHEEP, their intestines pulled out to form the Dragon's Fang symbol (similar to the black half of the yin-yang).

He stares at the grisly scene for a long beat as we wonder if this is the work of the mysterious "Him" Lan spoke to Moiraine about earlier...

EXT. TWO RIVERS - TOWN SQUARE - SUNSET

CLOSE ON Moiraine, standing in the window of her room in the Winespring Inn, hidden in shadows. She's got a cup of tea in her hands, and she's looking down at the square --

-- it's almost emptied out now, the last few people buying lanterns and candles from the peddler, Padan Fain, then heading out of town toward the river. Her eyes are focused on Rand, Mat and Perrin though, a few beers in now, drinking and laughing.

RAND

And you remember when he opened the bag --

MAT

(strong accent)
-- what the fock is a badger doing in moi y bag!

Rand and Perrin both laugh. Tam approaches the table, not wanting to disrupt --

TAM AL'THOR

It's getting dark if we're going.

Rand thinks for a moment, the spell of male camaraderie broken. He nods to himself, finishes off his beer --

RAND

Yeah, I'll be right there.

Tam nods goodbye to the boys, heads back to the cart, but then Perrin remembers --

PERRIN

Oh, wait. Mat. We noticed your luck wasn't really with you last night. So Rand and I chipped in.
(hands Mat a couple coins)
To buy lanterns for the girls.

Mat looks down for a moment, happiness and guilt forcing tears to the back of his eyes. But he blinks quickly, looks up and smiles --

MAT

Thank you.
(to Rand)
Don't stay up-mountain too long.

RAND

I won't.

Rand heads back toward Tam, as Mat and Perrin share a drink. Then CAMERA GOES BACK up to Moiraine's window. She steps back, her eye on Rand, and heads toward the door --

EXT. THE WESTWOOD - TAM & RAND'S HOUSE - EVENING

It's evening as Tam and Rand arrive at their small home in the Westwood. It's more cabin-like than other things we've seen, A-Frame with large thick logs for walls.

The interior is separated into a main living room with the fire and a small table and chairs, then two bedrooms off to the side.

Rand immediately moves to the embers of the dead fire, starts BLOWING on them to bring them back to life. A moment later, a few flames sprout from it and he tosses a new log in.

RAND
(regretful)
We should be at Bel Tine. To light a
candle for her.

Tam pulls something from his satchel -- one of the LANTERNS that Padan Fain was selling.

TAM AL'THOR
Whole point is to help guide her
spirit back to us. Doesn't matter
where we are when we do it.

He sets the paper lantern on the floor in the middle of their small home.

TAM AL'THOR (CONT'D)
Probably best that we're here, really.

Tam walks to the fire and lights a CANDLE from his satchel. Then he and his son sit on either side of the lantern, and he slowly sets the candle inside the lantern so it casts a soft red-orange glow on the room. They both look down at it, remembering her --

RAND
How long does it take before the
Wheel of Time turns someone's spirit
back out into the world again?

TAM AL'THOR
Wish I knew.
(a beat)
But I'm sure there's a reason no one
can remember their previous lives.
All we can do is the best we can with
the life that's given to us.

A long, silent beat.

TAM AL'THOR (CONT'D)

And take comfort from it. That no matter what happens -- what pain we face, what heartbreak, even death -- The Wheel keeps turning. Always. And we try again. Maybe do a little better than the last time.

Rand nods slowly, taking some comfort from his father's words.

EXT. THE WINESPRING RIVER -- NIGHT

Almost absolute quiet. Moonlight illuminating the slow-moving waters of the Winespring River.

We're with Egwene (her parents standing behind her) as she gently lights a lantern, then very delicately places it in the river.

CAMERA FOLLOWS the lantern as it's whisked away by the current, revealing DOZENS OF OTHER LANTERNS on the river with it.

WIDER and we see villagers lined up all along the river, putting more and more lanterns in the water.

It's a beautiful, haunting image.

We pick up moments of our other leads putting lanterns in the flowing water --

-- Perrin with Laila, they each put a lantern into the water. Then she rests back into his arms, her hand wrapped around his pinky. But he's still lost in thought, something off between them.

-- Mat and his family. He bends down, hands each of the girls a BRAND NEW LANTERN. Their eyes light up and they hug him, then light them, and put them in the water. As they do, he hands one to his mom too. She starts to cry as she lights hers, then sets it in the water. She SOBS UNCONTROLLABLY as it floats away, but for whom we don't know. His father holds her gently --

-- Nynaeve, all alone, putting two lanterns in the water. For each of her parents. She stands and watches the lanterns flow by, somber. Then she turns and walks back toward the village --

EXT. WINESPRING BRIDGE - NIGHT

Moiraine stands on the delicate, arching stone bridge with the lanterns flowing beneath her. She's thoughtful, mysterious, but also deeply emotional.

And there, in the forest just beyond the bridge, Egwene is watching her.

Then Egwene's mother touches her lightly on the shoulder as she looks up at Moiraine. She whispers --

MARIN AL'VERE

Come. Even Aes Sedai are allowed their grief.

Egwene follows, sparing one last look back at Moiraine on the bridge. And at just the same moment, Moiraine looks at her. Their eyes connect for one electric beat, as if Moiraine sees straight through Egwene, as if she knows everything about her.

Then Moiraine turns back to the water, and Egwene tries to shake it off, follow her parents up the hill.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT

Egwene and her family walk back into the main square. The other villagers are returning too.

The square's lit up beautifully with lanterns and candles all around. The tables from the Winespring Inn have all been moved out into the middle of the square.

Everyone's still somber though, thinking about lost loved ones. Then Marin Al'Vere climbs up on the steps of the Inn, looking out over everyone --

MARIN AL'VERE

C'mon, now. If we want our loved ones to find their way back here, we'd best show them something worth coming back for.

She nods to a small group of MUSICIANS behind her, who with a 1, 2, 3, and -- START PLAYING. The music is upbeat, fiddle and Asian flute dancing around each other to create the fast-paced melody.

People immediately cheer up, start grabbing drinks and dancing.

EXT. WINESPRING BRIDGE - NIGHT

Moiraine stands alone on the bridge, still watching the lanterns (which look eerily like the stars she watched with Gitara in the Teaser, pinpricks of light in the darkness). They disappear down the river, going out one after the other after the other.

Finally, there is only darkness.

Lan walks up the bridge from the forest, moving fast --

MOIRAINNE

He's here. Isn't He?

LAN

We need to leave. Now. Did you figure out which one it is?

Moiraine shakes her head slightly, the most upset we've seen her with herself.

INT. TAM AND RAND'S HOME - NIGHT

Back with Rand and Tam as they sit quietly, looking at the lantern on the floor between them. Then suddenly, there's an absolutely shocking sound --

SFX: A SINGLE, LOUD KNOCK ON THE DOOR

Rand and Tam exchange a look -- *what the hell?*

RAND

Who could --

But quickly, it becomes clear that this isn't really knocking, this is someone POUNDING on the door. Then -- CRASH!

The door SHATTERS, sending wood flying everywhere. Tam immediately pushes in front of Rand as they look at what's standing there --

It's a TROLLOC. 8-feet tall, a stitched-together Frankensteinian mess of human skin and patchy fur, with curling ram's horns, cloven feet, and the razor-sharp teeth of a wolf.

Mist escapes its lips as it stares at Rand and Tam, breathing heavily, a ragged-edged sword in its hand.

Then it ROARS.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT

Everyone's dancing and laughing now, the music at a fever pitch. Egwene moves amongst the men, spinning in circles as she laughs, her braid whipping around her.

She comes upon Perrin and he smiles bashfully at her as they dance a circle around one another. Laila glances at them from across the square, watching as she dances. Then on to the next partner.

Nynaeve's off to the side of the dance floor, her foot slowly tapping out a beat despite her disdain for fun.

Egwene moves to her next partner -- TOM THANE, the miller's son. He smiles at her, then suddenly his face goes still --

-- and the tip of a JAGGED BLACK ARROW juts out of the middle of his forehead.

Egwene gasps, steps back, not even sure what's happening. Tom stands still for a moment, then CRASHES to the ground. Dead.

Before Egwene can do anything, she hears a SCREAM nearby.

Then another. And another.

GIANT ARROWS WHISTLE through the air, crashing into villagers on the dance floor, SHATTERING bones and sending bodies flying with each horrific strike.

Egwene looks to the top of the Inn's steps, sees the fiddler's been PINNED to the door with THREE FIVE-FOOT LONG ARROWS in her chest.

CHAOS ERUPTS.

Villagers rush everywhere, screaming, trying to find their families. Egwene does the same, looking for her mother and father. But everything is a mess, blood and arrows in the air, bodies on the ground.

Then Egwene spots Nynaeve, rushes toward her. Nynaeve's crouched over a woman on the ground who's got an arrow in her neck, trying to stop the bleeding.

EGWENE

Nynaeve! What's happening?

But Nynaeve's razor-focused, eyes on the wound, trying to get the blood to clot.

EGWENE (CONT'D)

Nynaeve!

Nynaeve looks up at Egwene, horror in her eyes. And the two women survey the town square --

-- on the very edges of it, they see something even more horrible than the jagged, black arrows -- TROLLOCS. Dozens of them.

EGWENE (CONT'D)

What -- what are they?

NYNAEVE

I -- I --

Nynaeve has no idea. She and Egwene watch in cold, dead shock as one of the Trollocs LIFTS one of their friends in the air and TEARS him in half.

INT. TAM AND RAND'S HOME - NIGHT

Rand and Tam are in a fight for their lives as the Trolloc RIPS through the small wooden house.

Rand DODGES a swipe from the Trolloc's sword. Then it CLAWS at Tam, leaving two GAPING wounds down the older man's back.

RAND

Dad!

The Trolloc turns its attention back to Rand as Tam SCRAMBLES away from it, toward his bed.

Rand dodges another slash from the monster as Tam reaches under his bed and pulls out an OLD CHEST.

He quickly opens it, reaches inside and yanks out something amazing -- a SWORD. It's a beautiful katana-like blade, not dissimilar from Lan's, with etched HERONS decorating the sheath, handle and blade.

He looks back at the Trolloc and YELLS --

TAM AL'THOR

Over here.

The Trolloc stops chasing Rand and turns to see Tam. The older man spins the sword twice and comes into a ready stance. He knows how to use it.

Something like a smile touches the Trolloc's lips as it LAUNCHES itself at Tam.

But Tam's ready, meets the Trolloc's slash and deflects it. The Trolloc's surprised, and Tam uses the moment's delay to SLASH, leaving a black-red wound across the Trolloc's back.

It SCREAMS, half-human half-animal, and slashes at Tam again. The older man does everything he can to keep his massive opponent at bay despite the terrible injury to his back.

But the Trolloc doesn't just have its sword, it uses its claws and teeth to lash out at Tam too. Rand watches his father fight for a moment in absolute awe. *When did he learn to do that?*

Then Rand realizes he has to help, SNAPS off a leg from one of the chairs and moves toward the Trolloc with the jagged edge.

The Trolloc's overwhelming Tam though, SMASHING through the older man's defenses. Finally, it STABS him in the shoulder with its sword, pinning him to the wall.

Tam GASPS as the Trolloc smiles, then THUNK --

-- the broken chair leg protrudes from the front of the Trolloc's neck. Blood POURS from the wound.

It drops its sword (and Tam) and reaches to its neck, almost in disbelief. Then it gurgles and falls to the floor, revealing Rand behind, covered in dirt and sweat and blood.

He immediately rushes to his father, pulling the Trolloc's sword from his shoulder --

RAND

Dad. Dad!

Tam sputters, blood dripping out of his lips --

TAM AL'THOR

Are you all right?

RAND

I'm fine, I'm fine. What was that thing?

TAM AL'THOR

It doesn't -- doesn't matter. There's no time. There could be more of them. You need to get out of here, back to town -- now. Take my sword.

RAND

What? No. I'm not leaving you.

TAM AL'THOR

Ahhhh...

Tam puts his hand to the wound in his shoulder. It's already starting to PUS and TURN BLACK. Rand looks down at the Trolloc's jagged sword... *was it poisoned?*

Rand tries to help Tam to his feet. But the older man's too injured. He can't stand. He slides back to the floor.

TAM AL'THOR (CONT'D)

Son, go. You have to. Now. Leave me.

Tam's eyes flutter closed. He's slipping away. But Rand just shakes his head, looking at his father, that stubbornness that will come to define him filling his eyes --

RAND

No.

He picks up Tam's sword and sheath, ties them around his waist, then with every bit of strength he has, he LIFTS his father up, puts him on his shoulder.

It's difficult to stand with the weight, but somehow, he starts to walk forward, one step, then another, then he PUSHES through the door and in an almost impossible feat of determination and strength -- he begins to RUN, toward the forest, his father on his back.

EXT. TWO RIVERS - TOWN SQUARE - SAME

IMAGISTIC POPS from the Battle at Two Rivers:

-- Perrin and Laila running down a cobblestone street, chased by two of the monsters.

-- Mat is pushing by everyone, hunting for his family, absolute panic on his face. Then he finds his father and mother --

MAT
 Mom! Dad!
 (realizing)
 Where are the girls?

His mom looks around, almost like it's as confusing to her as it is to him --

NATTI CAUTHON
 They were right here, I --

ABELL CAUTHON
 -- I don't know. They --

Mat SCREAMS at his parents, absolute rage and terror in his voice, spittle FLYING from his mouth --

MAT
 Where are the girls?!

-- Egwene and Nynaeve. While Nynaeve's still trying to process everything, Egwene's rational, logical mind has kicked in.

EGWENE
 We need the Aes Sedai.

NYNAEVE
 What? No, she -- she's the one doing this --

EGWENE
 Then we're already dead. Our only chance is that she's on our side.

Nynaeve just stammers for a moment, she has no argument for that. Egwene stands and rushes back toward the woods --

NYNAEVE
 No! Stay down!

Arrows ZIP through the air around Egwene as she SPRINTS across the battlefield toward the bridge where she last saw Moiraine.

EXT. THE WESTWOOD - NIGHT

MATCH TO Rand, running through the Westwood. He's covered in sweat and blood, holding his father on his back as best he can. But he's exhausted.

He STUMBLES over a gnarled root on the ground. Almost falls.

TAM AL'THOR
 Stop... stop.
 (a beat)
 Put me down...

Rand stops, gently slides his Dad off his shoulders and onto a soft spot of grass next to a tree.

RAND
 Why? What's wrong? Are you all
 right?

But Tam's in a fever dream now almost, the wound on his shoulder looks absolutely horrific, BUBBLING with black pus --

TAM AL'THOR
 Kari?

Tam's eyes are unfocused as he looks at his son, touches his red hair. He's deep in a fever dream now, like he thinks he's talking to his dead wife --

TAM AL'THOR (CONT'D)
 It was just so hot, battles always
 are. Sweat heat. Blood heat. Only
 death is cool.

RAND
 What're you talking about?

TAM AL'THOR
 I didn't mean to find her there. Was
 just trying to get away from the heat
 and the stink. Up the mountain, into
 the snow. And there she was, an
 Aiel, blue with cold. Covered her
 little boy in her cloak. He should
 have been dead too. Crying in the
 snow. I couldn't just leave a
 child... no children of our own...
 always knew you wanted children.

Rand just watches his dad now, almost horrified. *What is he saying? Is he talking about finding Rand?*

RAND

Dad...

CRACK.

They hear something not far away from them, moving along the path in the forest. They both go dead still. Dead silent.

Wavering shadows on the road slowly resolve themselves into a HORSE AND RIDER. And Rand knows instantly that this is the Rider he saw when he was coming into town with his father earlier.

The Rider is followed by TWO LARGE, BULKY SHAPES that must be Trollocs. They're heading upmountain, away from the Two Rivers.

As they pass, Rand and Tam stay completely still, not even allowing themselves to breathe until finally the Rider and his terrifying companions disappear into the woods.

But Rand and Tam stay still, even after they're gone. Something telling them to be certain, absolutely certain before they move.

And then, so suddenly that it makes Rand draw in a sharp breath, the Hooded Rider reappears. In eerie silence, he swings his hood from side to side, peering into the woods.

Then finally the hood turns almost directly toward Rand, like it's staring at him as he crouches above his father, even though he's well hidden by the bushes and trees. Rand's hand tightens convulsively on the hilt of Tam's sword.

But the moonlight seems to be eaten up by the darkness of the hood, and Rand can't see the face it hides.

Finally, the Rider is satisfied that no one's there. He turns and KICKS HIS HORSE, moving quickly on up the road toward the mountains.

Rand waits a moment longer, trying to re-gather his strength to pick his father up again. But Tam stops him, says weakly, quietly --

TAM AL'THOR

Leave me, boy. Don't die for me.
I'm not who you...

RAND

Quiet.

Rand uses all of his remaining strength to slide his father back on his shoulders. Then he presses forward through the forest, toward the village, trying to be as silent as he can --

INT. PERRIN AYBARA'S FORGE - NIGHT

Perrin and Laila STRAIN to push the massive ANVIL across the floor. Husband and wife, both unbelievably strong, push their muscles to the absolute maximum to SLIDE the anvil across the dirt floor until it finally comes to rest against the door.

They stop, breathing hard.

PERRIN
What are those things?

LAILA
I got no idea. But I'll tell you
this --

She walks to the cooling rack, picks up the HUGE AXE that they were working on last night and a MASSIVE WAR HAMMER resting next to it. She hands the axe to Perrin --

LAILA (CONT'D)
They're not taking us without a
fight.

OFF Perrin and his wife, watching the door, weapons in hand.

EXT. WINESPRING RIVER - NIGHT

Egwene RACES through the woods by the Winespring River. Brambles CUT her face and legs as she goes, but nothing's going to stop her.

EGWENE
C'mon... c'mon...

But she hesitates as she gets close to the bridge. Because there's only silence ahead of her... *was Nynaeve right about Moiraine?*

Then behind her, we see something resolve in the dark shadows --

-- **A TROLLOC'S SNOUT.** Its SALIVA DRIPS onto her shoulder, and just before it bites her neck -- FWISH!

Lan moves through the air so fast and silent that Egwene barely notices him, TAKING OFF the Trolloc's head with his katana blade.

Its head rolls as Egwene steps out of the trees into the clearing. And Moiraine's standing in front of her, tense --

EXT. THE TWO RIVERS - TOWN OUTSKIRTS - NIGHT

Mat PUSHES through town, not caring about his own safety, even as he glimpses a Trolloc crouched, eating a corpse's intestines. It's Danya. But he can't let that distract him, he's got to find --

MAT
Eldrin! Bode!

Then he hears a small voice, off to his side --

BODE
Mat!

He turns and finds his sisters, hiding under a raised chicken coop, holding each other, shaking.

He rushes to them, picks them both up in his arms, covering their faces with kisses.

MAT
Oh Light... Light help me. Okay.
C'mon. We've gotta get out of here.

He sets them down and they rush toward the woods --

INT. PERRIN AYBARA'S FORGE - NIGHT

Trolloc fists POUND against the door of the forge, shaking the anvil. Perrin and Laila watch, trying to keep their faces expressionless. But the anvil holds.

Then the sounds of the Trollocs stop. Perrin and Laila look at each other, *are they safe?* Then -- CRASH!

TWO TROLLOCS drop down through the ceiling. One landing in front of Perrin and Laila, one landing behind.

Husband and Wife lift their weapons in the air, stand back to back, and face down these monsters. Then the Trollocs LUNGE at them and the fight begins --

EXT. THE TWO RIVERS - TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT

The white stones of the square are splashed with blood and bodies, Trollocs RIPPING apart the last villagers still out.

There's only one person still moving -- Nynaeve. She's DRAGGING an injured man into a hiding spot behind a burning house. It's Cenn Buie. He's got an arrow sticking out of his shoulder.

NYNAEVE
Shhh, old man. I have you. I have you.

She PRESSES her fingers to the wound, stopping the bleeding. As she holds him though, she looks at the carnage of the square -- the bodies everywhere. Trollocs devouring them.

Then one looks up from its meal, meets eyes with her, and smiles.

Slowly it walks toward Nynaeve, but she remains unafraid. She continues to work on Cenn Buie's wound, keeping him alive.

The Trolloc laughs to itself as it reaches her. She turns and cranes her neck up to look at it -- then sneers, a real "fuck you" expression on her face.

WIDE SHOT of Nynaeve staring up at the monster. It TOWERS over her, the village burning and smoldering behind. Slowly, it RAISES its sword into the air. But before it can bring it down --

FWOOM.

A MASSIVE BLAST OF FLAME SMASHES into the beast, throwing it back and setting it on fire.

It rolls across the ground, then DIGS its claws into the dirt, slowing itself down until it finally comes to a stop, crouched, flames burning on its back, staring back at what attacked it with a snarl --

-- it's Moiraine. She stands at the opposite end of the square, hands crackling with white energy, Lan standing behind her.

The Trolloc lifts its mouth into the air and HOWLS. An unearthly, inhuman, monstrous sound.

The other Trollocs all look up from their meals, and one after the other -- they set their eyes on Moiraine.

They slowly stand, drawing their weapons, ready for battle.

Then they start to walk toward her, faster, faster, until they're running, terrifying toothy mouths open and screaming --

Moiraine and Lan stand alone, two against an army of Trollocs racing across the square, using their massive legs to LEAP and run on all fours, jump from roof to roof.

They're everywhere.

LAN
It's too many.

CLOSE ON Moiraine's face as CAMERA GOES to HYPER SLO-MO PHANTOM CAM SPEED. She shuts her eyes, a look of complete calm on her face.

She breathes in and a GLOW OF WHITE ENERGY seems to permeate through her every pore, then her eyes SNAP OPEN --

-- and everyone's about to find out exactly what happens if you come for an Aes Sedai.

White energy coalesces around her hands, and then she reaches out and the white energy CRACKLES through the air toward camera, weaving together to form MASSIVE BALLS OF FLAME --

OFF this --

EXT. EDGE OF TOWN - NIGHT

Mat's running with his sisters toward the woods. They're almost there. Then he hears something behind them -- a SNARL.

He looks back and sees a Trolloc slowly following them with a smile on its monstrous face.

He quickly bends down to the girls, speaks firmly --

MAT

I need you to run, okay? Don't look back. Don't turn back no matter what you hear.

(a quick beat)

Just run, okay?

The little girls nod. He kisses each of them on the forehead.

MAT (CONT'D)

Go. Now.

The girls RUSH toward the woods, disappearing into the trees.

Mat slowly stands, KICKS his foot into the bottom of a nearby branch, breaking off a long piece of wood like a BO STAFF.

Then Mat turns and faces the approaching Trolloc, tears in his eyes. He spins the staff three times and comes into a fighting stance, staff out in front of him, shaking slightly.

He's 100% sure he's going to die --

MAT (CONT'D)

C'mon then, you bastard.

INT. JO AYBARA'S FORGE - NIGHT

Perrin and Laila are in an absolute fight for their lives against the two Trollocs.

Perrin clearly has some training. He wields his war axe like he was born with it, quickly switching from offense to defense, always keeping one eye on Laila to step in if she needs help.

But she's impressive herself, a ferocity behind her eyes as she swings her war hammer with deadly accuracy.

Back-to-back, husband and wife are actually putting up a front that the Trollocs can't get through. It's incredible.

Then the two Trollocs look at each other. And for the first time we see their eyes... they're **human eyes**. *Underneath all of this are these people?*

One of the Trollocs nods his head to the forge fire and the other smiles. He walks toward it, pulls out a shovel full of nearly-molten embers and THROWS them at Perrin and Laila.

They split up as the hot embers land on them, screaming in pain.

Then before Perrin knows what's happening, the Trolloc is ON TOP OF HIM. He holds out his axe, the handle pushed into its neck, just barely keeping the snapping jaws an inch away from his face.

He PUSHES with all of his might and turns the Trolloc over, rolling on top of it.

The two roll over and over across the ground, some kind of animalistic fury coming over Perrin when his life's on the line.

He PUMMELS the Trolloc with his massive fists as it CLAWS at him, leaving LONG GASHES across his arms and back.

But Perrin doesn't care, he's completely lost in the fight now, doing anything he can to stay alive. When the Trolloc DIGS its claws into his arm, he BITES its ear, TEARS it off in his mouth and spits out the bloody chunk.

Then Perrin's finally on top of the beast, and he lifts up his axe and SMASHES it into the Trolloc's face. Blood SPRAYS against him.

He does it Again. And again. Until the Trolloc stops moving.

He just stands there for a second, covered in its blood and his own, breathing heavily. He can't believe he won.

Then he hears the second Trolloc behind him.

Before it can attack, he SPINS and SLAMS his axe right into its chest. But when his eyes focus in on it, his mouth drops open. Because it's not the Trolloc.

It's his wife.

PERRIN

No...

He lets go of the axe, but it's still in her chest, hilt deep. She gurgles, shock on her face.

Behind her, Perrin sees that Laila killed the Trolloc she was fighting too, its face smashed by her war hammer.

She tries to speak, but only blood pours out of her mouth.

She falls to her knees and Perrin goes down with her, holding her in his arms. She wraps her hand weakly around his pinky. It's the last thing she'll do.

He can't even speak as she slips away.

EXT. TWO RIVERS - TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT

As Moiraine lashes out with the raw elements of the earth itself, flame and air and water tearing through the ranks of the Trollocs, Lan moves around her like a human shield --

-- plucking arrows from the air, cutting down any Trolloc that somehow manages to get close to her with his katana.

It's as if they are one person, moving around each other in perfect harmony as they unleash all hell on their attackers.

Moiraine presses her assault, creating two WHIPS OF FLAME in front of her. She swings them violently through the air, SLICING through Trollocs and leaving their corpses burning on the ground.

FIND Nynaeve, holding Cenn Buie in her arms, trying to keep him alive, watching Moiraine. Egwene CROUCHES by her side. They don't need to exchange words as they watch Moiraine, shocked by the power contained in this one, small woman.

NYNAEVE

By the Light...

Then WHAM --

-- there's barely a BLUR as a Trolloc FLIES through the room, SNATCHING Nynaeve by her braid and DRAGGING her behind him back into the chaos. It takes only a second, and she's gone.

Egwene just stands there, slack-jawed. Barley able to process. Then she races out into the battle zone after them.

And things are taking a turn for the worse outside too -- as Moiraine swings her whips through the air, a Trolloc LEAPS off the roof behind her, his massive scimitar blade lifted in the air behind him --

Just as he's about to SLICE her in half, Lan appears as if from nowhere, TACKLING the Trolloc out of the air, and rolling across the ground with him.

Moiraine looks to her right to make sure Lan's okay and BAM!

A MASSIVE TROLLOC ARROW goes right through her chest, knocking her to the ground.

The Trollocs HOWL as they close in on the fallen Aes Sedai --

EXT. TWO RIVERS - TOWN'S EDGE - NIGHT

Mat is fending off the Trolloc the best he can with his bo staff. And even though he's good with it, he really doesn't stand a chance.

The monster SLASHES at him, cutting the staff in half with its sword. Then WHAM! It kicks Mat in the chest, sending him flying backward into a tree.

Mat slides to the ground, half-dead, ribs broken.

Through the blood pouring down from his forehead, he looks up at the Trolloc, ready to die.

But then there's a sound in the air --

-- the HOWLS of the Trollocs fighting Moiraine. Calling for help to finish the job.

The Trolloc turns and runs away, fast as it can go, toward the town square, toward Moiraine.

OFF Mat, slumped against the tree, his eyes flutter closed --

EXT. TWO RIVERS - RUBBLE - NIGHT

Egwene's DIGGING through the rubble, cutting her hands and arms, screaming, using every bit of strength she has to push blocks of stone aside --

EGWENE
Nynaeve! Nynaeve!

Then someone approaches from behind -- it's her mother, Marin.

MARIN AL'VERE
Shhh, Egwene, quiet --

But Egwene doesn't stop --

EGWENE
Nynaeve! Nyn --

Marin WRAPS her arms around her daughter from behind, hushing her quietly in her ear, holding her --

MARIN AL'VERE
Shhhhh, she's gone, my baby, she's gone. Shhhh --

And slowly, wrapped in her mother's arms, Egwene stops her futile search. She collapses backward into her mother, crying. Marin holds her, looking out into the dust of the battle, wary of Trollocs. She kisses her daughter's head --

MARIN AL'VERE (CONT'D)
Shhhh, shhhh...

EXT. TWO RIVERS - TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT

Lan fights for his life with the Trolloc, finally pulls a dagger from his waist and STABS it in the face.

Then he rolls over, moving toward Moiraine --

LAN
Moiraine...

He lifts her up from the ground. She's having trouble breathing.

LAN (CONT'D)
I'm sorry...

MOIRAINE
(through gritted teeth)
Help me up.

LAN
You can't --

MOIRAINE
Now!

Lan slowly helps Moiraine push up from the ground, and she stands, facing the Trollocs. They're almost on top of her now.

He slowly steps back and she stands up, tall as she can, but still dwarfed by Lan, the Trollocs, everything around her.

MOIRAINE (CONT'D)
Light give me strength.

And she summons everything inside of herself to throw one final assault at the Trollocs.

There are perhaps a dozen of them still racing toward her. At first, it's not clear what she's doing, but then we notice something behind her --

-- a MASSIVE STONE in the Winespring Inn. At least 500 pounds. It's SHAKING. Almost like it's pulling loose from its place.

Then suddenly it ROCKETS out of the wall, and we FOLLOW it through the air to where it SMASHES into one of the Trolloc's faces. It takes the beast's head clean off.

Then a WIDE SHOT straight on at Moiraine, standing at the base of the steps to the Inn, arrow still protruding from her shoulder.

She grits her teeth, using every last bit of energy she has -- and suddenly DOZENS of stones start to fly out of the building, careening around Moiraine through the air and straight into the Trollocs racing toward her.

They SMASH into the monsters, knocking them through the air, ripping off their limbs. Some of the stones are bigger than Moiraine herself.

She stands in the center of the storm, hair wild, face covered in blood and dirt and sweat.

There are five Trollocs only a few feet from her now, but right as they are about to be on top of her she SCREAMS and does the only thing she still can --

-- she throws the ENTIRE WINESPRING INN (what's left of it) forward onto the Trollocs. Crushing them all beneath the weight. Along with Lan and Moiraine herself.

As the dust settles, there isn't a sound in the square.

Slowly, Marin and Egwene make their way out into the disaster area. They look around, a cloud of dust swirling just below their knees. They look to the right and see others emerge, one after the other from their hiding places in buildings, beneath carts, everywhere --

The entire town moves in slowly on the spot where the Winespring Inn used to stand. A MASSIVE CLOUD OF DUST SWIRLS in its place.

Then slowly, the dust begins to settle.

And REVEALS something shocking -- two small circles in the mountain of debris. One for Moiraine. One for Lan.

They're both unconscious on the ground, but she was able to keep them safe. OFF this shocking tableau --

EXT. WOODS OUTSIDE TOWN -- NIGHT

Rand's barely able to walk. He staggers under the weight of his father on his shoulders. We just hear his heavy breathing. The crunch of his feet against the ground.

And then finally he sees the bridge leading into town...

RAND
Thank the Light...

He moves toward it... but he's horrified when he starts to see plumes of flame and smoke coming up from the village.

RAND (CONT'D)
No.

He staggers across the bridge --

EXT. TWO RIVERS - TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT

-- and sees what once was their village. The dust has settled, but everything's still a disaster. With Marin Al'Vere coordinating, the people of Two Rivers have created an open-air triage hospital outside --

-- there's a long line of bodies covered in whatever BLANKETS and QUILTS could be found. Crying family members and friends crouch around their lost loved ones --

-- TROLLOC BODIES are being piled in carts and pushed toward a BONFIRE in the middle of the square. And everyone's still afraid, always glancing to the forest, wondering if there are more monsters coming --

-- There's also a line of the wounded, some much worse than others. Even though she's weak (and suffering from the arrow wound to her shoulder), Moiraine moves down the line, healing those she can.

At the edge of the square, Egwene sits on a pile of wreckage. She's shell-shocked, tears at the back of her eyes. Then Rand approaches with his dad, barely still standing --

RAND
Egwene! My dad, he needs help, where
-- where's Nynaeve?

Egwene meets his eyes, shakes her head slightly, her words barely a whisper --

EGWENE
She -- she's gone.

Rand doesn't even know how to respond to that. Then --

RAND
Can you help him?

And then Egwene *remembers* -- she is Nynaeve's apprentice. And Rand needs her help. She SNAPS out of it, shakes her head, stands up, looks at Tam, sees he's still breathing. Tries to be strong --

EGWENE

Here. Come here. Let's find
Moiraine.

She guides Rand over to a makeshift litter being used for triage, helps him gently put his father into it.

She hands him some bandages and they share a long, charged look before she moves to the front of the litter and drags it forward with Rand's help --

ELSEWHERE, Mat heads into the square, limping badly, WHEEZING, covered in blood and dirt. He's got one of his sisters in his arms, the other holding his hand.

His mom spots him, rushes over, tears in her eyes. She bends down, kissing the girls all over their faces --

NATTI CAUTHON

My babies. My baby girls. You're
okay. Thank the Light...

Then Mat sees his father walk toward them. The two men connect eyes for a moment, each wondering how similar and different they really are.

Then Mat turns and walks away. But when he does, he sees someone else coming out of one of the dark-shrouded alleys of the city --

-- it's Perrin. In his arms is his wife's body.

His face is blank, numb. Mat moves toward him --

MAT

Perrin!

He sees that Laila is dead.

MAT (CONT'D)

No...

Mat puts his hand on his friend's arm. But Perrin won't look at him. He just bends down slowly, and sets his wife ever so gently in the line of bodies in the square.

Mat crouches next to him in silence, providing whatever comfort he can. But it's clear that Perrin is shaken to his very core.

And right next to them, propped against the base of the rubble that was once The Winespring Inn, is Tam. Egwene and Rand are next to him, and Moiraine and Lan are approaching.

CLOSE ON Moiraine. We see there has been a tremendous toll taken by the Power she's used. And the wounds she's taken. Her skin looks pale, sickly, her hands shaking as she looks at Tam's wound --

MOIRAININE
Trollocs did this?

RAND
Is that what those things are?

Moiraine nods to herself as she slowly bends to Tam. She puts her hands over the wound in his shoulder.

Then WHITE LINES slowly push their way out of her hands, Healing the wound in Tam's shoulder. A RED GLOW coursing through the black pus, BURNING IT OFF almost like the final embers of a fire.

Lan watches, displeased. He's clearly more concerned for Moiraine's well-being than Tam's.

MOIRAININE
Ah --

She wavers for a moment, but Lan is there the second it happens, resting her down to the ground. Rand takes his father's hand. The older man seems to be breathing much easier now.

But then his face goes dark as he sees something, coming down the mountain --

TAM AL'THOR
No...

They all follow his gaze up, to the mountain peaks --

-- where there are DOTS OF LIGHT. Hundreds of them. The lights pour over the mountainside, almost like the lanterns in the river during the Bel Tine ceremony.

EGWENE
What are they?

MOIRAININE
(the barest hint of fear)
His army. More Trollocs.

LAN
Three hundred at least. How did they get here so fast? How could --

Moiraine just shakes her head, tries to stand --

MOIRAININE
We need to go. Now. Get the horses.

Lan helps Moiraine to her feet, then rushes to the Stables. Rand looks down at his injured father, then --

RAND

You can't leave, we need you to --

MOIRAINE

You're coming with me.

EGWENE

What?

MOIRAINE

The four of you. You're why I'm here, why they're here. And if you stay, they'll leave nothing and no one standing. And I can't do anything to stop them.

EGWENE

We can't just leave --

Lan arrives with a small group of horses. Moiraine uses what strength she has left to PUSH up into her saddle. Lan is up beside her in a second. The two of them look down at Egwene, Rand, Mat and Perrin.

MOIRAINE

Your life isn't going to be what you thought. You've lived too long in these mountains, pretending what happens in the rest of the world won't -- can't effect you.

(glances up at the Army)

Those things? They're after you, I promise you that. They'll follow you. And if you stay here, this is where they'll come.

The four of them look around the square, at their loved ones and families, struggling to survive after the first attack. There's no way they can survive another.

EGWENE

Why us? I don't understand --

Moiraine looks up the mountain, the army's getting closer. She shakes her head, tightens her saddle --

MOIRAINE

Our only chance is to reach the White Tower and the other sisters of the Aes Sedai.

Rand's shocked, looks to the others --

RAND

No.

MAT

We can't, can't just leave without even saying goodbye --

RAND

Why should we trust you?

There's the tiniest flicker behind Moiraine's eye. *Maybe they shouldn't trust her.* But she pushes past it --

MOIRAINE

There's no time. If even one of you stays, they will kill everyone in this town to get to you.

She kicks her horse forward, Lan falling in behind her as they race toward the bridge leaving town.

Egwene, Rand and Mat all look at each other, shocked. They're terrified -- what does this mean? What should they do?

MAT

Can we -- I --

But Perrin slowly pushes up from the ground, silent, and gets onto one of the horses. Whether it's because he wants to run away or protect what's left of his home, we don't know.

MAT (CONT'D)

Per...

Mat looks up at his friend. Around the square, people are starting to see the torches on the mountainside, the Trolloc Army approaching. Their ROARS and HORNS echoing through the dark.

Then Egwene nods to herself, decided. She gets on her horse, shocking Rand even more. Egwene looks down at him --

EGWENE

We can't take the risk that she's right.

Rand looks down at his injured father, sleeping peacefully. His wounds seem much better after Moiraine's Healing.

Rand looks out beyond the Two Rivers, looks to Egwene on her horse. The two connect eyes, then he turns, says to his father --

RAND
I'll be back.

He SWINGS up onto a horse. Mat's now the only one standing --

MAT
Well, fuck me.

He gets onto his horse too, and all of them KICK forward. Racing after Moiraine and Lan.

MUSIC PLAYS as our leads race through the wreckage of their home. A voice speaks, cracked with age but strong as an old oak. It is a voice we know. The voice of GITARA MOROSO, the blind Aes Sedai.

GITARA MOROSO
*The Wheel of Time turns, and Ages
come and pass, leaving memories that
become legend.*

-- Egwene sees her mother and father, organizing everyone in the triage center. They don't even notice her leave. She hardens herself and looks forward, braid resting on her chest.

GITARA MOROSO (V.O.)
*Legend fades to myth, and even myth
is long forgotten when the Age that
gave it birth comes again.*

-- Mat's mother looks up at him as he goes by. Then his small twin sisters see him and RACE after his horse, yelling his name --

BODE/ELDRIN
Mat! Mat!

-- Then our group is out on the bridge, leaving town behind, and out onto the road leading East, to the whole wide world beyond.

GITARA MOROSO (V.O.)
*In one Age, called the Third Age by some,
an Age yet to come, an Age long past, a
wind rose in the Mountains of Mist.*

-- As our heroes race through the mist-shrouded forest, Moiraine closes her eyes briefly, wispy white lines pouring out of her.

It's wind. And it circles around the group, picking up their scents and moving the mist like waves. Then it RACES back behind them, strong as a gale --

And finally it reaches the Trolloc army, the misty air being sucked into their flaring nostrils.

GITARA MOROSO (V.O.)

*The wind was not the beginning. There
are neither beginnings nor endings to
the turning of the Wheel of Time.*

As the Trollocs fly into a fury, they turn away from the Two Rivers and head toward our six heroes instead.

As they run, we see them STREAM around someone we've watched all episode but not known...

THE RIDER IN BLACK.

Ignoring the Trollocs now, the CAMERA moves toward him, closing in on his face, still hidden by the shadows of his hood.

Then he tilts his hood up and we see his face for the first time -- it's PURE WHITE, smooth, porous and wet like the skin of a slug. And most horrifying of all -- he has no eyes. It is like looking into the face of evil itself.

GITARA MOROSO (V.O.)

But it was a beginning.

He opens his mouth and we see a THOUSAND TINY SHARP TEETH smeared with blood. OFF this, we --

SMASH TO BLACK.

END OF EPISODE ONE