

FADE IN:

1. EXT. ENTRANCE TO A MEDIEVAL VILLAGE - NIGHT

A group of MASSIVE WARRIORS stand in formation on the snowy plain before a small village. Its wooden gates are shut. Their horses paw nervously at the snow. At the front is DIMITRI, a wealthy Lord dressed entirely in black. His salt-and-pepper hair is slicked back, his steel-grey eyes fixed on the village walls, his face stern and unreadable. Beside him stands SERGEI, bald with piercing black eyes, spinning his sword with effortless skill.

DIMITRI

Sergei, scale the wall with a few men.
Kill any guards you find. Open the gates.

SERGEI nods. He dismounts and signals to two nearby WARRIORS. The three of them head towards the wall and begin to climb, disappearing over the top.

2. EXT. VILLAGE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Seconds later, screams erupt from within the village. DIMITRI smiles with satisfaction as the gates creak open. The WARRIORS charge forward with a merciless cry. DIMITRI follows at a calm walking pace, his horse trotting slowly.

3. EXT. VILLAGE GATES - NIGHT

DIMITRI enters through the tall wooden gates. He lowers his gaze, unmoved by the sight of two dead men with slit throats lying at his horse's feet.

4. EXT. VILLAGE INTERIOR - NIGHT

A large square surrounded by wooden cottages. Doors hang broken. WARRIORS drag terrified VILLAGERS from their homes, forcing them to kneel in the snow.

5. EXT. VILLAGE SQUARE - NIGHT

DIMITRI walks into the square, coldly surveying the frightened VILLAGERS who dare not meet his gaze. Only ADRIAN, the village chief, resists. A handsome middle-aged man, he fights with striking agility, dodging every blow from a WARRIOR. He grabs a pitchfork leaning

against a wall and drives it into the WARRIOR's shoulder.
The man roars in pain.

DIMITRI nods to SERGEI, who rushes behind ADRIAN and strikes him hard on the head with the hilt of his sword. ADRIAN collapses, clutching his head. He sees blood on his hand.

DIMITRI
You fight well for a mere villager.
You could join my army.

ADRIAN
(furious)
No thanks!

DIMITRI
(with a sadistic smile)
Help me find what I'm looking for, and
I'll spare your village.

ADRIAN
(still furious)
And maybe start by telling me who you are?

DIMITRI turns over ADRIAN.

DIMITRI
I am Dimitri, Lord of Tsviata.

ADRIAN's expression shifts to terror.

DIMITRI
I'm looking for a sibling group of four.
Two of them are twins – a boy and a girl.

ADRIAN
You're wasting your time. No such children
live here.
And certainly no twins.

DIMITRI
(stern)
I've searched for these children a long
time. I wouldn't have come to this remote
mountain village if I weren't certain they
were here.

LUKA, ADRIAN's younger brother, kneeling beside him, squirms nervously. DIMITRI notices and smiles, triumphant.

DIMITRI
(cold and commanding)
Warriors, spread out. Search every house.
Flip rugs, beds, wardrobes.
Look for any hiding place!

Half the MASSIVE WARRIORS disperse into the village. The rest keep their weapons trained on the VILLAGERS.

6. EXT. VILLAGE SQUARE - NIGHT

Heavy snowflakes fall, dusting the heads of the kneeling VILLAGERS, shivering in the cold. DIMITRI paces in front of ADRIAN.

SERGEI (V.O.)
My Lord, we've found them!

ADRIAN and LUKA exchange a desperate look.

7. EXT. VILLAGE SQUARE - NIGHT

Four CHILDREN are pushed out of a house by SERGEI and two WARRIORS. All have chestnut hair and resemble one another.

ADAM, the eldest, is a handsome boy of about seven. He looks first at ADRIAN, lost, then glares defiantly at DIMITRI.

NICOLAE, the youngest at barely three, hides timidly behind ADAM.

NOVAK and ILEANA, the five-year-old twins, emerge last. DIMITRI spots them and a cruel smile spreads across his wrinkled face. He steps towards ILEANA, who hides behind NOVAK, intimidated.

DIMITRI
(kneeling, voice soft)
Don't be afraid.
If you do as I say, nothing will happen to you.
What's your name?

ILEANA
(nervous)
Iléana.

DIMITRI
(offering his hand)
Pleased to meet you, Iléana. I'm Dimitri.

ADAM and NOVAK step in front of ILEANA protectively. SERGEI and another WARRIOR grab them roughly and pull them away, knocking NICOLAE to the ground. He begins to cry.

8. EXT. VILLAGE SQUARE - NIGHT

No VILLAGER moves, but all watch in fear. ADRIAN and LUKA struggle as the WARRIORS seize ADAM and NOVAK. Two WARRIORS press knives to ADRIAN and LUKA's throats to make them stop.

ADRIAN
(roaring)
Don't hurt them!

9. EXT. VILLAGE SQUARE - NIGHT

DIMITRI kneels before ILEANA, who glances around, terrified.

DIMITRI
(calm and chilling)
Iléana, if you do me a favor, I promise
not to harm your family.

ILEANA
(trembling)
What do I have to do?

DIMITRI
Give me your hand.

ILEANA reaches out. DIMITRI grabs it and draws a small ruby-encrusted dagger from his belt. ILEANA panics and tries to pull away, but DIMITRI grips tighter. ADAM and NOVAK struggle, protective. NICOLAE cries louder. SERGEI and the WARRIOR tighten their hold on ADAM and NOVAK, making them wince.

ADRIAN (V.O.)
Don't touch my daughter!

DIMITRI
Don't move, Iléana, if you want me to
spare your brothers and your village.

ILEANA stops resisting.
DIMITRI nicks her finger with the blade.
She winces but stays silent.

He raises the dagger to his mouth – and suddenly, his eyes widen in shock.

10. EXT. MEDIEVAL VILLAGE SQUARE - NIGHT

DIMITRI returns to ADRIAN and LUKA, a satisfied smirk on his face.

DIMITRI

I'll leave and spare your village.
On one condition.
Your daughter must marry my son, Prince Kerian of Tsviata.

ADRIAN

(furious)

Never!

DIMITRI

You have no choice.
She'll grow up here. She's safer in this remote mountain village.
But in twelve years, when she's sixteen or seventeen, I'll come for her. She will become Princess of Tsviata.
If you flee or try to hide her, I'll impale every villager alive before your eyes.
Starting with your three sons.

DIMITRI signals his WARRIORS to prepare to leave. He walks to his horse and mounts with ease.

11. EXT. MEDIEVAL VILLAGE SQUARE - NIGHT

ADRIAN and LUKA rush towards ADAM, NOVAK, ILEANA, and NICOLAE.

SERGEI and the WARRIORS mount their horses and follow DIMITRI, riding past the terrified, freezing VILLAGERS. DIMITRI and his men exit the village.

12. EXT. MEDIEVAL VILLAGE SQUARE - NIGHT

ADRIAN embraces ILEANA, kissing her hair.
LUKA pulls ADAM, NOVAK, and NICOLAE close.

LUKA

(terrified)

What are we going to do, Adrian?

ADRIAN

(gazing at ILEANA, tender and worried)
I don't know, Luka.
But we have twelve years to figure it out.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

13. EXT. MEDIEVAL VILLAGE ALLEY - DAY

LUKA, now ten years older, walks down a snowy alley towards an old well. He looks around, then spots a tipped-over bucket, water spilled across the snow.

LUKA
(sighing, exasperated)
Iléana, if I get my hands on you...!

He spins around and runs back the way he came.

14. EXT. MEDIEVAL VILLAGE SQUARE - DAY

The village square bustles with a market. Colourful banners display wool, chickens, furs, fish. VILLAGERS shop happily under a bright blue sky. MERCHANTS shout from every corner.

MERCHANT 1
Finest wool! You won't find better at this price!

MERCHANT 2
Fresh fish of the day!

LUKA arrives, scanning the crowd, visibly annoyed.

15. EXT. MEDIEVAL VILLAGE SQUARE - DAY

NOVAK, now fourteen, tall and broad-shouldered, crouches behind a banner displaying eggs. His chestnut hair is tied back with a leather strap. His light-green eyes glint mischievously as he snatches two eggs unnoticed by MARTHA, the elderly vendor.

16. EXT. MEDIEVAL VILLAGE SQUARE - DAY

From the square's entrance, LUKA watches NOVAK's back, following his gaze.

17. EXT. MEDIEVAL VILLAGE SQUARE - DAY

Across the market, behind a banner opposite NOVAK, ADAM and NICOLAE crouch, clutching eggs.

ADAM, sixteen, has tousled chestnut hair and blue-grey eyes. He's tall and lean, less imposing than NOVAK.

NICOLAE, twelve, shares ADAM's build and hair, but has brown eyes and a softer face.

NICOLAE

(ducking behind the banner)

He's behind Martha's stand!

We can flank him from both sides!

ADAM

(whispering)

Bad idea. He's spotted us too.

He'll see us coming.

And I haven't seen where Iléana's hiding.

NICOLAE

Maybe she gave up and went back to the well like Uncle Luka asked?

ADAM

Have you ever seen Iléa abandon her twin in battle?

No — she's here somewhere.

They've got a plan.

ADAM peeks over the banner.

ADAM

(curious)

Where is she?

18. EXT. MEDIEVAL VILLAGE SQUARE - DAY

ILEANA slips out from a hay-filled cart, just behind ADAM and NICOLAE. Slender and striking, she has long chestnut hair and light-green eyes like NOVAK, her twin. Nevertheless, her features resemble NICOLAE more: soft, smooth, quietly watchful.

19. EXT. MEDIEVAL VILLAGE SQUARE - DAY

NOVAK suddenly stands behind Martha's banner, holding an egg in each hand.

NOVAK

(shouting)

Attaaaaack!

20. EXT. MEDIEVAL VILLAGE SQUARE - DAY

The eggs hit ADAM and NICOLAE, who jump up, ready to retaliate.

ILEANA, still hidden behind them, sneaks up behind them and cracks an egg on each of their heads.

Surprised, ADAM and NICOLAE spin around.

ILEANA bursts out laughing.

21. EXT. MEDIEVAL VILLAGE SQUARE - DAY

NOVAK grabs more eggs from Martha's stand.

MARTHA looks outraged, as do the surrounding VILLAGERS.

NOVAK raises his arm to throw again.

NOVAK

(deadly serious)

Iléa, run!

LUKA appears beside NOVAK and yanks his ear.

NOVAK, much taller, freezes mid-throw.

LUKA

(furious)

That's enough!

All of you - home. Now!

22. EXT. MEDIEVAL VILLAGE SQUARE - DAY

ILEANA, ADAM, and NICOLAE stop laughing and drop their eggs.

VILLAGERS grumble and whisper disapprovingly.

LUKA (V.O.)

You three, out!

ILEANA, ADAM, and NICOLAE sheepishly emerge from behind the banner and join LUKA, who still holds NOVAK by the ear.

NOVAK winces in pain.

23. EXT. MEDIEVAL VILLAGE SQUARE - DAY

ILEANA, NOVAK, ADAM, and NICOLAE walk side by side towards an alley, leaving the market. Behind them, LUKA apologizes profusely to the disgruntled VILLAGERS murmuring among themselves.

VILLAGER 1

Little brats. Their father should be raising them instead of wandering off who knows where!

VILLAGER 2

Luka's overwhelmed!
How could he not be, with those four to manage?

24. INT. PETRORIA HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

A modest medieval kitchen with a wooden table and benches on either side. ADAM, NOVAK, ILEANA, and NICOLAE enter, ashamed. LUKA storms in behind them, slamming the door.

LUKA

(stern)

Sit down!

They sit, shoulder to shoulder, facing LUKA.

LUKA

(raising his voice)

This can't go on!
Yesterday you wrecked Father Teodor's stall making fake swords.
The day before, you scared off all of Martha's chickens to dodge Iléana's sewing lesson.
And today you smashed half her eggs in a childish battle!
You're not children anymore!
At your age, your father was training to lead this village!

NOVAK

(defiant)

But we're not allowed to do anything. You won't even let us hunt in the forest!
I'm sure you and Father hunted at our age!
And he's never here!
He disappears for months every year and only returns for a few days before vanishing again.
You and he refuse to tell us why!
That's not what I call leading a village!

LUKA

(lowering his voice, uneasy)

He has more important matters to handle.
And Father Teodor does fine as a stand-in.

ADAM

Why don't you take his place?

LUKA

Because I have enough to deal with – with you four!

ILEANA

(guilty)

We're sorry, Uncle Luka.
We didn't mean to cause trouble.

NICOLAE nods beside her, equally remorseful.

LUKA

(softening)

You need to understand how important it is to keep a low profile. Father Teodor could easily demand we leave if you keep causing chaos. And where would we go?

ADAM

This village was built by our grandparents, and Father is its leader! No one can force us out!

LUKA

As Novak said, your father's been gone a long time. The villagers are starting to ask questions. And without him, who's going to stop them from throwing us out?

NOVAK

(quietly)

They're not the only ones asking questions...

The siblings lower their heads under LUKA's stern gaze.

ADAM

(lifting his head)

It's my fault, Uncle Luka. The egg fight was my idea.

LUKA

(glancing at Novak)

I doubt that.