

1. EXT. ROLLING HILLS - DAY

LAN, a slender 12-year-old Zoen girl, charges down a steep grassy hillside and skids into the first tree of a small grove at the bottom of a hill.

She darts around the tree and searches through the grove. In the center, she finds a tip of white stone peaking out under freshly fallen autumn leaves. She kicks at the leaves, quickly uncovering a large flat stone. She drops to her knees and digs in the soft dirt at its edges.

A horrific cry bellows from the hilltop behind her. She turns and sees a SHADOWY FIGURE descending towards her. She returns to dig in a panicked frenzy. After a moment she clears away enough soil to get a hand hold under the massive stone.

She looks up to find the shadowy figure close now to the edge of the grove. It's face, chiseled like the Petra, shows no emotion. Its body, covered in a heavy suit of black armor moves swiftly, yet with-out sound.

Lan strains to lift the rock, crying out with exertion. It doesn't budge. She looks back. The figure draws a long sword, its blade glows a strange, dark purple.

Lan heaves with all her strength. The rock gives, just enough for her to slide it back. A bright light erupts from a cavity underneath. Lan thrusts her hand in, grabs something, the TOKEN, a glowing stone carving in the shape of a tree, then spins to meet her attacker.

The shadowy figure swings his sword over his head to strike. Lan raises her arms in defense. The Token in her hand pulses with a blinding flash. The shadowy figure drops his sword and covers his face with his arm. He lets out a horrific cry of pain then drops to his knees.

Lan runs and doesn't look back.

2. EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF LAN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Lan, still covered in dirt, rushes down a wide street, lined with shops and businesses. RISH, a young Zoen boy about Lan's age, runs up behind her.

RISH

Hey, I've been looking all over for you. Where've you been?

LAN

Uh... Over at my grandma's, why?

RISH
They're back! Come on!

Rish slaps Lan on the arm then runs up ahead.

LAN
What? Who's back?

Lan rushes after him.

RISH
Who do you think?

LAN
Our boys?

As an answer, Rish waves her to hurry.

3. EXT. HILLTOP OVERLOOK - MINUTES LATER

Lan and Rish round the top of a grassy hill and stop at an overlook. The countryside spreads out below them, washed in the golden light of the setting sun. Farmlands, in giant squares, checker the rolling valley close to their hill. Beyond the farms, a sea of deep green forest disappears into the purple haze of a distant storm churning on the horizon.

LAN
Botans?

A straight dirt road cuts from the forest through the middle of the farmland on its way towards the overlook hill. A line of pale green dots fill the road. Closer, the dots take shape as haggard, slow moving Bota, dragging carts and carrying bags.

RISH
What are they doing here?

LAN
Who told you the youth brigade was back from the war?

RISH
Everyone!

Lan scans the farmlands as far as she can see to the right. Two thinner roads weave up and down over the farm covered hills. These are empty. To the left a few more empty roads.

RISH
I don't understand. How did the

Botans get here but not our boys?

A long bolt of lightening flickers as it expands across the dark, turbulent horizon.

Lan stares at the storm, suddenly fixated.

LAN
I think I've seen this.

RISH
Seen what?

Lan shakes her head, snapping out of her trance.

LAN
But it was a dream...

RISH
Lan! What are you talking about?
Seen what?

LAN
This! All of this. The war, the
brigade not coming back, the Bota
coming here. The storm.

Rish stares at Lan for a moment, his face compressed in thought. He notices Lan holding something large in her pocket.

RISH
What is that?

Rish points at Lan's pocket.

LAN
Nothing.

Lan turns away.

Rish spins around and pulls her arm out. The brightly glowing TOKEN slips out with it. Lan loses her grip with the force of Rish's pull and the Token tumbles to the ground.

Rish gasps.

RISH
What is that?

Lan swoops down and covers it in a rag before tucking it back in her pocket.

RISH

Lan?

Lan walks away.

RISH

Fine. Keep it to yourself.

Rish picks up a clod of dirt and tosses it at the back of Lan's head. Lan shudders at the impact but doesn't turn.

Rish leaves.

Lan sits down on a large white stone and watches the storm. She glances back to make sure she's alone before taking out the Token and holding it up.

LAN

What are you?

She touches it with a bare finger.

FLASH TO WHITE:

A crowd of Zo villagers, screaming in panic, flee through a narrow town street.

The Storm hits the edge of town. Buildings crumble in the ferocious wind.

Lan stands against the storm, holding the Token out in front of her like a weapon.

BACK TO:

Lan, sitting on the rock holding the Token. She puts it down, turns and walks away.

After a few steps she doubles back, grabs the Token and slips it in her pocket.

4. EXT. TOWN SQUARE - MOMENTS LATER

Lan wanders through the center of town. She notices several of the Botan refugees walking down the street in small clumps. She makes a wide path as she approaches a Botan woman standing up against a building. The Botan studies her as she passes.

Lan looks down at herself in reaction. To her horror, the Token glows brightly enough to shine through her pants.

BOTAN REFUGEE
Excuse me, child.

The stranger follows her.

BOTAN REFUGEE
What is that in your pocket?

Lan bursts into a sprint. She looks back. The stranger doesn't chase.

BOTAN REFUGEE
Please! Wait!

Lan runs to the end of the street and stops as it intersects with the town square. A crowd fills the entire space, making it difficult to move with any speed. She sees Rish sitting on a white stone sculpture at the back of the crowd and joins him.

LAN
Hey!

Rish pretends to ignore her.

LAN
What's all this?

Rish gives her a dirty look.

RISH
You want to me to tell you what I know?

LAN
Uh, Yeah.

Rish glances at Lan's bulging pocket where she keeps a firmly placed hand. Rish shakes his head.

RISH
Fine, I'll tell you what I know.
Cause that's what friends do. They share.

Lan scowls.

RISH
Only a handful of the boys came back. The Regional Governor is asking for volunteers to fight in-case the storm comes here.

Lan notices a tall Botan Refugee enter the square from the

same street she'd come in from. It was the same that called out to her. She hops off the sculpture and pushes into the crowd.

RISH

Hey! Where you going?

Lan reaches the front of the crowd where the REGIONAL GOVERNOR stands behind an elevated podium, speaking. A few YOUNG BOYS in soiled and torn clothes stand next to him.

CROWD MEMBER

But how do we fight a
thunderstorm?

REGIONAL GOVERNOR

Our adversaries, in their
blackened armor, hide in the
shadow behind the storm where we
cannot see them approach. What the
storm does not destroy, they will
devour.

CROWD MEMBER

Then we should run, not stay and
fight!

REGIONAL GOVERNOR

Run? To where? The Botans ran and
now they are here with us, facing
him all over again.

The Regional Governor glances at the storm in the distance behind him.

CROWD MEMBER

Him?

RG cuts a glance towards his ASSISTANT. His assistant shakes his head, no.

Rish sneaks up beside Lan.

RISH

Are you going to volunteer?

Lan gives him a dirty look.

RISH

What about that? (he points to
Lan's pocket) Are you going to
tell them about that?

Lan looks worried.

5. EXT. HILLTOP OVERLOOK - EVENING

Lan follows Rish up the steep hill. As they crest the top, they see dark clouds looming over the wide valley of farmlands.

Below them, a thin string of Zoen villagers, in make shift armor, winds along a dirt road from the town behind them.

The dark storm casts an erie purple shadow over the farm lands.

LAN

You think I should be down there
with them?

Rish looks at her strangely.

RISH

I never said that.

Rish turns his attention back to the storm. He points at something.

RISH

What is that?

At the center of the storm, a shape solidifies beneath the churning clouds, a skull, empty eye sockets, a jaw. More swirling mass collects beneath the skull, forming a neck, torso and long skeletal arms.

The arms drop down out of the storm like two funnels, hitting the ground with explosive force. The villagers near the impact, fall to the ground.

The Token in Lan's pocket emits a blinding PULSE of light. Rish covers his eyes. Lan tries frantically to smother the light. But it shines through her hands.

The vaporous skull floating in the storm snaps its attention towards the light. Its gaze locks on the two Zo children as it withdraws its arms from the surface and pushes slowly in their direction.

The kids panic. A gust of wind surges on the hilltop, almost knocking them off their feet.

RISH

Lan, tell me! What it that? What
did you find.

LAN

I don't know what it is! A few nights ago, I saw a place in a dream, the bottom of a hill north of town. I went there the next morning and found this (points to the Token) buried under a big rock. I wanted to tell you. Just...

RISH

Just what?

LAN

Its been showing me things. Rish, I don't know what to do.

RISH

What do you mean? What is it showing you?

LAN

I think... it showed me one of the Reds.

RISH

What?

LAN

It showed me place... Beyond the forest. A garden with strange trees and thicket in the center. It was like I was there. I could feel it all around me, this energy, life. I think its supposed to stop the storm. I think it wants me to find it.

Ran scoffs.

Lan kicks him.

LAN

That's why I didn't tell you!

RISH

You're just a kid, Lan. This has nothing to do with you. None of this.

A high pitched howl lifts over the wind. Lan turns. The creature in the storm moves towards them, faster than before.

LAN

We've gotta get out of here.

Lan grabs Rish's arm and pulls him off the hilltop.

6. EXT. TOWN - CONT.

They drop down into the town and race out into the nearest street. Looking back, the storm drifts in overhead, a ominous purple-black blotting out the sky.

A vaporous body drops down from the clouds, whips of smoke licking up like black flames around the limbs as they descend.

At the edge of the city, its giant smokey hand smashes down on top of a large building, leaving a crater as it lifts. A second building explodes into a shower of rocks and debris as the other hand lands.

The dual impacts shake the ground near Lan enough to destabilize an old building in front of them. It leans in the wind dangerously. They turn and run the other direction.

A huge impact thumps the ground. They glance back. The creature's full body has touched down. Massive feet and legs lift the torso half way to the clouds.

It takes a huge step into the city towards them, smashing a row of homes.

The building next to them collapses without warning from the distant impacts and intense winds. They are too close. A wall topples over onto Rish before he can react. Lan dodges out of the way.

Lan pulls at Rish, trying frantically to free him. But half of Rish's body is trapped under the wall.

RISH

Help me!

Lan digs at the rubble but can't clear enough to get Rish out. She panics. Heavy winds blow dirt and sand around them. More buildings in the distance tumble. The Token in her pocket shines. She notices it and takes it out.

RISH

What are you doing, Lan? Are you crazy? You'll bring it right to us! Go get some help!

Lan turns back to Rish. Embarrassed, she puts the Token back in her pocket.

LAN
Who should I get?

RISH
Find my dad, he'll know what to do.

Lan gets up and rushes deeper into the town. The winds of the storm howl behind her. She hears the rumble of more destruction.

As she runs through city streets, buildings tumble in around her, blocking her path towards Rish's house.

She turns around and sees the entire city being destroyed. Worse, the creature hovers near where she left Rish.

LAN
Rish!

She looks at the Token in her pocket, then scans the foothills in the distance with tall snow peaked mountains behind them. She sees a clear path through the rubble and out toward the lowest foothill. She rushes for it.

7. EXT. FOOTHILLS - MOMENTS LATER

She reaches the top of the foothill and holds out the Token. Beams of light cut through the smokey, debris filled air over the town.

The creature, now towering directly over Rish, turns and growls towards Lan in the foothills.

Lan back up, turns and runs towards the mountain. The creature follows, dragging the storm away from the town.

8. EXT. MOUNTAINTOP - MOMENTS LATER

Lan reaches a grassy slope just below the white tipped rocky summit. She stops and looks back to survey her progress. The foothills linger far below, the town now a dark blot in a wide vista.

Below her, a line of SHADOWY FIGURES, clad in the same black metal armor, climb swiftly up the rocky trail.

The Storm creature descends from the clouds and drops onto the mountain over top the figures, shadowing them like a

protective parent.

The creature crouches, face to face with Lan. Its massive skull and jaws dwarf the girl, easily 10 times the size of a full grown Zo.

Lan's arms and legs shake with fear but she doesn't turn. She removes the Token from her pocket and holds it up towards the face of the beast. The Bright light burns into the creature's vaporous flesh. It squints and snarls, trying to hold its position but after an agonizing moment, turns its head and pulls back.

Shielding its eyes with one arm, it rears up then strikes like a snake. Lan doesn't flinch, doesn't duck, doesn't run. She holds steady.

The creature's great arm explodes on impact, recoiling with a violent twirl. It bends back unnaturally and then splits into several vaporous pieces.

The creature screams and writhes within the cloud. It holds the stub at its left shoulder, then turns back to Lan and launches another assault.

This time it reaches slowly, methodically towards the tiny child. The tips of its great fingers push towards Lan, burning away in the light of the Token. The light pushes like a great wind at the skeletal vapor.

Lan gathers courage and steps forward.

LAN

Leave!

The light from the Token intensifies.

The creature's feet slip against the light's pressure.

LAN

GO!

She takes another step and thrusts the Token forward. The monster loses its footing and tumbles back into the cloud.

With screams and wails, the storm recedes from the mountain.

Lan collapses.

9. EXT. MOUNTAINTOP - LATER

She wakes up and sees a woman in a red robe walking away.

Next to her lies a pack of food. Her wounds are dressed. A stone path has formed next to her that leads off across the tops of the mountain.

The woman turns back and whispers

WOMAN IN RED
Go and find it. Hurry!

A strobe of images flash in the girl's mind. Moving along the path, down through a thick forest, ending abruptly in a garden. A small red leaved seedling surrounded by a dense thicket.

END: