

MIDSOMMAR

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Concept of the Hårgas by  
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1	<b>EXT. WOODS - HALSINGLAND - DAY</b>	* 1
	Hälsingland, North Sweden. We cycle through a series of beautifully composed midday landscapes. None of them feature people or human habitation.	
	A spare Swedish LULLABY plays over this quiet montage. This is the song of the Hårgas. When it concludes, we CUT HARD TO:	*
2	<b>EXT. HOUSE - MINNESOTA - NIGHT</b>	2
	A beautiful suburban home, bathed in vivid moonlight. The neighborhood is very quiet.	
3	<b>INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT</b>	3
	A MAN and WOMAN (early sixties) lay asleep in bed. They are extremely still.	
	The PHONE rings. The Man and Woman do not stir. After a few rings, the ANSWERING MACHINE takes it. (Next to the answering machine is a photo of a family: the man and woman standing happily with their two teenaged daughters.)	* * *
	ANSWERING MACHINE (V.O.) Hello. You've reached --	
	MAN & WOMAN (V.O.) -- the Ardor residence.	
	ANSWERING MACHINE (V.O.) Please leave your message at the tone. When you're finished with your message, press pound.	
	BEEP. Enter the voice of a YOUNG WOMAN:	
	YOUNG WOMAN (V.O.) Hey mom, hey dad, it's Dani. Sorry to call so late. I'm just checking in to make sure everyone's okay. I got kind of a scary email from Terri and it sounded like you guys were having some sort of conflict? Anyway, I just got a little worried, so call me when you can, and if there's anything I can do, just please know that I'm here. Okay. All right. I love you.	* *
	Beside their bed is a PHOTO of one of the daughters. She wears a beaming smile.	* *
4	<b>INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - BROOKLYN, NY - NIGHT</b>	* 4
	The young woman lowers the cell from her ear. This is DANI (25), a beautiful but delicate brunette. (She is the girl from the photo). She hangs up, and turns to her laptop. An EMAIL from <i>Terri Ardor</i> , titled "dear dani," is displayed. It reads:	* *
	<i>i cant anymore - everything's black - mom and dad are coming too. goodbye.</i>	*
	Dani stares at this, anxiety rising. She picks up her phone, hesitates, and then calls <i>Christian</i> .	

Four rings. CHRISTIAN (25) answers. *The rest of this scene will be shot in a VERY TIGHT CLOSE-UP of Dani.*

CHRISTIAN (V.O.)

Hi...!

Dani affects a care-free tone:

DANI

Hey sweetie. What you up to? \*

CHRISTIAN (V.O.)

Oh, just smoked some resin at Mark's and now we're getting pizza.

DANI

Oh nice.

In the b.g., we hear a young man repeating "hi Dani, hi Dani, hi Dani..."

CHRISTIAN (V.O.)

Yeah - he's saying hi right now, over and over.

DANI

Hi Mark!

CHRISTIAN (V.O.)

(off-phone)  
"Hi Mark."

DANI

So I was just calling to see if you were still wanting to get together.

CHRISTIAN (V.O.)

Oh - did we talk about doing something tonight?

DANI

I mean, not concretely. I was just seeing.

CHRISTIAN (V.O.)

(ambivalent)  
Uh, well - okay. Yeah. I should be able to swing by.

DANI

All right...!

CHRISTIAN (V.O.)

Yeah. Okay... How's the sister situation? \*

DANI

Well...I've now sent her three emails and still no response. I'm starting to get a little nervous. \*

CHRISTIAN (V.O.)

I'm sure it's fine.

DANI

Yeah. Probably. I hope so.

CHRISTIAN (V.O.)

She does this every other day, Dani. And only because you let her. \*

DANI  
Well, I don't LET her. She's bipolar.

CHRISTIAN (V.O.)  
I know, but you *do*, though, babes. You go straight to crisis mode.

\*

DANI  
Well - but she's my *sister*. And even *you* admit this last email was different...

CHRISTIAN (V.O.)  
Okay, but *is* it, though? It's still another clear ploy for attention - just like every *other* panic attack she's given you.

Dani looks like she wants to argue with this. She stifles it.

DANI  
Okay. Yeah. You're right. You *are* right.

CHRISTIAN (V.O.)  
The more you respond, the more she's encouraged to keep this crap up.

DANI  
No, I *do* know you're right. I just needed to be reminded. Thank you. I'm really lucky to have you.

CHRISTIAN (V.O.)  
Me too.

DANI (CONT'D)  
I love you.

CHRISTIAN (V.O.)  
...So do I.

DANI  
Okay. See you later?

CHRISTIAN (V.O.)  
Yup.

DANI  
Okay. "Bye Mark!"

CHRISTIAN (V.O.)  
"Bye Mark."

DANI  
All right. Love you. Bye.

Dani hangs up. Her eyes are wide with insecurity.

5

**INT. KITCHEN - MINUTES LATER**

5

Dani stands in the kitchen, mid-phone conversation. FRAUGHT. She paces when she's not speaking.

DANI  
It's just in his tone - you can hear it. It's like he's trying to work up the nerve to say something.

\*

GIRLFRIEND (V.O.)  
So be direct! Confront him!

\*

Dani has opened a cabinet to pull out a pill bottle. \*

DANI  
 Well - what if I scared him?  
 I'm always roping him into my  
 family crap...  
 I'm always *leaning* on him!  
 I even called him today *in*  
*tears* because my sister sent  
 me another scary email. What  
 if I'm scaring him off?

GIRLFRIEND (V.O.)  
 Oh - *how* do you rope him in?  
 That's what he's there for!

Dani swallow one of the pills. \*

GIRLFRIEND (V.O.)  
 What did your sister write? \*

DANI  
*Oh - just some ominous bullshit! She  
 does it all the time! It's torture, and  
 I've been completely leaning on him for  
 support! What if I overwhelmed him and  
 now he thinks I have too much baggage?*

Dani returns the prescription bottle. The label reads ATIVAN. \*

GIRLFRIEND (V.O.)  
 Well, if that's the case, then good  
 riddance! Right?

DANI  
 No! Not if I went too far! What if I  
 leaned too heavily?

Dani has returned to her laptop.

GIRLFRIEND (V.O.)  
 You didn't! He should *be* there when  
 you need him.

Dani begins hastily composing an EMAIL to her sister Terri.

DANI  
 But what if I need him too  
*often*? If it becomes a chore?

GIRLFRIEND (V.O.)  
 Then he's not the right guy.  
 Because it shouldn't ever be  
 a chore. Would it be a chore  
 if he leaned on you?

Dani breaks from writing to respond:

DANI  
 But he never asks for *anything* from  
 me! I've never even seen him cry!  
 So I'm the *only* one leaning!

GIRLFRIEND (V.O.)  
 Or the only one opening up! The  
 only one making yourself  
*vulnerable. That's* intimacy.

As the friend says that, Dani finishes typing. Her email reads:  
*"PLEASE write me back, Terri. You can't just write me something  
 like that and then disappear. I'm worried sick. Please write  
 back. Please."* \*

Dani's phone beeps with an INCOMING CALL. It's an UNKNOWN NUMBER.

6

**INT. PIZZA PARLOR - NEW YORK, NY - NIGHT**

6

A grubby pizza parlor. Outside the window looms a purple NYU sign.

CHRISTIAN, very handsome and fit, sits at a booth. Beside him are his friends MARK (26, droll, shaggy hair), JOSH (27, a skinny, sometimes snobbish academic), and PELLE (26), a nice-looking Swedish exchange student. Pelle doodles on his napkin (drawing the flowers on the table). \*

Mark is currently lecturing a despondent Christian, who begins with his face in his arms (on the table). \*

MARK

Dude: you need to stop sitting on the fence with this.

CHRISTIAN

But what if I end up regretting it and then I can't get her back? \*

MARK

You don't want her back!

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

I might!

MARK

So then you can bitch to *us* for that day about how much you regret it, and we'll remind you AGAIN that you've been wanting out of this stupid relationship for the last year, and then you can find some new chick who actually likes sex and who *doesn't* drag you through a million hoops a day. \*

Christian is thinking about this. Extremely conflicted. Josh takes a break from reading his dog-eared copy of *Primitive Mentality* (by Lucien Lévy-Bruhl) to ask: \*

JOSH

Do you think a masochistic part of you might be playing out *this* drama to distract you from the work you *actually* need to be doing? \*

CHRISTIAN

(prepared to be offended)  
And what work do I *actually* need to do, Josh?

JOSH

(quietly, almost to himself)  
Your *prospectus* maybe? Your *PhD*...? \*

Christian *clearly* doesn't want to be told his priorities by Josh. Before he can snap back, an attractive WAITRESS (early 20s) brings over the check.

WAITRESS

Whenever you guys are ready.

PELLE

(with Swedish accent)  
Thank you.

She SMILES -- at Christian.

WAITRESS

Thank you.

She HOLDS the smile with Christian and walks bashfully off. Mark definitely caught that.

MARK

Dude. You could be getting that girl pregnant right now.

\*

PELLE

And don't forget all the Swedish women you can impregnate in June.

MARK (CONT'D)

Yeah, dude - don't forget all the Swedish milkmaids.

Christian's PHONE rings. He checks. It's DANI. He deflates.

MARK (CONT'D)

Who is that?

Christian doesn't respond.

MARK (CONT'D)

That's not her again? Seriously?

Christian lets the call go.

MARK (CONT'D)

That's ridiculous, dude. She needs a therapist.

CHRISTIAN

She has one.

MARK

So she should call *him!* That's insane, dude. She's using you.

The phone starts ringing again. Christian checks it. "*Dani again.*"

MARK (CONT'D)

Oh my God.

Christian answers. He rises from the booth to get some privacy.

CHRISTIAN

Hello?

On the other end: an extended, agonized MOAN.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

Dani?

DANI (V.O.)

(distantly)

...no, no, no, no, no, no, no...

CHRISTIAN

Sweetheart? What's going on?

But now there's only heavy, frightening CRYING on the other end. It's a deep, horrible cry. One of pure animal grief.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)  
 (now scared)  
 What's happening, baby? Please talk  
 to me.

The crying has curdled into a sustained WAIL OF ANGUISH.

7 **INT. GARAGE - MINNESOTA - NIGHT** 7

The house from the beginning (scene 2).

Two CARS are parked. Their engines hum quietly. A FIREFIGHTER opens one car's door and turns OFF the ignition.

We now reveal that the end of a GARDENING HOSE has been taped to one car's EXHAUST PIPE. A second hose has been taped to the other car's exhaust pipe. Both hoses TRAIL out of the garage and INTO the house...

8 **INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS** 8

One gardening hose leads to a BEDROOM DOOR. The door is now open, but the end of the hose has been TAPED to the bottom...

9 **INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS** 9

The bedroom of the sleeping MAN and WOMAN (in their 60s, from the beginning). It is very clear now that they are DEAD.

Two police officers survey the room.

HARD CUTS to the man and woman being ZIPPED UP into body bags.

10 **INT. TERRI'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME** 10

TERRI (24), Dani's sister, sits on the floor of her bedroom, beside her desk. The end of the other gardening hose has been DUCT-TAPED TO HER MOUTH. A mess of vomit has dried around the edges of the hastily applied tape.

On Terri's desk: her LAPTOP. It is open to the EMAIL THREAD between her and Dani. In the bottom right corner of the screen: "3 New Messages from Dani Ardor."

11 **EXT. STREET - BROOKLYN, NY - NIGHT** 11

Dreamy snowfall in Brooklyn.

Christian, bundled up in layers, RUNS down the street. He's approaching DANI'S BUILDING, but even as he rushes, he's not going as fast as he possibly could. *There's an ambivalence in his stride.*

He enters the front door of Dani's building.

12 **INT. DANI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT** 12

Wide on the LIVING ROOM. We're centered on the COUCH, where Christian sits. Dani has crumbled there, her head shaking violently against Christian's lap as she WEEPS. Behind them: a WINDOW showcases snowfall against the dark night.

Dani's sobs are possessed of a profound despair. It's so intense that it looks painful - dangerous even.



We are pushing in on this, toward them. Christian's eyes are wide with worry. A worry that goes beyond Dani's well-being. He stares into space, imagining a future that he's being chained to. He looks TRAPPED.

We continue pushing toward them until we have pushed PAST them. The window behind them FILLS our frame.

Through the window - HEAVY SNOW raging in a black vacuum. We hold on this as our **OPENING CREDITS ROLL**, accompanied by intense, groaning score.

After the credits, we SLAM CUT TO:

**DAYLIGHT.** We are still looking out the window, but it's now late afternoon. LATE SPRING.

13

**INT. DANI'S BEDROOM - LATE AFTERNOON - 6 MONTHS LATER**

13

Dani lies on her bed, fully clothed. Her eyes are numb as she stares at the wall.

A KNOCK at the door. A well-dressed Christian pops his head in. He's grown a beard since we last saw him.

CHRISTIAN  
Hey babers. How we feeling?

DANI  
(looking to him)  
Hey.  
(sitting up)  
I'm up.

CHRISTIAN  
I'm just going to that party  
for like 45 minutes. You  
should keep sleeping.

DANI (CONT'D)  
Oh - I'll come with you...!

CHRISTIAN  
(hesitates)  
You sure you got enough rest?

DANI  
I wasn't sleeping anyway.

Christian pauses briefly, as if this clashes with his plans.

CHRISTIAN  
Okay, great. I'll just be at the door.

DANI  
Okay. I'll just get dressed.

Christian nods for a little too long, then "smiles" and leaves the room. Dani rises. Stands for a moment. *Heavy.*

14

**INT. APARTMENT - EVENING**

14

A PARTY in a brownstone full of circulating twenty-somethings.

Dani stands with Christian, who chats with Josh, Mark (holding two beers), Pelle, and a stoned HIPSTER GUY (26).

HIPSTER GUY  
I'm fucking *dreading* the summer. Stuck  
in shit-ass *Boulder* while my dad  
watches *Law & Order* all day.

\*  
\*

PELLE  
(to Mark)  
You have to work at your mom's shop when  
we all get back from our trip, right?

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

Dani squints with curiosity. Christian suddenly looks nervous.

HIPSTER GUY  
Oh - you guys are going somewhere?

JOSH  
To Sweden!

PELLE  
Hälsingland.

MARK  
Mr. Pelle's invited us for an authentic  
hippie midsummer at his yodeling farm.

\*

Dani has PAUSED. She hadn't heard this before.

DANI  
...Oh yeah?

Dani turns to Christian, who now looks semi-panicked.

CHRISTIAN  
I mean, yeah, we were thinking about  
maybe - we were talking about it.

DANI  
For when?

Dani feigns casualness as she looks inquiringly to the guys.

JOSH  
...Mid June to late July?

MARK  
In two weeks.

CHRISTIAN  
I mean, if we even go. I probably  
won't. We were just *talking* about it.

\*  
\*

Mark, Josh and Pelle stand awkwardly, confused. Christian  
clearly hasn't been honest with Dani.

\*

15 **INT. LYFT CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT**

\* 15

Josh, Mark and Dani sit in the back seat of a Lyft car.  
Christian sits in the front passenger seat.

\*  
\*

Dani's eyes are BUSY with nagging, paranoid thoughts.  
Christian, very tense, turns to look back at Dani. He forces  
a casual "hey" smile. Ambivalent, she "smiles" back.

\*  
\*  
\*

16 **INT. DANI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

\* 16

The door opens. Christian and Dani enter. Christian goes to  
his laptop and turns it on. Dani stays by the door, still  
preoccupied. Christian looks to her.

CHRISTIAN  
Are you okay?

Dani looks at him, hesitant to start a fight. Christian gives her an impatient look: "Yes? No?"

DANI  
I mean - yeah. I'm okay. That was just...very weird.

CHRISTIAN  
(playing dumb)  
What was?

Dani looks at him: "Seriously?" Christian widens his eyes: "What was weird?"

DANI  
The...Sweden! I had no idea.

CHRISTIAN  
Well - what do you mean? I told you I wanted to go.

DANI  
Okay, *fine*, but I didn't know you were going.

CHRISTIAN  
Well, I just decided today. I wasn't *keeping* it from you.

DANI  
You already have a ticket!

Beat. Christian now looks cornered.

CHRISTIAN  
(shrugs)  
I'm sorry.

Christian looks extremely defensive. He has LOCKED DOWN. Dani sees this, gathers herself, and tries to explain:

DANI  
It's just -- imagine if we were at a party and someone asks "what are you doing this summer," and *my* friends say: "*oh*, we're all going to China for three months, we're leaving in *two weeks*," and imagine that was the *first* you'd ever heard of it!

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)  
  
(correcting)  
Sweden. A month and a half.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)  
Okay: I *told* you I wanted to go to Sweden.

DANI  
You told me it would be "*cool* to go."

CHRISTIAN  
Yeah! And then I got the opportunity to go and I decided to *do* it.

DANI (CONT'D)  
I have no *problem* with you going! I just wish you'd think to tell me!

CHRISTIAN  
Well, I just apologized, Dani.

DANI  
You didn't apologize, you said -  
(shrugs)  
- "sorry." Which sounds more like  
"too bad."

Beat. Christian's eyes are now very cold.

CHRISTIAN  
Maybe I should just go home.

DANI  
...I'm just trying to understand.

CHRISTIAN  
And I tried apologizing.

DANI  
I don't *need* an apology. I just  
want to talk about it.

Pause.

CHRISTIAN  
I think I should just probably go home. \*

Dani looks helpless.

DANI  
I'm not trying to attack you.

CHRISTIAN  
Well, it feels like that.

DANI  
Well...I'm sorry! I *am* sorry. I  
just got confused.

Christian's eyes, looking down, haven't begun to thaw. Dani,  
now desperate to reverse the mood, sits on the couch. She  
beckons him.

DANI (CONT'D)  
Come on: Sit with me. I'm sorry. That  
just felt weird, that's all. I think  
going to Sweden could be really great  
for you. That sounds amazing. Are you  
going for your thesis?

CHRISTIAN  
(quietly)  
I don't *know* what my thesis is.

DANI  
(brightly)  
I know! It could be inspiring! Right?

CHRISTIAN  
(still looking down)  
...I think I'm just gonna leave.

Dani's eyes start to well intensely with TEARS.

DANI  
Please. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to  
overreact. Please.

Christian SOFTENS when he sees that she's crying. Still  
distant, he sits with her.

CHRISTIAN  
Okay - shhh. It's okay. I'm sorry,  
too. All right?

DANI  
I get paranoid. I'm sorry. I'm going  
through all this stuff and I've been  
dealing with all this panic and I  
just - overreacted. I'm not trying  
to put pressure or accuse you of  
anything. I just got crazy for a  
second. I didn't mean to project.

Christian strokes her hair.

CHRISTIAN  
It's okay. I'm sorry, too. It's okay.

Beat. Christian is wrestling with something, and then: \*

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)  
(uncertainly)  
I was gonna ask you to come *with* me.

Pause. Dani looks at him. He looks very tense. \*

DANI  
What do you mean?

CHRISTIAN  
...What I just said.

DANI  
To Sweden?

Christian nods a stiff "yes."

DANI (CONT'D)  
You don't *want* me to.

CHRISTIAN  
I just *asked* you. DANİ (CONT'D)  
After I broke down crying!

CHRISTIAN  
Well...you ruined the surprise.

Dani searches Christian's eyes. They aren't especially warm.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)  
I wanted it to be romantic.

Mark & Josh's apartment is essentially a stoner's den crossed  
with a serious anthropologist's home. Ironic posters (a  
portrait of Ronald Reagan, etc.) are countered by posters of  
James George Frazer and Claude Lévi-Strauss. There are stacks  
of books in every corner. \*

Christian, Mark, Pelle and Josh sit in the living room, smoking from a bong. Josh holds a book by Johannes Bureus (titled *Adalruna*) and Pelle is drawing in his notepad.

JOSH  
Are the Swedes sensitive about their history of Nazi collaboration?

PELLE  
Are *you* sensitive about Hiroshima?  
Or the trail of tears?  
Or slavery?

JOSH (CONT'D)  
*I am, yes.*  
Yep.  
Uhhh - what do you think?

Christian looks extremely preoccupied. His foot pumps involuntarily. He receives a TEXT.

CHRISTIAN  
(anxiously)  
Hey guys, it's Dani - she's coming up.

...Okay.

JOSH  
(re: weed and bong)  
Should we clear all this?

CHRISTIAN  
No no, it doesn't matter. But uh - listen...

Christian goes to buzz her in.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)  
...just so you guys know: she's *not* gonna actually come, but I invited her on the trip. Just to not make it weird.

A moment of silence. Pelle sits especially frozen.

MARK  
You invited her?

CHRISTIAN  
Yeah, but she's not coming.

JOSH  
She doesn't want to?

CHRISTIAN  
(measuredly)  
No: I "invited" her and she "accepted," but she's not gonna actually come.

Mark and Josh just stare at him.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)  
You guys *know* what she's dealing with!

MARK  
No, we know. I just didn't realize. It's totally fine if she joins.

JOSH  
Yeah, dude, nobody minds.

A KNOCK at the door. Christian goes to answer it, but before he does, he reasserts:

CHRISTIAN  
Okay, so just: you guys *told* me to  
invite her and you *know* that she's  
coming. Agreed?

They don't respond. Christian now OPENS the door to DANI. She enters with an almost apologetic smile on her face.

DANI  
Hey.  
(to the room)  
Hey guys!

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)  
Hi baby.  
JOSH/MARK/PELLE  
Hey!

DANI  
How's it going?

MARK  
Just chillin'.

DANI  
Nice.

A brief, awkward pause.

JOSH  
So, Sweden...!

DANI  
Yeah!

PELLE  
You're coming, right?

DANI  
I think so...! If it's not completely  
destroying your guys' male bonding  
plans.

MARK/JOSH/PELLE  
Nope. / Not at all.

CHRISTIAN  
Oh, shut the fuck up.

Dani smiles bashfully. Mark abruptly addresses Christian:

MARK  
Hey man, can I get you to look at  
that paragraph real quick?

CHRISTIAN  
(confused pause)  
Sure. Yeah. Okay.  
(to Dani)  
Right back.

Christian kisses Dani, and leaves the room with Mark. Dani looks to the ROOM. Josh has returned to his book. Pelle, alone on the couch, warmly gestures for Dani to join him. She obliges.

DANI  
Hey Pelle.

PELLE  
Hi Dani.

She notices that Pelle has been composing a DRAWING in his notepad. It's a drawing of the room.

DANI  
Ooh, that's a beautiful drawing.

PELLE  
Oh, thank you! I'm trying to be a naturalist.

\*

Pelle closes the drawing pad. Gives Dani his full attention.

DANI  
How've you been?

PELLE  
Pretty good! Survived finals. You?

DANI  
Uh, well - didn't quite finish! But they're giving me a break this year... (realizing)  
PELLE (CONT'D)  
Oh, right. God. Of course.

Dani makes an embarrassed "bleh" face.

DANI  
How did you like the Anthropology department?

\*

PELLE  
It's good! I just can't seem to choose if I hate academia or not. Unlike *this* one. ("this one" being Josh)  
You're doing psychiatry?

\*

DANI  
Psychology. Yeah. That's how you know I'm nuts.

PELLE  
Also that funny look in your eye.

Dani LAUGHS, a bit unnaturally. An awkward moment.

PELLE (CONT'D)  
So! You're coming to Hälsingland!

DANI  
Yeah! I can't wait. Christian says you've got a special thing in the woods planned?

PELLE  
Oh yes - a sort of crazy, nine-day festival we're doing...

\*

DANI  
Do you do that every midsummer?

PELLE  
Uh - well...this specific one happens only once every ninety years. So it'll be a first and a last for everybody.

\*

Pelle raises his eyebrows, mock-menacing.

DANI  
...Christian says you're from a really small community?



PELLE  
 Oh yes - tiny. Very sort of...  
 ("what's the word?")  
 Incestuous? Incestual?

DANI  
 Depends on which of those you mean.

PELLE  
 Oh - ha! No: we're just very secluded...

Pelle pulls up a PHOTO on his phone. Shows it to Dani. It features a lush, impossibly green field. Young men and women stand about - all dressed like hippies in white.

DANI  
 Oh wow!

PELLE (CONT'D)  
 Yeah...we do our own thing. \*

DANI  
 Looks like a Swedish hippie  
 renaissance fair. \*  
 (noticing another photo) \*  
 Who's this one? \*

Dani is pointing out a photo of a YOUNG WOMAN (20s) in an impressive flower dress. (*We will later discover her to be Ulla.*) \*

PELLE  
 Ooh - that's last year's May Queen! \*

DANI  
 Beautiful. \*

A thoughtful pause before he asserts: \*

PELLE  
 You know, I think it's actually very  
 good you're coming.

DANI  
 Oh yeah? For who?

PELLE  
 For you! *And* for my family. I think  
 you'll be very...

Pelle weaves his fingers together, signifying a tight-knit connection. Dani smiles. Pelle PAUSES again, and his tone now CHANGES. He leans forward, *sensitively*:

PELLE (CONT'D)  
 You know...I never had the chance to  
 tell you, but I was really so very  
 sorry to hear about - your loss...

DANI  
 Oh...!

PELLE (CONT'D)  
 ...and what happened.  
 I can't even fathom. I mean,  
 I lost my parents too, so I  
 have some idea, but... \*

Dani looks cornered. TEARS have welled up in her eyes.

PELLE (CONT'D)  
 Oh, no. Sorry to bring it up!

DANI  
 No, I mean - thank you. I just...  
 I'm sorry.  
 (stands up suddenly)  
 I'll be right back. Bathroom. Thank you.

Dani rushes off. Pelle watches her with blank eyes.

Dani, stifling tears, enters the BATHROOM.

18 **INT. AIRPLANE LAVATORY (IN FLIGHT) - DAY - 2 WEEKS LATER** 18

Dani has entered an airplane's lavatory, stifling an oncoming deluge. After shutting the door behind her, she BREAKS DOWN in a fit of violent SOBS.

19 **INT. AIRPLANE (IN FLIGHT) - MINUTES LATER** 19

We are WIDE, looking down the length of the plane. We track forward, drifting over the heads of passengers.

In the b.g., Dani exits the lavatory and returns to her seat. Christian is seated beside her at the window. We have arrived at a PROFILE CU of them (the window in the b.g.).

Christian takes Dani's hand and smiles at her. It's clear she's been crying, but she hides it behind a determinedly casual "all is well" expression.

Christian goes along with the pretending, and looks out the WINDOW. We have begun a slow ZOOM past them, toward the window. The window soon FILLS the frame. We are flying over beautiful terrain. We have entered SWEDEN. *The captain announces this in Swedish over the intercom.*

\*  
 \*

21 **INT. RENTAL MINIVAN (MOVING) - DAY** 21

Our group, now in a rental minivan, drives through Stockholm traffic. Pelle is at the wheel. Mark sits passenger, holding a film theory book. In the back: Dani, Christian and Josh (who reads the *Poetic Edda*).

\*  
 \*

They pass a group of BEAUTIFUL BLONDE WOMEN.

MARK  
 (to Christian)  
 Holy God, the women here...!

\*

Christian, aware of Dani, gives a self-conscious half-nod. Dani happily pretends to ignore this.

MARK (CONT'D)  
 What is it that makes them hotter?

JOSH  
 The Vikings grabbed all the best babes from other countries and dragged them over.

\*  
 \*  
 \*

They have now pulled onto the FREEWAY - leaving Stockholm.

\*

DANI  
 How far are we driving?

PELLE  
Four hours, about.

MARK  
(exasperated)  
Oh my God.

21A

**INT. FREEWAY RENTAL MINIVAN (MOVING) - LATER - DAY**

\* 21A

Dani's phone VIBRATES, waking her up. She checks it...

\*

DANI'S PHONE: A friend has just posted on her Facebook page  
"Happy early birthday! Hope tomorrow is the best one yet!"

\*  
\*

Dani doesn't react. She looks to the side to notice a book on  
Josh's lap. *The Secret Nazi Language of the Uthark*. Its cover  
is a runic pattern.

\*  
\*  
\*

DANI  
Why are you reading that?

JOSH  
Ha. Ask Pelle.

\*  
\*

PELLE  
(accepting the cue)  
We're taught the runic alphabet in my  
village. Josh just carries that  
around to annoy me.

DANI  
(to Josh)  
What are you doing your thesis on, again?

JOSH  
Uhhhh - well! My focus is actually on  
European midsummer traditions. Which  
was basically the *impetus* behind this  
whole trip. I'm doing Germany and  
England after this.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

DANI  
(to Christian)  
That's similar to what you're thinking  
of doing - right? For your thesis?

\*

CHRISTIAN  
(tensely)  
Well, I don't know quite *what* I'm doing.  
(As you know.) But I'm thinking about  
rooting it in *something* Scandinavian.

DANI  
See that, Pelle? You've managed to  
brainwash all your friends.

PELLE  
Josh was already brainwashed when I  
found him.

JOSH  
(re: Pelle's acknowledgement)  
Thank you.

DISSOLVE TO:

\*

24 INT. RENTAL MINIVAN (MOVING) - TWO HOURS LATER \* 24

Pelle is still driving. Christian sleeps in the back. Everyone looks notably more tired. It's been a long drive.

They pass a sign announcing (in Swedish) that they have arrived in **Hälsingland**.

PELLE  
Entering Hälsingland!

24A EXT. LARGE GRASSY MEADOW - TEN MINUTES LATER \* 24A

Pelle idles up to a LARGE GRASSY MEADOW. It's lush, impossibly green, magical. About forty YOUNG PEOPLE (teens to twenties) lounge about. Tents and camping equipment abound. Many of the women are dressed in traditional white dresses and don floral garland crowns. Some of the men look like 19th century farmers, although most are dressed in modern clothes.

PELLE MARK  
Okay. So. These are younger people from my village, also returning from their trips outside - yes, like me - Like you. and so this is like a homecoming. Tonight we will hang out here - and get high. And get high. And tomorrow we go to the real thing.

Pelle parks the minivan in the field.

25 EXT. MEADOW - CONTINUOUS \* 25

They all emerge, yawning and stretching. Dani is mesmerized. Pelle WAVES to a bunch of people on the grass. They clearly know each other well. Pelle gestures for our group to follow him as he approaches a crowd of GIRLS.

GIRLS  
Pelle!!

We cut WIDE as Pelle happily introduces everyone.

Then, across the field, a merry Blonde Guy (25) calls out to Pelle. This is INGEMAR. \*

INGEMAR  
(in Swedish)  
Holy shit! Pelle!!

Pelle turns to Ingemar. His face LIGHTS UP, and he runs over to him. Dani, Christian, Mark and Josh follow.

INGEMAR (CONT'D)  
(in Swedish)  
Happy St. John's!

Pelle laughs. They hug.

INGEMAR (CONT'D)  
(in Swedish)  
Christ - you're so skinny! Where'd the rest of you go?

PELLE  
(in Swedish)  
Looks like you got it.

INGEMAR (CONT'D)  
(in Swedish)  
What the fuck? I look fatter?

PELLE  
Here: English. These are my great  
friends. Josh, Christian, Mark,  
Dani: meet my brother Ingemar. Best  
friend since we were babies.

\*

INGEMAR  
(recounting)  
Josh, Christian, Mark...Dani?  
(confirmed)  
Awesome! And say hello to *my* friends,  
Simon and Connie from London.

He gestures to an attractive British couple, CONNIE (24,  
skinny) and SIMON (26, spectacled, tattooed).

INGEMAR (CONT'D)  
Simon and Connie, this is Pelle  
and...all the names I just learned  
two seconds ago.

\*

SIMON  
Hey.

CONNIE  
Hello.

INGEMAR  
Perfect timing, by the way:

Ingemar pulls out a bag of MAGIC MUSHROOMS. Hands them to Pelle.

INGEMAR (CONT'D)  
We just took these five minutes ago.  
Haven't even started coming up yet.

MARK  
(overjoyed)  
Ohhh shit.

Mark grabs the bag from Pelle and studies the contents.

PELLE  
(to the group)  
Do you guys wanna take it  
now? Or should we settle in  
first?

MARK (CONT'D)  
Fuck it. Let's just take 'em.

DANI  
(to Christian)  
I think I might need to find my  
footing first.

CHRISTIAN  
Yeah. Of course.  
(quietly)  
And you know you don't *need* to take  
them. If you're feeling unsure.

DANI  
No, I just need to get settled.

CHRISTIAN  
Okay. Well. I'll wait for  
you.

DANI (CONT'D)  
No - go ahead!

CHRISTIAN  
No, I'll wait. We'll come up together.

Josh and Mark and Pelle have pulled their mushrooms from the bag. They look to Christian, ready to go.

PELLE  
Ready?

CHRISTIAN  
I'm waiting for Dani. You guys go on.

MARK  
Dude. We can't come up at different times. They'll be totally separate trips.

CHRISTIAN  
Then you can wait for us.

Mark looks frustrated - *angry* even.

DANI  
You know what? That's okay. I'm ready.

CHRISTIAN  
Baby. Don't feel rushed.

DANI  
I don't. I'm ready.

MARK  
(false concern)  
You sure?

DANI (CONT'D)  
(bluntly)  
Yeah, Mark, thanks.

INGEMAR  
They made mushroom tea if you prefer against the taste.

DANI  
(considers)  
Okay. Yeah. I'll have that. Thank you - Ingmar?

Ingemar smiles confirmation and goes to fetch her a mug of tea.

CHRISTIAN  
Don't let *Mark* pressure you. Of all people.

DANI (CONT'D)  
He's not. It'll get too complicated otherwise. It's fine.

Ingemar hands Dani her TEA.

PELLE  
(to Dani)  
Ready?

Dani, now holding the tea, nods yes.

PELLE (CONT'D)  
Okay. Here we go. Think happy thoughts!

They eat their shrooms. Dani hesitates before SIPPING the tea.

CHRISTIAN  
You okay?

DANI  
Yeah. It's good. I'm excited.

CHRISTIAN  
(still concerned)  
Cool. Me too.

25A **MINUTES LATER**

25A

Dani sits on the grass with Christian and Pelle. Mark is off to the side, stabbing at an ANT COLONY with a stick. Josh paces nearby. His stomach TURNS audibly.

JOSH  
Uggghhh, I really don't feel good.

Josh hunches over to RETCH.

MARK  
Don't puke, dude. Keep it down.

CHRISTIAN  
(to Dani)  
How are you feeling?

DANI  
A little like I have food poisoning.

PELLE  
Technically you do. It'll go away soon.

CHRISTIAN  
And you can throw it up if you need to.

25B **JUMP CUT** to Dani VOMITING into a bush. Christian stands near her. 25B

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)  
That's good, baby. It's okay. Throw it up.

Dani rises to take a breath.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)  
Does that feel better?

PELLE  
Don't worry - you had it down long enough. You're still gonna trip.

25C **EXT. LARGE GRASSY MEADOW - MINUTES LATER**

\* 25C

The group sits on the grass together. The sun is still shining.\*

CHRISTIAN  
What time is it?

PELLE  
Nine PM.

MARK  
(suddenly alarmed)  
What do you mean?!

PELLE  
What do you mean?

MARK  
That doesn't feel right.

PELLE  
Why? It's the midnight sun.

MARK (CONT'D)  
It doesn't *feel* like nine. I  
don't like that! It feels  
*wrong*. \*

A YOUNG MAN approaches.

CHRISTIAN  
Oh fuck. It's a new person.

MARK  
What? I don't *want* new  
people.

PELLE  
No - new people are good!

A happy Young Man walks past. This is VALENTIN. \*

VALENTIN  
Hey hey! \*

The group mumbles hello.

MARK  
I wanna lay down.

Mark lies down.

MARK (CONT'D)  
Oh my God. Lay down. Guys. It's so nice.

Everyone lies down. Except for Josh and Dani. *For the rest of  
the scene, our focus is on DANI - even as everyone else  
speaks.* \*

MARK (CONT'D)  
Lie down, Josh.

Josh doesn't. Stubborn.

PELLE  
Can you feel the energy come up  
from the earth? \*  
(then, noticing) \*  
And look: the trees, too - they're  
breathing! \*

Dani looks up. The trees *do* seem to be breathing - visibly \*  
swelling and deflating with psychedelic life. They LOOM IMPOSINGLY  
over Dani. They GROAN in the wind, their branches leaning (almost  
*reaching*) down. \*

Pelle, marveling at his surroundings, continues: \*

PELLE (CONT'D)  
Nature just knows *instinctually* how  
to stay in harmony! Everything  
mechanically doing its part. \*

MARK  
(emotional)  
You guys are my family.

The word "*family*" HITS Dani.



MARK (CONT'D)  
 I really *mean* that. You're like my  
 real actual *Family*.

Dani RISES to her knees, suddenly overwhelmed. Christian looks \*  
 to her. She looks to him. He SMILES, but there's something *false*  
 about it.

Dani looks SCARED now. This scares Christian.

CHRISTIAN  
 Dani? Don't look like that.

Dani STANDS, panic mounting. Her eyes look crazed.

DANI  
 I'm sorry. I'm gonna walk.

CHRISTIAN  
 I can walk, too.

DANI (CONT'D)  
 No no. Sorry. I'm gonna...

Dani starts to walk off, a terrible feeling rising in her.

JOSH  
 Is she mad at us?

MARK  
 I don't *like* how she did  
 that.

Dani continues to walk. She's starting to think very bad thoughts.

DANI  
 (to herself)  
 No, that's not good. No. No.

She then stumbles onto a group of mirthful YOUTHS - all \*  
 wearing flower garlands. They sit in a circle as a YOUNG \*  
 WOMAN (20s) plays guitar and sings *Så Lunka Vi Så Småningom* \*  
 in a silly voice (to the laughter of the others). They all \*  
 suddenly see Dani, the guitarist stops playing, and \*  
 then...they all BURST OUT LAUGHING. \*

Dani turns stiffly away, tears welling. \*

DANI (CONT'D)  
 No, no, no, no...

Dani tensely speed-walks away, looking down at the ground. Her \*  
 surroundings are THROBBING visibly (and more intensely than \*  
 before).

INGEMAR calls out to Dani.

INGEMAR  
 Hey! Dani!

Dani freezes. Terrified, she looks up in his direction. He \*  
 waves her over. He's standing with a few youths at a picnic \*  
 table. *Behind them, Connie is tending to Simon, who looks ill.* \*

Dani warily approaches.

INGEMAR (CONT'D)  
 How are you feeling? Everyone: this  
 is Pelle's friend, Dani.

Everyone says hi.

DANI  
They were laughing at me over there.

INGEMAR  
What? No, I'm *sure* they weren't.  
They probably just wanted you to  
laugh *with* them.

But Ingemar's face was MUTATING as he said that.

DANI  
(terrified, forcing a smile)  
Okay. Sorry. Never mind. Thank you.

Dani turns around and walks stiffly off.

DANI (CONT'D)  
(trying to turn it around)  
It's okay. It's not that. You're  
okay. It's *drugs*.

She continues toward a sturdy wooden OUTHOUSE. She hastily  
enters and SHUTS the door. \*

26

**INT. OUTHOUSE - CONTINUOUS**

26

The interior of the outhouse is pitch-dark. We hear Dani  
fumbling for a box of MATCHES. After rummaging, she STRIKES  
one match, and for the moment of the SPARK, we vaguely see  
TERRI (Dani's sister, duct tape over her mouth) in the dark  
behind Dani. When the light settles, that image disappears. \*

The outhouse, now illuminated by candle-light, is very clean  
and cramped. Dani stands here for a moment. \*

DANI  
This is a coffin.  
(immediately reprimanding herself)  
Hey! No *it's not*.

Dani sees a MIRROR on the wall. She looks at it. Hard.

DANI (CONT'D)  
Fuck you. Stop it.

Suddenly her skin seems to take on a translucent quality. Her  
veins become faintly visible. Beneath her cheeks, it looks  
like organic gears are turning.

DANI SQUEEZES HER EYES SHUT. She takes a moment, trying to  
will that vision away.

DANI (CONT'D)  
Don't look in the mirror. It's not  
your face.  
(saying that again, under scrutiny)  
"It's not your face."

After a long moment, Dani OPENS her eyes again. When they  
open, TEN ADDITIONAL EYES open simultaneously - all over her  
face. *Like spider eyes*.

Dani SCREAMS and FLEES the outhouse...

27 **EXT. OUTHOUSE - CONTINUOUS**

27

Dani runs frantically across the field, desperately wiping off her face (as if to wipe off the extra eyes). We CHASE AFTER HER before CUTTING TO:

28 **EXT. FIELD - SAME TIME**

28

Christian, Josh, Mark and Pelle are still lying in the same spot. They've hit the peak of their trip. Twilight is coming.

In the b.g., a group has finished setting up LARGE SPEAKERS.

CHRISTIAN  
Where did she go?

MARK  
It's okay.

JOSH  
(looking at his hands)  
Why the fuck do we have fingerprints?

Christian STANDS, panic starting to build.

CHRISTIAN  
Dani's gone. We need to find Dani.

JOSH  
I don't *feel* like standing.

MARK  
Yeah - I don't wanna move.

CHRISTIAN  
Hey! Dani's our friend!

MARK  
She isn't *all* of our friend.

CHRISTIAN  
What? Yes she is. That's not nice! Why aren't you ever nice?!  
You're being *mean!*

MARK (CONT'D)  
(scared by this)  
*What? I am nice.*  
(tearing up)  
*I'm not being mean!*

Droning techno begins to THROB from the speakers in the b.g. With every bass punch, the surrounding environment THUMPS visibly.

CHRISTIAN  
Dani's our *friend*. And she's *sad*.

MARK  
But that makes *me* sad!  
(suddenly angry)  
And she's *NOT* our friend! She's barely *YOUR* friend! You only invited her because you're too scared to be *honest* with her!

Christian pauses, FURIOUS, and then:

CHRISTIAN  
Her family is *dead*, Mark!

\*

MARK  
(suddenly terrified)  
Why are you saying that?

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)  
Because they are! They're *dead!*

MARK  
 Why???

JOSH  
 (insistent)  
*HEY! NO!* We need to connect back to the *good* things! This is getting bad! Everything's alive right now.

CHRISTIAN  
 But that's just so it can die later.

MARK  
 (getting sucked into darkness)  
 Oh God...!

PELLE  
 But then it gets reborn! Death is just shit fertilizing crops. Everything gets recycled and made new again.

Silence. Everyone looks at Pelle, catching up to what he just said. Christian STOMPS OFF.

MARK  
 Wait! Christian! We need to stay together!

29

**EXT. WOODS - SAME TIME**

29

Dani paces in the woods. Muffled techno drones in the distance.

DANI  
*Hello?!... HELLO??!!*  
 (redirecting her thoughts)  
 It's almost your birthday. Fuck. What time is it?  
 (then, PAUSES)  
 You were almost born... You're a baby.

This gets to Dani. She now looks around the woods, fearfully. Like a lost child.

DANI (CONT'D)  
 MOMMY?!... DADDY?!...  
 (silently to herself)  
 Mommy daddy mommy daddy...  
 (absolutely panicked now)  
*CHRISTIAN?!*

\*  
 \*  
 \*  
 \*

No answer.

DANI (CONT'D)  
 No...no.... You're alone.

Then it HITS Dani. Her eyes well intensely with tears. This idea is now horribly significant.

DANI (CONT'D)  
 (a revelation)  
*You're alone.*

Dani sees a DEAD RABBIT. Its innards are splayed.

Dani warily approaches. Magnetized but repulsed. As she nears, the FEAR rises in her. She gets close enough to finally see...

The rabbit is being devoured by ANTS.

Dani looks mortified, but her eyes are glued. She LEANS IN to look closer, but then -- she sees ANTS on her arm. (Whether they're there or not is unclear.)

Dani SCREAMS. She violently SLAPS at her arm. She then swipes at her other arm, and starts slapping at her NECK and FACE, as if she were engulfed in ants. (She's not.)

Dani looks down. The earth seems to now be a PULSATING CARPET OF ANTS.

Dani SCREAMS and RUNS for her life. As she sprints:

CHRISTIAN (O.S.)

Dani!

Dani FREEZES, eyes crazed.

DANI CHRISTIAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 ...Christian?! Dani!!

Dani searches desperately for his voice. She FINDS him standing at a CLEARING. She runs for him, crying.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)  
 Where the hell did you go?!

They EMBRACE. She hugs him. SQUEEZES him.

DANI CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)  
 I got lost. Let's go back to the group.

DANI  
 (still squeezing)  
 Christian. Nothing means anything.

CHRISTIAN  
 What?

DANI  
 (looking at him)  
 Nothing *means* anything! We're just alone.  
 (tearing up)  
 And I felt this presence - like God but *not* God - and it was *showing* me this and it was *laughing* at me. \*

CHRISTIAN DANI (CONT'D)  
 You heard laughing? I *felt* it laughing! I figured it out, that nothing means anything and we're all alone, and it was getting *pleasure* from that. \*

Christian is getting SCARED.

CHRISTIAN  
 Okay, just - calm down-- \*

DANI  
 Oh my God what the fuck is that?! \*

Dani is now pointing to a BIG TREE in the BG. SEVERAL BOAR CARCASSES HANG FROM ITS BRANCHES. Christian sees it, but instantly turns away - denying it. \*

CHRISTIAN (firmly) No. \*

He takes Dani's ARM - \*

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D) Fuck. Stop it. That wasn't real. We're going back to the friends. Fuck. \*

- and starts leading her away.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D) You're having a bad trip, and you're *thinking* you're alone because you went off and you *made* yourself alone. You just got *scared*.

He's now PULLING Dani, aggressively.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D) (not even looking at her) You have *me*. Everything's *connected*. We're all *one*. Those are the *good* things you're *supposed* to think about. We're all unified. *Fuck*. \*

Christian has been leading her out of the woods. They emerge onto the FIELD, where the droning techno is now very present (and making the visible surroundings THROB to its beat).

We track alongside Dani and Christian as they walk uneasily through the grass - past groups of happy, tripping strangers.

Christian's eyes are glued tensely to the ground, combating dark thoughts. Dani looks less frightened now than disconnected.

They arrive at Josh, Mark and Pelle, who are now accompanied by CONNIE, SIMON, INGEMAR and the BLONDE SWEDISH GUITARIST (20s), who is still holding her guitar. \*

BLONDE SWEDISH GUITARIST Hej hej! \*

MARK Where were you? PELLE How are you, Dani?

CHRISTIAN (insistent) We're fine. She's fine. Just took a little walk. \*

JOSH (excitedly) Did you see the trees with the dead boars hanging?!

DANI (to Pelle) I wanna sleep. How can I sleep?

29A

**EXT. LARGE GRASSY MEADOW - WOODS - HOURS LATER**

\* 29A

CLOSE-UP OF DANI'S SLEEPING FACE.

In the distance: a faint, barely discernible melody. *It sounds like a flute.* \*

A HAND reaches into frame to nudge Dani. She stirs awake.

CHRISTIAN (O.C.)  
It's time to get up.

DANI  
...how long was I asleep?

Dani sits up. It's still BRIGHT outside. The visual surroundings are no longer morphing. Mark and Pelle and Josh are standing. Christian is crouched beside her.

DANI (CONT'D)  
Did it get dark at all?

PELLE  
For a couple hours. Not completely.

Then something occurs to Dani:

DANI  
Is it tomorrow?

CHRISTIAN  
I mean...from yesterday's perspective. \*

Dani looks at Christian, whose expression is blank. She SINKS with quiet disappointment. (He forgot her birthday.) Christian helps Dani up. She wobbles.

DANI  
Where are we going?

PELLE  
Where we came for.

30

**EXT. WOODS - DAY**

30

Everyone from the meadow CRUNCHES through the woods. Our group is at the end of the queue (carrying their bags). As they walk, the MELODY is growing clearer and louder. It's a happy tune.

The group's footing is unsteady. Dani, especially, keeps stumbling over her own feet. She grips Christian's wrist.

MARK  
Not loving the come-down on these mushrooms. \*

Dani notices a few disparate FLOWERS sprouting up from the ground. As she walks, the flowers continue to accumulate. Soon she's walking down a controlled, narrow TRAIL of wild yellow flowers - all leading toward a CLEARING.

MARK (CONT'D)  
(starting to take large, paranoid steps)  
Does Sweden have ticks? Because I can't fucking get Lyme. \*

The group finally arrives at the clearing. It opens to another FIELD, beyond which is a **SMALL VILLAGE**. The melody is being played by a floutist, a fiddler and a key harpist. The scene is UTOPIC.

JOSH  
(mesmerized)  
This is the place?

PELLE  
(slightly tongue-in-cheek)  
The tranquil and majestic Hårga.

MARK (O.S.) \*  
I have two uncles with Lyme and \*  
believe me: it's not worth the \*  
pleasant picnic in the countryside. \*

They continue toward it, approaching a Hålsingegård (a farm). About a HUNDRED PEOPLE stand on the grass, waiting. They are dressed like farmers from a Swedish fairy tale. They appear to be a WELCOMING COMMITTEE. \*

MARK (O.S.) (CONT'D) \*  
Jesus Christ. It's nothing but \*  
fucking tall grass out here. \*

Josh, meanwhile, is manically taking photos with his smartphone. \*

31 **EXT. HÅRGA FARMSTEAD - CONTINUOUS**

31

They arrive at the FARMSTEAD. At the center is one particularly LARGE building in the shape of a barn; this is the MAIN HOUSE. Surrounding this are several houses, a horse stable, a temple, and different gardens. The windows and doorways are all adorned in ST. JOHN'S WORT (flowers with bright yellow petals and golden stamens). Beyond the farmstead are vast fields of CROPS.

Most of the arriving crowd is embraced *ecstatically* by the welcoming committee. They hug and kiss and squeal with excitement. It appears to be something of a REUNION. Pelle, in particular, is bombarded with affection. (Many of the arriving youths have ornamented robes/costumes thrown over them by the older people.) \*

Josh, Mark, Christian and Dani stand awkwardly through this. Some children walk up to them, to hand them wild strawberries on sticks. \*

CHRISTIAN \*  
(to Pelle) \*  
You know all these people? \*

PELLE \*  
These are my family! \*

In the distance is a towering MAYPOLE. Immense in height and width, it is entangled in lush green shrubbery and marked by a wealth of symbols (some runic, some more esoteric, all colorful). At the top of the pole is a TRIANGLE, beneath which hang two RINGS. \*

While some of the welcoming committee take bags from our group, Pelle brings a beautiful young woman over. \*



This is DAGNY (25). She wears a white dress with intricate embroidery (featuring distinct Pagan runes). \*

PELLE (CONT'D)

(in Swedish)

Dagny - this is Dani, Christian,  
Josh, Mark.

(in English, to the guys)

This is my sister Dagny. Born on the  
same exact week as me.

DAGNY

Välkommen till Hårga!

DANI

(attempting Swedish)

Tack!

JOSH/CHRISTIAN

Thank you!

Dagny smiles and walks off.

An older man, ODD (50s), approaches. He is wearing a dress.  
Pelle lights up at the sight of him.

PELLE

Father Odd!

ODD

Little Pelle!

They embrace. There is a moment where they rest their foreheads  
together. **(Note: throughout the film, the Hårgas will communicate  
little things through subtly modulated expressions and gestures.  
These are their AFFECTS, a language known only to them.)**

ODD (CONT'D)

(in Swedish)

How is the pilgrimage?

PELLE

(in Swedish)

Wonderful. Amazing.

(in English)

These are my friends - Christian,  
Mark, Josh, Dani...

Odd shakes their hands as Pelle introduces them.

ODD

Hello, hello...yes, hello, welcome.

(to Dani)

Welcome home!

He HUGS Dani.

DANI

(amused, but slightly  
weirded out)

Thank you.

ODD

We are very happy to have you! Pelle  
has an immaculate sense for people.

Pelle smiles.

DANI

I love what you're wearing.

ODD

Oh - my frock? Quite girly, no? Ha!  
 (explains)  
 We do this as a tribute: In respect  
 of Ymir and because of nature's,  
 em...  
 (blushes at bad English)  
 hermaphrodite?...qualities...?

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

JOSH

Oh! Like the cult of Aphroditus!  
 (then, remembering)  
 I think the sakhis saints do the  
 same thing, too - in Brajbhoomi?

\*

Odd masks his annoyance. He shines a tight-lipped SMILE at Josh.

\*

ODD

So! We're your hosts, yes?! So  
 whatever you need, you just say so and  
 we will accommodate! Today is all  
 festivities, yet tomorrow the *official*  
 ceremonies begin, and you are Welcome-  
 Welcome-Welcome. So enjoy!

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

They all say thanks and Odd walks happily away.

MARK

Nice guy.

The music suddenly gets LOUDER. Percussion is introduced, and the music swells to become a regal melody.

Everyone's attention moves to TEN GIRLS & BOYS (different ages - from 7 to 13), all dressed in identical white dresses and suits. They hold FLORAL GARLAND CROWNS (made of mugwort and vervain) and sprigs of LARKSPUR. They are walking single-file towards a PLATFORM...

\*  
\*  
\*

Sitting on the platform are TEN OLD MEN AND WOMEN (60s to early 70s). These are the ELDERS. They wear severe or neutral expressions, and are dressed in finely embroidered linen.

\*

The girls and boys march onto the platform. They each stop to the left of one of the seated elders. Upon a cue, they simultaneously lay the crowns onto the elders' heads. (*Two of the elders receive slightly larger crowns.*) They then hand the elders the larkspur sprigs. After this, the girls return bashfully to the crowd.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

One of the elders - a sturdy older woman (60s) - rises to address the crowd. The music drops out. She is beautiful, composed, elegant. This is SIV, the spokeswoman.

\*  
\*

SIV

(in Swedish)

Happy midsummer, all!

As she speaks, several children - all wearing outfits to distinguish them as waiters - pass out shot glasses of AQUAVIT. Our group receives this as they arrive.

\*  
\*

SIV (CONT'D)

Ni är så oerhört välkomna hit. Vi vill att ni är med och firar Midsommar med oss.

\*

(MORE)

SIV (CONT'D)

Ni får boende, mat och vara en del av det som är den största festen här hos oss i Hårga. Faktiskt den största på nästan hundra år.

She notices the non-Swedish speakers. \*

SIV (CONT'D) \*

Forgive me - I'm excluding the ones who aren't of Swedish tongue. Welcome to Hårga, and happy midsummer! I believe it is the hottest and brightest that we've had in at least a decade, and this is our biggest party in almost a century! So - wow, yah?

JOSH/DANI/CHRISTIAN/CONNIE

(as if solicited)

Yeah. Wow.

Siv smiles, and proceeds to wrap it up.

SIV

All right, my fellow merrymakers. Without any further blathering - let's raise our glasses -

Everyone raises their aquavit. \*

SIV (CONT'D)

- and let our Nine-Day Feast commence! (announcing) \*

Skål!

EVERYONE

Skål!!

The crowd drinks. Everyone CHEERS. Including our group. The MUSIC begins again.

On one side of the platform: A young GIRL, also wearing an embroidered white dress, walks up with a JUNIPER BOUGH in each hand. She is accompanied by a TEENAGE BOY, who holds two FLAMING TORCHES. Meanwhile, two of the ELDERS (72) have risen from their seats. These are YLVA and DAN. They are the elders with the larger crowns. They move off the stage. \*

Siv now speaks in English, presumably for our group's benefit. (As she does this, the young girl and teen boy hand the elderly men a juniper bough and flaming stick.) \*

SIV

And now, in keeping with tradition: Ylva and Dan will make three trips. If they return with the flame intact, our vintage will be abundant this year! Alternately, if it burns out - that will be an omen of bad luck and we will know to prepare. \*

Josh turns to Pelle.

JOSH

What does "bad luck" mean?

PELLE

Usually that the cattle will get sick. \*

Siv yells in Swedish to the air. "*Back to the dead, spirits!*" \*

JOSH  
(to Pelle)  
What did she just say? \*

PELLE  
Told any lingering spirits to go  
back to the dead. \*

The two large-crowned elders, now BLINDFOLDED, begin to run  
around the Main House, holding up their flaming  
sticks. (Everyone watches, rapt.) They pick up the pace to  
finish their first cycle around the house. They then begins  
circling it again. \*

JOSH  
(to Pelle)  
Can I take photos? \*

PELLE  
(winks)  
Discretely. \*

The elders finish their second cycle around the house, and  
immediately begin a *third*. The community seems to be holding  
its collective breath. The elders FINISH the third run-around  
to reveal that Ylva's fire is still burning, *but...* Dan's  
flame has been EXTINGUISHED. \*

A man in the audience, ISAK (50s), lets out a GASP when he  
sees this. Everyone else sinks audibly with disappointment. \*

The elders, having finished, remove their blindfold. The elder  
with the extinguished torch DEFLATES. Siv gestures sadly to  
the crowd: "*There we have it.*" \*

Isak looks absolutely devastated. Christian's eyes are on him. \*

CHRISTIAN  
(to Pelle)  
He okay? \*

PELLE  
Haha. The cattle are his responsibility. \*

Isak's eyes stare off, unblinking. Heartbroken. He looks to  
the CATTLE HOUSE, eyes filling with tears. \*

MARK  
(to Pelle and Christian)  
How do you think he'd react if I just  
put my finger in his butt right now?

Continuing the ritual, Siv takes the torches from the elders  
and walks to a healthy FIRE in a pit (this fire is *always*  
burning; never to be allowed to extinguish). \*

PELLE  
(to Josh and Christian)  
That fire hasn't burned out since  
before I was born. It's all of our  
jobs to keep it going. \*

Siv deposits the sticks into the fire. \*

SIV  
(in Swedish)  
This high my fire, but no  
higher, no hotter!

PELLE (CONT'D)  
(translating)  
Uh - this high is my fire,  
but not higher or hotter.  
(explaining)  
It's to keep the fire from  
growing out of control.

Josh WRITES this down in his notebook. Christian WATCHES  
Josh, slightly perturbed.

Siv now accepts a BOWL OF BEER from one of the children. She  
drinks a healthy gulp, and then throws the rest into the fire.  
Everyone now APPLAUDS, clapping silently. *This seems to be the  
end of the ritual.*

31A

**EXT. HÄRGA FARMSTEAD - MINUTES LATER**

\* 31A

A group of TEENAGERS (all dressed in bright, formal garb)  
emerge from a kitchen. They carry PLATES OF FOOD (lamb and  
blood pudding) and BEER. They begin by serving the elders.

Dani sees that one of the teens is carrying an ornate platter  
featuring a LAMB'S SKULL (brain exposed) and a LAMB'S HEART.  
The platter is bordered by a dense spiral of INTESTINES. This  
is laid onto the center of a table that has been painstakingly  
decorated with local flowers.

PELLE  
That's a tradition. They just  
killed that lamb today.

One server dumps a generous plate of food into the fire. \*

Other servers now move to our group, which has settled onto  
the grass. They are handed plates and beers. \*

DANI  
(to Pelle)  
Can we help at all?

PELLE (CONT'D)  
No no. You're the guests. Let  
yourselves be spoiled. \*

One boy, RUBEN (15), walks up to Dani. He is severely mentally  
handicapped and his face is horribly deformed. He's dressed in  
gorgeous linen. \*

RUBEN  
(with difficulty)  
Hej hej!

DANI  
(shocked)  
Oh! \*

Ruben walks off. As he ambles aimlessly, people reach out to  
lovingly TOUCH him - as if in reverence.

PELLE  
You just met Ruben. \*

MAR (O.S.)  
I'm sure he's got a great personality. \*

The teens finish serving. They now sit with plates of their own.

Mark has already started eating. Josh NUDGES him. Nobody else  
has begun. Mark bashfully sets down his fork.

Silence.

Siv, the matriarch, looks to a jolly elder, STEN (60s), sitting beside her. He stands, takes a moment, and then SINGS a brief song to the air, as if in PRAYER. \*

PELLE  
(whispering to Josh and Christian)  
He's giving thanks.

JOSH For the food? PELLE (CONT'D) Yes. And the weather, and the crops...

Sten finishes his song, and then announces: \*

STEN  
Låt oss äta! \*

Everyone digs in.

CHRISTIAN  
Was that praying? \*

PELLE  
Uh - maybe not "praying." But he was just addressing the...everything. The harmony and the balance. \*

JOSH  
Can you translate what was sung? \*

PELLE ...I can get an translation from *him* later. CHRISTIAN (jumping in) Yeah, please, that would be amazing. \*

JOSH  
(eyes now burning on Christian)  
...Yes, Pelle, thank you.

Christian looks at Josh. A CHARGED moment. They start eating.

32 INT. BATHROOM - DAY \* 32

A beautiful, long-haired girl (16) stands before a mirror, anxiously fussing with her hair. She needs it to look perfect. This is MAJA. \*

33 EXT. HÅRGA FARMSTEAD - MINUTES LATER 33

Maja emerges from the MAIN HOUSE. All the younger Hårgans have joined hands to form a train of people. They run and dance in a long chain ("the long dance"), singing a variation of an old midsummer song. The MAYPOLE stands at the center of their circle. \*

Maja timidly watches the dance, smiling. Her eyes trail off to find our group. She alights on CHRISTIAN, instantly smitten. *It almost looks like she recognizes him.*

One of the dancing boys suddenly GRABS Maja's hand. He PULLS her into the train. She LAUGHS as she joins, being pulled suddenly into a HUMAN TUNNEL. \*

33A

EXT. HÅRGA FARMSTEAD - MEANWHILE

\* 33A

**MEANWHILE:** Our group is still sitting in the same place (along with Connie and Ingemar). They watch the passing dancers with fascination.

PELLE  
You guys should join!

DANI  
I'm too scared.

SIMON approaches, carrying two beers. He momentarily gets caught in the crossfire of a group of YOUNG BOYS CHASING EACH OTHER. He finally reaches Connie, and hands her a beer.

SIMON  
Alright?  
CONNIE  
Ta.

Simon sits.

SIMON  
(re: the boys)  
What are *they* playing?

PELLE  
"Skin the fool!"

CONNIE  
*Skin* the fool?

SIMON  
(sarcastic)  
Precious.

\*  
\*

\*

Dani notices Ingemar STARING at Simon and Connie. He looks resentful. He finally averts his eyes and forces a smile.

MAJA, in the dancing train, is about to pass the group. She summons the nerve to gently KICK Christian's back. Christian looks up to see Maja passing by. She SMILES bashfully at him. He confusedly smiles back.

Dani notices Christian smiling, but doesn't see Maja (who has already turned away).

Christian RISES, suddenly feeling bold.

CHRISTIAN  
(to Pelle)  
How can I join the...?  
PELLE  
You're American. Just jam yourself in there.

Christian uneasily JUMPS IN. He joins hands with two girls. Josh rises to follow Christian. Dani's EYES follow them.

\*

Pelle takes this opportunity to turn covertly to Dani:

PELLE (CONT'D)  
Hey: very quick:

He hands her a folded up DRAWING.

PELLE (CONT'D)  
Happy birthday.

Dani, surprised, opens the paper. It's a drawing of her FACE (donned with an extremely lush floral crown). The style is simple, but her likeness is captured beautifully. \*  
\*  
\*

DANI  
Oh - my gosh. Pelle!

PELLE  
It's just something I do for birthdays. Maybe it's not appropriate?

DANI (CONT'D)  
Oh my God, not at all! It's wonderful. Thank you, Pelle. I'm so touched.

PELLE  
Anyway. Just between us.

DANI  
Yeah, well - don't worry. Christian forgot.

Pelle PAUSES, surprised. He doesn't know what to say.

DANI (CONT'D)  
(immediately regretting)  
Or - I forgot to remind him. It doesn't matter. Thank you so much for this, Pelle. It's beautiful.

She folds the drawing back up.

34 **EXT. HÅRGA FIELD - MINUTES LATER**

34

The dance is over, although separate groups are still dancing and playing in the b.g.

Pelle is now leading our group on a TOUR. (Ingemar, Connie and Simon have joined along.) We track alongside.

JOSH  
How do you guys support this place?

PELLE  
Lumbering, linen, homeopathics...

INGEMAR  
Water power plant. \*

They pass a CIRCLE OF CHILDREN, accompanied by a teacher (Dan). \*  
They're carving RUNIC SYMBOLS into smooth BONES. \*

PELLE  
Schooltime over here.

CHRISTIAN  
Carving runes? \*

Dan takes a break from teaching to look up and smile confirmation. \*

PELLE  
(to Dani)  
Then they put it under their pillow and dream about its power. \*

Dani makes an "ooh" face. Josh makes a NOTE of this.



Christian sees that they're now passing an old RUNESTONE (on their other side). It stands erect in an untended field.

CHRISTIAN  
Oh man - there's a serious one.

JOSH  
Oh shit!

CHRISTIAN  
Which alphabet is that from?

JOSH  
(quick to answer)  
Looks like the younger Futhark.  
(to Pelle)  
Right? Or is that medieval?

\*

INGEMAR  
That's actually the *Elder* Futhark.

\*

Josh nods "*Ah, right*" - visibly pained to be wrong.

CONNIE  
(to Christian and Dani)  
So, how long've you two been together?

DANI  
Oh, jeez...almost three years now!

CHRISTIAN  
(gently correcting)  
Two and half.

\*

DANI  
(serious pause)  
You're joking. It'll be three in fifteen days.

\*

\*

Christian thinks about that, and grudgingly concedes.

CHRISTIAN  
Okay, no, that *is* true.  
(off Dani's look)  
It is! You're absolutely right.

He makes a "*sowwy*" face, kisses her incredulous cheek, and changes the subject by asking Simon, Connie and Ingemar:

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)  
How did you guys all meet?

They look at each other. "Who answers?"

INGEMAR  
Well...we were all working on the same farm, and funny enough: *I* was dating Connie when Simon and me first became pals.

\*

Simon's eyes narrow. Connie looks very confused.

\*

CONNIE  
(correcting)  
Well - we'd been on a date. Which I wasn't even actually aware that it was a date.

INGEMAR  
(backtracking jovially)  
Right, no, I meant that Connie and me  
had just become friends - we decided to  
be friends - and that was just before  
Connie and *Simon* started dating. And  
*now they're engaged!*

DANI  
Oh wow. Congratulations.

INGEMAR (CONT'D)  
Which is amazing. Yes.  
Congratulations.

Simon and Connie look uncomfortable. They smile "thank you."

SIMON  
(to Dani)  
We've actually asked Ingemar to  
officiate the wedding.

DANI  
(excited)  
You did?

SIMON  
Nope!

Everybody LAUGHS - including Ingemar.

Christian points out a GIANT TRIANGULAR HOUSE which stands  
isolated in a large field. It has been painted a vivid  
yellow. (Two teen boys hang out beside it.)

CHRISTIAN  
What about *that* house?

PELLE  
Ah, that's like a sacred temple. No  
one's allowed in there.

CHRISTIAN  
Looks like it was just built.

MARK  
(mock sinister tune)  
*Ooooweeeyoooooh.*

Changing the subject, Pelle motions toward the MAIN HOUSE.

PELLE  
Let me show you where we sleep!

He leads them toward it. Meanwhile, Ingemar leads Simon and  
Connie in another direction.

INGEMAR  
Here: come see the Rotvälta!

Our group walks off into the BG, and as they go, Ingemar and  
his crew walk profile in the MG. We follow alongside them. On  
their way, they pass a CAGED BEAR (which our group is also  
passing with curiosity in the BG).

SIMON

So we're just gonna ignore the bear, then.

INGEMAR

(acknowledging, deadpan)

That's a bear.

Connie sees a LONG CARPET that has been hung up (horizontally) on a clothesline in the FG. She approaches to check it out. Simon follows.

CONNIE

This is fucking cool.

Continuing the lateral track, we move slowly along it (having now become Connie's POV). In a series of seven panels, the carpet dramatizes the following...

- 1) A love-stricken girl in a server outfit (profile) stares longingly, with hearts for eyes, at a boy sitting frontal..
- 2) The girl in a large field, walking backwards as she gathers flowers.
- 3) **A dual-panel, first depicting:** The girl laying flowers under her pillow. **And then:** the girl asleep, dreaming about the boy. A dream bubble hovers over her head. Inside of it: the girl and the boy (with spiraling eyes) are kissing at their wedding.
- 4) The girl in the kitchen. She crouches over a coffee cup and drips menstrual blood into the cup.
- 5) **A triple panel, first depicting:** The girl snips off her pubic hairs, **then** a close-up of the pubic hair being snipped, **and then** the girl mixing the disparate hairs into pancake batter.
- 6) The girl handing the boy the pancake as he drinks the coffee.
- 7) The boy's face, spirals for eyes.
- 8) The boy kisses the girl, who is now pregnant in a wedding dress. They both have hearts for eyes.

SIMON (O.S.)

Wait. Is she dripping period blood into the drink?

CONNIE (O.S.)

How do you think I nailed you down?

We have passed the carpet to see our group arriving at the Main House in the BG.

35

**INT. THE MAIN HOUSE - MINUTES LATER**

35

Josh leads our group through the two-storied interior of the huge, barn-shaped house. There is a large, square HOLE in the floor of the second story (so both stories are visible to each other). On both floors, the walls are lined with BEDS. The center of the bottom story is bare, like a dance floor.

Pelle points out four small beds.

PELLE

These'll be yours.

Mark throws his bag onto one of them.

The group marvels at the walls, which are covered in INTRICATE \*  
 MURALS. Runic letters abound. The CEILING is especially \*  
 impressive. \*

CHRISTIAN \*

Who all sleeps in here? \*

PELLE \*

All the younger ones. Until we turn \*  
 thirty-two. Then we move to the \*  
 laborer's house. \*

JOSH \*

Why thirty-two? \*

Josh has pulled out his NOTEPAD, ready to write down Pelle's \*  
 answer. Christian (almost in response) pulls out his phone, \*  
 ready to type. Pelle PAUSES at this. He then explains, \*  
 gesturing to a MURAL that dramatizes the following: \*

PELLE \*

We think of life like the seasons. \*  
 You are a child until 16, and \*  
 that's the Spring. At some point we \*  
 all do our Pilgrimage, and that's \*  
 between 17 and 32. That is Summer. \*  
 Then, from 33 to 52, you're of \*  
 working age, which is Fall. And \*  
 finally from 53 to 72, you become a \*  
 mentor. \*

Josh and Christian have written all this down - their eyes \*  
 intermittently piercing each other. (Josh finishes with "53- \*  
 72 -- Mentor -- WINTER".) \*

DANI \*

What happens when you turn 72, \*  
 then? \*

Pelle makes a comical THROAT SLASH gesture. Dani laughs, and \*  
 begins to walk off. \*

CHRISTIAN

MARK

Not a lot of privacy. What do \*  
 you do when you need to jerk \*  
 off? \*

Or give yourself an enema. \*

Now that Dani is away, Pelle crosses quietly to Christian. *He* \*  
*covertly ushers him aside.* \*

Dani has found a wall of many FRAMED PHOTOGRAPHS. They all \*  
 feature a different young woman dressed in ceremonial garb. \*  
 In each photo, the woman is richly adorned in summer flowers \*  
 and wears an impressive FLORAL CROWN. These photos have been \*  
 taken annually for the last dozen years. \*

Dani looks over to notice Pelle still talking to Christian, \*  
 who now has one hand behind his back. He looks extremely \*  
 GUILTY. She interrupts by bluntly asking: \*

DANI \*

Are these the May Queens? \*

PELLE  
 Oh - that's right! You'll actually  
 be here for that.

JOSH  
 Who are the "May Queens"?

PELLE  
 Every midsummer we have a dance  
 competition and the winner gets  
 crowned.

A PRETTY BRUNETTE (25) steps up to the door:

PRETTY BRUNETTE  
 (announcing, in Swedish)  
 The children are watching *Austin  
 Powers* if you choose to join. Field  
 five.

She looks to Mark, SMILES bashfully and waves. She then  
 leaves.

MARK  
 Wait a minute. Did you just see  
 that?

Christian, hand behind his back, now sneaks over to Dani.

CHRISTIAN  
 Hey. Can I just pull you...?

Christian ushers her gently out of the front door. They move  
 to the **Front Steps**. Beyond them, four women (all different  
 ages) are gathered closely as they SING SOFTLY  
 ("*heydihrudi...*") to a crying baby. Struck by this, Dani  
 watches this for a second. As she does so, Christian produces  
 a SOCKERKAKA (sponge cake) from behind his back. A candle  
 protrudes.

DANI  
 (confused)  
 What?

CHRISTIAN  
 Happy birthday.

He struggles to light the candle with a bad lighter. He  
 finally succeeds.

DANI  
 Where did that come from?

CHRISTIAN  
 I've been trying to find a time to  
 surprise you all day.

Dani just looks at him with utter suspicion.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)  
 What? You thought I forgot?

Christian finally RELENTS with a guilty smile: \*

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D) \*  
 I'm sorry. I'm *really* sorry. I \*  
 didn't know it was tomorrow \*  
 already. With the sun. \*

He kisses her. She doesn't kiss back. He keeps kissing. \*

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D) DANII  
 Happy birthday, happy Fine. It's fine.  
 birthday, I'm sorry. I'm not upset.  
 - You *should* be. - *I know I should!*

He kisses her again, tenderly. She grudgingly kisses back. \*  
*The baby is still crying in the BG.* \*

CHRISTIAN \*  
 Happy birthday, mouse. \*

She forces a tight smile and BLOWS OUT the candle. \*

38 **EXT. VILLAGE - "NIGHT"** \* 38

A high angle wide of the village. Almost everyone, save for \*  
 some stragglers, are inside. The sun is low, looking like \*  
 evening (but we are past midnight). \*

38A **INT. THE MAIN HOUSE - SAME TIME** \* 38A

The windows have been boarded up for the night. Soft sunlight \*  
 peeks from the edges. \*

People are climbing into their beds. The baby is still CRYING, \*  
 now in his CRIB, which is stationed near the beds of women in \*  
 their twenties. The crib is made of severe-looking iron and \*  
 metal. One woman lays a PAIR OF SCISSORS under the baby's \*  
 mattress. \*

Dani, noticing this, looks inquiringly to Pelle. \*

PELLE \*  
 The iron keeps away the "invisibles." So \*  
 the babies don't get "changed."

Pelle smiles sardonically, knowing how it sounds.

DANI  
 How real is that stuff for you guys?

PELLE \*  
 (deflecting)  
 Ah, who knows? \*

Dani smiles. She looks over to Christian, whose eyes are GLUED \*  
 TENSELY to Josh's notepad as he scrawls "*Iron. Babies changed.* \*  
*'Invisibles.'*" Christian looks threatened.

Pelle has already climbed into bed.

PELLE (CONT'D)  
 All right - beauty rest! Tomorrow's  
 a big day.

JOSH  
And what's tomorrow?

PELLE  
(mysterious)  
First of the big ceremonies. \*

Bemused, Josh looks dead-eyed at Pelle. Waiting for more. \*

Pelle PAUSES, then takes Josh's notepad. He writes "Ättestupan" and hands it back.

Josh happens to know that word. His eyes WIDEN. "Are you serious?" Pelle smiles mischievously.

CHRISTIAN  
What's that? What's Ättestupan? \*

Pelle gestures for Christian to keep his voice down. Christian pulls out his phone and types "Atestupan" into a search engine. But there's no internet connection.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)  
Fuck.  
(to Josh and Pelle)  
What's Ättestupan?

Josh smugly climbs into bed. This has made Dani nervous.

DANI  
(to Josh)  
Is it scary?

Josh teasingly raises his eyebrows: "You'll see."

MARK (O.S.)  
Christian: do you wanna check my scalp  
for ticks and then I can check your  
scalp? \*

39 **INT. THE MAIN HOUSE - "NIGHT"**

39

Everyone is asleep. Silence, save for the baby's CRYING.

Dani lies AWAKE. Beside her: Christian sleeping soundly. To her other side: Mark SNORING.

Dani shifts her weight. She looks over at the wall mural, and notices an ILLUSTRATION of a HAPPY MAN OPENING HIS WRIST WITH A SPECIAL KNIFE. He is surrounded by smiling friends, and above him, a smiling SUN. Dani looks unnerved, but her attention is suddenly DRAWN AWAY by the SOUND of...

A teenaged BOY and GIRL (clearly new lovers) sneak quietly out of their beds. Giggling. They tip-toe out of the house, careful to make no noise.

Dani stares at this. Heavy. \*

42 **EXT. FIELD - MORNING**

42

In an open field, a group of WOMEN collect the morning DEW (in small vials) from the leaves and grass. They throw a SHEET over the wet grass. It absorbs the dew, and they WRING it out into a pail. \*

We TRACK ACROSS this, finally panning away to find...several men are setting up DINING TABLES in the BG, the fire temple just beyond them. They are laying the tables out to form a runic pattern. \*

We continue panning past this to find a large GROUP that has assembled for what appears to be some sort of DANCE CLASS (we see them in a medium wide, gently pulling back). They stand in rows of ten. At the head of the class is YLVA, one of the elders who carried the torch around the house. In demonstration, she lifts her arm and waves it fluidly, rhythmically, EMOTIONALLY, back and forth. (This is accompanied by a Hårgan, OSKAR, who sings a wordless emotion-based song - not dissimilar to speaking in tongues. The dance is inspired by this song.) The class IMITATES the dancer. They strive to perfectly match her movements and emotions. (*Josh watches raptly in the BG.*) \*

Finally, we've pulled back far enough to reveal Dani's shoulder in the FG. She's watching the dance class, having just woken up. She then turns to look around, marvelling at the structure of the community around her. She SITS DOWN cross-legged, being mindful to soak it in. \*

43

**EXT. FARMSTEAD - ONE HOUR LATER**

43

The dining tables have been set up to form a RUNE (representing the "cultivation of art, soul and craft"). \*

Half of the community is already standing at the tables. The other half is arriving now. Plates of food have already been placed. No one sits. \*

OUR GROUP (minus Dani) arrives at one of the tables. They gaze around, trying to understand the etiquette. They notice that a few lingering GIRLS walk backwards through a neighboring field, picking FLOWERS. \*

MARK  
Someone should tell those girls  
that they're walking stupid. \*

DANI now appears with a bouquet of HANDPICKED FLOWERS. She happily presents Christian with the bouquet.

CHRISTIAN  
What?! For me? \*

DANI  
Ja! \*

CHRISTIAN  
(accepting them with strained  
appreciation)  
...Tack så mycket. \*

He kisses her cheek.

Now that everyone is stationed at the tables, a BOY runs off to officially summon the guests of honor by ringing a BELL at the end of a table. \*

After a moment, TWO ELDERS (72), both wearing ornate golden dresses, enter the scene. \*



(We will recognize them as Dan and Ylva, the elders who ran around the Main House with the flaming torches.) They stand with alert posture, maintaining an awareness of their bodies as they walk. They arrive at TWO LARGE WOODEN CHAIRS, situated at the head of a beautifully decorated table with fine silverware and golden plates. (Every other table seats at least five people, but this table has been reserved solely for these two.)

Josh mouths to Pelle: "Are those the ones?" Pelle smiles.

The two men SIT. This prompts everyone else to sit.

Mark picks up his fork, only to notice that no one else has begun eating. Everyone waits patiently. Total SILENCE, save for the baby who is still crying.

Finally, the two men pick up their silverware and begin to eat. Now everyone starts eating.

Josh is scrutinizing every detail. Christian scrutinizes Josh.

43A

**EXT. FARMSTEEAD - MID-MEAL**

\* 43A

MAJA feverishly carves a small RUNE STONE in her lap. She is hunched over to conceal her progress from curious eyes.

The two elders are receiving lots of attention. \*

Next to Dani, a blonde woman, KARIN (20s), cradles the CRYING BABY. She rests her forehead against the baby's forehead and moans empathically. She notices Dani watching this, and she turns and SMILES. \*

DANI	KARIN	
(catching herself)		
Oh, God, I'm sorry. I was gawking.	No no...	*

DANI		
Is your baby okay?		*

KARIN		
Oh, she will be. She has the, em - rickets? Where the bones are bad? She is not "mine," though.		*

DANI	BLONDE WOMAN	
Oh, I'm sorry to presume!	No no - her birth mother is on pilgrimage. It helps them to detach. The babies are raised here by everyone.	*

Dani smiles at this idea. Josh and Christian are also taken by this. Josh SEES Christian's excitement, and quietly HARDENS.

KARIN		
(to Dani)		
How is your family like?		*

DANI		
Mine? Oh no, mine are...		*

Dani makes a comic throat-slashing gesture, recalling Pelle's; she then instantly feels guilty about it. *Christian suddenly looks nervous about this exchange.* \*

KARIN  
Oh no! I'm so sorry. All of them? \*

Karin already has TEARS welling in her eyes. She looks sincerely affected by this. \*

DANI  
(reacting)  
Oh God, no, I'm sorry. I shouldn't have said. We're enjoying our food.

KARIN  
(now worried for Dani)  
Am I making you sad to ask? \*

DANI  
No, not at all! I just shouldn't have mentioned it. \*

BLONDE WOMAN  
Please know we can talk if you like. Please. I am *happy* to talk.

DANI (CONT'D)  
(uncomfortable)  
Okay, thank you. Sorry. I feel silly. Thank you.  
(to Christian)  
Sorry.

Christian shrugs: "Don't apologize to *me*."

SIV, a table over, has been avidly watching this exchange.

43B

**EXT. FARMSTEAD - MID MEAL - MINUTES LATER**

\* 43B

Everyone has finished eating. Another HUSH falls awkwardly over the procession. Silence, save for the wailing baby.

Mark, half-asleep, confusedly looks around. He sees the Pretty Brunette (from earlier) SMILING at him. Caught off guard, he BLUSHES and smiles back (a little too eagerly). \*

One of the two elders STANDS. This is YLVA. She clears her throat. Closes her eyes. After a moment, Ylva begins to SING a wordless, choral song. \*

Everyone watches, rapt and emotional.

At the appropriate time, the other man (DAN) begins to sing along, softly and awkwardly at first. Soon he rises, singing with greater projection. When the song comes to a finish, SIV stands to RAISE her glass. This prompts everyone else to stand. They *all* raise their aquavit. \*

A long silence. Siv finally DRINKS. So does everyone else. The MUSICIANS begin to play their handmade instruments, and EIGHT MIDDLE-AGED MEN break into two groups. They walk to either of the elder's chairs, HOIST them up, and start CARRYING THEM OFF. \*

The congregation follows behind as the elevated elders are carried up a hill. Our group JOINS them, confused. Mark lags behind. \*

MARK  
 (to the group)  
 I'm gonna take a nap. My head feels  
 like a sewage blimp.

\*  
 \*

Mark heads back toward the Main House. Dani, Christian, Josh and Pelle proceed to follow the community.

44

**EXT. HILL - MINUTES LATER**

44

Everyone happily follows the elders of honor (still carried on hoisted thrones). They follow a narrow TRAIL OF FLOWERS up a hill.

\*

There is a FORK in the trail, leading either *to the left and downward* or continuing *straight ahead and upward*.

Ylva and Dan are carried straight ahead, continuing to ascend the rising hill. The following procession BRANCHES OFF to veer left. They continue down a slope that leads to the valley of a cliff.

\*  
 \*  
 \*

Our group, squinting with curiosity, begins following the procession toward the valley. But Pelle slows down.

\*

PELLE  
 Okay - actually:

\*

He holds them back.

PELLE (CONT'D)  
 I need to warn you before we go down...  
 (to Dani now)  
 ...because you could not *want* to.

\*

DANI  
 Is this the thing you mentioned  
 last night?

\*  
 \*

JOSH  
 (smirking)  
 Ättestupan.

\*

PELLE  
 We're about to perform a centuries-old ritual that is very important to us and very beautiful, but also - very far from anything you have in America.

\*  
 \*

DANI  
 (suddenly nervous)  
 ...Do I not want to do this?

\*

PELLE  
 Well - that's what I'm saying. You're *invited* to. I just...  
 (pauses)  
 You remember I explained the winter stage of a man's life? 53 to 72? Well, *this* is what happens when 72 gets reached.

\*  
 \*  
 \*

DANI  
 Okay. And what is "this"?

Pelle pauses, considering his words. Dani grows more nervous.

DANI (CONT'D)  
What is Ättestupan?

Josh can't suppress a smile - anticipating Pelle's answer. \*

45 **EXT. VALLEY - MINUTES LATER** \*

45

The community has gathered on the rocky valley. Tall CLIFFS loom imposingly. The baby cries in the BG. \*

Our group stands to the side, along with Simon, Connie and Ingemar. Christian turns to DANI, who looks extremely uneasy. \*

CHRISTIAN  
Are you sure you can handle this?

Dani doesn't know the answer to this.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)  
Maybe you should go back to the main house? It's not too late.

Dani starts to wrestle with this, but then:

DANI  
No. I need to try.

A HORN sounds. All eyes go to...

SIV, the Matriarch, holds a WOOD-BOUND BOOK whose cover is marked by runic letters. She opens it and reads in silence for a moment. Its scripture is written in runes and unknown hieroglyphs (the AFFECT language). \*

JOSH  
(to Pelle, whispering)  
What's that book?

Christian leans in to hear the whispered answer: \*

PELLE  
*Rubi Radr*. Our scripture.

JOSH  
Can I read that? \*

PELLE  
You would not be able.

CU of *Rubi Radr*'s pages, as held open by Siv. They are indeed indecipherable to common eyes. \*

Siv, eyes on the page, surprises our group by beginning to SING a wordless hymn. It's beautiful, yet feels improvised, as if inspired (on the spot) by emotions provoked by the text. \*

46 **EXT. CLIFF - SAME TIME**

46

The two elders have been carried to the top of a CLIFF overlooking the beach. Their chairs are SET DOWN near the precipice. They are placed beside freshly carved (and impressively sized) RUNE STONES. \*

The elders rise from their seats and then stoically put out their hands. Specially ordained men then draw CEREMONIAL BLADES across their palms, DRAWING BLOOD. \*

Ylva and Dan rub their palms together, making their hands nice and bloody. They press their palms onto their rune stones, both leaving TWO BLOODY HAND-PRINTS. \*

45A

**EXT. BEACH - SAME TIME**

45A

Everyone looks up at the cliff's peak. Dani is SWEATING BEADS now, her breathing erratic.

Finally, the TWO ELDERS appear at the edge. \*

Rapt silence.

Ylva stands there for a long time. \*

Mesmerized, Josh steps slowly to the side (away from Dani and Christian) to get a better look. His eyes are glued to the cliff-top. \*

Ylva, having now summoned total confidence, assumes a GRAND POSE, twisting her arms and legs into a standing fetal position, and extending her neck/head into a glorious reach for the heavens. This pose represents a final statement, and it has the power of one. \*

Dani BRACES herself. Her TEETH begin to chatter. She GRABS Christian's arm, and then --

Ylva LEAPS OFF THE PRECIPICE. Connie and Simon SCREAM. The woman plummets 200 feet to LAND FATALLY on the jagged rocks below. Upon impact, a FLOCK OF BIRDS ALIGHTS from a tree. Connie SCREAMS. \*

Our group is shocked into horrified silence. *Dani looks like she's been knocked out of her body.* The birds fly over Dani's head, and a sudden rush courses through her.

Disassociated, Dani turns to look at Connie and Simon, who are freaking out. \*

Then Christian points upward, redirecting Dani's dazed attention to the cliff-top. Dani's EYES scan back up to see... \*

DAN - *the elder whose torch burnt out before circling the house three times* - is now stepping up to the precipice. He also strikes a POSE, also reaching for the awesome, but his is slightly clumsier. He wobbles, but he holds the pose. While holding it, he turns to look down...at Dani. \*

SIMON  
(panicking)  
*What's happening? Is he gonna jump, too? No--*

Dan LAUNCHES HIMSELF OFF THE CLIFF, jumping vertically. Connie GASPS. Dan plummets straight down, but his left foot lands on the large rock that killed Ylva. This obliterates his leg and sends him falling brutally to his side. Dan, unfortunately not dead, WAILS in horrible pain. \*

The community grumbles with concern. Everyone turns to THREE MEN - each the oldest of their respective generations (the youths, the laborers, and the mentors). They understand what they must do. \*

SIMON (CONT'D)  
 Why did that just happen? We need to call an ambulance.

INGEMAR  
 It's okay.

SIMON (CONT'D)  
*What's okay?! CALL AN AMBULANCE!* Everybody's just watching!

Sten approaches the three men with a CUDGEL. This is a long-handled club with a pointed block of wood at the end. The cudgel is handed over to the MENTOR. \*

Dani watches, overwhelmed, as the three men (now armed with the cudgel) stalk over to Dan. The dying man moans pathetically, in too much pain to scream. \*

From DANI'S POV: The men have arrived at Dan's feet. The mentor RAISES the cudgel, and brutally swings it down onto Dan's HEAD. This isn't a fatal blow. The man raises the cudgel again, and this time he STRIKES Dan with enough force to silence him. \*

The mentor hands the cudgel to the LABORER. He raises the cudgel and brings it down onto the old man's crown. The elder's leg goes into pathetic SPASMS. Blood gurgling. The laborer BLUDGEONS him once more. Dan goes limp, probably dead. \*

The YOUTH is now handed the cudgel. He delivers two brutal swings to Dan's head. The mentor gently takes the cudgel away from the youth, and they all return to the community. The mentor hands Sten the cudgel, and everyone stands in respectful, contemplative silence. \*

Dani is GRIPPING Christian's arm. She is completely shell-shocked. Christian turns to Josh; they exchange "holy shit" looks. More EXCITED than troubled.

Siv bounds over to Connie and Simon, who are in a panic. *Dani trembles, powder-white. Traumatized.*

SIV  
 Ingemar! Did you not warn them?

INGEMAR  
 I'm sorry, grandmother Siv! I kind of warned them.

SIMON  
*Nobody did anything! Everyone just watched that!*

SIV  
 Oh my, poor things--

SIMON (CONT'D)  
*You're all just standing calmly around!!*

SIV  
 Oh, mercy - please--

Siv tries to lay an empathic hand on Simon and Connie's shoulder, but Simon RECOILS. \*

SIV (CONT'D) SIMON  
 You should have been warned  
*better*. What you just saw is  
 a long, long, *long* observed  
 custom. Those two men have Custom?!  
 just reached the end of their \*  
 life-cycle.

Siv now looks into DANI'S eyes, but Dani is in a daze. *She* \*  
*seems to have been knocked into a dissociative state.* Siv \*  
 speaks quickly to avoid being interrupted. \*

SIV  
 You must understand it as a great joy \*  
 for them. And when it is *my* turn, it \*  
 will be great joy for me. \*  
 (back to Simon and Connie)  
 We view life like a circle. Yes? A re- \*  
 cycle. One thing falls and another \*  
 raises. The first lady who jumped: her \*  
 name was Ylva. Yes? \*

Siv points to a PREGNANT WOMAN:

SIV (CONT'D)  
 That baby, who is not yet born, \*  
 will inherit this name and also be \*  
 Ylva. And if it's a boy, he will \*  
 take the name of Dan. \*

Dani gazes at Siv, who has taken on a strange ETHEREAL GLOW  
 (like an angel).

SIV (CONT'D)  
 But instead of getting old and dying \*  
 with shame and pain and *fear*, we give \*  
 our life. As a *gesture*. Out of \*  
*gratefulness*. Before it can *spoil*. \*

Siv releases Simon and Connie, who are no less fraught. Siv  
 now addresses the whole group.

SIV (CONT'D)  
 It does no good to die lashing back \*  
 at the inevitable. It corrupts the \*  
 spirit. \*

INGEMAR  
 (to Simon and Connie)  
 I'm sorry I did not warn you better.

48

**EXT. FIELD - DAY**

48

Everyone is walking back from the beach. JOSH rushes feverishly  
 toward the Main House. Christian's eyes are trained on him as  
 he moves to Dani, who looks destroyed.

CHRISTIAN  
 You okay, sweetie? \*

DANI  
 (branching off)  
 I need to not be here right now.

CHRISTIAN  
 Okay. Good idea. I'll find you in a  
 bit?

\*  
 \*

Dani walks off, addled. Christian ACCELERATES to follow Josh.

49 **EXT. FIELD - MOMENTS LATER**

\* 49

Dani's walk speeds into a SPRINT. Once out of sight, she  
 stops behind the triangular temple, now HYPERVENTILATING. She  
 tries to steady her breath, but it's too erratic. She breaks  
 down into violent SOBS. These are interrupted by a shrill  
 RETCH.

\*  
 \*

49A **EXT. STAGE - SAME TIME**

\* 49A

Two Hårgan men remove two stools from the stage (those  
 belonging to Ylva and Dan) and rearrange the remaining stools.

\*  
 \*

In the BG, Josh arrives at the Main House and enters.

\*

50 **INT. THE MAIN HOUSE - SECONDS LATER**

\* 50

Josh anxiously pulls his LAPTOP from his backpack. He sits on  
 the mattress as the computer boots up.

\*

Christian enters awkwardly - eyes on Josh. He appears to be  
 summoning the courage to say something.

CHRISTIAN  
 Hey dude...

JOSH  
 Hey!  
 (excitedly)  
 Holy shit, right?

\*

CHRISTIAN JOSH (CONT'D)  
 Holy shit. Incredible. Incredible!

\*

Christian works up the nerve:

CHRISTIAN  
 So listen: I've been wanting to ask you,  
 or tell you, or just - *mention* to you  
 something I've been thinking about...

Josh looks up. He DARKENS with concern.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)  
 I've just been *thinking*, and I've  
*decided*...I really think I wanna do my  
 thesis *here*. On Hårga.

\*

Josh doesn't react. Christian nervously continues:

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)  
 And I wanted to tell you *first*, so that  
 it didn't seem like I *wasn't* telling you.

JOSH  
 I feel like I can't tell if you're joking.

Christian doesn't respond. Josh becomes incredulous.



JOSH (CONT'D) \*  
 (barely containing his rage)  
 You know I'm out here doing my thesis,  
on *midsummer*. That's why I'm here.

CHRISTIAN  
 Yeah, but not on *this* community.

Josh's eyes BURN on Christian. Christian maintains an \*  
 innocent demeanor. \*

JOSH  
 ...You knew I was gonna want to do this.

CHRISTIAN	JOSH (CONT'D)
How would I know that?	Oh my God, Christian, of
Did <u>you</u> even know that before	<i>course</i> you did!
I just told you?	

JOSH (CONT'D) \*  
 You think I don't know what you're  
 doing? It's actually kind of *outrageously*  
 unsubtle. The fact that you're being  
 this *bald* about it. I'm honestly  
 impressed.

CHRISTIAN  
 What the *fuck*?

JOSH  
 Oh, yeah - "What the fuck."  
 (seething)  
*This is what I've been working towards*  
*and you know it.* That's why you look so \*  
 guilty right now. Because you know - \*  
 you know - that what you're doing is  
 unethical and leechy and lazy and  
 frankly kind of *sad*--

CHRISTIAN	JOSH (CONT'D)
Okay, wow, fuck you--	No dude, not fuck me! Find
	your <i>own</i> subject - or your
	<i>own passion</i> . Because I'm
	<i>actually</i> invested in this.
	It's not some glorified hobby
	that I'm casually dipping my
	feet into.

CHRISTIAN \*  
 Oh my *God!* In case you forgot, Your \*  
 Highness, we're *both* earning the  
 same degree--

JOSH \*  
 But we're not doing it in the same way,  
 Christian. Okay? I have to hold your \*  
 little hand through everything. You \*  
 didn't even know how to use J-Stor before  
 I taught you, and you're a fucking *grad*  
 student. I mean, why are you even *in*  
 academia? You don't care! Which is *fine!*  
 That's your prerogative! Just don't  
 appropriate my *actual* work for your new  
 shortcut!

This cuts Christian like a knife. His eyes are flaring with RAGE. But he stifles it. Determined to remain collected, he concludes:

CHRISTIAN

I wanna do my thesis here. If you want to as well, I'd be happy to discuss collaborating. If not, I guess we'll have two separate theses on the Hårgas.

Christian leaves.

Josh sits motionless.

51

**EXT. FARMSTEAD - CONTINUOUS**

51

A very pale SIMON smokes a cigarette near the door, talking quietly to Connie. \*

SIMON

I can't stay here four more days, I'm sorry.

CONNIE

That's fine. I can't, either. \*

Christian emerges from the Main House, extremely tense. Simon sees his demeanor. \*

SIMON

We feel the same way, mate. \*

Fuming, Christian just acknowledges Simon with a tight-lipped smile. Looking out, he then notices in the FIELD: several men and women are decorating a TREE that has been pulled from the earth and is now elevated on its side. Among the decorators he sees MAJA, working with her friend ULLA (28). They laugh as they work. \*

Christian gestures "excuse me" to Simon, and approaches Maja. As he walks toward her, he passes several other people working in the BG. \*

CHRISTIAN

Excuse me? Hi. Sorry to bother you... \*

Maja looks up - not understanding. She looks almost panicked.

MAJA

(not sure of the word)  
Hello. \*

CHRISTIAN

I'm Christian. \*

Ulla insert herself: \*

YOUNG WOMAN

Hello. I am Ulla. She is Maja. \*

CHRISTIAN

Hi Ulla. Maja. I, uh -- What are you guys doing? \*

ULLA

Decorating the tree! \*

Christian tries to ignore that Maja is staring at him with wide eyes. *Some of the working men also stare.*

CHRISTIAN

I was wondering, uh, if I could ask -  
 (pulls out pen and paper)  
 - how many of those Attestupans you guys have seen performed.

ULLA

Every time one reaches age.

CHRISTIAN

Okay...

ULLA (CONT'D)

So lots.

CHRISTIAN

Right. Okay. And you don't have, like, a typical mourning period? For grieving?

ULLA

We grieve *and* celebrate.

Maja is still staring at Christian, love-stricken. He is aware of it, but tries to ignore.

ULLA (CONT'D)

We must go now and keep work going.

CHRISTIAN

Okay. No problem. Thank you. I might find you to ask more later?

Ulla smiles "okay" and walks off with Maja. They wave goodbye.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

Goodbye.  
 (to Maja)  
 'Bye Maja.

Maja smiles timidly and waves goodbye again.

MAJA

(turning away)  
 Hello.

Christian smiles and turns. His smile evaporates, however, when he sees...

JOSH is standing near the stage, talking to PELLE.

JOSH

And I told Christian this already, and now I think he's trying to pretend that it was *his* idea, so if he comes to you--

PELLE

Well, no, hey, wait a minute: I seriously doubt the elders will approve of *anything* being written. They're extremely protective..

JOSH  
 So I can just use aliases for  
 everything. Solved.

PELLE  
 Then what would be the *point*? You  
 couldn't even get it peer reviewed.  
 (before Josh can argue)  
 Christian *did* already ask me this,  
 by the way. I told him the exact  
 thing I'm telling you.

JOSH  
 ...I thought you just said he  
 hadn't talked to you.

PELLE  
 (annoyed)  
 Fuck, look: I'll ask the elders.  
 Okay? But if it *is* approved, you  
 either *both* do it together or you  
 fight it out between yourselves.

Pelle puts his hands up to signify "*That's it.*" He walks off.

51A **EXT. FIRE PIT - "EVENING"**

The corpses of Ylva and Dan are carried (by Hårgan men) to  
 the everlasting fire pit. They are lowered carefully onto the  
 flames. Hårgans stand soberly about, respectful.

52 **EXT. MEADOW - "EVENING"**

Dani sits cross-legged near the lake. Her eyes are closed.  
 She's trying to meditate, but her breathing is still unstable.

Christian appears behind her.

CHRISTIAN  
 Hey.

Dani's eyes open with a start. She turns to him.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)  
 How we doing?

DANI  
 I can't stop fucking shaking and my  
*teeth* keep chattering.

CHRISTIAN  
 I can imagine. Today was a  
 lot.

DANI (CONT'D)  
 Feels like the neck on my  
*skin* is getting tighter. Like  
 I'm *choking*.

Dani pulls at her neck. Christian puts a hand on her  
 shoulder.

CHRISTIAN  
 You gonna be okay?

DANI  
 (looking up at him)  
*Are you just not at all disturbed  
 by what happened?*

CHRISTIAN  
 I mean, of course, it was *shocking*.  
 But I'm also trying to keep an open  
 mind.

Dani just stares at him.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)  
 It's - *cultural*. We abandon our  
 elderly to nursing homes. I'm sure  
 they find that disturbing.

Dani EYES him, disturbed by his nonchalance. She then sees...

In the b.g., a congregation of MEN and WOMEN (all holding  
 lanterns) are migrating off together. At the front of the  
 queue are men carrying the BEJEWELLED TREE (which we saw the  
 men decorating earlier).

DAGNY, whom we met earlier, splits from the group to RUN over  
 to Dani and Christian.

DAGNY  
 Hello! Do you like to joining us  
 with a special ceremony?

DANI  
*Why? What's happening now?*

DAGNY  
 It is only special.

DANI  
 (to Christian, whispering)  
*I can't do another thing.*

Dani looks to the queue, fraught. Among the line-up is an  
 equally unnerved CONNIE.

CHRISTIAN (O.S.)  
 It's okay. We can brave it together.

53

**EXT. MEADOW - MOMENTS LATER**

53

Dani (pulling again at her neck, *still feeling claustrophobic  
 in her own skin*) and Christian uneasily join Connie and Simon  
 among the migrating crowd. They're approaching a LAKE, which  
 seems to GLOW in the distance.

DANI  
 Did they tell you what this is?

CONNIE  
 (shakes head)  
 Someone better not be launching off  
 another fucking cliff.

Christian sees MARK behind them, and slows down to join him. \*

CHRISTIAN \*  
Nice nap? \*

MARK \*  
(whispering) \*  
The Elvira girl behind us keeps \*  
giving me sex eyes, but she speaks \*  
like zero English. \*

Mark is talking about the PRETTY BRUNETTE from earlier. She \*  
walks behind them (a few bodies away). Christian turns to \*  
look. \*

MARK (CONT'D) \*  
No, dude, I didn't say "look." \*  
Don't fucking announce it. \*

Christian turns back. \*

MARK (CONT'D) \*  
Anyway, I love her deeply. \*

CHRISTIAN \*  
(can't help himself) \*  
Don't you fuckin' kinda hate Josh? \*

56

**EXT. LAKE - SAME TIME** \* 56

Everyone arrives at a lake. Trees at the short have been \*  
decorated with lanterns, and torches glow at the opposite \*  
side of the water. At the lake's center, NINE BURNING TORCHES \*  
protrude from a BUOY atop the water. \*

Siv walks up to a mystified Dani and Connie. \*

SIV \*  
Do you admire the Brisinga-smycket? \*

CONNIE \*  
The lanterns? \*

SIV \*  
Glädje's necklace. We give it now to \*  
her mother, Kärlek, as praise for \*  
creating our sun. \*

Dani and Connie don't understand, nor do they inquire \*  
further. Siv laughs, seeing their confusion. \*

SIV (CONT'D) \*  
(to Connie) \*  
Think of it like theatre. Strictly \*  
presentational. Yes? \*

Dani placates her by nodding. Siv smiles. \*

HARD CUT TO: \*

56A

**MINUTES LATER**

\* 56A

A BELL is rung. Everyone's attention has gone to the front of the lake. *Dani looks extremely nervous.*

IRMA stands at the center of the shore. She SINGS a brief wordless song and then announces to the lake:

IRMA  
(in Swedish)  
In thanks and praise, Great  
Goddess, we bestow upon you this  
modest gift.

Music is played as the men HOIST up the lavishly decorated tree, run it towards the lake, and HURL it into the water. The lake gulps the tree down.

A HORN bellows.

A thin man, SVEN (40s), steps out to announce, quite theatrically:

SVEN  
(in Swedish)  
Oh no! Did you hear that rumbling?  
I think she is still hungry.

IRMA  
(in Swedish)  
I heard no rumbling.  
(to the crowd)  
Did any of you?

Grumblings all around. The consensus is "no."

SVEN  
(in Swedish)  
Ah, well - I suppose it could have  
been my own belly.

Some polite laughter among the congregation.

SVEN (CONT'D)  
(in Swedish)  
But I do not wish to risk offending  
our generous Mother.

IRMA  
(in Swedish)  
Nor do I. Yet we have already given  
our finest jewels and most fruitful  
tree. What else could we possibly  
offer?

Then a YOUNG BOY (10) is heard among the crowd. This is BROR.

BROR (O.S.)  
(in Swedish)  
You can use me!

The crowd OPENS UP to reveal Bror. He is adorned in the same jewels and flowers as the tree. His costume is an *imitation* of the tree's. He is clearly reciting lines (with less confidence than Sven and Irma). \*

IRMA  
(in Swedish)  
You, young Bror, wish to offer your life to our beloved Goddess? \*

BROR  
(in Swedish)  
If She will have it. \*

SVEN  
(in Swedish)  
How brave you are, little Bror! \*

BROR  
(in Swedish)  
Brave? What is brave in going home? \*

Horns are played as Bror steps forward to stand before the men who tossed the tree. They reluctantly strap WEIGHTS to the boy's ankles and arms. They then lift the boy up and carry him to the lake. \*

Dani starts to PANIC. \*

DANI  
(to Siv)  
*No. What's happening?* \*

Siv SMILES. \*

The boy is taken to the edge of the lake, and the men begin to SWING him back and forth. *They are preparing to launch him into the water.* \*

DANI (CONT'D)  
NO!!! \*

This mingles with other protestations from the crowd: \*

HÅRGAN #1 (in Swedish)	HÅRGAN #2 (in Swedish)
No! Don't!	Leave him be! He has shown his bravery!

The crowd erupts into a CACOPHONY OF STAGED PROTEST ("*No! Release him!*"). The men stop swinging the boy. After sufficient heckling, the men RELEASE the boy. He then runs to SIV, bashfully burying his face into her dress. She pats his head with pride. \*

Everyone APPLAUDS. The performance seems to be over. Dani looks completely disoriented. \*

Connie, who has now been joined by Simon, turns to Siv. \*



CONNIE  
So, is this just like a Wiccan  
thing??

\*  
\*  
\*

SIV  
(confused at first)  
Wicca? Oh my dear no! This is about  
*reciprocity*.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

Connie, wild eyed, looks unsatisfied.

\*

SIV (CONT'D)  
Strictly presentational.

\*  
\*

Dani still looks crazed. She turns to find CHRISTIAN, who (in  
contrast) looks very amused.

\*  
\*

59

**EXT. FIELD - MINUTES LATER**

59

Dani has pulled Christian to a secluded spot. She is very high-  
strung. In the b.g., the Hårgas' WATER POWER PLANT is visible.

DANI  
Please Christian - we need to leave.  
This is feeling really wrong.

CHRISTIAN  
Okay: look: I know it's weird. That's  
because it's alien. We haven't ever  
been *exposed* to anything like this.

DANI  
No, Christian: this is pagan  
nature worship. This is  
completely backwards. We  
shouldn't be here.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)  
We just need to acclimate--

DANI  
I don't want to acclimate! I want to leave.

CHRISTIAN  
Baby, I cannot leave right now. Period.  
I'm doing my thesis on these guys--

DANI  
*What? Since when?!*

CHRISTIAN  
Since I decided! Today. Which you *know*  
has been a nightmare for me to figure  
out. And I made the mistake of telling  
Josh and now he's *competing* with me--

DANI  
So let him *have* it if he  
wants it! We shouldn't *be*  
here, Christian.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

No, hey - have you even *seen*  
what's happening here?! This  
level of tradition? And  
nobody *knows* about it,  
nobody's *written* on it - and  
they've invited us to be *part*  
of it! Can't you see what a  
privilege that is?!

But why *have* they invited us?  
And why did *Pelle*?!

Because Pelle did!  
Because he trusts us!

DANI  
And why would he trust *you*, of all  
people? You're opportunistic  
anthropology students.

CHRISTIAN  
Maybe *because* we're  
anthropologists. Maybe they  
want someone to document  
this.

DANI (CONT'D)

Oh my God, are you *blind*?  
They're performing pagan  
rituals! People are jumping  
off cliffs. They *depend* on  
nobody knowing about this!

\*

CHRISTIAN  
(stubborn)  
Not necessarily.

Dani HESITATES, seeing that she's getting nowhere.

DANI  
I want to leave.

CHRISTIAN  
Then you can leave. I invited you to  
come, and I don't regret that, but  
I'm here for a reason.

Beat. Christian's eyes are ice cold.

DANI  
...Do you not love me anymore?

CHRISTIAN  
(momentarily stunned)  
What does *that* have to do with this?

DANI  
(almost to herself)  
This is the devaluation phase. We've  
been in it for a long time now. Next  
comes the discard.

CHRISTIAN  
Oh fuck - can we maybe spare our  
relationship your textbook  
psychology keywords?

\*  
\*  
\*

DANI

No - this has been happening for a long time! You've been pulling away. And *I've* been in denial.

\*

CHRISTIAN

(finished)

Oh, *please* - give yourself some credit, babe. Looks to me like you've got it *all* figured out.

\*

\*

Christian turns to walk away, but then he STOPS. He turns back to Dani, suddenly furious.

\*

\*

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

Actually, you know what? I'm just gonna say something. When you casually gift me a bouquet of impromptu flowers, all *I* wonder is how and when I'm supposed to pay that *back*.

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

DANI

(genuinely baffled)

*What? What flowers?!*

(suddenly remembers)

At *lunch??* I grabbed those on a *whim!*

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

CHRISTIAN

Oh yeah?  
You have no ulterior motives?  
On the day after your birthday? When I didn't get you flowers?? Everything you *give* me is like a reminder that I didn't get you something!

DANI (CONT'D)

*Yes!*

What *motives* would I have?

\*

DANI (CONT'D)

(incredulous)

Are you serious?

\*

\*

\*

CHRISTIAN

Yeah, fine - *see?* Play the wounded party again. You're just this self-denying altruist and I'm a paranoid dick. You don't have a conniving bone in your body!

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

DANI

And what is it that you imagine I'm *conniving?*

\*

\*

\*

CHRISTIAN

You *are*, Dani! I feel like I'm being locked into your *debt* every time you do something "*just because.*" 'Cause it's never just because.

DANI (CONT'D)

I don't do *anything* to "keep you in my *debt*"! I'm just trying to be kind to you!

\*

CHRISTIAN  
Fine, great - so never mind. You're  
right. *I'm* the asshole.

\*  
\*  
\*

DANI  
Nobody's the asshole!

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)  
No, I *clearly* am! You  
selflessly give me flowers  
and I feel trapped. Fuck. I'm  
supposed to be *WORKING* here!

\*

Christian turns and STORMS away.

DANI  
Oh my God. You're gonna walk away  
now??

\*

As he leaves, she cries out:

DANI (CONT'D)  
You're just gonna leave me like this?!

60 **INT. THE MAIN HOUSE - "NIGHT"**

60

People are closing the shutters, bringing the Main House into  
darkness. \*

Dani enters with sunken eyes. Christian's already in bed. Staring  
at him, Dani walks to JOSH. (She is pulling at her neck again.)

DANI  
Do you have a sleeping pill?

JOSH  
Sure. Uh...

Josh fishes a PILL out of his bag.

JOSH (CONT'D) DANII  
They're intense, though. You I just need to sleep.  
might wanna cut it in half.

She swallows it whole.

61 **INT. THE MAIN HOUSE - "NIGHT"**

61

Silence. Everyone is asleep, including Dani.

There is RUSTLING heard off-screen. Dani WAKES. She sits up  
to see...

Christian's bed is now EMPTY. So is Mark's bed. And Josh's.

Concerned, Dani looks to the DOOR. Mark, Josh, Pelle and  
Christian are quietly tip-toeing out of the house. They  
GIGGLE. Christian is the last to exit.

Confused, Dani climbs out of bed. She rushes to the door.

Dani looks OUTSIDE to see that the group is now inside the  
RENTAL MINIVAN, which is IDLING off. Pelle drives, SMILING. \*  
Christian, in the back seat, looks down at his lap, ignoring \*  
Dani. MARK ROUNDS TO THE BACK WINDOW, SMILING GIDDILY AT DANI \*  
as they drive away.

Dani watches this in utter horror.

The diminishing car's TAILPIPE belches thick black smoke.

Dani opens her mouth in anguish. An impossible amount of BLACK SMOKE (the same color as that from the tailpipe) escapes her lungs, FILLING the frame, and then--

We SLAM to a HARSH **INSERT** of the GORED FACE of the second Elder who jumped off the cliff. He GASPS wretchedly.

We then PUNCH OUT, *wider*, to reveal that the dashed bodies on the rocks are DANI'S PARENTS and her SISTER. We then CUT TO:

62 **INT. THE MAIN HOUSE - "NIGHT"**

62

Dani is ASLEEP in bed. The last scene was a DREAM. Her eyelids twitch as she continues to suffer the nightmare.

We pan away from Dani to reveal that MAJA, several beds over, is AWAKE. She anxiously fingers a freshly carved RUNE STONE. Her eyes are GLUED to Christian, who is fast asleep.

Maja climbs out of bed and tip-toes to Christian's bed. She crouches to SLIDE the rune stone under his mattress. She then runs nervously back to her bed. *Poking out from under her pillow are seven different flowers.*

\*  
\*

JOSH, whom we now reveal to be awake, has been watching this.

63 **INT. THE MAIN HOUSE - NEXT MORNING**

\* 63

All of the beds are now empty, and morning activity is heard outside. Dani, however, is still asleep.

\*

63A **EXT. FIRE PIT - MORNING**

\* 63A

The corpses of the elders (Ylva and Dan) are no longer visible in the fire. Two Hårgan MEN reach underneath the fire pit to pull out a TRAY (stationed below the pit). This catches all of the fire's ASHES, which fall through small holes in the pit.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

64 **EXT. BOOKBINDING HOUSE - MORNING**

\* 64

In the BG, the men from the last scene carry the ash tray over to a massive ROTVÄLTA (a fallen tree whose root system is exposed). The earth around the rotvälta is particularly ASHEN. The men ceremoniously scatter the ashes across the pale, chalky ground.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

We pull back from this to reveal PELLE tending to the garden.

\*

Josh, accompanied by Mark (holding two cups of juice), approaches Pelle. Watching this, Christian lingers in the BG. ***Even deeper in the BG are two ceremonially dressed men, surrounded by onlookers. They chop a straw goat into three sections, celebrated by silent clapping.***

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

JOSH  
Hey man. Any word?

\*  
\*

Pelle looks up to see Josh. He SIGHS and rises.

\*

PELLE  
 They said you can do it as long as you *absolutely* don't use names and the location is never even *hinted* at and you'll have to sign an agreement to that.

JOSH (CONT'D)  
 (nodding, excited)  
 Okay. Wow. Okay.

Josh can't contain his glee. \*

PELLE  
 And you split it with Christian. \*  
 Because he came to me first. \*

JOSH  
 Well, that's -- We'll figure that out. \*

Mark notices in the distance: WOMEN picking flowers. Among them: the BRUNETTE he has a crush on. She is laughing with her friends. \*

JOSH (CONT'D)  
 (to Pelle)  
 Here: can I ask you something? \*

MARK  
 I'm gonna take a leak. \*

Mark walks off. *We see the brunette noticing him as he goes.* (Beyond her, one of the straw goat choppers has walked up to a hole in the earth. He kneels down to lay the straw goat head into the hole. He then sprinkles different herbs into it and starts filling the hole back up with dirt.) Josh pulls Maja's RUNE STONE out of his pocket. \*

JOSH  
 I found this under Christian's bed. \*  
 Do you know what this is? \*

PELLE  
 (looking over it)  
 Love rune. It casts a love spell. \*

CHRISTIAN walks over. *Just behind him, THREE ANIMALS are led across the field by specially dressed Hårgans.* Josh CONCEALS the rune. \*

CHRISTIAN  
 What's going on? \*

PELLE  
 The elders said you can do your thesis as long as you don't use actual names or location. \*

CHRISTIAN  
 Holy shit. That's incredible. Thank you so much.

PELLE (CONT'D)  
 You're splitting it with Josh.

CHRISTIAN  
 (as if Josh isn't there)  
 I already told him that's totally  
 fine with me.

Pelle notices Christian glancing over at Maja.

PELLE  
 I think my sister Maja has taken a  
 liking to you.

CHRISTIAN  
 Oh. Yeah. I think I noticed.

*Having now covered the hole, the man in the BG rises to pour  
 a small bottom of animal blood onto the earth.*

PELLE  
 (raising eyebrows)  
 You know, she just got her byxmyndig.

CHRISTIAN  
 Ha. What's that?

PELLE  
 It means -  
 (smiling at the silly  
 expression)  
 - "pants license"? When you turn  
 sixteen, you're allowed to have sex.

BEARDED MAN (O.S.)  
 NEJ!!!

Christian and Pelle and Josh FREEZE. This came from a BEARDED  
 MAN (40s) who is now bounding past them. This is ULF. He is  
 running toward the Rotvälta (where the recently deceased  
 elders' ashes were scattered). MARK is standing behind it,  
 urinating. *His two juice cups are resting on top of the giant  
 fallen tree.* When he sees Ulf, his urine stream CEASES.

ULF  
 (in Swedish)  
 WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! STOP IT! GET  
 AWAY!

Mark, looking stupefied, is FROZEN.

ULF (CONT'D)  
 (in Swedish)  
 Put your disgusting dick away! How  
 dare you!

Mark zips back up, utterly confounded. He steps out from  
 behind the tree, but is still standing on the ashes.

ULF (CONT'D)  
 (in Swedish)  
 GET FUCKING OFF! GET OFF!

Not understanding, Mark hesitantly steps away, leaving the  
 ashen area.

ULF (CONT'D)  
 (in Swedish)  
*These are our ancestors! You're  
 pissing on our ancestors!*

People have started gathering around.

MARK  
 What's wrong? What did I do?

Pelle (and Christian and Josh) have run over.

PELLE  
*What happened?*

ULF  
 (in Swedish, disgusted)  
 Your little American friend. He's  
 pissed on the Rotvälta!

PELLE  
 (gasps, in Swedish)  
 I'm so sorry, Father Ulf! He  
 didn't know.

MARK  
 What happened? What did I do?

PELLE  
 You were peeing on the ancestral  
 tree.

MARK  
 The tree? So what? I'm sorry. "SO WHAT?!"

MARK  
 What?! I didn't know!

Ulf is in a fury. He STIFLES it, but his eyes are  
 frighteningly wide.

PELLE  
 Here, Mark: let's just...

Pelle leads Mark away. Christian joins.

MARK  
 What the fuck? It was a dead tree.  
 What's even happening?

PELLE  
 All of our dead are tied to that  
 tree.

MARK  
 But *it's* dead. It's a dead  
 fucking tree. I didn't  
 realize it was special. I  
 just had to pee. -- Well, no,  
 of course not.

PELLE (CONT'D)  
 I know, but it's important to  
 us. It's okay. We know you  
 didn't know. You wouldn't pee  
 on a gravestone, right?

Mark looks over to Ulf, who has collapsed into furious TEARS.  
 ARNE, a sturdy Elder, speaks soothingly to him.

Mark calms down.



MARK \*  
 Well - fuck. I *am* sorry. I still \*  
 don't understand what I *did*... Do I \*  
 apologize? \*

PELLE \*  
 Apologize later. \*

The Pretty Brunette (Mark's crush), named INGA, walks up. \*

MARK \*  
 Oh shit. Hi. \*  
 INGA \*  
 (to Pelle, in Swedish) \*  
 Tell him it's okay. He didn't \*  
 know. I will talk to father \*  
 Ulf. \*

She SMILES at Mark and walks off. \*

PELLE \*  
 (explaining) \*  
 She said to tell you it's okay and \*  
 that she'll explain to him your \*  
 mistake. \*

MARK \*  
 (overjoyed) \*  
 Seriously? What else did she say? \*

Christian now sees DANI in the distance, woozily looking for \*  
 him. He walks over to her, affecting pleasantness. \*

CHRISTIAN \*  
 Hey! \*  
 DANI \*  
 (seeing him) \*  
 Oh! \*

CHRISTIAN \*  
 You get some good sleep? \*

They arrive at each other. He gives her a peck. *In the BG,* \*  
*the other goat-chopper is burying his section of the straw* \*  
*goat in a hole.* \*

DANI \*  
 What's happening there? \*

CHRISTIAN \*  
 Mark's just completely retarded. \*

Dani thinks to ask more, but instead: \*

DANI \*  
 I'm sorry about last night. \*

CHRISTIAN \*  
 ...How you feeling? \*

DANI \*  
 (pause, emotional) \*  
 I don't want us to be fighting, \*  
 Christian. \*

CHRISTIAN

Well - *me neither.*

Christian looks like he wants to say more. Dani waits for it. \*  
Finally, Christian thinks better of it. \*

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

Are you feeling less nervous today? \*

Dani pauses uncertainly at this. \*

HORNS bellow in the BG. The surrounding Hårgans cease working \*  
and everyone, including Dani and Christian, look off in the \*  
same direction. \*

67

**EXT. ANIMAL SACRIFICE HILL - DAY** \*

67

CU of a COW'S HEAD being pushed through a hole in a PILLORY. \*  
We ZOOM OUT of this to find that the pillory has additional \*  
holes (extending beyond both sides of the cow's), and \*  
additional animals' heads are being pushed through them. \*

We eventually zoom out wide enough to reveal that this \*  
pillory, perched at the top of a HILL, has secured the heads \*  
of NINE ANIMALS (one sheep, two goats, two dogs, a baby \*  
horse, a cow, and two pigs). \*

Arne stands to the side of the line-up. On the other side is \*  
SIV. \*

The entire community has congregated at the bottom of the \*  
hill. Dani looks very nervous. She turns to Pelle, who \*  
already looks concerned for her. \*

DANI

Do I want to stay for this?

PELLE

...Maybe you should not.

Dani looks to Christian. He looks very excited. She turns \*  
back to the top of the hill, anxious. \*

Siv sings one very extended note to the air. When she finishes, \*  
SILENCE. And then...STEADY PERCUSSION BEGINS. Arne strikes a \*  
different POSE (physically and emotionally) with every percussive \*  
hit. \*

HANNA, reading from the holy book *Rubi Radr*, begins to SING. As \*  
we've heard before, it is a WORDLESS choral song. \*

Nine YOUNG MEN, each holding a blade, walk up to the animals. \*  
Simultaneously, they all SLIT THE ANIMALS' THROATS. The animals \*  
THRASH wildly as BLOOD drains from their necks. (The song has \*  
degraded into anguished snarls and cries.) \*

That does it. Dani STORMS OFF. Christian is too awe-stricken to \*  
care. Josh, meanwhile, is recording a covert VIDEO with his \*  
phone. \*

Beneath each animal, a narrow CHANNEL has been pre-carved into \*  
the earth. Each channel winds and loops to eventually converge, \*  
thus forming THREE MASSIVE RUNIC SYMBOLS. The blood pours from \*  
each animal to run down the separate canals. Soon, the blood has \*  
co-mingled to fill the carefully-engineered runic sculpture. \*  
It's horrible and beautiful. \*

Josh and Christian, briefly joined in their excitement, trade looks of amazement. Mark looks mystified.

MARK

Is this weird or is this not weird? \*

Pelle now goes after Dani, who is speed-walking away.

In the b.g., Simon can be heard saying:

SIMON (O.S.)

What the fuck did you bring us to?

Dani walks past SIMON, who looks very scared in the BG. He is confronting a grinning Ingemar. \*

SIMON (CONT'D)

(to Ingemar, aggressively)

Why are you smiling, mate?

Dani speed-walks away from the site (with intermittent running), going for the Main House. Pelle follows her, glancing over his shoulder to view more of the ceremony. \*

69

**INT. THE MAIN HOUSE - MINUTES LATER**

69

Dani enters the Main House, eyes crazed. She goes to her bed and begins hastily packing her bag. Her breathing is erratic and she's pulling at her neck again (as if to loosen the skin).

Pelle enters.

PELLE

Dani?

Dani looks up, teeth chattering with anxiety.

DANI

I'm really sorry, Pelle. Thank you for inviting me, but I really need to go. Can someone maybe drive me? \*

PELLE

I did warn you this time. I know it looks extreme, but we only do this once every ninety years. It's - what's the word-- \*

DANI

I understand that it's momentous.

PELLE

(that was the word)  
Right! Exactly!

DANI

(snapping)

*I don't know why we're here, Pelle!* I don't know why you invited us!

PELLE (CONT'D)

Okay: Here: Sit down.  
Please.

He sits Dani down. He plants himself beside her, taking her hands.

PELLE (CONT'D)

I invited my friends because this is a once-in-a-lifetime *thing* and I wanted to *share* it. Especially with my friends who I *knew* would appreciate it, because I *am* proud of this place.

DANI

But I'm *not* an anthropologist. I *don't* have the foundation to understand this.

PELLE

And yet I was the *most* excited for you to come.

\*

Pelle has pulled a special homemade sachet (containing a SPECIAL HERB) from his pocket. He places a under her nose.

\*

\*

PELLE (CONT'D)

Here: smell this.

\*

\*

DANI

What is it?

PELLE

It calms you down.

She pauses before smelling it.

PELLE (CONT'D)

Go on. Inhale. I will, too.

Demonstrating, he INHALES the herb deeply. He puts it back to her nose, and she does the same. She's still trembling.

PELLE (CONT'D)

Isn't that nice?... I know what you're going through, Dani.

DANI

What am I going through? I'm scared. I can't breathe.

PELLE (CONT'D)

You're going through a lot.

PELLE (CONT'D)

I know you are, and I'm going to say something now, because *my* birth parents are both gone, too--

\*

DANI

What?!

(crying now)

That's not what I'm *talking* about!

PELLE

I know, and that's fine, but please... My birth-parents *both* died when I was a little boy. They burned up in a fire, and I became - technically - an orphan. So believe me when I say I know what that is, because I *do*. Yet *my* difference is: I didn't get a *chance* to feel lost. Because I *had* a family - here - where everyone embraced me and swept me up and I was raised by a community that doesn't bicker over what is *theirs* and what is *not* theirs.

\*

(MORE)

PELLE (CONT'D)

That's what you were sacrificed to. But I - have always felt...held. By a family. A real family. Which everyone deserves. And you deserve.

Dani looks down at Pelle's hands GRIPPING hers.

DANI

Christian could walk in.

PELLE

He's what I'm talking about. And he's my good *friend* and I *like* him... But do you feel HELD by him, Dani? Does he feel like a HOME to you?

His eyes are locked intensely on Dani's. She doesn't turn away.

PELLE (CONT'D)

My pilgrimage has been fun. New York is *fun*... But I also find it terrifying how people live. As if it's necessary and even good to be lost and drifting...and I haven't spent *one* night over there that I haven't *longed* to be back here...in the lap of the Hårgas.

Dani looks almost hypnotized as she looks into Pelle's eyes.

PELLE (CONT'D)

Stay, Dani. Please. It will be good... And I swear we're all finished sacrificing animals.

Dani gives a weak half-laugh. She relents. She sits up straight and wipes her eyes, regaining composure.

PELLE (CONT'D)

Good.

Pelle stands up.

DANI

You're a very empathic person. \*

PELLE

Well, our first language here is strictly emotion-based. So I could just be using that to manipulate you.

Dani pauses at this. Pelle sticks his tongue out, teasing. Dani SMILES, relieved. \*

PELLE (CONT'D)

You are super vulnerable, though. And I mean that in a great way. It's very rare. It's beautiful. \*

Dani is touched, but tries to hide it.

DANI

(re: the herb)  
Can I smell that again?

PELLE  
 (holding it out)  
 You can have it.

\*  
 \*  
 \*

70

**EXT. ANIMAL SACRIFICE HILL - SAME TIME**

\* 70

The ceremony has ended.

\*

Simon and Connie stand frozen, traumatized. Simon is visibly DISTRAUGHT. He stares up at the top of the HILL, where the blood-drained animals are now being taken from the pillory.

\*

SIMON  
 Are we *eating* those animals?

INGEMAR  
 Not those ones.

SIMON (CONT'D)  
 And why not?

INGEMAR  
 (seeing the aggression)  
 ...Because they weren't killed for that.

SIMON  
 So what were they killed for? So we could watch that shit and clap?

Ingemar smiles. This infuriates Simon.

SIMON (CONT'D)  
 What the fuck is that smile, mate? Get it off.

CONNIE  
 (trying to calm him)  
 Simon...

This has drawn attention. People are now looking over.

INGEMAR  
 (gesturing)  
 We can talk about this over here.

SIMON  
 Why didn't we talk about it *before* you took us here?

Ingemar gently touches Simon's arm to lead him away.

SIMON (CONT'D)  
 (pulling back his arm)  
 Don't sort me out, mate!

STEN speaks up.

\*

STEN  
 What's offending you, son?

\*

SIMON  
*What's offending me?* Besides the fact I just saw something I can't ever unsee, I'm offended that you're teaching impressionable kids to sacrifice innocent animals - *including* a fucking defenseless dog--

\*

IRMA speaks up.

\*

IRMA  
 We sacrificed defenseless animals *yesterday*, too! To fill your belly!

\*

STEN  
 Why are we using "sacrifice" like  
 it's a dirty word?

SIMON  
 Because it's fucking  
 medieval!

IRMA  
 Why are you swearing?! We're  
 not swearing!

Sten gestures to Irma to calm down.

STEN  
 (to Simon)  
 Are you even aware you're in your  
 body right now?  
 (then)  
 Sacrifice is essential in *any*  
 relationship. Let's put it in *your*  
 terms--

SIMON  
 What are *my* terms? You don't *know*  
 my terms--

STEN  
 (continuing, louder)  
 Say you're entangled with a lover who  
 can't put *your* needs before her own.

CONNIE  
 What's *that* supposed to mean?!

STEN  
 (to Connie now)  
 Say your partner can't part with even a  
*fraction* of his own comfort to give you  
 what you *need*. And show that you're  
*appreciated*.  
 (to both of them now)  
 Wouldn't you resent them? Wouldn't you  
 start to neglect them yourself? Maybe  
 you'd even want to *punish* them for  
 taking you for granted.  
 (to Simon)  
 Sacrifice is *proof*. And without it,  
 I'm sorry, but no union can last.

Beat. Simon pops the bubble:

SIMON  
 Alright. Thank you for that. And now  
 we've seen two people kill themselves  
 and nine animals get bled to death,  
 so I think we're leaving.

STEN  
 I'll happily drive you to the station.

SIMON  
 Lovely. Thank you.  
 (to Connie)  
 Let's go. We're getting our things.

STEN  
 (gesturing)  
 I do need your help jumping the  
 truck, if you'll be so kind.

SIMON  
You need *my* help specifically?

\*  
\*

STEV  
Who am I driving?

\*  
\*

Simon pauses.

SIMON  
(to Connie)  
Go pack our stuff. I'll pick you up  
out front in -  
(to Sten)  
- five minutes?

\*  
\*

STEN  
Very fine.

\*  
\*

Connie doesn't want to go alone. She hesitates and then walks quickly off. We TRACK alongside Connie, following her away.

As Connie speed-walks, PANIC rises in her. She looks back a few times, making sure that she's not being followed.

70A

She arrives at the **MAIN HOUSE**. Dani and Pelle are standing outside. They watch her storm past.

\* 70A

DANI  
Are you okay, Connie?

CONNIE  
(not stopping)  
Yeah. Sorry. We're actually leaving.

We stay outside with Dani and Pelle in a wide. Before long, ODD comes running up.

\*

ODD  
Connie!

Connie steps out. She lugs her bags and Simon's bags.

\*

ODD (CONT'D)  
Simon told me to tell you...  
(catching his breath)  
Jan drove him to the train station.  
After Simon gets dropped off, he's sending the truck straight back for you -

\*  
\*

What?

CONNIE  
ODD (CONT'D)  
- and you'll meet him there.

CONNIE  
No. Why would he go without me? He wouldn't do that.

\*

ODD  
The truck only had room for two.

CONNIE  
What does *that* mean? That's not true. Why wouldn't he tell me?

\*

ODD  
Today's only train leaves in ninety minutes.

(MORE)



Salmon Rev. (mm/dd/yy)

80.

ODD (CONT'D)

It takes thirty-five minutes to drive there and back. They didn't want to waste time.

CONNIE

So I could've sat on his lap!

ODD

Simon said that, too. Yet we don't break traffic laws.

Connie looks to Dani, incredulous.

CONNIE

(to Odd)

They just left without me, just now?

ODD

There wasn't room in the truck. Yet it *is* coming right back. For you.

Connie shakes her head, not buying it. She WALKS OFF, on a mission to find out more. Odd turns to Dani:

ODD (CONT'D)

Lunch in a bit!

73

**EXT. FIELD - DAY**

Mark, standing in the shadow of the kitchen-side, peers cautiously around the corner. He's listening to (and trying to catch a glimpse of) ULF, who cries into the shoulder of MATS (late 60s), a handsome elder. *He's still devastated over the desecrated Rotvälta.*

MATS

(in Swedish)

I know, I know. It's unimaginable. But he did not understand what he was doing.

Beyond this, Christian is interviewing VALENTIN (20s). Christian takes NOTES as he asks questions. Two Hårga women listen in, smiling. *Christian's eyes keep straying to JOSH, who is also questioning people. They are now RACING to gather info.*

CHRISTIAN

How are roles or jobs assigned?

VALENTIN

That's based on traits we show as kids. For example:

(points to Mats)

He was assigned "to protect," so he made *his* pilgrimage as doctor.

Christian quickly writes this down. DANI walks up to him.

CHRISTIAN

Hey. You okay?

DANI

...Simon left without Connie.

73

CHRISTIAN  
 (faux concern)  
 Really? That's so shitty.

Christian bluntly returns his attention to Valentin.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)  
 (to Happy Man)  
 Actually - what about coupling? Is  
 incest ever a problem?

Dani PAUSES, disturbed by Christian's indifference. *For the first time, she actually looks scared of him.*

VALENTIN  
 Ha! Well, the bloodlines are very  
 well preserved, so the elders must  
 approve mates. Cousins can  
 sometimes mate, but we do respect  
 the incest taboo, so...we often  
 need to invite outside peoples.

Christian is taking feverish notes. Dani watches him with a new kind of SCRUTINY; a new kind of distrust. As Christian writes, he GLANCES over at something, and then does a double take ("*what the hell?*"). Dani also looks...

JOSH is being led to Ruben's temple by ARNE...

Christian stares at this, wild-eyed. Dani walks disdainfully away from him.

76

**EXT. FARMSTEAD - MINUTES LATER**

Dani walks idly around, thinking about her exchange with Pelle (and about Simon leaving Connie). She holds the herb pouch that Pelle gave to her. As the gears turn in her head, her attention falls on...

A large **KITCHEN** in one of the houses. A group of **WOMEN** (all ages) collaborate to prepare dinner. One woman, **ULRIKA** (30s), sees Dani and waves her over. Dani pauses and then approaches.

ULRIKA  
 Would you like to help join us?

DANI  
 Sure!

She steps up.

DANI (CONT'D)  
 Do you know...have you seen Simon?

ULRIKA  
 Oh, yes, he was driven to the  
 station. Did you not say goodbye?

DANI  
 No. I didn't. But that's okay...  
 (mind still racing)  
 What are we making?

76

ULRIKA  
Meat tarts!

\*

Dani smiles "ooh!" and joins the women. She's handed an apron. Another Woman says something to Dani in Swedish.

ULRIKA (CONT'D)  
(translating)  
She says you're so beautiful.

\*

DANI  
Oh! *She's* so beautiful!

Meanwhile, MAJA is preparing a tray of unbaked MEAT PIES. One of the pies is clearly very special. She distinguishes this one by laying a special BASIL LEAF on top.

76A **EXT. FARMSTEAD - SAME TIME**

76A

SIV stands among labouring men, staring at the KITCHEN WINDOW. She watches Dani.

77 **INT. TEMPLE - SAME TIME**

77

The HOLY TEMPLE. Josh stands near the altar with Arne, who has pulled the *Rubi Radr* from an elevated pedestal. He shows Josh the text (written in the graphic Affect language - a combination of runes and abstract hand paintings). *The walls of the temple are lined with thousands of books that look like variations on the Rubi Radr.*

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

ARNE  
We describe it like "emotional sheet music."

\*

JOSH  
What does it say?

ARNE  
Well...each runic letter stands for one of the 16 Affects, which are graded from most holy to most unholy. This one is about Grief. You can see at the end, however, we have blank pages?

\*

\*

\*

\*

Indeed the last half of the book is BLANK.

ARNE (CONT'D)  
This is because the *Rubi Radr* is a forever work in progress. Forever evolving. We have many hundreds of these.

\*

\*

\*

JOSH  
And who decides what's added?

ARNE  
Well - this iteration is being written by Ruben.

\*

Arne points to RUBEN, the deformed boy, who is playing outside.

\*

JOSH  
(confused)  
The...disabled?

\*

\*

ARNE  
 Since birth. He draws and the Elders  
 interpret.

He shows Josh the first pages. They are marked by HANDPRINTS -  
 all in different colors of paint. (Below the drawings are  
 illustrative interpretations.)

ARNE (CONT'D)  
 Ruben is unclouded by normal cognition.  
 It makes him open for the source.

JOSH  
 So...what happens when Ruben dies? Do  
 you just wait until a new baby isn't  
 "clouded"?

ARNE  
 Ruben was a product of inbreeding.  
 All of our Oracles have been  
 deliberate products of inbreeding.

Josh's jaw hangs. He hides his amazement.

JOSH  
 Can I possibly take a photograph?

ARNE  
 (suddenly alarmed)  
 What? No. Absolutely not.

Arne CLOSES the book.

JOSH  
 Okay. Sorry.

ARNE (CONT'D)  
 Absolutely not.

A TENSE beat. Broken suddenly by a very DISTANT SCREAM, too  
 far away to discern whether it's made by a man or animal.

81 **EXT. FIRE TEMPLE - EVENING**

Mark, who was just approaching the triangular temple, has  
 frozen to investigate the noise. It is gone.

His attention now returns to the temple, where a group of  
 young women are entering and exiting. The women entering  
 carry large floral ornaments; the ones exiting are fetching  
 new ornaments from a pile.

Mark keeps his distance, but continues to warily approach.  
 INGA emerges from the house, but when she sees him, she  
 pauses and hesitantly waves hello.

MARK  
 (to himself)  
 Fuck, yep, that's her.

Embarrassed, Mark gives a half-wave, then instinctively turns  
 away, as if to change course.

MARK (CONT'D)  
 Fuck.

He then forces himself to turn back. Still looking at him, Inga has returned to work, having picked up a big piece of floral ornamentation. She turns her back to him as she re-enters the temple. \*

Behind Mark, the young boy BROR runs from one group to another, announcing: \*

BROR (O.S.) \*  
 (in Swedish)  
 Supper is ready! ... They're calling supper! \*

82 **EXT. FIELD - EVENING** \* 82

The dining tables are now set in a runic pattern (symbolism TBD). Everyone is seated. \*

Christian, Dani, Josh and Mark sit at a table. Pelle is seated a few seats away. Dani glances over at him. He smiles warmly and looks away. Dani's eyes LINGER on him.

The SERVERS are laying plates in front of everyone. One especially COY-LOOKING SERVER sets a plate in front of CHRISTIAN. It features the special meat pie with the BASIL LEAF on top.

CHRISTIAN  
 Thanks.

Dani turns to Christian.

DANI  
 Has anyone seen Connie? \*

CHRISTIAN  
 I think Mark did earlier. \*

MARK  
 Yeah, I'm pretty sure I noticed her trying out for the sprinting olympics. \*

DANI  
 What? Where? \*

JARL, a happy Haårgan, inserts himself. (Valentin, beside him, smiles and nods in agreement through this.) \*

JARL  
 Sorry, but I can say what happened. Her boyfriend called the landline from the train station and calmed Connie down. Then she begged our pardon and I drove her to meet him. \*

A brief pause as everyone considers this. \*

CHRISTIAN  
 Okay, well, that's a relief. \*

DANI  
 Why would Simon would leave without her? \*

CHRISTIAN \*  
I'm sure it was just miscommunication. \*

DANI \*  
(after a moment) \*  
I could see you possibly doing that. \*

CHRISTIAN  
...The fuck does *that* mean?

DANI \*  
.....Never mind. \*

Christian stares at Dani. Surprised at the uncharacteristic defiance.

Meanwhile, Mark has noticed ULF staring at him from a distance. Ulf has murder in his eyes.

MARK \*  
(to Josh)  
Fuck. Somebody's still sore about "the ancestral tree." \*

Josh looks up to see Ulf, whose eyes really are trained on Mark.

JOSH  
Yikes.

MARK  
Is he gonna kill me?

Josh, preoccupied, turns to Christian. He asks, faux-casually:

JOSH  
Did you learn anything about the *Rubi Radr*?

CHRISTIAN  
(mock-delighted)  
Oh, what? You wanna collaborate now?

Josh ignores this and moves on to his food.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D) \*  
I know that one elder gave you a glimpse. \*

JOSH \*  
(abruptly, ending it) \*  
*Thank you.* Sorry I brought it up. \*

Christian seethes. He takes a BITE of his tart. As he chews, he catches something on his tongue, and pulls a PUBIC HAIR \*  
from his mouth. His eyes widen with alarm. \*

MARK  
(seeing this)  
Oh my God, dude. What the fuck?

DANI \*  
(inquiring)  
What is it? \*

MARK  
 Was that a fucking pube? *Ew.* \*  
 DANI (CONT'D)

CHRISTIAN \*  
 It's just a hair. \*

MARK \*  
 Yeah. A *pubic* hair. \*

CHRISTIAN  
 (embarrassed) Shhh! Calm down. \*  
 MARK (CONT'D)  
 Why are you embarrassed? \*  
 They're the ones handing out \*  
 hair pies. \*

Christian tenses up, embarrassed by Mark. He then notices: \*  
 MAJA is looking at him. Dani catches this. \*

Christian self-consciously breaks the gaze, taking a sip of his \*  
 drink (a pink-tinted MEAD in a crystal glass). \*

Mark notices that ULF is still staring him down.

MARK (CONT'D) \*  
 Jesus. He's still lookin' at me. \*

Josh looks tensely at his NOTES. He stares at a line that \*  
 reads: Affects -- *runic combinations, "emotional sheet music"*

INGA, the pretty brunette, sneaks up behind Mark. She \*  
 whispers in his ear.

INGA  
 You will come with me?

Mark turns to her, startled. He smiles widely.

MARK  
 What?

INGA  
 You will come? I show you.

MARK  
 Uhhh... Oh-kay.

INGA  
 Yes? \*  
 MARK (CONT'D)  
 Yeah. Okay. Sure. Great. \*

Mark rises from his seat.

MARK (CONT'D)  
 (to his friends)  
 I'll be back, I guess? She's gonna \*  
 show me... \*

Mark looks very excited as he walks off with Inga. She takes \*  
 his hand and leads him toward the woods. \*

DANI \*  
 Somebody for everyone, I guess. \*

Josh is so immersed in his thoughts, he didn't even notice Mark \*  
 being lured away. \*

83

**INT. THE MAIN HOUSE - "NIGHT"**

83

Everybody is climbing into bed. Josh's eyes, however, are BUSY. He's thinking intensely about something.

Dani sneaks up on him.

DANI  
Hey, can I steal another sleeping pill? Only half this time.

JOSH  
Oh. Yeah. Okay.

Josh fetches her a pill. She takes it and moves to her bed. Josh crawls stiffly into *his* bed. He's still wearing his SHOES.

84

**INT. THE MAIN HOUSE - LATER**

84

Everyone is asleep, except for JOSH, who looks as tense as before. He sits up, scanning the room to make sure nobody is awake. He then climbs quietly out of bed. He creeps to the door and silently exits.

85

**EXT. THE MAIN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS**

85

Josh rushes across the grass. It's now darkest twilight. He hustles to the TEMPLE, glancing nervously about.

86

**INT. RUBEN'S TEMPLE - FOYER - CONTINUOUS**

\* 86

Josh passes the dark foyer to enter through the Temple Doors...

87

**INT. RUBEN'S TEMPLE - CONTINUOUS**

\* 87

Josh sneaks into the Temple. Ruben is asleep by the door. \*

Josh creeps past him to approach the pedestal featuring the holy book *RUBI RADR*. He pulls out his phone, turns on the FLASHLIGHT, and begins taking silent PHOTOS - page by page - of *Rubi Radr's* text. \*

While he anxiously photographs, Josh keeps glancing up at the Temple DOORS, making sure he's still alone. He has photographed about fifteen pages when he hears the front door CREAK open.

Josh FREEZES. He looks up. Through the Temple's open doors, he sees SOMEONE standing in the dark foyer. The person is barely visible in the dimness. After some scrutiny, Josh makes it out to be MARK. He is standing motionless. \*

JOSH  
(relieved, whispering)  
What the fuck. *Mark?* \*

But Mark doesn't move or speak.

JOSH (CONT'D)  
(whispering)  
*The fuck are you doing? Close the door! We're not supposed to be here.* \*

Mark still doesn't move. Despite how hard it is to see, one can tell that his body looks BULKIER than usual. And his face seems somewhat SWOLLEN. \*



Josh looks unsettled. He starts moving toward the door.

JOSH (CONT'D)  
 (whispering)  
 Mark? *Hello?* What the fu--?

MARK steps forward. It is now bright enough to see... This isn't Mark. It's a LARGER MAN, and he's WEARING MARK'S SKIN (which is stretched uneasily over the man's bulkier features). Upon closer inspection, one might identify these features (and the blue eyes) as belonging to ULF.

Before the full horror of this revelation can register on Josh's face, he is STRUCK against the HEAD by a bludgeoning FORCE (the end of a cudgel wielded by an off-screen Hårgan). Josh collapses to make a sustained, involuntary GROANING noise.

A quiet moment as "Mark," eyes invisible behind the skin mask, stares down at Josh's twitching body.

Josh's body is swiftly DRAGGED out of frame.

88 INT. THE MAIN HOUSE - MORNING

Outside, the ROOSTER crows.

People stir awake in their beds. Josh's bed is EMPTY. As is Mark's.

89 EXT. FARMSTEAD - MORNING

Breakfast time. The tables are shaped to form the "stability" pattern. Dani, Christian and Pelle look quizzically around. The community is dressed in more colorful clothes than usual.

DANI  
 Could Mark still be off with that girl?

PELLE  
 I wouldn't be surprised.

DANI  
 Then what about Josh?

CHRISTIAN  
 I'm honestly not too concerned.

Sten stands up. A hush falls cleanly over the scene.

STEN  
 We have something regretful to announce. This morning the nineteenth book of *Rubi Radr* was found missing from the temple. We are not hoping to point fingers, yet we ask kindly that whoever took it, please return it to its original place. You can leave it in the temple, which will be left unguarded and unwatched. Nobody need know it was you. If it is not returned by tonight, other actions will be taken. Thank you.

He sits down and everyone uneasily resumes eating.

CHRISTIAN  
 (under his breath)  
 Fuck.  
 (to Dani and Pelle)  
 Which of you is surprised?

89A

**EXT. FARMSTEAD - LATER**

\* 89A

Breakfast has ended. Christian, Dani and Pelle deposit their dirty dishes at the washing station, only to turn around and see ARNE and STEN walking toward them. Our group anticipates the following question:

ARNE  
 Where is your friend Josh?

CHRISTIAN  
 I know. We have no idea.

ARNE  
 He and your other friend disappear on the same day. You see how it looks.

CHRISTIAN  
 Yes, obviously, but I swear to you - we are *completely* in the dark on this. We are every bit as confused as you are.

DANI  
 (not sure whether to say it)  
 We *did* see Mark go off with one of the girls last night.

STEN  
 What girl?

PELLE  
 Inga.

Sten thinks about this. *Irma has joined.* Christian interjects:

CHRISTIAN  
 But Mark wouldn't have done this. *Josh*, however: he came to bed with us, and when we woke up, he was gone. And if he *did* take that book, I just pray you understand: we do not identify as *friends* of his, or collaborators, or *anything*. I certainly don't *vouch* for him and we'd be so embarrassed to be connected to this in *any* way.

Beat. ARNE relents.

ARNE  
 ...Let's just hope it gets returned.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)  
 Yes. I hope that very much.

PELLE  
 I feel responsible.

ARNE  
 Well - you and Odd can go looking for them. Maybe you can redeem this.

Pelle nods, walks to Odd, and they proceed toward the truck.

Sten turns to Dani and Christian. \*

STEN  
(to Dani)  
You'll be going with the women for  
the day's activity. \*

Karin is standing behind Sten, ready to take Dani. She steps  
forward to hand Dani a special summer dress. \*

STEN (CONT'D)  
(to Christian)  
And Siv asks to see you in her house. \*

CHRISTIAN  
(nervous)  
Why? \*

The Elder doesn't have the answer.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)  
...Which one is hers? \*

The Elder points to a SMALL WHITE HOUSE across the field.  
Christian nods "okay" and starts toward it. As he walks, he  
hears:

PELLE (O.S.) ODD (O.S.)  
Grandfather Sten! The truck is gone!

STEN (O.S.)  
What?!

Christian turns to see a distraught Pelle and Odd. \*

ODD  
They took the truck.

Pelle stares daggers at Christian, and then turns back to Odd.

Christian, very uneasy now, proceeds to the small white house...

90

**EXT. FIELD - DAY**

90

ECU of a BRIGHT YELLOW-GREEN PASTE. It's being MASHED  
vigorously in a bowl. The paste is made of ground-up flowers.

A fat SCOOP of the paste is dropped into a LARGE GLASS JUG OF  
SPRING WATER (perched on a table). The paste is STIRRED into  
the water. \*

A queue of WOMEN (between 16 and 45) has formed behind the table.  
One by one, the women accept a CUP of the water. They drink it  
(sometimes after nervous hesitation). In the b.g. is the MAYPOLE.

Dani has joined the line. KARIN (whom she befriended earlier) \*  
is in front of her.

DANI  
Do you know what we're doing?

KARIN  
Oh yes. This is the big one. \*

Karin smiles mischievously. Dani smiles skeptically back. They arrive at the "water" table. Both are handed a cup. \*

DANI  
It's just water?

KARIN  
Not *just*. It is for the competition. \*

Karin gulps hers down, and then gestures "You now." Dani pauses, and then knocks it back. \*

KARIN (CONT'D)  
(smiling)  
Uh-oh! \*

She LAUGHS and HUGS Dani.

KARIN (CONT'D)  
Here we go! \*

Dani looks very nervous.

91 **EXT. FIELD - MAYPOLE LATER** \* 91

Three CIRCLES OF WOMEN have formed around the Maypole. The inside circle (of about 8 women) is surrounded by the middle circle (about 15 women), which is surrounded by the largest, outside circle (about 22 women).

The men, children and older women have gathered on the grass to watch. IRMA stands with musicians (fiddler, key-harpist, and floutist). \*

Dani stands in the middle circle. All the neighboring women look very excited.

Dani looks down at the earth. At first everything looks normal, but then she notices...GRASS has begun to sprout from her shoes.

Dani looks up. *Fuck*. She's tripping.

IRMA speaks up. \*

IRMA  
(in Swedish)  
It was here, long ago, that the Black One lured the youths of Hårga to the grass and seduced them into dance. Once they began, they could not stop, and they danced themselves to death. Now, in life-holding defiance of the Black One, we dance until we fall. And she who survives last will be crowned for her stamina. \*

Irma CLAPS her hands ONCE. The musicians play a long, sustained\* NOTE. All of the women join hands and slowly dip to a cross-legged BOW. The musical note dies. A brief moment of SILENCE, and then...THE MUSIC BEGINS! (It is the song of the Hårgas.) \*

The women begin to DANCE. The inside circle dances in a chain to the left. The middle circle to the right. The outside circle to the left. \*

Dani stumbles as she finds her way into the dance. Once she hits her stride, she smiles. Karin looks back at her and LAUGHS good-naturedly. Dani laughs back! \*

92      **INT. SMALL WHITE HOUSE - SMALL ROOM - SIV'S HOUSE- SAME TIME**      \*      92

Christian sits in a small wooden chair in the empty LIVING ROOM. The walls are completely covered in RUNIC MURAL ART.

Christian lingers on a particularly striking ILLUSTRATION (painted in the wall's center) in which a BEAR is being BURNED ALIVE before several onlookers.

A door opens to reveal SIV.

SIV  
Please. Come in.

Christian rises to follow Siv into the other room...

93      **INT. SMALL WHITE HOUSE - LARGER ROOM - SIV'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS**      \*      93

A spare room. Two chairs face each other in the center. Siv takes a seat in one of them.

SIV  
Please. Sit.

Christian obliges.

Siv's posture is perfect. Christian self-consciously corrects *his* posture. A long silence, and then:

CHRISTIAN  
I just need to say, I have no idea where Josh went, and I can swear to that on my mother's life.

SIV  
How do you feel about Maja?

Christian pauses. Siv is stone. She gives him nothing.      \*

CHRISTIAN  
About Maja?

Siv just waits.      \*

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)  
How do I feel about her *how*?

SIV  
You have been approved to mate with her. You're an ideal astrological match and she has fallen in love with you.

CHRISTIAN  
We haven't even really spoken.      \*

SIV  
She fell in love with you before you came. Pelle showed her a photo.

CHRISTIAN  
(pause)  
I have someone here with me. I'm with Dani.

SIV  
Dani will not know. I am not proposing marriage. You wouldn't be approved for that.

CHRISTIAN  
So...you're asking me to what?

SIV  
I'm asking you if you care to mate with Maja. It is a one-night offer.

CHRISTIAN  
...She's very beautiful.

SIV  
She *is* very beautiful.

CHRISTIAN  
I think I ate one of her pubic hairs.

SIV  
That sounds probably right.

Beat. Christian doesn't know what to say.

SIV (CONT'D)  
From an academic perspective, it would also serve as a unique glimpse into our sexual rites.

CHRISTIAN  
Can I not have a unique glimpse without participating?

Siv smiles at the silly question.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)  
Can I think about it?

SIV  
You can think about it right here. Tonight is the time of alignment. Then it's done. \*

A long, conflicted pause.

CHRISTIAN  
I don't think I can.

SIV  
Okay. Is that your answer? \*

Christian hesitates. He's very torn. \*

94

**EXT. SMALL WHITE HOUSE - MINUTES LATER**

94

Christian emerges from the house in a daze. We track back with him. His eyes are fraught as he wrestles with the moral quandary. But as he continues to walk/think, a vague SMILE sneaks onto his face.

Christian looks ahead to see the DANCE COMPETITION in the distance. He's walking toward it. \*

95

**EXT. FIELD - MAYPOLE - SAME TIME**

\* 95

Dani is still engaged in dance, although it's now the tree-penis dance. It's a dizzying spectacle, and the mounting hallucinations are clearly taking their toll on the dancers.

\*  
\*  
\*

The music STOPS abruptly, and everyone FREEZES.

IRMA  
(in Swedish)  
Around!

\*

Everybody turns around to face the OPPOSITE DIRECTION. They switch hands, and the music RESUMES. They now dance in the opposite direction.

One woman STUMBLES to her knees, laughing. She is now disqualified. She walks off to sit on the grass and watch.

Another WOMAN pulls out of the circle to RETCH nearby. She is also disqualified.

Dani, who was having fun, is suddenly disturbed by the retching sound. She feels sick for a second.

DANI  
(thoughts turning)  
Josh...?

Karin turns happily to Dani.

\*

KARIN  
Don't slip!

\*

Dani looks to her.

KARIN (CONT'D)  
Can you holding on?!

\*

Dani gets a second wind. She's back.

Maja, who is dancing in the outside circle, sees CHRISTIAN arriving. He joins the onlookers.

Maja *decisively* feigns COLLAPSE, opting out of the dance. She stumbles over to the onlookers, affecting dizziness. She glances over at Christian, smiling at him. He SMILES back. She coyly sits a few people over. *The electricity between them is palpable.*

The music STOPS abruptly again. All the dancers turn around, switching hands. As the music starts again, one woman TOPPLES to her side, bringing down two of her neighbors. She and one other laugh; the third woman is furious.

95A

**EXT. FIELD - MAYPOLE - LATER**

\* 95A

Many of the women have now been disqualified. Dani is still in the running! She seems determined to stay alert and compete.

The music CEASES. The women STOP. Their attention is turned to a field where SEVEN SMALL FENCES extend one after the other.

\*  
\*

IRMA  
(in Swedish)  
Seven fences jumped clean! Three ladies at a time!

\*  
\*

KARIN  
 (to Dani, translating)  
 Now we are jumping the seven  
 fences. We go three and then three.

DANI  
 (confused, semi-alarmed)  
 What?

KARIN  
 Just watch first.

95B

**EXT. FIELD - MAYPOLE - MOMENTS LATER**

95B

Irma CLAPS once. Three women - including Karin - walk up to form a row. Standing side-by-side, they face the seven fences.

The fiddler suddenly WAILS on his fiddle, creating an intense treble. The women all RUN forward. They JUMP over each fence and run to the next. One woman's foot catches the third fence and she FALLS to the grass. Another woman collapses over the fifth fence. Karin makes it to the end. She happily returns, still eligible.

Another three women go. Nobody makes it to the end on this one.

Next up, two women line up. DANI is urged forward to join them. She looks to the women beside her. They SMILE at her. Their smiles stretch wider (and more fluidly) than normal. The edges of their mouths elongate up their cheeks.

The fiddle suddenly TREBLES. The women RUN.

DANI JUMPS OVER THE FIRST FENCE. She gasps, suddenly filled with confidence. She runs to the next fence and CLEARS it. She runs faster now, to the third fence. Clears it. The fourth fence - clears it! The woman to Dani's left suddenly BIFFS it, falling on her face. Unshaken, Dani clears the *fourth* fence, and then the *fifth*, and then the *sixth*...

Dani makes it to the final (and tallest) fence. She leaps high. Her foot ALMOST connects with the top of the fence, but it PASSES OVER! She lands on her feet, triumphant. She glows with excitement.

The other woman also made it. She walks up to Dani, HUGS her and gives her an encouraging PECK on the lips.

Dani turns to the onlookers. She sees CHRISTIAN. He isn't paying attention. He claps absent-mindedly.

Dani's expression CURDLES. She walks back to the maypole. Her trip is turning BAD again.

More women have lined up to jump the fences. The fiddle SHRIEKS, and they run.

Christian's eyes go to Dani. She's staring at him. Taken aback, he gives her a smile. She doesn't smile back. *She's very much in the grip of the psychedelics now.*

Dani's HANDS are taken by women on either side of her. Confused, she looks around to see that she is now part of a more modest circle surrounding the maypole. Only SEVEN women remain. The music STARTS and they commence dancing.



95C

**EXT. FIELD - MAYPOLE - MEANWHILE**

\* 95C

**MEANWHILE**, Christian sits among the onlookers. He's sneaking obsessive glances at Maja. Suddenly, he notices ULLA (whom he met earlier) walking toward him. She arrives at his feet, holding out the CUP of the flower-spiked water.

\*

ULLA  
For you.

CHRISTIAN  
What is it?

ULLA  
Spring water with special properties.

CHRISTIAN  
(skeptical)  
What's it do?

ULLA  
Breaks down your defenses and opens you for the influence.

CHRISTIAN  
...I'm worried I'll have a bad trip.

Christian looks back to Maja. She's now looking directly at him. Her eyes are languid, confident. She doesn't break the gaze.

Christian turns to Ulla, and accepts the water. He sips it. Sips it again. KNOCKS it back.

Settling into the idea that he's now going to hallucinate, Christian looks back to the MAYPOLE. The women are still dancing in a circle.

95D

**EXT. FIELD - MAYPOLE - IN THE DANCING CIRCLE**

\* 95D

Dani's eyes betray rising panic.

\*

One woman (MAJVOR) says, as provocation:

\*

MAJVOR  
(in Swedish)  
If we stop, will everything keep spinning?

\*

ULRIKA, the small woman we met earlier, replies:

\*

ULRIKA  
(laughing, in Swedish)  
What if we looked down and there were centipedes everywhere?

\*

Ulrika laughs, and then looks down. As imagined, she sees the ground as a squirming BLANKET OF CENTIPEDES. She SCREAMS in horror, desperately FLEEING the circle. Another woman has looked down to see the same thing. She also SCREAMS, and runs off.

\*

\*

Dani looks down, panicked and confused. It's just the earth beneath her feet.

DANI  
There's nothing there.

Dani looks up. She laughs with relief, still confused.

KARIN  
(smiling)  
That's right! Hold on to your brain!

\*

95E

Now there are only five women dancing, and we TILT DOWN from Dani, who is laughing to find...her shadow (and the SHADOWS of the other dancing women) and they accelerate seamlessly into a **TIME-LAPSE**. The shadows of the dancing women crawl across the grass, moving in accordance with the drifting sun. Two women FALL (to be disqualified) over the course of this time lapse.

\* 95E

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

Now, only Dani and two other women are in the running. One of these is Karin. The other is a good-natured brunette. They each dance separately, no longer holding hands. The brunette's legs are clearly less stable than Dani's or Karin's, and she is tired and stumbling.

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

Competition has been growing in Dani. She's so close to winning that she can now taste it.

Karin turns happily to Dani.

\*

KARIN (CONT'D)  
(in Swedish)  
Are you tired?!

\*

Dani, still dancing:

DANI  
I don't speak Swedish!

KARIN  
(not understanding)  
What?!

\*

Dani repeats herself, but it comes out as:

DANI  
Aewobeemeewish!

Karin, understanding, responds:

\*

KARIN  
Waweroobeeny!

\*

DANI  
(somehow understanding)  
Aewabeeny-sa-aewonnerstabloo!

They are speaking complete gibberish, but they understand each other perfectly. Dani is amazed.

DANI (CONT'D)  
(excitedly remarking on this)  
Weerabbleeishcobleraymib!

Karin nods manically, agreeing with this.

\*

KARIN  
Blorishcobleraymib-wonnerstablee!

\*

The Plump Woman suddenly TRIPS over one foot to fall CRASHING to the ground. Karin (still facing Dani) TRIPS over the Plump Woman. She COLLAPSES, laughing merrily on the way down. \*

Dani dances past the fallen women. She doesn't immediately realize that she's just won the competition. She still looks determined as she continues dancing manically around the maypole. \*

95F

**EXT. FIELD - MAYPOLE - MINUTES LATER**

\* 95F

Cheering women rush over to congratulate Dani, but she KEEPS DANCING in the circle, afraid that it's a trick.

The women tug excitedly at Dani's arms. They embrace her. Dani decelerates, but does not cease dancing. Finally, enough women have enfolded her. Her dancing feet slow to a confused halt.

IRMA  
(in Swedish)  
We have our May Queen!!

\*

IRMA approaches with an immense, gorgeously crafted GARLAND CROWN. She lays it on Dani's head. \*

DANI  
(hallucinating)  
It's over?

IRMA  
You are our May Queen. \*

DANI  
(confused)  
Why? Me?

IRMA  
You! \*

DANI  
(suddenly scared)  
*What do you mean?!*

ROSE PETALS are fired out of small air cannons by children. The petals rain down on Dani and the surrounding Hårgans.

Dani, severely disoriented, is led aside by several women. One woman wraps her in a sort of gown (composed only of greenery and flora), and then she is directed to stand before a gorgeous view of the field. Her distracted attention is pointed to a MAN holding a large, old FILM CAMERA. He takes Dani's PHOTOGRAPH. \*

Dani looks for Christian, who stands among the Hårgans with a baffled expression. Dani alights on him.

DANI (CONT'D)  
What's happening?!

But Christian doesn't understand it himself. He shakes his head to say "*I don't know!*"

DANI (CONT'D)  
(pleadingly, to the surrounding women)  
What does this mean? What do I have to do?

The women answer with hugs, warm smiles, and kisses on the cheek. Their faces morph subtly (a product of the psychedelics). Among the people who kiss her are her MOTHER and FATHER and SISTER (Terri). She looks back for them, but they have disappeared. A figment of her imagination?

Caught in the hallucination, Dani falls into a traumatized daze. PELLE breaks the spell by giving Dani an enthusiastic hug.

PELLE

Holy cow, you won! May Queen!

He gives her a blunt KISS on the lips. Before she can react, Pelle is replaced by two new women, also kissing and hugging her.

Dani is then led to a ROUND WOODEN PLANK (painted gold and shaped like a cartoon SUN) with eight long, protruding handles. She is directed to STAND on it.

KARIN

Careful!

\*

The handles are gripped by four men, and Dani is swiftly HOISTED UP. She almost falls, but doesn't. She is elevated five feet above the ground as the crowd erupts into mirthful SONG.

The song persists as Dani, still on her pedestal, is carried across the field. All eyes are on her. Everyone follows her.

DANI

(searching)  
Christian?!

But Christian has lagged to the back of the crowd. He looks extremely conflicted. His eyes move to Maja, whose eyes are TRAINED on him. She smiles widely, but her eyes are faded.

Christian slows to a stop as the procession continues.

\*

Meanwhile, Dani's confusion and fear is beginning to subside. She looks down at the procession to see that these people are indeed celebrating her. A few women even persist in throwing rose petals up at her.

Dani, now calm, looks down to see that her FEET and LEGS have assumed the GOLD color of the plank (like a chameleon).

95G

**EXT. FIELD - DINING AREA - LATER**

\* 95G

The crowd arrives at today's **DINING AREA**. In a LUSH FIELD, the tabletops are made of MIRRORS, and they are all queued up to form a long, straight line. At the head of the table is a HUGE CHAIR (more like a throne) adorned in lush greenery and bright flora.

\*

Dani's pedestal is set down. Members of the crowd step aside to create a PATH for Dani's trajectory (toward the throne). Dani takes a moment before stepping *decisively* onto the GRASS.

When Dani's FOOT touches the grass, small SUMMER FLOWERS magically SPROUT UP around her foot. Her next step is the same. Flowers emerge, impossibly, from the soil. She continues to walk forward, having now assumed a more self-possessed posture. Confidence is rising in her, and with every step, more flowers sprout up. She's leaving a beautiful trail of wild flowers in her wake.

Dani STOPS at the throne. Everyone now finds their way to *their* seats, but no one sits. They look to her. She looks momentarily confused, but then understands. She SITS. Now everyone may sit.

Dani admires her green throne. The greenery/flora subtly SWELLS and DEFLATES (as we saw before, with the mushroom trip).

SERVERS appear with plates. Dani is the first person to receive food and drink. Her tableware is much finer than the rest.

Looking down at her food, Dani suddenly catches her reflection in the tabletop mirror. *Her face looks wrong.* She quickly LOOKS AWAY. \*

Before long, everyone has food in front of them. They sit with their hands on their laps, present. They WAIT for Dani.

Dani picks up her FORK. She looks back to the rest of the table. They all look back at her with patience. She then looks down and PIERCES her food with the fork. (The sound of the piercing is heightened.) Dani takes a BITE. Now everyone may begin eating.

Dani looks down the length of the extended table. She alights on CHRISTIAN, who isn't eating. He looks very disturbed, clearly suffering a bad trip. He looks in Dani's direction. They LOCK EYES, but communicate nothing to each other. They are both lost in confusion, but they don't share in this. If anything, they look SCARED of each other.

This moment is broken by a SERVER arriving at Dani's side. He presents her with a SALT HERRING. The community sees this and laughs, knowing what's in store. \*

DANI  
For what?

STEN explains: \*

STEN  
You must eat it whole, but the tail going first. \*

DANI  
(sincerely frightened)  
What? I can't. That's too big.

STEN  
(chuckle) \*

No no - you must try.

Christian, tripping heavily, turns to a LARGE MAN to his side.

CHRISTIAN  
How much is happening right now?

Inexplicably, the Large Man CLAPS in Christian's face. This sends Christian on an intense downward spiral.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)  
(almost inaudible)  
*Why did you do that?*

The Large Man's attention is now on Dani, whose head is tilted back as she tries to eat the herring whole (tail first). Sten holds it above her, feeding it into her mouth. \*

Dani takes half of the herring into her mouth, starts to chew, and then coughs out the rest. This elicits ecstatic APPLAUSE. Dani, unnerved at first, lets out a childlike LAUGH.

STEN  
A word from the May Queen!

\*

BLONDE WOMAN  
Yes! Speech!

DIFFERENT HARGANS  
Speech!

IRMA  
Stand! Stand!

\*

Dani is urged to stand up. She does so, clearly hallucinating intensely. The silence hangs heavily.

DANI  
...I don't know if this is real, or  
what's happening, but - thank you.

\*

Dani lets this hang. A brief awkward pause, and then:

\*

ARNE  
To the May Queen!  
(raises his aquavit)  
Skål!!

\*

\*

EVERYONE  
Skål!!

Everyone drinks to that. One Hårgan Woman turns to Dani (who's sitting back down) to excitedly say:

\*

\*

HÅRGAN WOMAN  
You are the family now! Yes?

Dani nods, unsure. The woman nods manically.

HÅRGAN WOMAN (CONT'D)  
Yes! Yes! You are the family!

The Woman rubs Dani's arm, smiling warmly (and aggressively).

PELLE, we reveal, is composing a drawing of Dani in her throne.

Christian's expression is SOUR. He turns to notice that MAJA is looking at him. Taken aback, Christian's expression slowly SOFTENS (in a slack-jawed, lust-stricken way). Maja is clearly "in heat." Holding Christian's gaze, she RISES from her seat (as if in slow-motion) and begins to walk sensually off. Christian watches her go. She passes SIV, whose eyes are also trained on Christian.

Maja continues toward the TEMPLE, glancing back at Christian to confirm that he's still watching her. DANI notices this, despite the fact that everyone is competing for her attention.

Dani looks to Christian. He stares dumbly at the table, lost in conflict.

95H

**EXT. FIELD - DINING AREA - MINUTES LATER**

\*

95H

Everyone is finished (although there's a smaller number of women at the table now). Siv RISES. All eyes go respectfully to her.

\*

\*

SIV

Now it is traditional for the May Queen to bless our crops and livestock. And after the luck you just inherited from that salt herring, we should all be doubly encouraged.

Laughter all around.

\*

Siv gestures in the direction of a CARRIAGE, just beyond the tables. Its back sports TWO UNLIT TORCHES.

\*

Three GIRLS scatter flowers to create a PATH between Dani and the carriage. Dani RISES. *Everyone else stands up, too.*

DANI

Can Christian come with me?

SIV

No. The Queen must ride alone.

Dani pauses to accept this. She steps onto the floral path and approaches the carriage. On the way, one MAN (dressed in lady's clothing) offers her a LONG, FLAMING STICK. Dani accepts it. The man motions to the carriage's unlit torches.

Dani walks to the carriage, extends the stick's flame toward the torches, and sets them each AFIRE.

The man takes the stick back from Dani, and gestures for her to enter the carriage. A TRADITIONALLY DRESSED MAN stands beside the carriage door. He hands Dani a VIAL OF HOLY SPRING WATER, and offers Dani his hand (for support) as she contemplates entering.

TRADITIONALLY DRESSED MAN

Your majesty.

Dani accepts his supportive hand as she climbs into the carriage.

96 **INT. CARRIAGE - CONTINUOUS**

96

Dani takes a seat.

Outside, several YOUNG WOMEN (including HANNA) have gathered in front of the carriage. They each take hold of RODS, prepared to pull the carriage.

\*

A few other women have gathered to the sides of the carriage. They hold juniper boughs and unlit torches. One girl goes around, IGNITING their torches.

97 **EXT. DINING AREA - SAME TIME**

\*

97

Most of the community remains standing at the dining tables. They WATCH as the women pull the carriage away.

Christian watches, too. Guilt-ridden. He looks to SIV. She looks unblinkingly back.

98 **INT. CARRIAGE (MOVING) - MOMENTS LATER**

98

Dani looks out the window as the carriage is pulled through the WHEAT FIELDS. The accompanying women WAVE their torches about, casting away dark spirits.

99

**EXT. FIELD - SAME TIME**

99

A GIRL begins scattering flowers to create a NEW PATH. This is between Christian and the TEMPLE. All eyes are now on him.

Christian, frozen for a moment, RISES. He takes one abrupt step forward, and then continues warily toward the Temple.

100

**INT. TEMPLE - CONTINUOUS**

100

Christian enters the foyer of the temple. The temple doors are closed. MATS, dressed in ceremonial dress, stands in waiting. He hands Christian a WHITE GOWN. \*

MATS \*

Put this.

The man gestures to a MODESTY PANEL in the corner (behind which Christian can disrobe).

101

**EXT. WHEAT FIELD - SAME TIME**

101

The women pulling the carriage have slowed to a STOP. Dani is directed by Hanna to step out. She is handed a flaming torch, and led to a small HOLE in the ground. \*

Dani is handed a sack of GRAIN, a raw STEAK, and an EGG. She is directed to pour the grain into the hole, which she does, and to then drop the steak over the grain. She does this, too. She is then instructed to crack the egg and pour its contents into the hole. \*

Hanna now affects perfect posture. Dani instinctively mimics this. \*

HANNA \*

Repeat now after me.

Dani and Hanna are looking directly into each other's eyes. Hanna begins to SING very slowly, enunciating very carefully, and Dani SINGS ALONG (quite well): \*

HANNA (CONT'D) \*

(copied by Dani) \*

*Vakna upp, vakna upp, både åker och äng  
Nu har du sovit länge i din säng  
Nu är det över med snö och med regn  
Nu har sommarnatten kommit.*

Hanna is impressed. As are the onlooking young women. \*

The hole is COVERED UP with soil.

102

**INT. TEMPLE - FOYER - SAME TIME**

102

Christian has changed into the WHITE GOWN. He steps nervously out from behind the modesty panel.

CHRISTIAN

What now?

Mats now turns to a MAN WITH HAIR COVERING HIS FACE (looking like the back of a head). He hands Mats a STONE POT. Mats now turns to raise the pot toward Christian's face. Christian looks very unnerved by the man whose face is covered in hair. \*



MATS  
Breathe in.

\*  
\*

Mats lifts off the lid to release a WAVE OF STEAM. Christian looks to Mats, wary.

\*  
\*

MATS (CONT'D)  
For your vitality.

\*  
\*

Reluctantly, Christian BREATHE IN the vapors and his eyes begin to cloud over. He EXHALES heavily (coughing the last bit out). He's already feeling the effects. His breathing becomes shallow and his legs start to wobble.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

The Man Whose Hair Envelops His Face now OPENS THE DOORS to the temple. Quiet humming is heard from inside.

\*  
\*

103 INT. TEMPLE - CONTINUOUS

103

It is dark, save for several burning candles.

\*

In the center of the room, lying on a lush bed of freshly cut birch twigs and WILD FLOWERS, is MAJA. She is NUDE, lying on her back, legs together.

\*  
\*

Several OLDER WOMEN, mostly in their 30s and 40s (some in their 50s and 60s), stand at the back of the room. They are also NUDE. The humming comes from them.

\*  
\*

Christian is too stoned to react. He regards the room as he would a dreamscape.

The humming starts to build as them women SING in the Hårgas' wordless, groaning, microtonal tradition.

\*

Maja tilts her head and her eyes move toward the front door...at Christian.

\*  
\*

One Woman now steps up to draw Christian's gown OFF of his shoulders. He is fluidly DISROBED. Now standing naked (and erect), he is directed towards Maja, who waits nervously.

\*

Christian seems to LEVITATE half-an-inch off the ground and then FLOATS gently across the room (clearly a product of the escalating hallucination). As he approaches Maja, the singing intensifies. Maja's LEGS timidly PART. Christian, approaching swiftly, looks down at her. Her eyes are closed as she waits to be taken. *The singing rises to an operatic pitch.*

\*  
\*  
\*

104 EXT. CATTLE HOUSE - SAME TIME

104

The sun is less intense now. It is nearing twilight.

The carriage has pulled up to the barn. Dani, holding a torch, proceeds to bless the livestock. Hanna sings.

\*  
\*

105 INT. TEMPLE - SAME TIME

105

Christian has descended to his knees. He sits between Maja's legs, preparing himself. He looks extremely intoxicated.

Maja's eyes are squeezed shut as she anticipates what's coming. Christian awkwardly leans down to gently KISS her lips. Without opening her eyes, she kisses back - slowly, sensually. The singing rises and falls (out of harmony) with trembling impatience.

Christian gently presses himself into Maja. Her mouth opens in anticipation. He ENTERS her. Overwhelmed, Maja digs her nails into his back. Her eyes well with tears. Christian looks unsettled, but he continues...

Christian is now MAKING LOVE to Maja, very slowly - almost robotically. She lies motionless, mouth agape. She doesn't move a muscle, nor does she make a sound, but her expression is one of total, paralyzed ECSTASY. The singing has now HARMONIZED.

The Older Women watch this with rapt attention. They are clearly aroused. The lovemaking is dreamily slow. The singing rises steadily. Delayed percussion accompanies each heavy, lagging THRUST.

Maja looks back at one of the women. It is ULRIKA. She smiles tenderly at her. This would be touching if it weren't so weird. Maja offers Ulrika her HAND, and Ulrika supportively takes it into her hands. Ulrika lovingly presses her CHEEK against Maja's open palm, CARESSING her face. \*

Maja MOANS. The women all MOAN in sympathy. (Some have taken to rubbing their breasts.) \*

In the far corner, we reveal, Ruben is finger-painting on the pages of the Rubi Radr. He is inspired. \*

106

**EXT. FARMSTEAD - MOMENTS LATER**

106

The carriage has returned to the farmstead. Dani steps uneasily out of the wagon, still under the warping influence of the hallucinogen. The SINGING/MOANING is heard faintly from the Temple. \*

HANNA  
We shall go now to Siv's house. \*

DANI  
What's there?

HANNA  
It is a special meeting, only for the Queens. She will bless you. \*

The distant singing persists. Dani looks to the Temple. She seems DRAWN to it.

DANI  
What about there?

HANNA  
Not for us. \*

Dani, attracted/worried by the singing/moaning, takes a few steps toward the Temple. The young women look very concerned. Hanna steps up to STAND IN DANI'S WAY. \*

HANNA (CONT'D)  
I think you should not. \*

DANI  
...Why?

Hanna is not convincing when she says: \*

HANNA  
It is a ceremony for the men.

\*

Dani is now very suspicious. Her expression begs "What is it really?" Hanna's expression says that it's something that would hurt Dani. Hanna's expression pleads: "Don't go inside. For your own sake."

\*

\*

Dani's eyes NARROW with paranoia. Now she *must* enter. She PUSHES ahead. The women remain where they are, very worried.

107

**INT. TEMPLE - FOYER - CONTINUOUS**

107

Dani enters the foyer of the temple. Beyond the closed doors, the singing/moaning has reached an operatic intensity.

\*

Dani takes a moment to gather herself, and then she bends down to peer through the door's KEYHOLE.

Through the keyhole, Dani sees Christian's BACK as he "makes love" to Maja. The surrounding women have fallen deeper into their trance. They are all HOLDING THEIR BREASTS. With every one of Christian's thrusts, the women PUMP THEIR BREASTS WITH THEIR HANDS - moaning in tandem with Maya. Dani's eyes go WIDE with horror.

\*

\*

\*

Stunned, Dani backs away from the keyhole. She suddenly doubles over and RETCHES. She rushes out of the temple.

108

**EXT. TEMPLE - CONTINUOUS**

108

Dani runs outside. She VOMITS onto the grass. She's in a state of shock. Her breathing is shallow and she looks anxiously around, as if confused as to her whereabouts.

The young women rush over to Dani. They surround her, touching her, rubbing her. Dani CAN'T BREATHE. She's panicking.

Hanna directs the women to LEAD Dani to the Main House. They all hurriedly guide her in that direction.

\*

109

**INT. MAIN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS**

109

The young women usher Dani to her bed. They sit her down, gathering intimately around her. Dani struggles increasingly to breathe.

Hanna HOLDS Dani's FACE in her hands. She locks eyes with Dani and affects DEEP BREATHING. Dani's eyes, unwilling to settle at first, gradually become FIXED to Hanna's. Hanna continues to affect deep, measured breathing. Dani struggles to follow her. Her breathing trembles to meet Hanna's example.

\*

\*

\*

Finally, Dani BREAKS DOWN into tears. Everything she's bottled up, all the emotions that she's labored to stifle - it all comes BURSTING out. She falls into deep, anguished SOBS.

Still locked onto Dani's gaze, Hanna *also* breaks down. She SOBS \* DEEPLY along with Dani. *They are sympathetically connected.* It's remarkable, and very unsettling.

The surrounding women have also started CRYING, although not as intensely as Hanna, who has absolutely fixed herself to Dani. The crying is infectious, and the deeper they go, the greater the outpour.

\*

It has become a circle of hysterical, weeping women. They moan and scream and cry. It's positively TRIBAL.

110

**INT. TEMPLE - SAME TIME**

110

The ceremony has nearly reached its apogee. The singing has peaked, and Christian is thrusting faster and harder than before. Maja, eyes still closed, is in a state of absolute EUPHORIA. She moans in ecstasy, and the room has filled with a cacophony of sympathetic moans. \*

Christian suddenly looks ill. He begins to slow down.

MAJA  
(in Swedish)  
No. Don't stop.

Christian looks like he's going to be sick.

One of the OLD WOMEN (60s) crouches behind Christian. She PUSHES on his buttocks, urging him to thrust faster. She keeps pushing and pushing until Christian's thrusts have gained in force.

MAJA (CONT'D)  
(in Swedish)  
Yes. Yes. Fill me.

Christian continues to push until he finally CLIMAXES. The Old Woman releases him, and backs away.

The singing/moaning DIES out. \*

Christian, motionless for a long moment, pulls out of Maja and sits on the ground. He looks slightly traumatized. Maja looks as euphoric as ever. She hugs her knees to her chest, and gently rocks herself back and forth.

MAJA (CONT'D)  
(in Swedish, to the women)  
I can feel it! I feel the baby! \*

Christian looks back to the OLD WOMAN who was just pushing his buttocks. She smiles toothlessly at him. He's *definitely* going to be sick. He STANDS suddenly, taking in the room with growing repulsion. He turns to amble dizzily out of the temple.

111

**EXT. TEMPLE - BOOK BINDING - CHICKEN COOP - CONTINUOUS**

\* 111

Christian exits the temple. He looks around, increasingly disoriented. He looks down to see the fresh puddle of Dani's VOMIT. This triggers him to retch. He moves desperately away from the vomit. \*

Standing at a distance, several isolated Hårgans watch Christian stumbling about. Christian tries to ignore them. He walks toward the MAIN HOUSE, but as he approaches, he hears the CHORUS OF CRYING (coming from Dani and the young women), and he immediately changes his trajectory.

Christian is now walking toward the BOOK BINDING HOUSE. \*

As he nears the house, he sees that the TRUCK (which was supposedly stolen) is now parked beside it. Christian's eyes buzz with suspicion. \*

He then looks downward...at a GARDEN in front of the book binding house. It is in the shape of a CIRCLE. \*

And at the heart of that circle...a FOOT, its sole facing skyward, protrudes from the soil. A symbol has been painted onto the sole. (It is Josh's foot.)

\*  
\*  
\*

Christian's eyes are wild with terror. He rigidly turns around, his heart pounding, panic taking hold.

\*  
\*

CHRISTIAN  
(to himself, in denial)  
That's not that. That wasn't...

\*  
\*  
\*

He walks off hurriedly toward a SMALL HOUSE. He opens the door to reveal that it's a CHICKEN COOP.

\*  
\*

112

**INT. CHICKEN COOP - CONTINUOUS**

112

Christian enters. He shuts the door behind him. Chickens flap stupidly about.

Christian tries to regain his composure. But as he tries to steady his breath, he SEES...

\*  
\*

Across the room, SIMON - naked - is suspended midair. His arms are outstretched, his body faced downwards, and it looks like he's flying. (In fact, he's being held up by flora-decorated ropes.) His BACK HAS BEEN OPENED UP, his RIBS SEPARATED FROM HIS SPINE (reaching outward like claws) and his **LUNGS HAVE BEEN PULLED UP TO LOOK LIKE OUTSPREAD WINGS**. It appears that his bloody "wings" have also been covered in bird feed. *In fact, one chicken is currently standing on his back, pecking at a rib.*

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

Frozen in horror, Christian stares unblinkingly.

CHRISTIAN  
Josh?

Christian's eyes fill intensely with TEARS. He starts toward Simon, whose lung-wings are subtly SWELLING and DEFLATING. He's still breathing.

\*  
\*

Driven by morbid compulsion, Christian crouches under Simon to make sure that it's Simon's face, and he confirms that it is, BUT...

\*  
\*  
\*

His EYES HAVE BEEN REMOVED and the sockets have been stuffed with BRILLIANTLY COLORED FLOWERS.

\*  
\*

Terrified, Christian turns - as if to run from this nightmare - but he SLAMS into...

\*  
\*

**ODD**, who is wearing a garland crown. Odd blows a handful of BROWN POWDER in Christian's face. Christian can't help but BREATHE IT IN. He coughs out a lungful of the mysterious dust.

\*

Stunned for a moment, Christian stumbles back. He tries to move his legs, but they are suddenly FROZEN. Now immobile, Christian drunkenly COLLAPSES. He writhes into panic, unable to move. His eyes are LOCKED OPEN.

He sees a gathering of Hårgans outside the door. Among them is PELLE. Christian looks pleadingly at Pelle. Pelle looks away with shame.

Odd leans down. With his fingers, he CLOSES one of Christian's EYELIDS. He then CLOSES the other. As this lid shuts, we GO TO **BLACK**.

HOLD ON BLACK. After a beat, we sharply cut to:

113

**EXT. STAGE - NEXT DAY**

\* 113

A TIGHT CLOSE-UP of Christian's sleeping face. His lip is slightly contorted, and his chin is chapped with dried saliva. A HAND enters frame to gently SLAP Christian awake. His eyelids do not open on their own.

The hand's fingers PRY OPEN Christian's EYELIDS. His lip remains contorted. He tries to speak, but it's nothing but vowels.

HÅRGAN MAN (O.C.)  
You cannot speak. You cannot move.

We cut WIDE to reveal that Christian sits limply in a wheelchair. He faces the crowd. Behind him, on the stage, is an immense THRONE made of glorious flowers. DANI sits in this throne, dressed in a **MASSIVE FLORAL DRESS** that looks like a grossly distended pile of blossoming flowers. Her GIANT FLORAL GARLAND CROWN is comprised of the nine special flowers and herbs. To either side of her, the ELDERS are all standing upright. (Also, RUBEN has a special seat, whose platform is covered in COTTON, resembling CLOUDS.)

Dani seems to have detached from reality completely. Her eyes are somewhere far away.

The entire community is gathered behind Christian. Among them, MAJA stands happily, wearing vivid red lipstick.

When it's clear that she has everyone's total attention, SIV SPEAKS:

SIV  
On this, the day of our deity of purification, we gather to give special thanks to our treasured Sun. As an offering to our Father, we will today surrender nine human lives.

Christian's eyes flare with terror. Dani's expression is blank.

SIV (CONT'D)  
As Hårga takes, so Hårga also gives. Thus, for every newblood sacrificed, we will dedicate one of our own. That is: four newbloods, four Hårgans, and one to be chosen by our Queen. Nine in all, to die and be reborn in the great Cycle.

Siv is done. Sten now continues the speech.

STEN  
The four newbloods have already been supplied. As for our end, we have two already dedicated -

Sten gestures to two elderly CORPSES (one male and one female) proudly DISPLAYED near the back of the crowd.

They stand upright, and their bottom halves (legs, hips) have been replaced by TREE STUMPS and their arms have been replaced by dense TREE BRANCHES. Their branch-arms are positioned to strike symbolic poses. The female's head is tilted back as GNARLED TWIGS jut violently from her mouth (as if they grew out of her stomach). The top of the male's head is opened up (as if having bloomed) with an overgrowth of twigs sprouted out (as if they had grown in his brain and then broken through); twigs also emerge from his ears.

STEN (CONT'D)  
 - and two who have volunteered.  
 (projecting to the crowd)  
 Ingemar? Ulf?

INGEMAR and ULF take one step forward. Ulf looks nervous. Ingemar looks overjoyed.

STEN (CONT'D)  
 You have brought outside offerings, thus volunteering your own bodies. You will today be joined in harmony with Everything.  
 (to Pelle)  
 And to Pelle, who has brought us new blood and our new Queen: you are today honored for your unclouded intuition.

Pelle, wearing a VERY LARGE GARLAND CROWN, smiles serenely.

Sten continues:

STEN (CONT'D)  
 And now, for the ninth offering, it is traditional that our fair Queen shall choose between a pre-selected newblood and a specially ordained Hårgan...

Sten turns to an Elder standing beside a large BALL CAGE (as generally used in bingo) at the end of the platform. The cage holds about a hundred WOODEN BALLS (the size of ping-pong balls) with a different RUNIC NAME carved into each.

The Man rotates the ball cage, which then dispenses a single BALL. The man holds up the ball and reads the name aloud:

BALL MAN  
 Dag.

STEN  
 Honorable Dag! Please step forward.

DAG, a man in his late 50s, looks like he just won the lottery. He takes a step forward, beaming with pride.

STEN (CONT'D)  
 And Christian Hughes.

A Hårgan man now wheels Christian, whose eyes are locked wide, away from the base of the stage. He positions Christian beside Dag to also be facing the stage. Christian is shocked at the sight of Dani.

STEN (CONT'D)  
(to Dani)

These are your candidates for the ninth and final offering. We patiently await your verdict.

Christian tries to scream, but this only results in muffled moans. His eyes BEG Dani for mercy. Her eyes are GLASS.

The community waits as Dani makes her silent deliberation.

Dani's EYES settle fixedly on CHRISTIAN. A wave of intense EMOTION suddenly animates Dani's face. Sadness, anger, love, heartbreak... These feelings are finally wrestled down, and her expression becomes BLANK again. Her EYES, still trained on Christian, have HARDENED. They narrow pointedly to suggest that she's made her decision. Sten understands.

STEN (CONT'D)  
(to the crowd)

The honor has been bestowed on Christian Hughes, our ninth and most sacred offering!

Christian's muffled screams now become hysterical. He has turned blue in the face. Dani's gaze remains steely and absent.

114

**EXT. FIELD - EVENING**

114

CU of a WHEEL rolling across the grass. Tracking alongside this, we tilt up to reveal that it belongs to a WHEELBARROW. Lying in the wheelbarrow is CONNIE'S CORPSE. It is soaking wet and its flesh is grossly distended (from being left underwater). She is wearing the same outfit (of greenery and jewels) that was used earlier for the sacrificial tree (which was fed to the lake).

Continuing to track alongside the wheelbarrow (which is pushed by a young male Hãrgan), we pull back to EXPAND OUR VIEW. We reveal that the Hãrgan is carting Connie's corpse toward the yellow-painted SACRED HOUSE, which was previously off-limits. It stands in the center of an open field. Its door is now OPEN.

We settle on a static wide of this until a NEW CART is pushed into frame. We now follow this cart, keeping it centered in frame. This cart holds MARK'S "CORPSE." In fact, it is just his hollowed out SKIN - stuffed with straw and hay. Atop his head is a jester's hat.

Peripherally, other bodies are being carted toward the house.

We continue to track ahead, following Mark's cart INTO the SACRED HOUSE...

115

**INT. SACRED HOUSE - CONTINUOUS**

115

The interior is completely adorned in greenery. An impossibly lush mausoleum. In the center is a PLATFORM made of hay.

Connie's corpse is rested against one wall.

Mark's is seated against the opposite wall.

Beyond them, to either side, are the TWO ELDER CORPSES that were standing upright in the crowd. The male body (who also drowned) is surrounded by his most precious belongings (jewelry, books, etc.).



The dead female elder (who has been frozen stiff; she has begun thawing) is also surrounded by her most prized possessions. \*

Beyond them, at the far end of the temple, is... \*

JOSH'S BODY, which is covered in dirt and soil. His eyes and nostrils are clogged with earth. His face is locked into a gagged scream, his mouth utterly stuffed with paper (from the Rubi Radr). Stacks of books rest on his lap (and atop those, his smartphone stands on its side, facing outward). And beside Josh... \*

SIMON'S CORPSE. He is now in the same dress as the rest of the corpses, but the eyes are still replaced by bright flowers. \*

116 **EXT. BOOKBINDING HOUSE - SAME TIME** \* 116

We are PUSHING TOWARD the bookbinding house, whose doors are open. To the side of it, Ulf and Ingemar are being embraced passionately by several members of the community. \*

117 **INT. BOOK-BINDING ROOM - SAME TIME** 117

A room that is typically used for book-binding. Its walls are lined with collector's editions of books.

A DEAD BEAR (seen earlier, alive and caged) lies on the island table. A deep INCISION has been drawn from the animal's neck to its groin. Two Hårgan Labourers pull out the bear's INNARDS. After scooping out the majority of its guts, they pile the waste into a bucket.

Then, with the assistance of two well-built Hårgan men, the Labourers endeavor to lift CHRISTIAN's paralyzed body.

Christian is fitted into the bear's hollowed out carcass. They start by inserting his limp legs into the bear's legs.

118 **INT. SACRED HOUSE - MINUTES LATER** 118

Humming and music has started very quietly outside. \*

Christian has been secured into the giant bear carcass. The incision (from its groin to its neck) has been SEWN UP. The bear's JAW has been removed, creating a gaping HOLE (down to its upper chest) through which Christian's FACE is visible.

Five Hårgan labourers plant the bear carcass in the CENTER of the hay platform. Its back rests against a hay pile. Christian is still unable to move or speak. His muffled screams persist. \*

A man dressed as "Vídorr" (god of vengeance) stands before Christian. He holds the *Rubi Radr* in his hands. \*

VÍDORR  
(in Swedish)

Mighty and dreadful beast. With you, we purge our most unholy affects. We banish you now to the deepest recesses, where you may reflect on your wickedness. \*

Ingemar and Ulf are now seated on haystacks. They are also surrounded by their most prized belongings. Mats stands before Ingemar, who smiles widely. He pours a thick, sappy LIQUID into Ingemar's mouth. \*

MATS (in Swedish) \*

Drink from the yew tree. Feel no fear.

Mats moves to Ulf. He pours the liquid into his mouth as well. \*

MATS (CONT'D) (in Swedish) \*

Drink from the yew tree. Feel no pain. \*

Mats leaves the house. Now, THREE HÅRGAN MEN enter with FLAMING TORCHES. The music begins to rise outside, including the wordless, microtonal SINGING we've come to recognize. \*

The men approach Christian, whose "screaming" has become horribly frenzied.

The men move to different sides of the hay platform. They form a TRIANGLE. Simultaneously, they touch their torches to the hay - igniting a FIRE.

119 **EXT. FIELD - SAME TIME** 119

The torch-men exit the house. Inside, the fire has begun to spread along the platform.

The music rises as the fire picks up. The SINGING, which wavers in trembling anticipation, has not yet found harmony.

Dani watches this with dissociated eyes. She stands tensely in the field, eyes locked on the fire. Behind her, all of Hårga is enraptured.

120 **INT. SACRED HOUSE - SAME TIME** 120

The fire has grown considerably. Inside the bear, Christian is now being steam-boiled in the animal's fluids.

The bear's FUR begins to catch fire. Before long, the whole animal is swallowed in the blaze. Christian's wretched face becomes invisible behind the flames.

Ulf and Ingemar (still smiling) watch this with detached fascination.

The fire has now spread to other piles of hay. It has begun to crawl up the walls of the house.

Ulf is suddenly consumed by flames. He SCREAMS!

121 **EXT. FIELD - SAME TIME** 121

Ulf's screams are heard from the Sacred House. Suddenly, every member of the Hårgan community (who is not singing) begins to SCREAM as well. Feeling Ulf's pain, they emit a horrible chorus of wails. When Ulf's screams die down, so do theirs.

Meanwhile, Ruben has been given paper to PAINT on. Two elders encourage him.

DANI, watching the burning house with fraught eyes, is suddenly met with a wave of conflicting emotions. Her expression curdles into one of sheer HORROR and DISGUST. Then it becomes one of deep SORROW and SHAME. Her eyes well with tears. The singing has now HARMONIZED and has risen to an insane, operatic pitch.

We cut to an immense WIDE. Dani's back is in the f.g. and the burning house is in the b.g. Overcome, Dani buries her face in her hands. Breaking into gentle sobs, she begins to walk aimlessly to the side. We TRACK alongside her, keeping her centered. She is circling the house, pulling at her hair and face in increasing anguish. She is WEEPING now, and the house (ever-present in the b.g.) has become ENGULFED in the raging flames.

Dani begins MOANING and SCREAMING. Her howls almost harmonize with the singing in the b.g. The fire ROARS and CRACKLES in the distance. It's apocalyptic.

Soon it's uncertain whether Dani is crying or LAUGHING. Her legs become weak and she collapses to her knees. Four Hårgans (one of them being Pelle) run into the scene, carrying a LARGE CHAIR - Dani's throne.

The Hårgans lift Dani by the arms and SEAT her in the throne. They then HOIST the chair into the air.

On the upward LIFT, we cut to a tight CLOSE-UP of Dani's face. She is being carried forward. Her expression, which begins as one of great distress, slowly starts to TURN. Her agony subsides into sudden CONFUSION. *What's happening? Where am I? I'm on this chair, being carried!* Her expression goes from FEAR to EXCITEMENT to CONFUSION again. She suddenly lets out an abrupt LAUGH (which we can't hear over the music and the now-deafening FIRE). Dani is now being taken over by an invading sense of pride and contentment. This soon evolves into a manic exhilaration. Dani BEAMS. She has been embraced by a new family. She is Queen. She is not alone. \*

A SMILE finally breaks onto Dani's face. (For some, this smile \* might recall the photo of Dani in her parent's bedroom at the \* beginning of the film.) She has surrendered to a joy known only\* by the insane. She has lost herself completely, and she is finally free. It is horrible and it is beautiful.

CUT TO **BLACK**