

FADE IN:

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE VILLAGE - DAY

A sweeping aerial shot follows a winding river, revealing two distinct communities on either side – one upriver, the other downriver.

Both villages are nestled among farms and fruit orchards, their homes modest and scattered. Beyond the lush greenery, distant mountains rise, majestic and commanding – a silent reminder of nature's power.

EXT. BEHIND THE POTTER'S FENCE - SAME TIME

Three boys – TEO (11, chestnut hair), SIA (10, blond), and ELI (12, black curly hair) – peek over a wooden fence.

Their faces are smudged with dirt. Sweat beads glisten on their forehead.

They climb, tense and quiet, and perch on the fence.

Each clutches a calat – a handmade slingshot – and a few stones.

THEO
(whispering)
Understood. That one – the big one
on top.

ELI
It must be the best of them.

THEO
Yes, that's the point.

SIA
What if he tells our parents. I am
already in the dog house for
breaking the school window glass.

THEO
Don't worry. His ears don't work
properly. Just be quick.

They get into position. Slingshots loaded. Hair stuck to their foreheads. Dirt smudged across their faces.

EXT. BEHIND THE POTTER'S FENCE - CONTINUOUS

The boys aim.

THWACK – TEO misses.

SNAP – SIA

CRACK! – ELI hits the large pot dead center.

It shatters.

ELI grins – proud, glowing – but his friends are already slipping away.

 OLD POTTER (O.S.)
 (yelling)
 BASTARDS!

ELI watches, proud of his perfect shot – glowing. But his smile fades as he sees his friends disappearing.

The OLD POTTER hesitates. He examines the scene, then looks at his shattered best pot with pity. A beat – then he charges forward, a barking dog at his heels.

ELI bolts. The potter and his dog give chase.

His heartbeat pounds in his ears, drowning out the barking. He clutches his slingshot tightly.

His worn shoes start slipping off – but he doesn't stop.

He just runs.

EXT. RIVER SIDE IN THE BIGGER VILLAGE – NOON

EXT. RIVERSIDE – CONTINUOUS

ELI runs along the riverbank, the potter and his barking dog close behind.

The camera glides downstream – revealing a group of women gathered by the river shore.

Some play gently in the shallows with their young children.

Others work on small handcrafts or serve food, passing dishes and drinks.

The scene feels like a peaceful picnic – a warm, communal moment.

They wear earth-toned, long-sleeved shirts and matching skirts.

White pinafores cover their fronts.

Their hair is tucked neatly beneath bonnets or scarves – simple, modest, and uniform.

In the center, a striking young woman, ARIS (30), stands with a basket of flowers and medicinal herbs.

Her orange-blond braid is coiled tightly around her head as she speaks, explaining the plants to a small circle of attentive women.

Nearby, CORDELIA (KOKO), an 18-year-old with a slight limp, tends a small fire at the riverbank.

She spreads a woven textile on the grass and lays out cheese, fruit, and other farm goods.

A short distance away, BIBI, dressed in all black, sits silently on a flat stone in the river.

Her head is bowed. She whispers to herself as she slowly mourning for someone—eyes distant, fixed on the flowing water.

Sunlight dapples the water. Green reflections shimmer across the surface.

EXT. THE HILL BESIDE RIVER— SAME TIME

EXT. HILLSIDE ABOVE THE RIVER – CONTINUOUS

ELI scrambles up a small hill beside the river, panting hard. The dog is gaining – barking wildly.

The roar of the river rises in his ears, mixing with the dog's barks. It's deafening.

Behind him, the OLD POTTER appears – breathless, waving his arms, shouting something.

But ELI hears nothing. Only the rush of water and the barking.

The potter tries to grab the dog – but the animal breaks free, charging up the hill.

ELI turns toward the river. The current churns below – wide, deep, dark, and strange.

It feels like the river is calling him.

The dog is almost on him.

ELI jumps – into the deepest part of the river.

FADE OUT.

INT. DEEP IN THE RIVER – MOMENTS LATER

ELI floats beneath the surface, still clutching the sling shot.

At first – panic.

Then – calm.

He opens his eyes.

He can breathe.

The current carries him. In the distance – a shimmer. A glowing shape like sunlight on glass.

Muffled voices echo from above.

But he swims toward the glow.

Suddenly – he sees his mother, ARIS, and his aunt KOKO, dragging him from the river, panicked, screaming in muffled voices.

EXT. RIVERSIDE – MOMENTS LATER

ELI, soaked and gasping, is dragged to safety.

He blinks, dazed, struggling to process what just happened.

His eyes scan the river, looking for the shiny glowing thing in the river.

There – BIBI, his grandmother, is calmly coming toward him.

ELI sits on a spread blanket. ARIS, his mother, angrily dries him off with a thick cloth, rubbing hard from both sides.

ELI keeps glancing back at the water – at the spot where he saw the strange reflection.

She doesn't like ARIS scolding him.

ARIS
(stern, while drying his
head)

(MORE)

ARIS (CONT'D)
How could you be so foolish? Did
you think drowning was a game?

KOKO
(pouring hot water into a
small teacup)
Be careful, ELI. This river doesn't
forgive.
(beat, glancing at others)
I doubt you jumped in alone.

Eli looks up, confused – noticing BIBI getting closer.

ELI
There was something down there!
Something glowing.

ARIS tries to swallow her anger. KOKO sets the tea down,
gently steadying the moment.

ARIS
Stop your nonsenses, just tell me
how did you end up in the river.

ELI stays silent.

From nearby, a group of women having lunch call out.

WOMAN#1
Let him go, Aris. Just be thankful
he's okay.

WOMAN#2
He's just a kid. A good swimmer
too.

They laugh, but the tension remains.

THEO (V.O.)
He cracked the old potter's best
pot.

ELI freezes.

ARIS whirls around – furious. She snatches a nearby stick and
strikes ELI lightly on the hip.

BIBI steps forward, calm and protective. She takes the stick
from ARIS and places herself between them.

ARIS, out of respect for her mother-in-law, steps back – but
glares at Eli.

ARIS
 What have you done? Have you lost
 all sense?

KOKO eyes THEO and SIA nearby.

SIA looks nervous. THEO smug.

KOKO

Don't tell me you two weren't with him.

(smirks)

He's only in trouble because he's the better shot.

ELI, near tears:

ELI
 We all did it. It was THEO's idea.

KOKO
 See! I knew it. So they all should
 be punished.

ARIS
 Still doesn't make an excuse.

Suddenly, TALA (35, elegant, better dressed than the others)
 steps forward.

She's KOKO's cousin – and THEO's aunt. She's been watching
 quietly.

TALA
 Come on, Koko. Let his mother teach
 him something for once.

The air shifts. Women pause. The history between these two
 women is clear.

KOKO's smile turns cold.

KOKO
 Well, look who's talking about
 "manners."
 (beat)
 I think it's you who owes an
 apology.

BIBI tries to signal KOKO to stop, but she doesn't.

A kind, calm woman – MARY (31, mixed skin), Theo's mother –
 steps forward.

MARY

MARY (CONT'D)

(to THEO)

If you were with him, you should've kept his secret.

(to ARIS)

I'm sorry, Aris.

TALA bristles, unwilling to back down.

TALA

What nonsense, Mary. Eli broke the pot. Why should you be sorry.

MARY

Because Theo shouldn't snitch on his friend.

Koko interferes

KOKO

And maybe someone should let a mother raise her son. Happy! Mary is not like you.

TALA tries to stay cool, but her words cut.

TALA

Alright, little cousin. We haven't done anything wrong, except take care of you after your father – and then your brother – passed. And now? Everyone sees what's happening.

ELI watches THEO and SIA. He knows he can't confront them, not yet.

ARIS and MARY try to step in. Other women murmur as trying to calm the rising heat. But the insults continue.

KOKO

How generous of you. But everyone knows – all you want is our land.

You'll never get it.

TALA

You mean the land this witch—
 (points at BIBI)
 —stole from our uncle by trickery?

KOKO

Shut your mouth! Your uncle was my
 father.
 (firm, angry)
 You'll never have our land. Or my
 sister.
 (cold)
 Tell your brother that Aris chose
 my brother — and never once looked
 back.

ELI's ears perk up — words he's never heard before.

ARIS glances at MARY. Their eyes meet — and for a moment,
 Aris sees something unexpected:

Not judgment. Just quiet ache in Mary's eyes.

ARIS

(shouts)
 Koko, stop it.

BIBI slowly rises. She takes ELI's hand — he's calmer now,
 almost dry.

She walks forward, stops in front of TALA. They hold eye
 contact for a long moment.

Then — she walks away, guiding ELI with her.

INT. ARIS' HOUSE — EVENING

A flat green yard, slightly elevated above the rest of the
 village, stretches between two houses—one older, one newly
 built. Both reflect typical European village architecture.
 The organized yard and garden reveal the presence of a woman
 with a green thumb.

In the back: a shared barn, chicken coops, and food storage
 sheds. It's a warm spring evening. A dim electric bulb glows,
 casting a soft light in the encroaching dusk.

ARIS, now changed into a white nightdress, sits on a bench on
 her balcony, waiting.

Across the yard, KOKO sits impatiently on the stairs of the other house. Restless, she gets up and walks over to ARIS.

ARIS
It's getting dark.

KOKO
They'll be here soon.
(pause)
Sorry... I shouldn't have said anything today.

ARIS
Did you see her eyes? Tom's wife.
Mary, I mean.

KOKO
Yes. Her innocence burns me.
(beat)
I just wish her son was like her.
But the nasty blood in that family always survives.

KOKO's blunt words make ARIS chuckle.

ARIS
There is no point to mess with Tala!
(pause)
Nothing but spilling all the dirt out.

A dog barks in the distance. They both turn to see BIBI and ELI entering through the gate.

BIBI pauses as ELI runs ahead toward his mother. She then walks slowly toward her own house. KOKO calls out—

KOKO
(grinning)
Bibi! Want me to walk with you?

BIBI doesn't answer, just heads to her house.

KOKO (CONT'D)
(swallows)
Keep forgetting she doesn't speak to us.

ARIS
How long is she going to carry her pain.

KOKO turns to ELI.

KOKO

Where have you been? It's almost
night

ELI snuffles and pulls up his nose.

ELI

We went to the potter's house. Paid
for the broken pot.

ARIS frowns. She gives ELI a light slap on the back—more
disappointed than angry.

ARIS

Aren't you ashamed? Making your
granny go through that?

ELI

Granny insisted, he said that he
was so worry when I jumped in the
water.

KOKO chuckles. The tense decreases.

ARIS

(to Eli)

Okay enough! Go rest now. Your new
teacher starts tomorrow.

Eli runs playfully toward the house.

KOKO

Oh, did they finally send someone?

ARIS

Let's just hope the people here let
this one do his job.

INT. ARIS'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Aris checks the doors and walks through the quiet rooms. She
steps into Eli's small room — plain, with an old portrait of
his father, Edward on the desk. She sets down a lantern,
studies the photo, then kisses Eli's forehead and exits.

INT. ARIS'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

She lies in bed — one side empty. The room is still, thick
with silence.

Aris turns to her side, pressing a hand against her chest.
Under the fabric, her fingers move, slowly, unconsciously —
rubbing over her breast, her nipple.

A quiet gasp.

She curls in on herself. A tear falls on the pillow.

Longing. Grief. A body remembering touch.

Then – a noise.

Dog barks.

The sound of a motorbike passing... fading.

A soft thud.

Then – a knock.

ARIS (CONT'D)
(whispers)
What is going on?

She grabs a scarf, wraps it around herself – then pauses, returns, and lifts a hunting rifle from her closet.

EXT. ARIS'S HOUSE – MOMENTS LATER

The dog is chewing something – meat.

ARIS (CONT'D)
Who's there?

VOICE (O.S.)
Don't be scared, Aris. It's me.

Tom (40,, village current patron, Eli's father cousin) emerges from the shadows – tall, bearded, drunk.

ARIS
(coldly)
What are you doing here in the middle of night?

Tom tries to smile, stepping onto the first stair.

TOM
Just checking on Eli. I heard the boys had a rough day.

ARIS
Check during the day light next time.

TOM
Sorry if Theo dragged him into something.

Aris hides the gun behind her.

ARIS

No worries he is just a kid.
That'll teach Eli not to trust
everyone - like his father did.

Tom chuckles.

TOM

You're colder than I remember. But
I still care for you.

ARIS

Care for your own household.

TOM

(intensifying)

It's been eight years from the
moment you are alone! I loved you
before him. I still want you.

ARIS

(furious)

You killed Edward, you got his
position enjoy it. But you never
have his land, wife and prosperity.
Not until I am alive.

TOM

You have no proof on putting the
blame on me. His stupidity killed
him. The much he cared for those
monster in the deep village, he
didn't for you.

Aris, heads to her house, still hiding the gun her behind.

ARIS

The only monster I know is you.
Edward was making a peace with
them. But you didn't want to,
bcause of your haterd to deep
village people.

(beat)

Now, get out of my propery.

TOM

(smirks)

If I don't...

Aris brings the gun out.

Tom gets closer. He grabs the string of her nightdress and pulls it out.

TOM (CONT'D)
Come on! Your core is calling me out. I can feel the heat from your body. I can make you cool.

Aris backs up. She raises the gun.

ARIS
One more step, and I'll shoot.

Tom smirks.

TOM
You wouldn't. You know that I will give away my everything for you Aris.

ARIS
Back off!

Aris aim Tome's side of the head.

ARIS (CONT'D)
My father was the sharpest shot this land has known. His aim runs in my blood. I won't miss.

Tom still smirking.

ARIS (CONT'D)
I hate you Tom, I rather be dead than to be close to you.

Tom is still getting closer, she aims the Gun and

BOOM...

She fires. A chunk of Tom's hair flies off. He freezes.

ARIS (CONT'D)
(cold, brutal but quiet)
The next one's between your eyes.

Koko's voice calls out from inside.

KOKO (O.S.)
Aris? What was that?

ARIS

(still glaring at Tom)
Just a wild boar in the orchard!

Tom stumbles back and leave.

Aris lowers the gun. She sits, weeping silently. Her hands are trembling. The dog still is chowing the meat.

EXT. BIBI'S WINDOW - SAME TIME

Koko is running to Aris's house. Bibi stands behind the glass, unmoving. She's seen everything.

EXT. VILLAGE - AFTER MIDNIGHT

A deep, heavy metal bell rings out - loud and haunting.

Its echo ripples through the quiet village.

Little windows begin to glow, one by one.

INT. ARIS'S ROOM - SAME TIME

Aris jolts awake.

She sits up, hand on her chest, breathing fast.

ARIS (CONT'D)
(whispers)
What a night!

INT. ELI'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Eli wakes in fright.

ELI
Mama! Mama!

INT. ELI'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Aris rushes in, sits beside him, and holds him close.

ARIS
Nothing, just the bell in the
village square. That's all.

ELI
But you said when the bell rings,
something important has happened!

ARIS
Maybe!

ELI
Let's go check.

ARIS
(protesting)
What? No. Back to sleep.

Eli frowns, then quietly slips out.

EXT. YARD - CONTINUOUS

Eli finds KOKO already outside, alert at the gate. ARIS and Eli go to the yard.

KOKO
What night is tonight? Should we go
check?

Aris steps out.

She sees villagers in the distance, lanterns in hand, walking toward the main square.

She hesitates - until Eli playfully runs off.

With a sigh, she grabs her shawl

ARIS
Eli, wait!

She follows.

EXT. ROAD TO THE VILLAGE SQUARE - AFTER MIDNIGHT

ARIS walks quickly, worried that ELI might catch a chill, but he runs ahead - full of excitement.

More villagers are emerging from their homes, lanterns in hand, footsteps gathering under the cool spring night. The leaves rustle softly in the wind. The moon glows full, casting silver across the sky.

KOKO
I should've brought our lantern.

ARIS
What about Bibi? Was she scared?

KOKO

No. She just sat on her bed, staring out the window.

I think she felt like déjà vu - that damned night we pulled my brother's lifeless body from the river.

ARIS (CONT'D)

I felt it too.

(beat)

That was the night we lost
everything.

KOKO

Was it really a wild boar last
night, or just something you
imagined?

ARIS

I don't know.

But maybe it's good for people to
hear a gunshot from a house without
a man in it, occasionally.