

EXT. FOREST GLADE, NORWAY - DAY

A bright, crisp afternoon in a verdant forest glade. Small pine trees and lupines abound. A white hare sits among the brush.

OLAF, King of Norway, gazes upon the hare and smiles beatifically.

OLAF

I revel in God's creation. He has blessed us with a bounteous gift: from the mighty fjord to the timid hare. It is our duty by God to sup from this earth; and sup we shall, and profit from the divine beneficence.

OLAF turns to LEIF ERIKSSON, who stands at his side.

OLAF (CONT'D)

That is why I have chosen you, Leif, to bring the light of truth -- the will of God -- to the edge of the world.

LEIF bows to his sovereign.

LEIF

I am humbled, sire, by your confidence.

OLAF

Come -- walk with me.

OLAF and LEIF stroll along a path lined with large stones half buried in the ground. The king's RETINUE follows at a discreet distance, their banners flapping in the breeze.

KING OLAF is a tall slender man with a thin beard, his crown perched atop bushy black hair. Regal robes of red and purple hang loosely upon his person. Throughout this scene, both men converse in a stiff, somewhat artificial manner.

LEIF

I will miss the green glades of Norway. But it will be good to see my family again.

OLAF

You have been -- and are -- a most loyal subject of the court, Leif.

(MORE)

OLAF (CONT'D)

I think it is time we lift your family name above that of common outlawry.

A hint of embarrassment comes over LEIF'S face. LEIF is a young man in his early twenties with a light beard and shoulder-length reddish-blond hair.

LEIF

Nothing would please me greater, your highness.

OLAF

How bodes your father?

LEIF

He has made the most of his exile. I believe he is now ready to retire to his farm, and his ale.

OLAF

His famous temper has cooled, has it?

LEIF glances off into the distance.

LEIF

Settling in Greenland has been good for him.

OLAF

And how are those brothers of yours?

LEIF turns back to OLAF.

LEIF

They are well, I think. I have not seen them for some time. It will be good to see my family again.

OLAF

Yes, good, good -- oh, and I forgot, you have a sister, too, yes?

LEIF

Half-sister, yes.

OLAF brings the procession to a halt in the midst of a clearing. He glances at the sky in thought while LEIF and the others wait.

OLAF

Mmm . . . .

OLAF turns to LEIF with a decisive look

OLAF (CONT'D)

The old ways are finished, my friend. We will tear down the heathen temple and build upon it a new moral foundation. No longer will our people pillage and ransack and . . . fornicate.

OLAF emphasizes the last word. LEIF glances at the ground awkwardly.

OLAF (CONT'D)

Our trade routes will be strengthened; we will bring order and stability under the crown. This is God's will.

OLAF turns to LEIF and places his hands on LEIF'S shoulders.

OLAF (CONT'D)

And you, Leif Eriksson, will be the avatar of that bright new dawn.

LEIF alights onto one knee and bows.

LEIF

It will be my privilege, sire.

OLAF smiles upon LEIF in an arrogant, fatherly manner and places his hand on LEIF'S head.

OLAF

Go forth, and build me a church in your Greenland.

OLAF pats LEIF on the head. The king then motions for his RETINUE to follow as he walks on. LEIF stands and awkwardly steps back to let the king's RETINUE pass.

LEIF gazes after the RETINUE.

The RETINUE proceeds on its way down the path, banners flapping in the breeze.

LEIF turns his gaze skyward and squints.

The sun is a bright aura. Cue opening credits music.

## OPENING CREDITS AND MONTAGE – VARIOUS EXTERIORS

The credits flash, white text on black, and juxtaposed with the following images:

Icelandic and Greenlandic land and seascapes.

Various Norse vessels sailing to their destinations.

Scenes of the Greenland settlers and their farming community.

Credits and music end.

Fade in over the sound of tides lapping against the shore, and seagull cries. A Nordic rune stick lays in the shallows of the seashore, jammed in between various rocks, the tides lapping against it. The title VINLAND fades in over this image.

Title card:  
GREENLAND, A.D. 1000

EXT. LEIF'S CHURCH, EASTERN SETTLEMENT, GREENLAND – DAY

A small church sits in an open area along a hill overlooking the fjord. The church is made of wood with a steep arched roof. Green turf and sod cover the roof and walls.

A low stone wall, also covered in green turf, surrounds the church and its attendant cemetery, which is comprised of only a few grave markers. Four tall wooden gateposts surmounted by an arched roof stand at the entrance to the church grounds.

LEIF is making minor adjustments or repairs to the sod roof.

LEIF'S father, ERIK THE RED, approaches and enters through the gate. ERIK is a middle-aged man in his fifties, with a short, grizzled beard, rugged features, and graying, red, shoulder-length hair.

LEIF looks up from his work as his father appears.

ERIK stands within the gateposts and surveys the church.

ERIK  
I expected something larger.

LEIF wipes his hands on his trousers and moves to the other side of the church.

LEIF  
The breadth of our love is what  
matters to God.

ERIK, still surveying the building, nods in silent agreement.

ERIK  
Well, it's a fine piece of work.  
Your Norwegian king would be proud.

LEIF begins tinkering with another area of the turf wall.

LEIF  
Thank you, father.

ERIK seats himself on the stone wall. There is a brief,  
somewhat awkward pause.

ERIK  
You know, I am reminded of an old  
berserker confederate of mine,  
Gunnar Skull-Crusher. He would  
often brag of all the churches he  
had ransacked in England.

ERIK gazes out at the fjord.

ERIK (CONT'D)  
Seems a million years ago.

LEIF  
We must change with the times,  
father.

ERIK  
True. Once we fled the kings of  
Norway; now we build churches for  
them.

LEIF stops and looks at his father.

LEIF  
I build this for God.

ERIK gives his son a conciliatory smile.

ERIK  
Of course.

ERIK alights from the wall.

ERIK (CONT'D)  
Well, I must say, it is a fine  
piece of work;  
(MORE)

ERIK (CONT'D)  
and a fine addition to our humble  
village here at the end of the  
world.

LEIF acknowledges his father with a quick smile and continues  
fiddling with the sod.

ERIK (CONT'D)  
Will you join us for supper  
tonight? Your siblings look  
forward to your company.

LEIF  
Yes, father.

ERIK  
Bjarni, son of my old confederate  
Herjolfr, is joining us as well.  
We'll talk of old times.

LEIF glances back at his father with a placid smile.

LEIF  
I look forward to it.

ERIK THE RED smiles and nods at his son, then turns and exits  
through the gate. He walks a few steps before turning again  
to address LEIF.

ERIK  
Cod, eggs, turnips, and a fresh  
batch of your father's ale -- your  
good King Olaf won't know what he's  
missing.

LEIF once again smiles in acknowledgement.

ERIK THE RED turns and continues on his way.

LEIF smooths out a piece of green turf along the wall and  
lightly presses his forehead against it.

EXT. LONGHOUSE, BRATTAHLID FARM, GREENLAND - EVENING

Dusk over the fjord.

The longhouse is similar in construction to the church, but  
longer, wider, and with a gentler slope of roof. A stone  
path leads up to the doorway, through which LEIF enters.

INT. LONGHOUSE, BRATTAHLID FARM, GREENLAND – EVENING

Inside the first chamber of the longhouse are situated rows of benches around a stone fire pit.

ERIK THE RED and LEIF'S brother THORSTEIN sit closest to the door.

Seated further back near the doorway to the next chamber are LEIF'S brother THORVALD and their half-sister FREYDIS.

A few other friends and family members of the extended household sit along the benches. All are eating or preparing their meals.

THORSTEIN is slightly taller and slimmer of build than LEIF. His shoulder-length hair is closer in hue to their father's color, but his beard is somewhat fuller.

THORVALD has darker shoulder-length hair. He is paunchier than his brothers, with a full rounded face clean-shaven and dotted with freckles.

FREYDIS has long dark hair, is of medium height, and has a slight build. All are in their late teens or early to mid-twenties.

Flickering orange firelight illuminates the room.

As LEIF enters, everyone is eating, drinking ale from goblets and stone mugs, and conversing pleasantly.

ERIK stands up, a goblet of ale in hand, puts his arm around LEIF'S shoulders, and motions to a servant to prepare LEIF a meal.

ERIK  
Sea sojourner  
Voyager and builder  
Returns to his home  
To build a Christ-shield.

LEIF smiles and laughs uncomfortably at his father's recitation.

LEIF'S siblings and the other GUESTS applaud and look on in amusement.

ERIK (CONT'D)  
(to LEIF)  
Your brother and I were speaking of  
our joy at your return.

LEIF glances with a bemused smile at THORSTEIN.

LEIF

Then Thorstein has forgiven me for  
the torments I gave him as a child.

THORSTEIN smirks at his brother.

THORSTEIN

Perhaps God has forgiven you.

Some of the GUESTS react to THORSTEIN'S retort with "Oohhs"  
and "Aahhs". ERIK lets go of LEIF'S shoulders as the servant  
hands LEIF his meal and a mug of ale. LEIF glances at his  
father.

LEIF

I'll go and see if Thorvald needs  
help with his supper.

LEIF and THORSTEIN give each other a brotherly sneer.

LEIF then makes his way to THORVALD and FREYDIS. They make a  
space for LEIF in between them.

THORVALD attempts a straight face as he addresses LEIF.

THORVALD

Your sister and I saved a place for  
you.

LEIF

Many thanks.

LEIF nods and smiles at FREYDIS and begins eating his meal.  
FREYDIS addresses LEIF in a demure manner.

FREYDIS

I saw the work you did on the  
church. It is very beautiful.

LEIF

Thank you, Freydis.

THORVALD

Voyager, builder -- you begin to  
shame the rest of us, dear brother.

LEIF

Nonsense. I see nothing but great  
things ahead for our family. We  
enjoy King Olaf's patronage. All  
of us shall prosper.

FREYDIS smiles in joyful expectancy.

THORVALD takes a copious sip from his mug.

THORVALD  
 We certainly shall prosper by  
 father's hops and barley. He made  
 Yule Feast for three shiploads of  
 Irish merchant men last winter.  
 'Gads, they were a noisy lot!  
 Smelly, too.

LEIF  
 I lament that I was not here.

LEIF smiles and winks at FREYDIS.

FREYDIS grins at her brother.

At this point, a stout bearded man enters the chamber. This  
 is BJARNI. ERIK exuberantly welcomes BJARNI instantly.

THORVALD  
 It was wretched--

THORVALD leaves off and glances up at the new arrival.

LEIF  
 Our guest of honor?

THORVALD  
 Bjarni Herjolfsson. He landed in  
 Eriksfjord--

THORVALD turns to FREYDIS.

--what was it, a year ago? He's  
 been staying with his father on his  
 farm over in Einarsfjord. I hear  
 he got lost at sea and only made it  
 here by chance.

ERIK, meanwhile, is introducing BJARNI to THORSTEIN and the  
 other GUESTS.

LEIF  
 The sea makes playthings of us all.

ERIK points to LEIF, THORVALD and FREYDIS.

ERIK  
 My other children: Leif, Thorvald,  
 and Freydis.

They all bow and wave in acknowledgement to one another.  
 BJARNI addresses LEIF.

BJARNI

I understand you recently arrived  
from the court of King Olaf.

BJARNI takes a seat next to ERIK as ERIK pours BJARNI a  
goblet of ale.

LEIF

Yes, in the spring.

BJARNI

I hope your passage was easier than  
mine.

LEIF

The sea is not to be trifled with.

BJARNI

It can certainly lead one astray, I  
can tell you--

ERIK addresses his GUESTS.

ERIK

Herjolfr, Bjarni's father, stayed  
at my side when the Althing had me  
chased from Iceland. His father  
thence followed me here to the end  
of the world.

BJARNI takes a voluminous draught from the goblet, licks his  
lips and belches.

BJARNI

Hardly the end of the world . . . .

LEIF reacts to BJARNI'S statement with a look of perplexity.

ERIK places a firm hand on BJARNI'S shoulder.

ERIK

And now, his son Bjarni has fled  
from the clutches of the Norwegian  
king to come stay with us as well.

BJARNI laughs nervously.

BJARNI

Now, Erik, please, you would see me  
hanged for such talk.

The GUESTS laugh.

ERIK  
Ridiculous! The king and I are on  
excellent terms.

While ERIK speaks this line, THORVALD leans in towards LEIF  
and FREYDIS.

THORVALD  
With enough ale in his belly,  
father could have a dozen men  
hanged.

LEIF and FREYDIS snicker.

ERIK  
Besides, good King Olaf has a  
marvelous sense of humor, doesn't  
he, Leif?

LEIF smiles, chewing on a piece of food.

LEIF  
Actually, he has no sense of humor.

More laughter from the GUESTS.

ERIK  
Come, Bjarni, tell us about your  
voyage. There have been rumors but  
we have yet to hear from the  
captain himself.

BJARNI giggles tipsily as the GUESTS give him an encouraging  
applause. BJARNI shrugs and stands, gulping down the  
remainder of his goblet. A servant refills it summarily.

THORVALD gives his siblings a knowing, amused glance.

LEIF sets his plate aside and leans back with a relaxed  
smile, one hand behind his head.

BJARNI clears his throat and begins his speech in grand  
storyteller fashion.

BJARNI  
I was determined to spend the  
winter here in Greenland on my  
father's farm; but my men thought  
it ill-advised to make the voyage,  
since none of us had sailed the  
Greenland Sea before. But, I was  
determined, so we made ready and  
set sail from Norway.

(MORE)

BJARNI (CONT'D)  
After three days, wind and fog set  
in from the north and we became, as  
they say, 'bewildered by the sea.'

The GUESTS laugh lightly.

BJARNI (CONT'D)  
For many days, we had nothing to  
tell us where we were. It was as  
if the world had simply vanished.

BJARNI shudders slightly.

BJARNI (CONT'D)  
Mmm, terrible feeling . . . .

BJARNI takes another sip of ale, then pauses and stares into  
the goblet.

BJARNI (CONT'D)  
When, after many more days, the fog  
lifted, the sun finally came out,  
and we could find our bearings. We  
soon spotted land. Well, we came  
in close to shore to see if, in  
fact, we had arrived in Greenland.  
Now of course I knew that Erik the  
Red had named it Greenland  
precisely because it was nothing  
but ice and rock.

The GUESTS giggle.

ERIK holds his hands up and grins.

BJARNI laughs tipsily but grows progressively more  
uncomfortable with his own narrative.

BJARNI (CONT'D)  
But . . . this was no rugged land  
of rock and glacier. No, it was a  
land of deep forests, green  
meadows, rolling rivers and  
streams. Quite beautiful. Very  
quiet. Strangely quiet. Sort of .  
. . eerie silence . . . .

BJARNI becomes distracted in recollection.

The GUESTS glance awkwardly at one another.

BJARNI (CONT'D)

The men wished to go ashore and replenish our water and timber supply, but I . . . decided otherwise; and so, keeping the land to portside, we made sail and angled away from shore. We had a good wind now from the southwest, and soon those strange far lands faded from view along the stern and disappeared below the horizon. Three days more and we sighted new land, topped with glacier, which I knew to be Greenland. And that's my tale.

BJARNI gives a sheepish laugh and bows as the GUESTS applaud his recitation. He sits down and confers with ERIK.

THORSTEIN sits quietly, deep in thought.

THORVALD and FREYDIS glance at each other and then at LEIF.

LEIF sits back with his right arm over his head, tilted to the right. He is also in contemplation.

EXT. BRATTAHLID FARM, GREENLAND - NIGHT

A full moon illuminates the tides of the sea, and the mountains of the fjord.

The longhouse and various other dwellings are lit by torches placed variously around the vicinity.

BJARNI is chatting with a few of the dinner GUESTS when LEIF joins them.

LEIF

Bjarni, excuse me, may I have a word with you?

BJARNI motions to the others, and he and LEIF go off together along the top of a slope overlooking the sea. BJARNI still carries a goblet of ale.

BJARNI

Your father has discovered a rare and beautiful land here.

LEIF

Indeed. We are a restless family.

BJARNI  
 Hmm . . . .

LEIF  
 (after a pause)  
 That was quite a story you told at  
 supper.

BJARNI looks at LEIF and laughs guiltily.

BJARNI  
 Oh, well, your father's to blame.  
 His good ale loosened my tongue.

LEIF stops and pauses with a look of bewilderment.

LEIF  
 You mean to say you have not spoken  
 to anyone else of these . . . far  
 lands?

BJARNI  
 No, I haven't felt the need.

BJARNI takes a sip of ale.

LEIF  
 And your crew?

BJARNI looks down at his goblet and bursts out into a nervous  
 laugh.

BJARNI  
 I swore them to secrecy, would you  
 believe? I suppose they would kill  
 me now for breaking confidence . .  
 . .

BJARNI glances off into the distance with a look of  
 embarrassment and coughs.

LEIF  
 Can you tell me exactly where these  
 . . . far lands are situated?

BJARNI finishes coughing and gestures vaguely out to sea.

BJARNI  
 West.

LEIF  
 Can you be certain?

BJARNI shakes his head.

BJARNI

No. But after I resolved not to go ashore, we returned due east, as I said, before the gale, and arrived here in one piece, thanks be to God.

BJARNI glances upwards and then takes a large gulp from his cup.

LEIF

Why did you not go ashore? You mentioned an abundance of timber along the coastline. It seems to me the profit from such a yield would be tremendous.

BJARNI nervously laughs again.

BJARNI

Funny, that never occurred to me.

LEIF

Well, it's understandable. You were lost and in unfamiliar waters.

BJARNI

Yes! Well, no, actually, there was . . . something else . . . .

There is a momentary pause. BJARNI looks at LEIF who stares back in polite expectation. BJARNI laughs again in embarrassment.

BJARNI (CONT'D)

I'm somewhat ashamed to speak of it, really. I couldn't go ashore.

BJARNI turns his gaze out to sea.

BJARNI (CONT'D)

There was something about that landscape. It seemed to me that if I entered into it, I would be swallowed up as if by some living thing.

Both are silent after this statement. LEIF follows BJARNI'S gaze.

The tides glimmer in the moonlight.

LEIF  
 (after a pause)  
 Do you plan to stay here in  
 Greenland?

BJARNI  
 Oh, yes.

There is another momentary pause.

LEIF  
 May I buy your ship?

BJARNI replies by giving LEIF a curious look.

EXT. HARBOR, ERIKSFJORD, GREENLAND - DAY

The knar stands silently in the bay, a quarter mile from the shore, to prevent it from being stranded in the shallows. It is a clinker-built vessel over fifty feet in length with two curved ends at bow and stern. The curve at the bow of the vessel is carved into a head of fantastic design.

The knar stands anchored in the water with a large wide square sail tied by various lines to a tall central mast. Tethered to its sides are two skerries, or rowboats.

MEN are in the process of rowing various goods and cargo out to the ship.

LEIF and THORSTEIN stand and watch the activity from shore.

THORSTEIN  
 A crew of but twenty -- will it be  
 enough?

LEIF  
 It must. It was all I could  
 assemble in so short a time.

THORSTEIN  
 Then perhaps . . . we make this  
 voyage in haste.

LEIF turns to his brother.

LEIF  
 Word of Bjarni's discovery has  
 already travelled throughout the  
 settlement. Others will make this  
 journey if we do not.

LEIF turns his gaze out to sea.

LEIF (CONT'D)

I must stake my claim first.  
Should this venture prove to be as  
profitable as I think it will be  
then we must have an established  
settlement there to provide for  
future expeditions.

THORSTEIN

The northern seas are without pity.  
We might wander lost for an age.  
Bjarni was lucky.

LEIF once again turns to face his brother.

LEIF

Bjarni is a terrible sailor.

THORSTEIN replies with a stern gaze. Then they both break  
out in laughter.

THORSTEIN

This is true.

LEIF

Anyway, there is more luck to be  
had. King Olaf says we must sup  
from this earth, and sup we shall.

THORSTEIN

I only hope our feast will not be a-  
-

THORVALD interrupts from behind.

THORVALD

Where is father?

LEIF and THORSTEIN turn to face THORVALD as he approaches.

LEIF

Last I spoke with him he was at the  
farm.

THORVALD looks at his brothers with an expression that  
communicates there is news to tell.

THORVALD

Father is joining us.

LEIF and THORSTEIN react in silent amazement.

THORVALD (CONT'D)

Yes. He told me he would meet us here at the harbor. But no one can find him.

EXT. OPEN COUNTRY, GREENLAND - DAY

ERIK THE RED rides an Icelandic horse over moss-covered terrain dotted here and there with snow and ice. Tethered to the horse's tackle is a large wooden box.

ERIK arrives at a spot signified by a peculiar rock arrangement.

ERIK brings his horse to a halt and jumps down.

ERIK detaches the wooden box and a digging tool, brings these over to the rock arrangement, and sets them on the ground.

ERIK alights to his knees, takes a key, and opens the box.

The inside of the box overflows with sundry pieces of gold and silver.

ERIK, panting from his ride, smiles, closes the box and locks it.

ERIK then takes up the digging tool and begins plying the soil next to the rock arrangement.

EXT. HARBOR, ERIKSFJORD, GREENLAND - DAY

LEIF, THORSTEIN, and THORVALD are in discussion as various goods and supplies continue to be loaded onto the knar.

LEIF

I thought he had done with voyaging. I wonder what changed his mind.

THORSTEIN

Father's whims are like the sea: bewildering and difficult to navigate.

The three brothers share a chuckle.

LEIF nods and glances out at their ship.

LEIF

Our father was navigating these seas long before any of us were born. We will certainly benefit from his counsel.

As LEIF speaks these lines, FREYDIS walks towards them.

THORVALD

Not if he's drunk on his own ale. We shall have to hide all spirits in a special compartment in the--

THORVALD, who has his back to FREYDIS, leaves off as LEIF and THORSTEIN notice her presence. THORVALD turns and smiles brightly.

THORVALD (CONT'D)

Why, here's our sister! Freydis, have you seen or heard from father lately?

FREYDIS does not reply, but gazes at them with a look of remonstrance. She addresses LEIF in a quiet voice.

FREYDIS

Leif, may I speak with you a moment?

LEIF glances at his brothers, then moves off from them and steps with FREYDIS over to where they won't be heard. At first FREYDIS avoids making eye contact with LEIF.

FREYDIS (CONT'D)

Why am I to stay? Why am I not going with you?

LEIF

We need you here. Father has decided to come with us. Should something happen you would be the only one--

FREYDIS pierces LEIF with a stare.

FREYDIS

That's not the reason.

LEIF pauses and sighs.

LEIF

Freydis, we may not come back.

A slight sardonic smile comes to FREYDIS' lips.

FREYDIS  
All of us shall prosper, you said.

LEIF  
And so we shall.

FREYDIS  
But not the forest child.

LEIF  
Freydis, that was never considered--

FREYDIS  
Had our father married my mother, I  
would be on that ship.

LEIF shakes his head defiantly.

LEIF  
Not true.

FREYDIS tilts her head slightly and gazes at her brother  
contemplatively.

FREYDIS  
God does not forgive so easily the  
sins of the flesh.

LEIF affects an expression of frustration (or perhaps  
disgust), throws his hands in the air, and walks away.

FREYDIS glances over at her other brothers.

THORSTEIN frowns and goes after LEIF.

THORVALD comes over to FREYDIS, embraces her, and kisses her  
on the forehead. He cups her face in his hands and looks her  
in the eye with affection.

THORVALD  
My sister will be on the next  
voyage, I guarantee you that,  
Or my name isn't Thorvald the Fat.

FREYDIS replies with a bittersweet smile.

EXT. OPEN COUNTRY, GREENLAND - EARLY EVENING

ERIK sits atop his horse, covered with dirt and sweat. He  
gazes at the ground next to the rock arrangement.

The wooden box is well buried.

ERIK flicks the reins and takes off on the horse at a canter.

Canter soon turns to full gallop. Despite the uncertainty of the terrain, ERIK pushes the horse on still faster.

The horse stumbles and reels.

ERIK is thrown violently aside.

ERIK lies upon the ground for a moment, wincing in pain. He tries to sit up.

The horse continues on its way at a gallop.

ERIK lets out a cry of pain, holds his ribs, and doubles over.

EXT. BRATTAHLID FARM, GREENLAND – DUSK

A SERVANT is bringing a cow in from grazing as the sun begins to set. Suddenly the SERVANT hears the sound of horse's hooves. The SERVANT looks up.

ERIK'S horse canters towards the farm, without a rider.

The SERVANT gazes in wonder at the horse emerging out of the shadows of dusk.

EXT. HARBOR, ERIKSFJORD, GREENLAND – DUSK

The activity in the harbor has ceased for the day.

LEIF and THORSTEIN sit on a rise overlooking the knar as it sits shadowed in the fading light. They sit with their arms propped on their knees, and appear to be holding vigil.

Just then, the SERVANT approaches.

LEIF and THORSTEIN turn their heads.

The SERVANT'S face is fearful.

SERVANT

Your father's horse was found.

LEIF and THORSTEIN respond in stunned silence. They abruptly rise and run back to the farm.

INT. STABLES, BRATTAHLID FARM, GREENLAND - NIGHT

LEIF, THORSTEIN, and THORVALD, along with members of the household staff, stand around ERIK'S horse within a large wooden structure, resembling a barn. The SERVANT holds the horse's bridle. Stone oil lamps light the room. The scene begins in mid-conversation.

THORVALD

--and no one knows when he disappeared. He could be anywhere within fifty leagues of the farm.

THORSTEIN

He may have fallen and found refuge at one of the other farms.

THORVALD

Do we know if he even left the settlement?

LEIF

We must break into groups. Thorvald, take one group of servants and go to the other farms. Thorstein, take a second group and begin covering the west outside the settlement. I will take a third group and start north.

While LEIF is giving instructions, FREYDIS approaches the group.

THORSTEIN

It could take us days to find him.

LEIF

Then, please, by all means, what would you have us do--

FREYDIS

Leif--

LEIF stops and looks at FREYDIS.

FREYDIS (CONT'D)

I think I know where father might be.

EXT. OPEN COUNTRY, GREENLAND - NIGHT

ERIK lies still amongst the rocks. A cold, gentle rain begins to fall.

He holds his side and stares vacantly into space with his mouth ajar, his breath coming out like heavy clouds. Suddenly, from far off, he hears the sound of voices.

EXT. OPEN COUNTRY, GREENLAND – NIGHT

A large search party makes its way over the rugged and stark terrain. Torchlight flickers amidst the darkness.

FREYDIS, LEIF, THORSTEIN, and THORVALD lead the search party. They cry out their father's name. Suddenly they hear a feeble holler emanate from somewhere beyond a small hill.

The search party rapidly ascends the hill.

The other side looks out into a small valley. From somewhere in the darkness of the valley they can hear ERIK'S voice hollering for them.

INT. BEDCHAMBER, LONGHOUSE, BRATTAHLID FARM, GREENLAND – NIGHT

ERIK is laid upon a bed of wool and soft turf. The SERVANTS remove his shirt. Bruises cover the skin along his rib cage. ERIK winces and gasps in pain.

One of the SERVANTS begins preparing medicinal herbs and bandaging.

LEIF, THORSTEIN, THORVALD and FREYDIS assemble around the bed. ERIK speaks aloud in an exhausted voice.

ERIK  
How lucky I am that I was found!

LEIF leans over the side of the bed.

LEIF  
It wasn't luck, father. Freydis led us to you.

ERIK tilts his head up slightly to look at FREYDIS standing at the corner of the bed. He gives her a weak smile.

ERIK  
Is my daughter a seeress?

FREYDIS replies with a look of mild discomfort.

FREYDIS  
I . . . played a hunch.

ERIK smiles weakly again and lays his head back down.

LEIF  
 Father, the ship is laden and  
 prepared to sail. Do you -- do you  
 wish us to wait until you heal?

ERIK closes his eyes and shakes his head.

ERIK  
 I think we must recognize that God  
 does not want me on that boat.

LEIF, THORSTEIN, and THORVALD bow their heads.

ERIK (CONT'D)  
 I leave it to you, Leif, and your  
 brothers, to find these far lands  
 of Bjarni's, and reap whatever  
 rewards God has prepared for you.

FREYDIS glances askance at LEIF with a frown.

ERIK (CONT'D)  
 Thank you, my children, for saving  
 my life. My blessings are many.  
 And now, please, if you could all  
 let me rest. Except Freydis -- I  
 would like her to stay a moment.

THORSTEIN and THORVALD touch FREYDIS' back and squeeze her arm as they turn to leave. LEIF takes her head in hand with a gentle roughness and kisses the side of her head; FREYDIS responds with an ambivalent look, gazing at her father. LEIF then turns to leave.

ERIK (CONT'D)  
 The servants, too -- please leave  
 us for a moment.

The rest of the SERVANTS step out.

When they are alone, ERIK addresses FREYDIS in a low voice.

ERIK (CONT'D)  
 How did you know where to find me?

FREYDIS does not look him directly in the eye as she replies.

FREYDIS  
 I didn't. I played a hunch.

FREYDIS glances at her father.

ERIK fixes her with a stare belying his weakness.

FREYDIS sighs.

FREYDIS (CONT'D)

I thought you might be somewhere in  
the vicinity of those rocks you  
were arranging yesterday morning.

ERIK now regards her with a look of wonder.

EXT. BRATTAHLID FARM, GREENLAND - DAWN

Flashback:

FREYDIS sits alone, wrapped in furs, and watches the sunrise over the fjord from a small hill overlooking Brattahlid Farm. She gazes out over the fjord in a kind of sad reverie. Suddenly she is jarred out of her contemplation by the sound of a horse's hooves. FREYDIS looks down towards the farm.

ERIK THE RED leaves Brattahlid Farm on horseback.

FREYDIS stands and walks down the hill.

FREYDIS looks around the corner of the blacksmith's workshop and watches with intense curiosity.

ERIK rides quietly away along the path that leads away from the farm.

CROSS-FADE.

EXT. OPEN COUNTRY, GREENLAND - DAWN

Flashback:

ERIK THE RED trots along a stretch of flat open country towards his destination. The dawn light suffuses everything in a soft hue. As he trots along FREYDIS emerges from behind a hillock along the same stretch of country, maintaining a discreet distance behind her father.

CROSS-FADE.

20. EXT. OPEN COUNTRY, GREENLAND - EARLY MORNING

Flashback:

FREYDIS sits once again on a rise of land, partly obscured by a hillock, and watches something in the distance.

ERIK kneels on the ground in the far distance and arranges a set of rocks in a particular arrangement, his horse tethered nearby. Once finished he leans back and looks around as if for witnesses.

INT. BEDCHAMBER, LONGHOUSE, BRATTAHLID FARM, GREENLAND - NIGHT

ERIK gazes at his daughter with a knowing look.

ERIK  
You are the watchful one.

FREYDIS replies with an ambiguous expression and looks aside.

ERIK (CONT'D)  
Freydis, buried next to those rocks  
is something very important. I  
must know that it will be safe.

FREYDIS holds herself up straight.

FREYDIS  
I will see to it.

ERIK nods and lays his head back down.

FREYDIS (CONT'D)  
Father?

ERIK  
Yes?

FREYDIS  
If Leif will not have me on this  
voyage, I . . . wish to be on the  
next voyage to the far lands.

ERIK once again smiles in a knowing way.

ERIK  
I will see to it.

FREYDIS smiles subtly.

Title card:  
FIRST EXPEDITION

EXT. OPEN SEA - DAY

The knar sits upon the open sea at full sail.

Its crew of twenty CREWMEN, plus LEIF, THORSTEIN and THORVALD, move about on deck.

Several CREWMEN guide the sail with lines to catch the wind.

Another CREWMAN steers with the rudder from the stern.

The ship pitches on the waves.

LEIF holds his hand up with the palm facing his eyes and the fingers closed tight. He uses his hand to measure the height of the sun above the horizon.

THORSTEIN consults a sunstone.

THORVALD sits at the bow, eating a bowl of porridge, and gazes out to sea.

The horizon on all sides shows no sign of land.

The knar appears small on the open sea.

The sky grows dark with the twilight.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. SEA OF ICE - DAY

Tall icebergs surround the knar on all sides. The knar floats silently among them.

A CREWMAN steers as OARSMEN manipulate the ship to avoid collision with the ice. The wind is calm and a strange silence pervades the sea. The only sound discernible is the creak of the ship's timbers.

LEIF, THORSTEIN, and THORVALD stand watchful and tense as the CREWMEN delicately navigates the ice. They wear furs and their breath is visible in puffs.

The icebergs are bluish-white and irregularly shaped. The sky is heavy and overcast.

LEIF, THORSTEIN, and THORVALD and their CREWMEN remain taciturn and watchful.

The icebergs are like a maze.

The ship proceeds through a narrow gap between two large pinnacles.

LEIF addresses the rowers and helmsman.

LEIF  
Ease over to starboard!

The CREWMEN move the ship to the right and slowly circumvent the two icebergs.

THORSTEIN looks up and points at a seagull.

THORSTEIN  
Sea bird!

THORVALD  
Land?

As the ship passes through the narrow gap, a large arched gate of ice presents itself.

The ship comes up at an angle so whatever lies beyond the arch is not immediately visible.

LEIF moves forward towards the bow with a look of both excitement and apprehension. He addresses the rowers and helmsman.

LEIF  
Take us through that arch!

The CREWMEN slowly guides the ship beneath the arch. Excitement and apprehension encompass the entire crew.

As they pass through the gate of ice, the knar disappears from sight.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. COASTAL WATERS, VINLAND – DAY

As if it were a dreamscape, the coast of Vinland presents itself. The sound of chimes and strange choirs fill the underscoring.

The landscape is the complete obverse of Greenland: bright, lush, verdant, green. Tall pines cover the mountains; rolling green meadows lay across the foothills. Rivers and streams empty out into the sea.

LEIF, THORSTEIN, THORVALD, and the rest of the CREWMEN stare in wonderment as the landscape fills their vision, beguiled by the sight of land, beguiled by the beauty set before them.

LEIF gazes at the landscape with a strange lust in his eyes.

LEIF  
And there it lies.

THORVALD  
Bjarni was speaking the truth. And  
I thought that drunkard dreamt it  
all.

THORSTEIN  
Can we be certain we're not  
dreaming now?

LEIF grimaces at THORSTEIN'S comment.

LEIF sidles over to THORSTEIN and THORVALD and addresses them  
in a low but stern voice.

LEIF  
We must show confidence to the  
crew.

LEIF steps over to the center of the deck near the mast.

THORSTEIN glances over at THORVALD; THORVALD smiles and  
shakes his head.

LEIF addresses the CREWMEN.

LEIF (CONT'D)  
Gentlemen -- as you see, your  
efforts have been repaid. Before  
us lies a virgin country, untouched  
and boundless, waiting for us to  
fulfill God's promise. Let us pray  
now to that divine power which has  
brought us here on the wings of the  
wind to engage this horn of plenty.

The brothers and their crew bow their heads and pray to their  
god.

The knar, carried gently by the wind, floats passed beaches  
and shoreline, mountains and foothills. The strange musical  
language of the landscape continues in the underscoring.

CROSS-FADE.

EXT. COASTAL WATERS, VINLAND - DAY

As the knar proceeds along the coastline, the CREWMEN scan  
the landscape intently.

A CREWMAN maps the coastline on a piece of vellum.

Around a bend, a large sound or bay becomes visible. The knar is a quarter mile out from the shore.

LEIF points towards the bay.

LEIF (CONT'D)

That appears large enough. We could bring the ship in close and take the skerries over to the shore.

THORVALD

Do we know what sort of animal life we may be dealing with?

LEIF

We'll pack the weapons.

LEIF addresses the CREWMEN.

LEIF (CONT'D)

Rowers and helmsman, bring us in to within half a sea-mile from shore.

The CREWMEN begin to ply the water, pulling the ship towards the bay.

The water parts before them as the vague song of the land continues in the underscoring, accentuated by low but insistent percussion.

LEIF, THORVALD, and the rest of the CREWMEN remain focused on the task and the land before them.

THORSTEIN gazes with concern at the water.

The knar passes through the center of the bay.

THORSTEIN speaks aloud.

THORSTEIN

Have we considered the tide--?

The knar runs aground in the deceptively shallow waters.

As the ship becomes moored in the shallows, LEIF, THORSTEIN, THORVALD, and the CREWMEN are thrown about the deck.

The brothers and their crew rise to assess the situation.

The knar stands stiff, slightly off balance.

THORVALD

Low tide!

LEIF swings between the lines over to THORSTEIN, who gazes down over the side.

LEIF  
How bad is it?

THORSTEIN  
Not . . . bad. We should be able to maneuver again once the tide comes up.

LEIF looks about.

LEIF  
When could that be?

THORSTEIN  
God knows. However, I would suggest we send someone below to see if there is damage to the lap strake. We could be taking on water.

LEIF addresses TYKIR, a crewman.

LEIF  
Tykir, go below and see if the hull is breached.

TYKIR nods and goes below.

LEIF sighs heavily in frustration and rubs his hands together.

THORSTEIN notices LEIF'S aggravated state.

THORSTEIN  
The waters deceive.

LEIF  
I blundered it. The crew has lost confidence.

THORSTEIN smiles and leans in towards his brother.

THORSTEIN  
Let them go to shore. A reprieve from their labors might fan their distress.

LEIF glances back at his brother, smiles, and pats him on the arm.

TYKIR emerges from below.

TYKIR  
The hull is sound.

THORVALD  
Well, as we don't appear to be  
sinking, I suggest we go ashore and  
wait this business out.

LEIF and THORSTEIN share a smirk.

EXT. OPEN SHORELINE, VINLAND - DAY

LEIF, THORSTEIN, and THORVALD, along with the CREWMEN, row  
the skerries to shore.

(Since the entire crew cannot fit into both boats, return  
trips are able to bring the entire crew to shore to wait for  
high tide.)

LEIF, THORSTEIN, and THORVALD, along with the CREWMEN, wade  
up to shore and step upon a meadow of tall thick green grass  
dappled with dew.

Some of the CREWMEN gather the dew in their hands and taste  
it, as the beguiling sound of voices and tuned percussion  
continues in the underscoring.

TYKIR sips the dew from his cupped hands and addresses his  
fellows.

TYKIR  
I have never tasted anything  
sweeter!

LEIF, THORSTEIN, THORVALD, and the rest of the CREWMEN sample  
the dew.

THORVALD  
I would swear there is sugar in it.

TYKIR  
We have truly found paradise!

LEIF addresses everyone.

LEIF  
Gentlemen, we have been given this  
time to rest before the tide  
returns. Stay close to shore --  
once the tide has risen we will  
need to reach the ship without  
delay. No one will be left behind.

The CREWMEN fan out into groups and lay down to lounge upon the grass.

LEIF and his brothers sit on a rise of ground where they have a good view of the ship.

LEIF stares pensively out into the bay.

LEIF (CONT'D)  
 Father would have murdered me for  
 such a maneuver.

THORSTEIN  
 Leif -- let it be.

LEIF sighs in frustration, lies on his back, and looks up at the sky.

LEIF'S brothers do the same.

THORSTEIN (CONT'D)  
 What shall we call this land?

LEIF grimaces.

LEIF  
 Land of Shallow-Waters.

THORVALD smiles with satisfaction.

THORVALD  
 Land of Honey-Sweet Dew.

THORSTEIN  
 Land of Green Meadows.

THORVALD gazes up at the clouds.

THORVALD  
 Land of White Dragons.

THORSTEIN affects a look of alarm.

THORSTEIN  
 Where?

THORVALD  
 There! See?

THORVALD points at a cloud.

THORSTEIN studies it a moment.

THORSTEIN  
It's a horse.

THORVALD  
No, it isn't. You can see the  
dragon's wing.

THORSTEIN  
That's its saddle.

The three pause a moment, and then laugh at themselves.

THORSTEIN gazes up at the sky.

THORSTEIN (CONT'D)  
I wonder what father and Freydis  
are doing right now.

LEIF  
Knowing Freydis, probably arguing  
over some trifle--

THORVALD  
Oh Leif--

LEIF  
Well, you heard her accusation! It  
was wholly untrue.

THORVALD  
Was it?

THORSTEIN  
Gentlemen! We have had a long  
voyage. Let us . . . repose  
awhile.

LEIF frowns and slowly closes his eyes.

THORVALD does the same.

EXT. OPEN SHORELINE, VINLAND - EARLY EVENING

THORSTEIN lies upon his back with his eyes closed. He slowly  
opens his eyes and a look of curiosity and mild concern comes  
over his face.

THORSTEIN sits up on his elbows and looks out at the sun.

The sun is noticeably lower in the sky.

THORSTEIN glances over to his right.

In the near distance lies LEIF. In the far distance lie the CREWMEN. All are slumbering peacefully.

THORSTEIN smirks and turns to his left and looks out over the bay.

The unmanned knar is drifting slowly out to sea.

THORSTEIN  
Leif! Thorvald! The ship!

LEIF and THORVALD rise up sharply from their sleep and stare out at the escaping ship with wide eyes.

THORVALD  
Tide's up!

The brothers leap to their feet and yell at the crew to wake up.

LEIF  
Get to the boats!

A mad rush ensues as the brothers and the CREWMEN begin stumbling and running for the skerries tethered at the shore.

LEIF and THORSTEIN tumble into one of the skerries with some of the CREWMEN, laughing in spite of the situation. LEIF motions to the CREWMEN in the other skerry to begin pursuit.

THORVALD, who is heavier than his brothers and therefore not as fast, is valiantly attempting to reach the skerry, running across the meadow.

LEIF and THORSTEIN laugh and urge him on.

THORVALD waves for them to leave without him.

THORVALD slips in the mud where the water meets the shore and tumbles into the water with a large splash.

THORVALD then clumsily climbs up onto the boat, dragged on by his brothers. All three collapse in a heap of laughter as the OARSMEN take the boat away from shore.

The current slowly and leisurely pulls the knar out of the sound by the current.

The OARSMEN frantically race to catch up with the knar.

The crew is finally able to reach the knar at the mouth of the sound.

The first CREWMEN who reach the ship climb aboard and grab the ship's oars and rudder.

Fighting the current, they slowly regain control of the ship.

By this time, LEIF, THORSTEIN, and THORVALD have climbed aboard. THORVALD is dripping wet.

LEIF, THORSTEIN, and THORVALD look back towards land.

In the far distance on the shoreline, the remaining CREWMEN left behind are jumping, yelling and waving at them.

LEIF is out of breath.

LEIF (CONT'D)  
All right, let's go back for them.

CROSS-FADE.

EXT. COASTAL WATERS, VINLAND - DAWN

The knar slips slowly through the waters a quarter mile from shore.

LEIF stands on deck, gazing intently at the land.

THORVALD comes up from below, wrapped in a heavy woolen cloak, and looking drowsy. He comes over and stands next to LEIF.

THORVALD  
So, what are we looking for today?

LEIF  
A way in.

THORVALD  
Well--

THORVALD interrupts himself with a yawn.

--that shouldn't be too difficult.

LEIF glances aside at THORVALD and then turns back to the shore, muttering almost to himself.

LEIF  
If we could find something . . .  
take us inside . . . .

THORVALD  
 (after a pause)  
 Well, I'm going back below for some  
 porridge. Would you like some?

LEIF appears distracted and doesn't reply at first.

LEIF  
 Um -- no, thank you.

THORVALD goes back below. THORSTEIN meets him on the steps  
 coming up. THORVALD gestures towards LEIF

LEIF stands motionless in the dawn light on the gently  
 swaying deck, gazing towards land.

THORSTEIN  
 He'll drive himself mad.

THORVALD  
 He'll drive us all mad.

THORVALD goes below.

THORSTEIN comes on deck and goes to stand next to LEIF. They  
 share a glance and then gaze back at the shore

The shore slowly comes to life in the morning light.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. RIVER, VINLAND - DAY

The knar's OARSMEN are plowing the waters of a wide river.

LEIF, THORSTEIN, and THORVALD, along with the CREWMEN, are  
 craning their necks to see what lies ahead. The steady  
 insistence of voices and percussion in the underscoring  
 drives them on.

CROSS-FADE.

EXT. LAKE, VINLAND - DAY

Seen from a distance, the knar floats into a large tranquil  
 lake. The lake is surrounded by rolling green meadows topped  
 by tall, steep pine-covered hills.

Clear rustling streams feed the lake. A strange silence  
 pervades the vicinity.

LEIF, THORSTEIN, and THORVALD stand on the deck surveying the landscape. LEIF'S expression is one of elation.

LEIF  
Drop anchor.

CROSS-FADE.

EXT. LAKE SHORELINE, VINLAND - DAY

LEIF, THORSTEIN, and THORVALD, along with TYKIR and other CREWMEN, make their way once more onto land. One of the skerries remains tethered at the shore; the knar is visible off in the distance anchored in the lake.

LEIF and his men stride ashore with confidence.

They come to an open flat area a little ways from the shoreline, near a stream. There are maple and oak trees nearby. The area has a feeling of pastoral tranquility.

THORSTEIN looks up and around as if listening.

THORSTEIN  
It is quiet.

LEIF turns to face his men. He gestures at the ground that surrounds them.

LEIF  
Here we will build a settlement to house and supply future expeditions to these lands. Others may follow us, but we will be the vanguard to this new world. God has ferried us here; let us settle and claim this land. Gentlemen, we stand upon the future.

THORSTEIN, THORVALD and the other CREWMEN look up and about at the sublime landscape. In the underscoring, it faintly sings to them.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. LAKE SHORELINE, VINLAND - DUSK

Tents made of fabric and hide dot the shoreline. In the far distance, the knar sits anchored in the lake, motionless in the twilight.

Various CREWMEN sit around a large fire, cooking and eating salmon.

LEIF and THORSTEIN sit on a log on one side of the fire; THORVALD sits on a log opposite.

TYKIR

The streams are gorged with salmon.  
We simply reached into the water  
and grabbed them up.

LEIF

We must begin at once to build  
longhouses and smithies. We'll  
need sleeping quarters, areas for  
storage, an iron smelter, a kiln--

THORSTEIN

We can begin felling trees in the  
morning. There's more than enough  
timber.

LEIF

Thorvald.

THORVALD looks up from his meal.

LEIF (CONT'D)

Thorvald, I want you to select a  
group of men and explore further  
into the country. Let us see what  
lies beyond these hills. Go no  
more than three days' walk from  
camp.

THORVALD

Are you trying to get rid of me?

The CREWMEN laugh.

LEIF

Mmm . . . yes.

The CREWMEN laugh harder.

THORVALD sets his plate down and stands.

THORVALD

Well, brother, should I uncover a  
tribe of full-breasted, lustful  
women I promise to keep them to  
myself.

LEIF  
A just bargain.

THORVALD mockingly addresses all assembled.

THORVALD  
Fare thee well.

THORVALD goes off to prepare for his assignment.

When THORVALD has gone, LEIF turns to THORSTEIN.

LEIF  
They'd probably just give him the  
pox.

Another laugh is shared by the CREWMEN.

EXT. WOODED COUNTRY, VINLAND - DAY

Shafts of sunlight filter down through the mist between the trees.

THORVALD and his MEN are combing the hillside. Some of the MEN carry supplies on their backs.

THORVALD looks bored. TYKIR trudges along nearby. THORVALD addresses him.

THORVALD  
Tykir, my friend, do you rate  
yourself a servant or a man?

TYKIR  
A man, though I serve.

THORVALD  
Is it enough for a man to serve  
others?

TYKIR  
I wouldn't presume to know such  
things.

THORVALD  
Whom do you serve?

TYKIR  
God, the king, and your brother  
Leif.

THORVALD  
In that order?

TYKIR  
In that order.

THORVALD laughs and shakes his head.

THORVALD  
I love my brother, but he perches  
himself upon a higher summit.

TYKIR glances at THORVALD knowingly.

TYKIR  
I have known eagles to fly higher  
than the tallest peak.

THORVALD pauses and turns to TYKIR.

THORVALD  
Are you, by chance, currying favor?

TYKIR responds with an innocent look.

TYKIR  
I, sir?

THORVALD smiles and points into the forest

THORVALD  
I'm going this way.

TYKIR  
Shall I follow?

THORVALD  
Uh, no. I prefer solitude.

As THORVALD saunters off into the forest, TYKIR calls after him.

TYKIR  
Where shall we meet?

THORVALD points ambiguously off to the side, and continues on his way.

TYKIR frowns and goes off with the rest of the MEN.

CROSS-FADE.

EXT. FOREST, VINLAND - DAY

A vine with berries hangs along a tree in the forest. In the distance, THORVALD comes into view and gradually makes his way to where the berries hang.

THORVALD plucks a berry curiously from the vine, studies it for a moment, and then nonchalantly tosses it in his mouth. At once, he is taken aback by the apparent flavor and fermentation of the fruit. He begins to pluck more from the vine, muttering to himself.

THORVALD  
Mmm . . . get some more of these .  
. . .

CROSS-FADE.

EXT. WOODED COUNTRY, VINLAND - DUSK

TYKIR sits upon a hill in the forest, staring out into the distance.

The sun sets through the trees. The forest has become shadowed in the dusky light.

A CREWMAN approaches TYKIR.

CREWMAN  
Thorvald has not returned.

TYKIR continues to stare into the sunset.

TYKIR  
I know.

CREWMAN  
Where are we to find him?

TYKIR  
He wouldn't say.

The CREWMAN fidgets in a confused manner.

TYKIR (CONT'D)  
We make camp here tonight.  
Tomorrow, if Thorvald has not  
returned, we go back and tell his  
brothers.

The CREWMAN acknowledges TYKIR and walks away.

TYKIR continues to stare into the sunset.

EXT. FOREST, VINLAND - NIGHT

THORVALD saunters along drunkenly with a handful of berries, the darkened forest illuminated fitfully by the moon. Berry juice stains cover his lips. His countenance is one of placid inebriation.

THORVALD pauses in a clearing and commences a soliloquy.

THORVALD

I am Thorvald the Fat.  
 What of that?  
 It is my pleasure to claim this  
 land,  
 Though a king of no nation I am.  
 With its honey dew and fruitful  
 vine,  
 Fair weather and noble pine,  
 I stand -- Mmm, somewhat  
 uncertainly--  
 Upon this fertile ground -- and  
 that is my lay.

THORVALD takes an ostentatious bow and then scrutinizes a berry with bleary eyes.

THORVALD (CONT'D)

This grape is a liquor of rare  
 brew.  
 I'll take me back with you,  
 And make my fortune, garnet-seed,  
 With your harvest and distillery,  
 And let no scoundrel say,  
 Why, that Thorvald, baby-faced fey,  
 He'll be no gallant, no princely  
 kin.  
 No! You, wine-grape, will make me  
 Thin!

THORVALD tosses the berry in his mouth and chews it contentedly. He then breathes with satisfaction.

THORVALD (CONT'D)

I am berry happy.

THORVALD pauses, his eyes glancing back and forth, and then bursts out laughing. After a moment, he frowns and then saunters on.

EXT. NORSE SETTLEMENT, VINLAND - EVENING

LEIF and THORSTEIN sit facing each other over a chessboard set upon the stump of a tree. Both sit on logs.

In the background, timber, stone and other construction materials lay about the foundations of several structures.

CREWMEN are busy cooking supper over a fire.

THORSTEIN glances up.

The reconnaissance group, sans THORVALD, comes towards the settlement.

THORSTEIN

Leif--

THORSTEIN gestures in the direction of the group. LEIF turns to look.

LEIF

They're back early.

THORSTEIN

I don't see Thorvald.

TYKIR comes up to LEIF and THORSTEIN with a grave expression, breathing somewhat heavily.

TYKIR

Your brother is missing.

THORSTEIN and LEIF share a look of bewilderment. THORSTEIN turns back to TYKIR.

THORSTEIN

What do you mean?

TYKIR

He went off on his own yesterday.  
He never returned to camp.

LEIF stares at the chessboard in a pensive manner.

THORSTEIN stands up and addresses TYKIR.

THORSTEIN

How far did you get?

TYKIR

A day's walk, maybe a little more.

THORSTEIN looks up and around at the darkening hills.

THORSTEIN

Brother, where the devil have you gone?

EXT. FOREST, VINLAND - NIGHT

An owl stares down from a tree.

THORVALD grins up at the owl, standing with a handful of berries in the middle of a clearing in the woods. Berry juice still stains his lips and mouth. He addresses the owl.

THORVALD  
Hello there!

The owl stares back, occasionally blinking.

THORVALD smiles at the owl in camaraderie.

THORVALD (CONT'D)  
It's good to have company.

THORVALD looks down at his handful of berries and then holds them up to the owl.

THORVALD (CONT'D)  
Would you like some of my magic berries?

The owl stares back, occasionally blinking.

THORVALD brings his hand down and points a finger at the owl.

THORVALD (CONT'D)  
Ah, no. You're the one who catches the mice.

THORVALD pops another berry into his mouth and then screws his face up into a grimace.

THORVALD (CONT'D)  
Hmm . . . that was a tart one . . .  
.

THORVALD swallows the berry and resumes his conversation with the owl.

THORVALD (CONT'D)  
I say, you're a tight-beaked fellow. Will you not howl for me? Why, even the birds here are mute. This is a quiet land we've discovered. Fruitful yet stern. Fertile yet calm. Lush yet--

The owl suddenly flies away.

THORVALD hears a slight noise from behind. He slowly turns.

THORVALD (CONT'D)

Oh my.

A MASKED FACE stares at him from the darkness. Bush shrubs conceal the rest of the figure. The mask is of white ivory. Only the eyes of the face behind the mask are visible, and regard THORVALD inquisitively.

THORVALD (CONT'D)

I'll be damned -- a spirit, eh?  
Well, you can't frighten me. I  
come from a land of trolls, you  
know.

The MASKED FACE continues to regard THORVALD with intense curiosity, its head shifting slightly.

THORVALD once more offers his handful of berries.

THORVALD (CONT'D)

Would you like some of my magic  
berries?

The MASKED FACE stares without reply.

THORVALD (CONT'D)

Ah well, if indeed you are a spirit  
of these woods, then I'm sure  
you're quite familiar with their  
delicate bouquet. But hear me, O  
sprite: I claim these grapes --  
berries, whatever -- in the name of  
Thorvald, son of Erik! I intend to  
cart them back to Greenland and  
make my fortune. My father won't  
be the only distiller in this clan.

The MASKED FACE stares without reply.

THORVALD slumps his shoulders.

THORVALD (CONT'D)

Will you not speak to me either?

THORVALD sighs.

THORVALD (CONT'D)

Ah well. I suppose it's back to my  
brothers for me then. Very well --  
be gone!

THORVALD gestures with his fingers for the masked figure to leave.

The MASKED FACE does not move.

THORVALD (CONT'D)  
All right, then -- boo!

The MASKED FACE does not move.

THORVALD shrugs.

THORVALD (CONT'D)  
Eh, suit yourself.

THORVALD glances down at his hand and takes up another berry.

THORVALD (CONT'D)  
But if you think you're pilfering  
my berries--

THORVALD looks up and pauses.

The masked figure is gone.

THORVALD glances all around at the pitch-black forest, and then looks at the berry in his fingers.

THORVALD (CONT'D)  
Perhaps I should stop eating these.

THORVALD pauses and then pops the berry in his mouth.

EXT. NORSE SETTLEMENT, VINLAND - MORNING

LEIF and THORSTEIN are organizing a search party.

LEIF  
We'll leave ten men behind to watch  
the settlement and the ship.  
Thorstein and I will take ten men  
and make our way back to where  
Thorvald was last seen. And men,  
should this happen again -- don't  
wait for us.

LEIF casts a glance at TYKIR. TYKIR replies with a stoic look.

LEIF (CONT'D)  
All right, let's get started.

As they grab up their gear, THORSTEIN addresses LEIF.

THORSTEIN

Is it me, or are we cursed to be  
forever searching for our missing  
loved ones?

LEIF

We are a restless family.

The SEARCH PARTY sets off towards the hills.

CROSS-FADE.

EXT. OPEN COUNTRY, VINLAND - DAY

The SEARCH PARTY is crossing a field of wild, self-sown wheat  
at the foot of a dense forested hill. They are calling out  
THORVALD'S name.

LEIF stops to inspect the wheat. THORSTEIN comes up to him.

THORSTEIN

We must stay to the task at hand.

LEIF glances at his brother and looks up and about.

LEIF

This land is astounding in its  
abundance. Wheat, timber--

THORVALD (O-S)

And wine berries!

LEIF and THORSTEIN freeze and look about frantically for the  
location of THORVALD'S voice.

THORVALD pops up from underneath the cover of the wheat a few  
yards from his brothers.

The SEARCH PARTY stops and looks at THORVALD in astonishment.

THORVALD'S lips are still stained red. He regards the search  
party.

THORVALD (CONT'D)

Oh my, you didn't go to all this  
trouble on my account.

LEIF

Where in God's name have you been?

THORVALD

Exploring, per your instruction.  
This is a very fruitful land we  
have found, gentlemen.

THORVALD takes some of his berries out of a pouch.

THORVALD (CONT'D)

In addition to these magnificent  
fields of grain, planted for us by  
Providence, I have come upon the  
most exquisitely intoxicating fruit  
imaginable. I intend to take it  
home in vast quantities.

THORSTEIN smirks at THORVALD and shakes his head.

LEIF addresses THORVALD with forced patience.

LEIF

Well, dear brother, if you are  
quite finished with your  
researches, perhaps we may return  
to the settlement.

THORVALD

Yes, by all means.

THORVALD takes a few steps in the direction from whence they  
came before turning to face his brothers again.

THORVALD (CONT'D)

If it should interest you, I have  
thought of a name for this region--

LEIF and THORSTEIN gaze at THORVALD with impatient stares.  
THORVALD grins at them.

THORVALD (CONT'D)

Land of Wine.

THORVALD holds up the berries before depositing them once  
again in his pouch.

LEIF and THORSTEIN glance at each other, sigh, and motion and  
yell for the rest of the party to continue back to the  
settlement.

They walk a few paces before THORVALD turns to them once  
again.

THORVALD (CONT'D)

But gentlemen, we must be wary--

THORVALD gives them a knowing look and gestures at the forests that surround them.

THORVALD (CONT'D)  
These woods are haunted.

LEIF and THORSTEIN reply with somewhat uncomprehending looks. They look up at the forested hills.

The woods are dense and impenetrable.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. NORSE SETTLEMENT, VINLAND - DAY

To the sound of drums and voices in the underscoring:

The loading of wheat tied into bundles onto the knar.

Timber is loaded into the hold.

Cloth sacks full of red berries are deposited into one of the skerries.

The settlement is complete. Longhouses and other buildings of various sizes, constructed of the same materials as their counterparts in Greenland, cover the green meadow beneath the maple trees and beside the stream.

LEIF looks back at the settlement one last time as he and his brothers alight into the remaining skerry and cast off for the knar.

CROSS-FADE INTO  
THE NEXT SCENE.

EXT. COASTAL WATERS, VINLAND - EVENING

As the knar sets off to sea, LEIF, THORSTEIN, and THORVALD gaze back at the lush environment.

The landscape is beautiful, majestic and mysterious in the oncoming twilight.

THORSTEIN  
The best-spun tapestry could not do  
honor to this land we leave behind.

LEIF smiles at his brothers.

LEIF  
 We leave behind but for the  
 present.

The knar continues to make its way to sea, guided by the oarsmen. Alongside the knar is the small lifeboat filled with THORVALD'S berries.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. OPEN SEA - NIGHT

The knar lists back and forth over the waves under a sky filled with constellations.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. SEA OF ROCKS, NEAR THE SHORES OF GREENLAND - DAY

The shores of Greenland are visible in the far distance.

The knar is working its way past a plethora of large rocks on the portside.

THORSTEIN and THORVALD stand at the stern.

LEIF stands in the center of the ship, giving orders to the crew.

LEIF  
 Watch those rocks a-portside! Keep  
 her even!

THORVALD  
 It's always a few sea-miles from  
 shore where you have the worst  
 disasters.

THORSTEIN glances aside at him.

THORSTEIN  
 Be guarded in your words, brother.  
 You might bewitch us.

THORVALD frowns slightly and peers around and over the side of the ship.

THORVALD'S boat full of berries tugs alongside the ship.

LEIF gives commands to the crew.

LEIF  
 Angle it further to starboard! We  
 must be clear of those rocks!

The CREWMEN work the sail with the ropes.

The OARSMEN and helmsmen steer.

THORSTEIN cranes his head as if listening for something.

THORSTEIN  
 Are those voices?

LEIF points off to port side.

LEIF  
 See! Do you see it?

In the far distance, a small Norse longship has jammed itself into the rocks and is sinking. PASSENGERS on the ship are screaming and yelling; some are endeavoring to gain the knar's attention.

THORSTEIN comes forward and gazes intently at the longship.

THORSTEIN  
 They were swept into the rocks.  
 The waters are frigid -- they'll  
 surely drown--

LEIF  
 If we take the knar into the rocks  
 then none of us will survive.

THORVALD comes up behind them, gazing out at the chaos.

THORSTEIN  
 We can try and get to them with the  
 skerries. We can maneuver the  
 boats through the rocks without  
 injury.

The expression on THORVALD'S face has gone from concern to fear as he turns to his brothers.

THORVALD  
 Both . . . of them?

LEIF and THORSTEIN turn to face their brother.

THORVALD replies with a hangdog expression.

LEIF  
 Thorvald--

THORVALD looks back and forth at his boatload of berries and off into the distance at the wrecked longship.

THORVALD  
Oh -- just dump it!

LEIF and the CREWMEN set to work preparing the boats.

THORSTEIN pats THORVALD on the shoulder.

THORSTEIN  
We'll go back for more--

THORVALD  
I know, but--

The CREWMEN start dumping THORVALD'S berries into the water.

THORVALD watches the berries float away with a pained expression.

EXT. SEA OF ROCKS, NEAR THE SHORES OF GREENLAND -- DAY

LEIF and THORSTEIN are in one skerry, THORVALD and TYKIR in the other. They are navigating both lifeboats through the sea rocks in an attempt to reach the wrecked longship.

LEIF  
How many are there?

THORSTEIN  
It's a small ship. There can be no more than a dozen of them.

LEIF  
They may have taken on more passengers than they had space. I've known rogues who sank their own ships through carrying too much weight than turn away a paying customer.

THORSTEIN  
We must try . . . .

LEIF  
Indeed we must--

As they come closer to the wreck, more details become visible. Some PASSENGERS are already standing upon the rocks that captured the longship.

Other PASSENGERS are still on the ship's deck as it tilts above the waterline. Some of the passengers are women and children.

As the skerries get closer PASSENGERS start diving into the frigid water.

LEIF and his brothers start yelling for them to stop.

The lifeboats are now within range of the ship.

LEIF (CONT'D)  
The rocks impede us! We can get no closer!

By this time, some of the PASSENGERS in the water have reached the skerries. The brothers and TYKIR start to drag them aboard.

Now the rest of the ship's CREWMEN and PASSENGERS start jumping into the water to reach the lifeboats.

One WOMAN holds her screaming CHILD above the waterline as she struggles to reach the boats.

LEIF takes the CHILD while THORSTEIN brings the WOMAN onto the boat.

THORVALD and TYKIR, meanwhile, are pulling wet, shivering PASSENGERS onto their skerry as well.

Some PASSENGERS have jumped into the water with their belongings. LEIF yells to them.

LEIF (CONT'D)  
No! Leave your belongings! We can't take on the weight!

THORVALD pulls PASSENGERS out of the water. One of them climbs over him to get into the boat.

THORVALD  
Yes! That's it! Plenty of room for everyone . . . .

As THORSTEIN and LEIF continue the rescue, THORSTEIN looks out.

A young woman with auburn hair is desperately trying to reach the skerry. This is GUDRID.

GUDRID and THORSTEIN lock eyes upon one another.

GUDRID thrusts her hand out of the water at him.

THORSTEIN dives into the water.

LEIF  
Thorstein!

THORSTEIN swims toward GUDRID.

THORSTEIN reaches GUDRID, grabs her arm and pulls her towards him. They share a brief look of mutual empathy and reassurance and start swimming to the skerry, carrying each other.

By this point, the other CREWMEN and PASSENGERS of the longship have been pulled onto the skerries. They include GUDRID'S parents, THORBJORN and HALLDIS. Everyone is crammed on top of each other into the boats, which are becoming precarious under the weight.

GUDRID and THORSTEIN reach the skerry. THORSTEIN lifts GUDRID up and LEIF and her parents pull her aboard.

THORSTEIN looks up at LEIF, his lips quivering.

LEIF looks down at THORSTEIN with anxiety.

LEIF (CONT'D)  
There's no more room.

THORSTEIN turns to face the longship as a cracking sound comes from behind.

The longship starts to split at the point where it jammed into the rocks. The hull of the section above the waterline begins to splinter and crack and fall into the water

Waves created by the collapsing longship put the overfilled skerries in jeopardy and threaten to drown THORSTEIN.

THORSTEIN swims to THORVALD'S skerry, struggling with the waves.

THORVALD and TYKIR manage to pull him aboard as he shivers from the cold of the water.

The ROWERS begin to pull the skerries away as the longship continues to break into pieces.

The skerries slowly and laboriously start to make their way to the safety of the knar.

THORSTEIN cranes his head over to the other skerry, where he sees GUDRID.

GUDRID is looking for THORSTEIN.

GUDRID and THORSTEIN see each other, and smile.

CROSS-FADE.

EXT. ROAD, BRATTAHLID FARM, GREENLAND - EARLY EVENING

FREYDIS and ERIK THE RED are walking down the road that leads onto the farm. ERIK appears to walk with difficulty. A SERVANT comes to meet them.

SERVANT

Your sons are home.

FREYDIS and her father share a look of elation and pick up their pace; FREYDIS assists her father.

EXT. LONGHOUSE, BRATTAHLID FARM, GREENLAND - EARLY EVENING

LEIF and THORVALD stand outside the entrance to the longhouse with some of their MEN.

THORVALD sees FREYDIS and their father coming towards them. THORVALD throws his arms out wide.

FREYDIS runs up and embraces THORVALD. She and LEIF share a brief hug and kiss, and then both brothers go up to embrace their father.

ERIK

I knew my boys would come back to me.

LEIF

Thorstein's inside. We had an event, but all are safe.

ERIK sighs and looks out to sea.

ERIK

There is no way to navigate these seas without incident.

LEIF

A shipload of Icelanders got caught out on the rocks. We managed to rescue them in the skerries.

ERIK'S expression suddenly changes to alarm.

ERIK

That's Thorbjorn's ship, my old confederate. He and his daughter--

ERIK makes his way past them.

LEIF  
Everyone survived--

ERIK goes and enters the longhouse.

LEIF stands a moment and stares, and then glances at THORVALD.

THORVALD shrugs.

THORVALD  
Welcome home.

LEIF shakes his head, and the three siblings turn and enter the longhouse, FREYDIS and THORVALD arm in arm.

INT. LONGHOUSE, BRATTAHLID FARM, GREENLAND – EVENING

A large fire burns brightly in the pit as the rescued PASSENGERS huddle around it for warmth. Various SERVANTS prepare food and drink for them.

THORSTEIN sits near the front of the room next to GUDRID, THORBJORN and HALLDIS. All are wrapped in woolen blankets. THORSTEIN is engaged in quiet conversation with GUDRID and her parents.

ERIK enters and embraces THORSTEIN.

ERIK then turns to embrace THORBJORN, HALLDIS and GUDRID.

ERIK  
Gudrid, you've grown into beautiful maidenhood. When I saw you last you were but a little rabbit, scampering across the moss-land.

GUDRID  
I seem to have a knack for survival.

GUDRID beams at THORSTEIN.

THORBJORN  
You raised your boys well, Red. They came to our aid when many would have left us to the mercy of the waves

As THORBJORN speaks, LEIF, THORVALD, and FREYDIS enter.

ERIK reaches over and tugs LEIF roughly to him with an air of pride.

ERIK  
We are very lucky to have them.

By now, the PASSENGERS all have mugs of warm ale.

ERIK takes a mug proffered from a servant and raises it.

ERIK (CONT'D)  
To my son: Leif, the Lucky!

The PASSENGERS assembled shout approval and toast LEIF, who grins sheepishly.

LEIF then takes a mug and raises it.

LEIF  
And I would like to toast my  
brother Thorstein, for his  
fearlessness--

THORSTEIN bows his head as the PASSENGERS cheer and toast.  
He and GUDRID share smiles.

--and my brother Thorvald, who gave  
up a skerry full of wine berries so  
we could employ it as a lifeboat.

The PASSENGERS cheer and toast.

THORVALD laughs but with a hint of irony.

THORVALD  
Yes, it is my hope that someday God  
will eventually allow me to make my  
fortune.

LEIF laughs and embraces THORVALD, muttering in his ear.

LEIF  
You'll give them guilt.

THORVALD  
What--

THORVALD turns to face the group.

THORVALD (CONT'D)  
But of course it was worth it when  
so many lives were at stake--

THORVALD notices that FREYDIS is smirking at him.

THORVALD (CONT'D)

What are you grinning at, squirrel?

FREYDIS

You, great bear! It's good to have  
you home.

THORVALD

Well . . . it's good to be home.

THORVALD reaches over and embraces FREYDIS with a warm,  
brotherly smile.

FREYDIS embraces THORVALD with joy, her eyes shut tight.

FADE TO BLACK.