

HUNT

Written by

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EXT. FOREST - DAY

A snow-covered forest.

We witness everything from a telescope.

A flock of animals. Lion bodies, howl's heads, giant wings, something you may see from *Harry Potter*. We call them griffins later on. They chase a deer.

It's one of the brutal hunting scenes, the natural selection. We see in slow motion the deer run in its engulfing horror, and the griffins chase with all their strength.

A plaintive cry scratches the sky. Blood stains the clear snow. Poor deer don't get to escape the crawl of the wild animal.

A griffin bites onto its neck, another pour of blood. The snowy ground becomes a velvet carpet.

The telescope takes back a few yards, behind the herd of animals, a few left-out griffins.

A solemn voice, from behind the telescope, talking:

THE KING

Always looking at the few that's  
one step away from the herd.

Now we see the voice comes from a man, a man with a crown, a gigantic figure, riding a horse. That's our KING(51). He talks to one of his entourage.

Following him are two girls. Beautiful dark skins, hunting fits, identical looking.

THE KING (CONT'D)

Lucky one. .

He draws an arrow from his quiver, pulls the bow.

THE KING (CONT'D)

Before they get to the herd, none  
of their friends will notice their  
death.

A fast whooshing sound of the arrow, following a LOUD wretched crying.

THE KING (CONT'D)

Bingo.

TESS(22), one of the two girls who has a slightly shorter figure, is tied to her horse with special leather holding straps, resembling a horse rein.

Behind her is Jin(24).

Close up on Tess' hand, which now grabbing onto the reins. We see some bruises on her forearm.

She unintentionally stretches her sleeve to cover the mark, as her sight lays into the deep forest, taking in everything, emptily.

JIN

Tess.

Jin approaches her from behind.

JIN (CONT'D)

Are you sneaking out to ride again?

Tess doesn't answer.

JIN (CONT'D)

Don't lie to me, I saw your arm.  
(play angry face)  
You know you shouldn't...

The king claps to the crowd.

KING

Bring in the wines! Celebration  
times!

INT. CASTLE - CORRIDOR - A STORMY NIGHT

Pound of the storm onto the window. The crackling sound of the fireplace. Some murmuring down the corridor.

INT. CASTLE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A glorious living room accompanied by a to-the-ceiling fireplace. The whole room is lit by a dim flame.

A minister kneels on the carpet.

KING

South border. Yes. What is the  
level of this event.

MINISTER

Third, your Highness.

KING

Take care of it. Don't bother me  
with this kind of trivia.

MINISTER

Yes. My lord.

The minister retrieves. An entourage by the door:

ENTOURAGE

Your Highness. The queen.

KING

Yes, my queen.

The queen walks in.

A wizard-looking old man sits by the king. Long white beard.

KING (CONT'D)

I have something to talk to you. My  
love.

He gestures to the Wizard guy.

KING (CONT'D)

The prophet following our family  
from my great great father's age.

PROPHET

My queen.

QUEEN

Yes. Beloved.

PROPHET

What you are about to hear may be  
heavy. But there's no easy way to  
say this, my HIGHNESS. I'm simply a  
teller from God.

QUEEN

Please, go ahead.

PROPHET

My lord, my highness, every royal  
family sacrificed royal blood to  
the winter god, in the tenth winter  
after the throne had been passed,  
to allow the kingdom to pass this  
deep winter safety.

Silence.

QUEEN

What happens if we don't?

PROPHET

The great god's agony sent every kingdom into a mysterious plague, or severe coldness.

Another moment.

PROPHET (CONT'D)

We don't go against the will of god, my lord, my Highness.

Smoke boils in the fireplace. Following a long silence.

QUEEN

Yes. I see.

A close up on the wall. A FAMILY PHOTO. Jin in the middle of King and Queen. Tess is a bit behind, her rather small figure even pushes her away.

KING

Come here, my queen. I'm sorry to make you hear this.

QUEEN

You are not asking my opinion, aren't you?

KING

Comm'n, there's no bargain here.

A beat.

QUEEN

I know you.

The queen motions to the exit.

QUEEN (CONT'D)

Just don't make me see it.

INT. CASTLE - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

A heavy wooden carved gate to the living room is opened to a crack. The vague mumbling from within the room comes through.

PROPHET (O.S.)  
 ...doing it in the sacred forest.  
 The whole ritual should be in the  
 by the sacred pond, with witness of  
 the spirit...and...  
 (breath)  
 Nobody will have to know it. Your  
 Highness...

Tess flanks by the door, leaning to it, listening intently.  
 Queen slams out. Tess quickly hides under the darkness.

QUEEN  
 (to herself)  
 You never like her, don't you?

INT. CASTLE - PRINCESS ROOM - SHORTLY AFTER

Tess sneaks into the room in darkness. Doesn't realize Jin is awakened.

Jin turns on her bed:

JIN  
 Where did you go?

A pause.

TESS  
 I went for a ride.

JIN  
 Are you stupid. Do you know how  
 dangerous it is for you to go  
 alone?

TESS  
 I need some fresh air.

Jin comes over, checking her.

JIN  
 Are you okay?

TESS  
 Yes, yes. I'm ok! I just need a  
 breather. For Christ sake.

JIN  
 Don't throw that tantrum on me,  
 stupid. I am your sis.

EXT. FOREST - ANOTHER DAY

Distant pond shimmers between twigs. A herd of hunting horses strikes the forest. Snow gets thicker.

An entourage halts.

ENTOURAGE

This is a big one!

The king whips. Horse gallops.

EXT. FOREST - BY THE POND - CONTINUOUS

A group of people circles a dead griffin by the pond. It lets go of one last howling, taking over every sound on the earth for a second, then, a long, long, silence. It's blood stains the water and snow.

The crowd split to make space for the king's arrival. He comes closer to the open ground, crouches over.

KING

A beautiful one.

He touches the creature.

KING (CONT'D)

I will surely miss my hunting time  
so much during the winter.

The two princesses squeeze out of the crowd. They stand behind the king.

Jin seems scared by the giant creature. She retrieves.

Tess puts her hands over. She can almost feel the warmth of blood in it. The brave girl takes one feather off, caressing gently. Something she never felt before.

Suddenly, she feels a gazing from afar.

She raises her head, locking eyes with another griffin concealing itself in the wood. Beautiful creature.

EXT. CASTLE - BACKDOOR - DUSK

A moat circles the castle. The bridge is been putting down slowly.

A troop of cavaliers on their horse, pulling the hunted Griffin over the bridge. Jin and Tess trudge their ponies by the moat. Tess fiddles with the white feather.

Jin sees the cavaliers:

JIN

What to do with the creature?

LEADING CAVALIER

For a beautiful thing like this, taxidermy, goes to King's collection.

TESS

What does that mean?

CAVALIER

(laughing)

You little princess never went to the king's collection room?

TESS

No.

JIN

Never.

CAVALIER

Top floor, end of hallway. Don't let the king know I said it, okay?

Jin stares at the cavalier's helmet. About twenty other identical-looking cavaliers, helmeted, line up after him.

JIN

Like we can tell who you are.

She lets him go.

Meanwhile, Tess gently pats it while the cavalier pulls it into the castle's back storage room. It's eyes half closed, emerald green, crystal clear.

EXT. OPEN FIELD BY THE FOREST - DAY

Jin stands by Tess, who's on her pony. She ties up the holding straps for Tess. The queen stands afar waving to them.

QUEEN

Jin, take care of your sister. Be back before sunset.

JIN

Yes! Mum!



Some new wounds on Tess's forearm.

JIN (CONT'D)  
You sneaking out again.

Tess doesn't reply.

JIN (CONT'D)  
Not like I'm gonna tell on you.

TESS  
Yeah.

JIN  
If you like riding that much, let  
me join you next time, will you?

TESS  
I guess.

JIN  
Make a promise.

TESS  
Promise.

They do the pinky promise.

EXT. MID FOREST - ???

Jin and Tess ride their pony.

They glide through the trees. So carefree.

It is the time of the day. Dark, but moonlight vaguely coats a silhouette on every form, enough for them to ride through the forest. Not a single soul, no hunters, no entourages. It seems like a different world, tranquil, motionless. Tiny quirking of bugs and birds is anything punctuating the moment.

Ponies go from trot to galloping. Snow splashes under their hooves.

EXT. MID FOREST - BY THE POND - ???

Distant images of Jin and Tess trudge the forest, snow, pond, shimmering lake. Following the voices of the two. We don't see their face.

TESS (V.O.)

Jin.

(pause)

Jin. I want to tell you something.

JIN (V.O.)

Yes?

TESS (V.O.)

We have to leave here before the winter comes.

JIN (V.O.)

Leave where?

TESS (V.O.)

Here, this castle, this country, this whole place, to somewhere else.

Horse trudging sound.

JIN (V.O.)

What are you talking about?

TESS (V.O.)

They are going to kill me.

JIN (V.O.)

What. Who?

TESS (V.O.)

The King.

JIN (V.O.)

Father?

A beat.

JIN (V.O.)

Now you are just playing with me...

TESS (V.O.)

I'm not joking, I heard it the other day. A prophet was here in the castle, mom was there. They said something...about a ritual, a sacrifice...of a royal family.

JIN (V.O.)

It sounds crazy.

TESS (V.O.)

It does.

JIN (V.O.)  
Why is it you.

TESS (V.O.)  
Me? Don't act like you don't know  
it Jin. I was born curse with that  
defect. No use to the family  
anyway. I would choose me if I was  
there.

JIN (V.O.)  
Tess.

TESS (V.O.)  
If I go alone, they will come to  
you. Jin.

A moment.

TESS  
It's about time, winter coming  
close.

JIN (V.O.)  
You have a plan?

TESS (V.O.)  
Maybe.

We see, from afar, they stop by the pond. It is beautifully  
shining under the moon. Tess throws a rock into the pond,  
ripples it open. Some distant sound of a wild animal.

INT. CASTLE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Noice, speeches, clash of toasts. A feast. People in their  
winter fits, all the fireplaces lit up. Snow piles up the  
window, it is winter coming, but the castle is busy as usual.  
People seem more frenzy when they realize the killing storm  
of that deep winter is not falling on them.

King and Queen on the two ends of the long table.

Jin and Tess hold their hands under it. King is giving a  
speech. They eye each other.

INT. CASTLE - KING'S LOUNGE - SHORTLY AFTER

Prophet seats mid the room. King comes in, shuts the door. We  
can still hear the crowd outside.

PROPHET

So early?

KING

They are enjoying themselves. Drunk enough to ignore my absence for a minute.

King pours himself some liquor.

PROPHET

Ready for tomorrow?

KING

I have to be. I'm the king.

PROPHET

I mean the girl.

KING

...I told them we are going for hunting.

PROPHET

Oh, girls. Aren't they happy for it?

KING

Surely they are.

BANG.

A HUGE crashing sound from above cuts the small talk.

INT. CASTLE - TOP FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

King storms through the hallway. Following him are two entourages, and the prophet.

INT. CASTLE - COLLECTION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Door slams open. A rather startling scene.

A room full of stuffed animals, from birds to mammals, some creatures you only see in Greek mythology or *Harry Potter*. Few pieces of classic paintings, chinas, and unnamable novelties settle in between.

A lot of Griffin heads, of many varieties. But all in a mess, ramshackle.

Floor full of WHITE FEATHERS. A window widely opens, snow storms in, blending in the feathers.

A mess.

King rushes into the window. A rope attaches to it, the other end on the ground. Down there, disarrayed horses' footprints on the snow, all the way to the forest.

KING  
WHAT THE...

CAVALIER  
YOUR HIGHNESS. QUEEN SAID  
PRINCESSES ARE MISSING.

A cavalier panting heavily by the door.

EXT. BY FOREST

Thousands of torches burn up the night. Yelling, swearing, fire burning, horse clopping. A war.

EXT. FOREST

A herd of animals, Griffins, in particular, stomper the ground. They strike through the imposing trees, in the same direction.

TESS  
(yelling)  
Jin! Are you with me.

JIN  
(yelling back)  
I'm here!

A close look. Among all the migrating animals, Tess and Jin are covered in white feathers, riding with them. Ominous darkness. Two white shadows. Chaotic strikes, solemn breathing of wilding, shaking of the ground. They lose all their visions, but keep riding, until in a quick move, they see:

Light shining through the trees.

EXT. FOREST EDGE - OPEN FIELD - CONTINUOUS

For the first time in a while, they feel the snow scratching their faces.

They made it out of the forest.

Tess gradually adapts to the light. She sees herself, she sees Jin, she sees the thousands of wild, beautiful, white animals surrounding them. She slows down, turns, and sees the torch lights deep in the forest and,

An arrowhead.

JIN (O.S.)  
TESS — — !!

Torch light engulfs the darkness.

Blood stained feather blows into the sky.