

"CHOICES"

FADE IN:

EXT. THE DOCKS - CAIRHIEN

From a bird's eye view, we see a large ship docked at the stone quay, with many workers loading cargo from wagons into the ship's hold. The CAMERA begins to pan downward, following the line of wagons up the quay. Amidst the workers, Aiel watch them work. As we pass by one particular wagon, the CAMERA lingers for a moment on its cargo, a twisted arch. Finally, at the end of the line is HADNAN KADERE's wagon. Kadere is standing at the single window, watching the proceedings. We zoom in until the window fills the screen; Kadere is sweating, and his expression betrays his nervousness. Suddenly his eyes dart off to the left.

KADERE'S POV

A mounted party approaches, with RAND AL'THOR and MOIRAINÉ SEDAI at its head. LAN MANDRAGORAN and MAT CAUTHON follow closely behind, with AVIENDHA, EGWENE AL'VERE, JASIN NATAEL, and a group of soldiers bringing up the rear.

CROWD (V.O.)

All glory to the Lord Dragon! Hail
the Lord Dragon!

Rand is bent over in his saddle, listening to something Moiraine was saying.

CLOSEUP - KADERE

A puzzled look crosses Kadere's face.

KADERE

Where are the Maidens?

KEILLE SHAOGI (LANFEAR) (O.S)

Aren't you going to look at an old
friend, Hadnan?

INT. KADERE'S WAGON

Kadere turns away from the window to see KEILLE SHAOGI, and with a quick movement, he pulls the curtains across the window.

KADERE

Keille? But I thought you were...

In a blink, KEILLE transforms into LANFEAR, and Kadere promptly drops to his knees.

KADERE

Great Mistress, how may I serve?

LANFEAR

By telling me what Rand al'Thor is up to. Quickly, mind.

KADERE

It is difficult, Great Mistress... I cannot get close to him here, but...

She steps closer to him, eyes blazing, and Kadere begins to babble.

KADERE

He is sending Aiel south in huge numbers, Great Mistress. Oh, and he has founded a school...

As he talks, the CAMERA pulls back into the shadows.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE DOCKS

Moiraine dismounts and begins checking the wagons. The others follow suit, although Rand is clearly getting frustrated.

RAND

What is it you want me to see, Moiraine?

Moiraine ignores him as she continues up the line.

RAND

Did she tell you what it was, Egwene?

EGWENE

Just that you had to see something.

AVIENDHA

You must trust Aes Sedai.

MAT (SNORTING)

Yes, do that, by all means.

RAND

Well, I mean to find out now, so...

Kadere's wagon explodes, sending splinters of wood and glass flying. Lanfear steps out of the wreckage, holding something wet and red, her face blazing with fury.

LANFEAR

He told me, Lews Therin! You let another woman touch you! Again!

She tosses her small burden to the side, and for a moment, the wind picks up, inflates it, and we can see Hadnan Kadere's features before it collapses to the ground. Moiraine runs directly toward the Forsaken, with Lan at her heels. An invisible hand knocks him aside with ease, and he is sent flying. Another invisible hand grabs Moiraine and drags her until she's face to face with Lanfear.

LANFEAR

Out of my way, flea.

Moiraine is hurled to the side, and she rolls a few times before disappearing under one of the wagons.

RAND'S POV

The quay is in chaos, as the workers scatter in all directions, some of them jumping into the river, others hiding behind wagons. Lanfear has a dark aura around her, and she starts walking towards him.

CLOSEUP - RAND

He closes his eyes for a moment, wincing, and then they flash open with an intense look.

LONG SHOT - RAND AND LANFEAR

They both raise their hands, and with that motion, flows of Air and Fire appear, whipping and snatching at each other. A group of Aiel try to attack Lanfear, and she envelops them in a wall of flame without missing a beat. Rand uses a flow of Air to grab them and drop them in the river. He looks up, waves his hands, and a light-gray dome appears, forty feet high, a hundred feet long. Lanfear's flows bounce harmlessly off the dome's wall, and she concentrates on attacking Rand.

MEDIUM SHOT - RAND

Aviendha and Egwene step forward to stand at each side of him, and they begin weaving flows at Lanfear.

CLOSE SHOT - LANFEAR

She doesn't look like she's having much of a problem handling her three adversaries, her anger fueling her strength.

LANFEAR

One of them? Which is Aviendha?

BACK TO SCENE

Aviendha and Egwene begin screaming, their bodies arching upwards. Rand looks at each of them, then sets his face, his hand making a short chopping motion. The two women fall to the ground, motionless. Lanfear staggers, her flows snapping back at her.

LANFEAR

You are mine, Lews Therin! Mine!

RAND

No. I was never yours, Lanfear.
I'll die before I'll love a
Forsaken.

LANFEAR

If you are not mine, then you are
dead.

The flows come fast and furious now, and it looks similar to a swordfight, with Rand parrying and blocking Lanfear's flow attacks. He starts walking forward, trying to close the distance between them. She shuffles to one side, her back coming up against a wagon. His face, determined. Her face, angry and cold.

LANFEAR

You will die slowly, and beg me to
let you love me before you die.

She shoots a knife-shaped flow at him, a flow with the same color as his flows. He fights this flow with great effort.

RAND

Trying to shield me, Lanfear?

LANFEAR

I'll make both of those trulls watch you beg before drowning you with their blood. Which one's death will hurt you most, Lews Therin? I want you to hurt, to know pain such as no man has ever known!

Along with the knife-shaped flow, tiny needles of the One Power stab Rand, cloaking him with pain. He screams in agony, but still he fights, stepping forward. She climbs up onto the wagon to stay out of his reach, and we see that it's the wagon with the twisted arch. She spots something beside the arch and picks it up - a bracelet.

LANFEAR

Oh, my, Lews Therin. What a little gift this is.

The bracelet, an *angreal*, gives her added strength, and she devotes all her energies to attacking flows, dropping her shielding flows. Behind Rand, Aviendha staggers to her knees.

AVIENDHA

Rand, this is your chance!

Rand falls to the ground, the needle flows convulsing him with pain. He looks up at Lanfear.

RAND (V.O.)

I could do it. I could strike her down.

Lanfear's expression curls into a snarl.

RAND (V.O.)

But I can't.

SERIES OF SHOTS

A) A woman in a dark merchant's dress, a dagger in her hand, Rand's fire-red sword cutting her down.

B) Ilyena, her broken body lying in a ruined hallway.

RAND (V.O.)

I can't.

Rand begins to laugh.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE DOCKS - BEHIND THE WAGONS

Moiraine crawls out from underneath the tail of the wagon, her face haggard.

MOIRAINÉ'S POV

Lanfear stands in front of the arch, staring down at Rand's contorted body. Rand is laughing hysterically.

BACK TO SCENE

Moiraine sighs, and begins climbing up the back of the wagon. Now Lanfear is starting to laugh, an ugly, hateful sound.

MOIRAINÉ'S POV

She quietly sneaks up alongside Lanfear, the CAMERA moving slowly and carefully, not even sparing a moment to look down at Rand and the others.

BACK TO SCENE

At the last second, Lanfear sees Moiraine. She turns, but it is too late; Moiraine leaps at her, clawing away the bracelet. They tumble into the arch, disappearing immediately. Harsh light explodes from the arch, and then lightnings surround it, arcing back and forth. The wagon catches fire, and as the arch starts melting, Lan is staggering towards it. Rand catches him.

RAND

You... You can't follow her, Lan. I'm sorry.

LAN

I know. The Light send me peace, I know.

The smoke from the fire is beginning to fill the dome, so Rand waves his hand tiredly, and the dome disappeared.

LAN

She is gone. I cannot feel her presence.

The Warder turns and walks away without a backward glance. Rand runs awkwardly over to Aviendha and Egwene. Mat is already there, fanning Egwene with his hat.

RAND

Is Egwene...?

MAT

I don't know.

AVIENDHA

She still breathes.

AMYS, BAIR, MELAINE, and SORILEA appear on the scene, pushing Rand aside to look at Egwene. A moment later, Egwene's eyes flutter open.

EGWENE

I... hurt.

SORILEA

Of course you do. That is what happens when you let yourself be caught in a man's schemes.

EGWENE

I... will be right as wellwater... with a little rest.

BAIR

You will be right with a great deal of rest, child. I fear you will be doing not much of anything but resting for some days, and that includes Tel'aran'rhiod. Don't give me that stubborn look, girl, or I'll turn your care over to Sorilea.

SORILEA

You will not disobey me more than once, Aes Sedai or not.

AVIENDHA

I, at least, am well enough to do what must be done.

The Wise Ones look at her skeptically.

AVIENDHA

I am. Lanfear had me a moment less than Egwene, which made the difference. I have *toh* to you, Rand al'Thor. I do not think we

would have survived many moments more.

EGWENE

Rand...? What happened?

RAND

They are... They are both gone. Lanfear is dead, and so is Moiraine.

Egwene begins to cry, and Aviendha holds her tight, comforting her.

AMYS

You are a fool, Rand al'Thor. About this and many other things.

RAND (MUTTERING)

No doubt.

He turns to see Lan getting on his horse. Rand gets up and walks over to him.

RAND

I'm sorry, Lan. If I'd been faster, if I'd...

LAN

The Wheel weaves. She was a soldier, a warrior in her way as much as I. This could have happened two hundred times these past twenty years. Today... It was a good day to die.

RAND

Still, I'm sorry, I should have... I hope you can still be my friend; I value your counsel, and your sword-training, and I'll need both in the days to come.

LAN

I am your friend, Rand, but I cannot stay. Moiraine altered my bond so that it would pass to another. I must go to her now, despite my desire to avenge Moiraine's death. If you ever see Nynaeve again, tell her... Tell her I've found someone else. These things happen.

RAND

I will tell her whatever you say,
Lan, but I don't know that she'll
believe me.

Lan leaned down to catch Rand's shoulder in an iron grip.

LAN

We are alike in many ways, you and
I. There is a darkness in us.
Darkness, pain, death. It radiates
from us. If ever you love a woman,
Rand, leave her and let her find
another. It will be the best gift
you can give her.

He straightened and lifted a hand in salute.

LAN

Peace favor your sword. *Tai'shar*
Manetheren.

RAND

Tai'shar Malkier.

Lan gallops away on his horse.

RAND

The last embrace of the mother
welcome you home, Lan.

CUT TO:

INT. DOCKMASTER'S HUT

Rand enters and slams the empty hut's door shut.

RAND

Mourn, burn you! She deserved that
much!

He clutches at his face with his hands.

RAND

Moiraine dead, Egwene almost dead,
and Lan gone. A high price to pay
for Lanfear.

He puts his hands in his pockets and pulls out the letter
from Moiraine. Rand flops down into a chair and begins
reading.

MONTAGE OF PREVIOUS SCENES WITH MOIRAINNE (TO RUN DURING VOICEOVER)

MOIRAINNE (V.O.)

Since the first day I reached Rhuidean, I have known that a day would come in Cairhien when news would arrive of Morgase. I did not know what that would be, but each time that news led to the docks on the following day. There were three branches from the docks, but if you are reading this, I am gone, and so is Lanfear.

RAND

Light, she knew. She knew, and still...

MOIRAINNE (V.O.)

The other two paths were much worse. Down one, Lanfear killed you. Down the other, she carried you away, and when next we saw you, you called yourself Lews Therin Telamon and were her devoted lover. I could not tell you, for the same reason I could not tell Lan. Even given the choices, I could not be sure which you would pick. Men of the Two Rivers, it seems, retain much of storied Manetheren in them, traits shared with men of the Borderlands. It is said that a Borderlander will take a dagger's wound to avoid harm to a woman and count it fair trade. I dared not risk that you would place my life above your own.

RAND

My choice, Moiraine. It was my choice.

MOIRAINNE (V.O.)

A few final points. If Lan has not already gone, tell him that what I did to him, I did for the best. He will understand one day, and I hope, bless me for it. Trust no woman fully who is now Aes Sedai. I do not speak simply of the Black Ajah, though you must always be watchful for them. Be as suspicious

of Verin as you are of Alviarin. We have made the world dance as we sang for three thousand years. That is a difficult habit to break, as I have learned while dancing to your song. You must dance free, and even the best intentioned of my sisters may well try to guide your steps as I once did. Lastly, be wary of Master Jasin Natael. I cannot approve wholly, but I understand - perhaps it was the only way. Yet be careful of him. He is the same man now that he always was. May the Light illumine and protect you. You will do well.

The last words echo softly as Rand lays the letter on the table. It catches flame on its own and burns quickly.

SULIN

Why do you weep here alone, Rand al'Thor? I have heard that some wetlanders think it is shameful to be seen weeping.

SULIN stands in the doorway, fully equipped, ready to fight. Rand wipes his eyes.

RAND

I'm not... What do you want? I thought you had all decided to abandon me or something.

SULIN

No, Rand al'Thor. You have abandoned us.

Sulin takes one of her spears and with a grunt, snaps it in two.

RAND

What are you doing?

Sulin takes another spear and snaps it in two. She reaches for a third, but Rand grabs her by the arm.

RAND

I said, what are you doing?

SULIN

Will you put us in skirts, and make us marry and tend hearth? Or are we to lie beside your fire and lick

your hand when you give us a scrap of meat?

RAND

I don't mean any such thing! I thought you understood. So I kept the Maidens out of the battle with Couladin. Not everyone fought that way, and you never said a word.

SULIN

You kept us from the dance of spears? We kept you from the dance. You were like a girl newly wed to the spear, ready to rush out and kill Couladin without a thought for the spear you might take from behind. You are the *Car'a'carn*, and you have no right to risk yourself needlessly. Now you go to fight a Forsaken.

RAND

And you want to keep me out of this fight as well?

SULIN

Do not be a fool, Rand al'Thor. Those who go with you have already been chosen. Men from every society, but no Maidens. *Far Dareis Mai* carries your honor, and you take ours away.

RAND

I... do not like to see a woman die. And I could not kill a woman if my life hung on it. I would rather go against Rahvin alone than see a Maiden die.

SULIN

Listen to me, *Car'a'carn*. This is what I am: the spear. When a lover came between me and the spear, I chose the spear. I have never wanted anything else. No chief would hesitate to send me wherever the dance is hottest. A treekiller who stabbed me to the heart in my sleep would do me more honor than you do. Do you understand?

RAND

You don't leave me any choices, do you?

SULIN

There are always choices, Rand al'Thor. You have a choice, and I have one. *Ji'e'toh* allows no other.

RAND

All right. Choose out your Maidens, Sulin. *Far Dareis Mai* will have as many as any other society.

Rand stalks past Sulin's sudden smile and opens the door.

EXT. THE DOCKS

A line of Maidens stretches as far as the eye can see. Sulin emerges beside Rand and raises her spear in triumph. The Maidens begin cheering, and Rand pushes past them to get to Mat.

MAT

I thought maybe they were going to go in one at a time and kiss you out of your miseries.

RAND

How can you be so cheerful?

MAT

Because I'm alive. What do you want me to do, cry? Amys says Egwene will be all right in a few days.

Mat looks around and pulls Rand close.

MAT

Burn me, if we're going to do this thing, let's do it. *Dovie'andi se tovyu sagain.*

RAND

What?

MAT

I said, it's time to roll the dice. Did Sulin stop up your ears?

RAND

Time to roll the dice.

He nods, grabs Mat's shoulder.

Let's do it.
RAND