

I. R. E. A.
SEASON1: THE INITIATE
EPISODE5: THE PLOT

Written by

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Original script

EXT. A CROSSROADS. DAY.

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To the left is a forest, in the centre is a large inn with high stone walls and two large iron gates, and to the right is ploughed farmland. It is winter.

EXT. A ROAD IN THE WOODS. DAY.

On the way, Lieutenant Beginner rides slowly on the horse, and Ema, her hands tied, lies on the ground behind the horse. The girl is barefoot, dirty, with bruises on her hands and feet and a swollen face from beatings. Ema is wearing some trousers, a shirt and a military tunic with holes in it. Her hair is dishevelled and full of blood clots.

Ema falls to her knees and then onto her stomach. The horse stops. Lieutenant Beginner turns in surprise to see the girl on her belly. The Lieutenant pulls on the rope and Ema struggles to her feet. The horse starts slowly and Ema follows.

EXT. A CROSSROADS. DAY.

Slowly, the horse with Lieutenant Beginning on its back comes out of the woods, followed by Ema. The girl falls to her knees again, then to her stomach. The horse stops. The lieutenant pulls on the rope, but Ema does not move. The lieutenant tries to walk away with the horse, but it refuses to move. The lieutenant dismounts angrily.

BEGINNER

(getting off the horse)

You two want to annoy me.

The Lieutenant walks over to Ema and grabs her by the hair. He lifts her off the ground and puts her on her feet. The Lieutenant approaches the horse, but Ema falls to her knees, her face hitting the ground. The Lieutenant looks at her, turns and grabs her by the hair, lifts her off the ground, carries her to the horse and throws her like a sack on the horse's saddle. He takes the horse by the headstall and starts for the inn.

EXT. COURTYARD OF THE "BLUE STORK" INN. DAY.

The courtyard of the inn is large and square. Two men and three women are riding in a large carriage. Four horses are harnessed to the carriage. In another part of the courtyard are two carts full of sacks.

On another side of the yard, 6 horses are tied up. Chickens and ducks of all colours are running around the yard.

Servants run around the courtyard with various tasks. Upstairs, on all three sides of the walls, are apartments for rent. You can see the wooden doors with numbers on them, the wooden corridor that connects them, and the wooden stairs that lead up to the rooms.

The carriage door is closed by a young man who climbs into the back seat and blows a long whistle. The horses pricked up their ears. The coachman pulls on the reins, the horses snort and throw their heads back. The second coachman cracks his whip over the horses as they charge towards the wide open iron gate. The first coachman stands up and pulls hard on the horses' heels, the horses turn a little to the left, they are about to crash into the left half of the iron gate, but the coachman pulls to the right, the horses are turned towards the open gate. The second coachman cracks his whip again and the horses speed out of the gate, while the young man at the back whistles, hat in hand.

The carriage has left the courtyard of the inn. After a while, Lieutenant Beginning enters the gate, pulling the halter of the horse on which Ema sits, belly up on the saddle. Beginning stops in the middle of the courtyard. A boy walks past him.

BEGINNING

(to boy)

Hey, kid.

The boy stops and looks at Lieutenant.

BEGINNING(CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Call the innkeeper.

(The boy, without saying anything, starts towards the entrance of the inn. Confused, the Beginning shouts at him again)

Boy.

(The Boy stops and looks at the Beginning)

I told you to call the innkeeper.

(Still without saying anything, the boy turns and runs to the door of the inn. Beginning is even more confused and shouts at the boy again)

Boy!!!

(MORE)

BEGINNING (CONT'D)
 (The boy stops again and
 looks back at Beginning)
 Where are you going?

BOY
 I'll get the innkeeper.

Lieutenant Beginning is about to say something, but changes his mind and waves the boy away. The boy suddenly turns and walks to the inn door, opens it and disappears inside. The door closes behind him.

Lieutenant Beginning approaches Ema, raises her face, brings his cheek close to her nose, stays like that for a moment or two, then lets her head drop.

Men and women, customers of the inn, climb the wooden stairs to their rooms. Others come out of their rooms and lock the doors with keys.

On one side of the courtyard is the main entrance to the inn. Above it is a large stuffed blue stork. The central building of the inn consists of a ground floor and two floors with windows, some open and some closed.

There are a lot of people in the courtyard, and Lieutenant Beginning is watching. Someone can be heard in the background.

INNKEEPER
 Hello, Lieutenant.

The Beginning turns to the speaker. The Innkeeper is a very tall and very thin man, with no hair on his head or eyebrows. He wears knee-high leather boots, leather trousers and a black tunic, also made of leather. Over the tunic he wears a brown leather apron and on his wrists he wears a very wide leather bracelet.

BEGINNING
 You've put on weight.

INNKEEPER
 (smiles)
 Yes, one gram, but I'll lose two.

BEGINNING
 Don't end up stuffed like that blue stork.

INNKEEPER
 I will end up, isn't that the name of my inn? The blue stork.

And the innkeeper laughs with satisfaction at his joke. When he becomes serious again, he turns to Ema.

INNKEEPER (CONTINUED) (CONT'D)
What have you brought me this time?

BEGINNING
A treasure.

INNKEEPER
(smiles)
Yes, a bit of a dirty treasure.

BEGINNING
Well, isn't that how you get gems
out of a quarry?

INNKEEPER
And that's how you got this?

BEGIN
500 blue gold coins, and make it
quick, I'm busy today.

The Innkeeper says nothing. He looks at Ema, raises her face and studies her.

INNKEEPER
She's been badly beaten up, but
she'll be all right in a week.

BEGINNING
Don't fuck with me.

INNKEEPER
200.

BEGINNER
450 and I won't bash your head in.

Beginning stares into the eyes of the Innkeeper, who is two heads taller than he is.

INNKEEPER
(allows himself to be
convinced)
What a good negotiator you are,
Lieutenant. Get her off the horse.

The Innkeeper turns and heads for the door of the inn. The Lieutenant takes Ema by the shoulders, lifts her off the horse, leads her to the horse trough and lays her down on the ground. He then takes a bucket, fills it with water and pours it on the girl's face. Ema wakes up and coughs.

The Innkeeper appears beside the Lieutenant, handing him a bag of money. Behind the Innkeeper is a young girl of Ema's age. The Innkeeper speaks to her.

INNKEEPER (CONTINUED) (CONT'D)
 Take her, wash her, give her one of
 your dresses and she'll be back on
 her feet in two days.

The young woman lifts Ema from the ground. They walk towards the stable.

INNKEEPER (CONTINUED) (CONT'D)
 (to Lieutenant)
 Good day, Lieutenant.

And the innkeeper turns and walks away.

BEGINNING
 The same to you.

And Lieutenant Beginning turns, goes to his horse, saddles it and leaves.

The Innkeeper enters the inn.

The lieutenant rides out of the courtyard.

Ema and the young woman enter the stables.

INT. THE STABLE OF THE "BLUE STORK" INN. DAY.

Ema is sitting on a bed of hay. Next to her is the young girl brought by the innkeeper.

LILY
 What's your name?

EMA
 Ema. And yours?

LILY
 Lily.

EMA
 How beautiful you are. What
 beautiful dark hair you have.

LILY
 You're beautiful too. I'll wash you
 and give you a dress, my dress. Are
 you hungry?

EMA

No.

LILY

You have to eat to get back on your feet. You have to start work in two days.

EMA

What's here?

LILY

Blue Stork Inn.

EMA

(smiles)

What a silly name.

(Lily giggles)

And this, I suspect, is where I was sold by Lieutenant Beginning.

(Lily doesn't answer, just smiles at Emma)

Let me out of here too.

EXT. INNER COURTYARD OF THE ROYAL PALACE. DAY.

The courtyard was crowded with people. There were soldiers, nobles, servants, a cart full of sacks pulled by two horses. Some of the servants are looking after the hunting dogs, which are excited and barking. The King and the Queen come out of the Royal Palace. They are standing at the top of a stone staircase.

OKOT

My Queen, I love you very much.

UKAMAKA

I love you too, my King.

OKOT

It'll be hard without you for three days.

UKAMAKA

What can I say, I'm crazy about your stick.

OKOT

(blushing)

Hush, my Queen.

UKAMAKA

Why? Let the whole Fortress hear
that they have a virile King..

OKOT

(covers her mouth with his
hand)

Be quiet, my queen.

(and squeezes Ukamaka's
waist)

Hush, I'm going mad.

Ukamaka grimaces a little, as if the King is putting too much
pressure on her.

OKOT (CONTINUES) (CONT'D)

(lets go of her arms)

Sorry, does it hurt?

UKAMAKA

(pretending to hurt her)

Yes, I'm not feeling well, I told
you. Those sleepless nights when
you never stop.

OKOT

I'm going hunting for three days.
Sleep on soft pillows, OK?

UKAMAKA

Don't worry, I will. Have a good
hunt and bring back lots of game.

OKOT

I love you, my Queen, I love you
very much.

The king kisses the queen's hands, then goes downstairs,
walks to his horse, mounts it and leaves. The king goes out
of the gate, followed by soldiers, then nobles, carts full of
sacks and walking servants. The last to leave are the dogs,
held on leashes by a few servants.

Ukamaka watches everyone go. When the last dog has left the
yard, she turns and hurries back to the Blue Palace.

INT. ROYAL BEDROOM. DAY.

The bedroom is large, with a double bed in the middle and
large wooden wardrobes against the walls. The bedroom door
opens and Ukamaka enters, followed by Ash, who closes the
door behind them.

UKAMAKA

Have you chosen 5 soldiers?

ASH

Yes, Your Majesty.

UKAMAKA

Two more to send to spy on the King.

ASH

I have already sent them, Your Majesty.

UKAMAKA

Very good. Have the other 3 guard the Royal Bedroom so that no one can enter.

ASH

I will put them on guard outside the door.

While talking to Ash, Ukamaka undresses in front of him. The captain does not turn away, giving the impression that Ukamaka's behaviour is familiar to him. The queen opens a wardrobe, takes out a pair of trousers and a black leather tunic, and puts them on.

UKAMAKA

All right, let's be careful here. I don't trust these people. Help me.

Ukamaka sits down on a high-backed wooden chair, Ash takes a large boot and puts it on the Queen's right leg. He then takes the other boot and places it on her left foot.

Ukamaka gets up from his chair, takes a black hooded cloak from the wardrobe and pulls it over his shoulders. They leave the bedroom. The door closes behind Ash.

EXT. INNER COURTYARD OF THE ROYAL PALACE. DAY.

In the courtyard, 5 soldiers are waiting for the Queen. They are all on black horses, dressed in black, with their faces covered and their weapons in full view.

A servant with two horses stands beside the soldiers. Ukamaka comes out of the palace, followed by Ash, who has no face covering. The two of them quickly descend the stone steps, mount their horses and ride out of the Royal Palace gate, followed by the other soldiers.

EXT. GATEWAY TO THE BLUE FORTRESS. DAY.

The gate is open and people are entering, being checked by soldiers. There is a long queue of people waiting to enter the gate.

Out of the gate comes Ukamaka and the soldiers following her. You can see the group moving away from the Blue Fortress, turning left and entering the forest next to the fortress.

EXT. FOREST NEAR THE BLUE FORTRESS. DAY.

Ukamaka rides through the forest, followed by her soldiers. After a while they reach a clearing where they stop. The soldiers dismount and begin to pick up the branches above the pit through which they entered the White World.

Ukamaka and Ash dismount and approach the pit. One soldier stays with the horses and the others go down into the pit. Ash helps Ukamaka down as well. A soldier opens the wooden door in the wall of the pit and Ukamaka enters, followed by Ash and the other soldiers.

INT. ASH GROTTTO. DAY.

Ukamaka appears in the Ash Grotto, followed by Ash and the rest of her soldiers. They all search the walls of the cave. There are niches dug into the walls where you can see the marks left by the tools used to make them.

UKAMAKA

They look artificial.

ASH

Yes, Your Majesty. These must be the pickaxe marks.

(and Ash touches these marks with his hand)

It's warm here.

UKAMAKA

Where?

ASH

(takes his hand out of a niche and then puts it back in)

Yes, it's warm in this alcove.

Ukamaka approaches the niche and extends his right hand. After a moment he says:

UKAMAKA

Curious. It's hot. Why is this hot?

A soldier's voice can be heard behind the Queen.

SOLDIER1

Your Majesty.

Ukamaka turns to look at the soldier. He shows her a drawing on the wall. Ukamaka approaches the drawing. It is a matrix with 3 rows and 3 columns and empty squares. Ash approaches the Queen.

UKAMAKA

Have you ever seen anything like this, Ash?

ASH

(tapping his fingers on
the matrix)

No, Your Majesty.

UKAMAKA

What is it?

From behind the Queen, another soldier's voice can be heard.

SOLDIER2

And here's something, Your Majesty.

Ukamaka turns to the soldier who is pointing at something written above a niche in the cave wall. As Ukamaka approaches the niche, she hears the other soldiers.

SOLDIER3

And here's something, Your Majesty.

Ukamaka has a look at what Soldier3 shows.

SOLDIER1

And here, Your Majesty.

Ukamaka has a look at the walls and sees numbers that are written in four strings above the niches:

These strings of numbers, two, three, four, five or one string, are written all over the walls of the cave.

UKAMAKA

What's here?

The soldiers also look at the strings of numbers.

Ukamaka motions for the soldiers to follow her, and leaves the Ash Grotto at the entrance.

EXT. WHITE FOREST IN THE WHITE WORLD. DAY.

Ukamaka and her soldiers carefully examine the vegetation and the ground. Everything is perfectly white.

The group walks carefully through the White Forest. Ukamaka sees a path by a small stream. The Queen looks to the left, where the stream comes from, and then to the right, in the direction of the stream.

ASH

Let's see where it comes from.

UKAMAKA

No, better to see where it goes.

The Queen goes to the right, followed by the soldiers.

The group walks along the small path parallel to the thin stream. Ukamaka leads the way, followed by Ash and the other soldiers.

Ukamaka sees a small White House among the trees and signals for the group to stop. Ash has also seen the White House and waves to Ukamaka to follow him. Ash slowly approaches the White House and draws a semicircle around it, coming to a point where he can see the White Lake and the White House. Ukamaka and her soldiers are hiding in the White Forest.

In front of the White House there is a telescope on a tripod. Ayaju comes out of the White House, goes to the telescope, changes the lens and looks through it. When she sees it, the Queen says in a whisper, more to herself.

UKAMAKA (CONTINUED) (CONT'D)

Why am I not surprised to see you here?

The Grand Master writes something down on a piece of paper, and then looks again through the telescope, which is pointed at the two Suns in the sky of the White World. Ayaju moves the telescope from one sun to the other and then writes something down.

Ash looks at Ukamaka and gestures to Ayaju. The queen tells him with a look that she doesn't need to do anything and waves her hand to stop.

Ayaju enters the White House, comes out after a moment, two, three, changes the telescope lens again, looks through it and writes something on the paper in his hand.

Ukamaka beckons the soldiers to follow her, and the group slowly and quietly walks back along the small path that runs parallel to the stream.

After walking in silence for a while, Ukamaka asks Ash.

UKAMAKA (CONTINUED) (CONT'D)
Do we have until the grotto?

ASH
It's a bit further on.

UKAMAKA
We have to put on white clothes.

ASH
Yes, Your Majesty, and wear them,
here in the White World. We have
arrived here.

In front of them is the Ash Grotto. Ukamaka enters, followed by Ash and the rest of the soldiers.

INT. ASH GROTTTO. DAY.

Ukamaka enters the cave followed by her soldiers and stops abruptly. She looks in amazement at Cinyra, Adonis and Smyrna who are in the Ash Grotto.

The two groups look at each other without moving.

EXT. ON A BEACH. THE DAY.

Cinyra, Smyrna and Adonis are sitting around a simmering fire jug with several stones placed over it. The three are eating fish, and there are some leftovers on the stones. Adonis has finished eating.

ADONIS
 (to Cinyra)
 Can I put out the fire?

CINYRA
 (does not answer
 immediately, chews what's
 in her mouth, then says)
 Yes, put it out.

Adonis rises from his seat and throws sand over the stones and the fire. The young man surrounds the whole fireplace and throws sand over it.

Cinyra has finished eating and takes a thick piece of stem from beside him and drinks water from it. A little water runs down her chin. Smyrna has finished eating and looks at the rest of the fish.

SMYRNA
 (to Cinyra)
 Shall we take the rest of the fish?

CINYRA
 (putting the piece of stem
 down beside him)
 It's no use. We're going back. Hide
 the food in the tent.

ADONIS
 (approaching Cinyra)
 All right, I'm ready.

Cinyra stands up.

ADONIS (CONTINUED) (CONT'D)
 I'm very excited, aren't you?

CINYRA
 I'm very curious.

ADONIS
 There's clearly something there,
 Dream of Confirmation told us so.

Smyrna comes out of the tent. She approaches them.

CINYRA
 Yes, but we need to see what's on
 the other side.

ADONIS
(walking ahead of the two)
We're going in and we'll find out
in a minute.

Cinyra goes after Adonis, followed by Smyrna. The woman approaches the old man and whispers to him.

SMYRNA
I'm afraid. Can't we wait another
day?

CINYRA
(walking)
What do you think?

SMYRNA
Let's go to the cave tomorrow.

CINYRA
And tomorrow, will it be better?

SMYRNA
I don't know, maybe.

CINYRA
Anyway, I'm tired of eating this
fish, all these weeks just fish.
And then we had the Dream of
Confirmation, right?

SMYRNA
Yes, but I'm still scared.

And the two of them follow Adonis into the rainforest.

EXT. A GLADE IN THE TROPICAL FOREST. DAY.

Adonis emerges from the rainforest, followed by Cinyra and Smyrna. The three approach the mouth of the cave and pause before the matrix drawn by the young man.

ADONIS
Dad, this is it. We're taking the
big step.
(Adonis looks at Cinyra)

CINYRA
Come on, Adonis. We'll follow you.

Smyrna clings to Cinyra, Adonis looks at the mouth of the cave, smiles confidently and enters.

Cinyra takes Smyrna's hand, who is trembling with fear.

SMYRNA
Daddy, I'm scared.

CINYRA
(looks at Smyrna)
You're with me. Come with me.

And Cinyra enters the cave, dragging Smyrna behind him. All three disappear into the cave, and from there you can hear the wind blowing loudly.

INT. INSIDE THE CAVE. DAY.

Adonis walks carefully between the stalagmites and stalactites. The wind gets stronger. Cinyra and Smyrna follow Adonis at a short distance. The young man feels the wind pulling his body towards the bottom of the cave. He walks slower and slower, not wanting to be torn away by the wind.

But the wind is getting stronger, and Adonis is pushing harder and harder, resisting harder and harder. Adonis turns his head to look at Cinyra, a few paces behind him, hand in hand with Smyrna. The strong wind tugs at their clothes.

Suddenly, Adonis is blown away by the wind. He disappears into the pit at the bottom of the cave.

Smyrna flinches and clings tighter to Cinyra. The two continue walking in the direction the wind is blowing. Their coats are being pulled more and more towards the bottom of the cave by the wind. They walk hard, very hard against the strong wind. Their feet are shaking.

Suddenly, Cinyra makes a sudden move and walks away from Smyrna. The woman looks in horror at Cinyra, who violently pushes her into the wind, and Smyrna disappears into the bottom of the cave.

Cinyra tries to stand still, but the wind pushes him to the bottom of the cave. The old man takes a step, two steps, and the wind tears him away and throws him to the bottom of the cave.

Now all you can hear is the loud sound of the wind rushing through the cave.

INT. ASH GROTTTO. DAY.

Adonis comes running out of the bottom of the Ash Grotto. He stops in the middle of the cave and looks around at the cave walls and niches.

Behind him comes Smyrna, also on the run, who takes two steps, stumbles and falls at Adonis' feet.

ADONIS
 (leaning towards his
 mother)
 Mother, are you all right?
 (Adonis lifts Smyrna from
 the floor)
 Have you hurt yourself?

The woman begins to recover, nodding her head.

From the bottom of the cave, Cinyra suddenly appears and is about to be thrown off balance, but he takes two or three steps and remains standing.

CINYRA
 (to the other two)
 Are you all right?

Adonis and Smyrna nod their heads in agreement.

ADONIS
 (to Cinyra)
 Are you all right, Father?

CINYRA
 I'm fine.

And the old man begins to study the walls of the Grey Grotto. Adonis and Smyrna also study the walls of the grotto. They touch with their fingers the niches in the walls, the matrices, the strings of Numbers.

ADONIS
 Why are the matrices empty, Father?

SMYRNA
 Everything is grey.

CINYRA
 (looking at the walls and
 everything on them in
 fascination)
 It can't be. I can't believe it.

ADONIS

What?

CINYRA

Could this be it, the Grey Grotto?

SMYRNA

This... grotto?

ADONIS

What cave? What's here?

CINYRA

(still looking at the
walls of the cave in
amazement)

This must be it... the Grey Grotto,
where the Hidden Slave..

But Cinyra doesn't get to finish what he was going to say,
because Ukamaka enters the cave, followed by her soldiers.

For a moment or two, they all stand frozen, looking at each
other. Suddenly, Ukamaka commands the soldiers:

UKAMAKA

Catch them!

The soldiers draw their swords and charge the three, who are
trying to escape from where they came. In a few moves, the
soldiers catch the three.

UKAMAKA (CONT'D)

Bring them to me.

In front of the Ukamaka, the soldiers place the three on
their knees.

SMYRNA

Don't kill us, My Lady. We are
simple Numerologists, we do no
harm, only good.

Ukamaka looks at the three of them. Behind the Queen, Ash is
studying Cinyra.

UKAMAKA

Before I kill you, I want to know
who you are and how you got here.

SMYRNA

My Lady, we don't know much. We
were exiled to an island where we
found a cursed cave.

(MORE)

SMYRNA (CONT'D)

When we went in to seek shelter from a violent storm, we noticed that the wind was blowing like a whirlwind. We weren't careful, and the wind sucked us in and threw us here. But we're leaving, Mistress, let us go, we're leaving.

Adonis and Cinyra are on their knees, heads bowed.

Ash approaches the queen and whispers in her ear.

ASH

Your Majesty, this old man is the one who gave me the painting of the four images in Green Fortress.

UKAMAKA

Which painting?

ASH

The pictures of the pit by the old tree, the candle and the wooden door that brought us here.

UKAMAKA

Ah. Got it.

The Queen's approaching Cinyra.

UKAMAKA (CONTINUED) (CONT'D)

You.

(Old man raises his head)

What's your name?

CINYRA

Cinyra.

UKAMAKA

What are their names?

CINYRA

The young man, Adonis, and the woman, Smyrna.

UKAMAKA

Do you know who I am?

CINYRA

Yes.

(and the old man is silent)

UKAMAKA

(after a moment or two of
silence)

Tell me, who am I?

CINYRA

Ukamaka, daughter of the Green King
of the Green Royal House. But,
forgive my stupidity, I've been
living on an island isolated from
the world lately, so I don't know
if you're Princess or... Queen.

UKAMAKA

Do you know where you are?

CINYRA

(does not answer
immediately, says after a
moment)

I don't know exactly, but I have an
idea because I know the legends of
Numerologists.

UKAMAKA

Are you a Numerologist?

CINYRA

Yes, I am.

UKAMAKA

White or black?

CINYRA

It depends on the needs of the
person who pays me.

UKAMAKA

Or the one who spares your life.

CINYRA

That's right, or the one who...
spares our lives.

UKAMAKA

(points to Ash)

Do you know him?

CINYRA

Sure, I gave him a picture of the
way here.

(to Ash)

(MORE)

CINYRA (CONT'D)

And thank you, Captain, for remembering me and saving our lives.

UKAMAKA

Don't be so sure you'll live.

CINYRA

I am a very educated man, my lady, and it bothers me not to know whether you are a Princess or a Queen.

UKAMAKA

Does it matter?

CINYRA

Yes, so I know where I am and can tell you. Can we get up?

(Ukamaka nods in agreement)

This, as you can see, is the Ash Grotto where legend has it that the Hidden Slave taught his blood kin the Numbers. That would also mean we're in the White World. May I, Mistress?

(and Cinyra makes a sign that he wants to leave the cave)

UKAMAKA

I'm coming for you.

(Cinyra starts towards the exit)

EXT. WHITE FOREST IN THE WHITE WORLD. DAY.

Cinyra emerges from the Ash Grotto, followed by Ukamaka and Ash. The three of them take a few steps through the forest.

CINYRA

What a beautiful forest, Mistress.

UKAMAKA

The Hidden Slave, you say?

CINYRA

Legend has it that the Forgotten Blue Father, while teaching his Great Son the Numbers, was spied on by a slave we call the Hidden Slave.

(MORE)

CINYRA (CONT'D)

When the Forgotten Blue Father discovered him, he tried to kill the slave, but the slave ran away. He left the Blue World and took refuge in the White World where he taught his relatives, the Numbers, and they became Numerologists. Meanwhile, the Forgotten Blue Father created the Order of Numbers and civilised the Blue Fortress, and the first Grand Master of the Order was the Grand Son.

(Cinyra stops and turns to Ukamaka)

The painting I sent you was to be used in the forest around the Blue Fortress. If we... met here, it means that you are the Queen of the Royal Blue House.

Ukamaka doesn't answer immediately, she looks at Cinyra for a second, two seconds. The old man is sure of himself and looks Ukamaka straight in the eye.

UKAMAKA

You are insightful, old... what did you say your name was?

CINYRA

Cinyra.

UKAMAKA

Right, Cinyra. And the others?

CINYRA

The young man is Adonis and Smyrna.

UKAMAKA

Come back to the grotto.
(and the three walk
towards the entrance of
the Ash Grotto)
But tell me something, Cinyra. Why did you give me this painting? Why do you want me here?

CINYRA

For revenge.

UKAMAKA

What do you mean?

CINYRA

When the Hidden Slave died of natural causes, his body was placed in a niche in the wall of the Ash Grotto. The body was guarded by my family. But the Order of Numbers somehow made it to the White World, found the Ash Grotto, killed the guards and destroyed the hidden slave skeleton. The skull they left in the Ash Grotto, the arms they hid in the walls of the Ice Cave, the body they placed in the tree that grows on the island in the Purple Lake, and the legs they threw to the bottom of the Red Prairie.

UKAMAKA

But why did they do it?

CINYRA

They have respected the will of the Forgotten Blue Father that the Hidden Slave be found and destroyed along with his family. In this way, the Order of Numbers hopes to destroy the Numerologists and single-handedly control everything that happens in the Blue Fortress and the 1000 villages around it.

The 3 have reached the Ash Grotto and enter it.

INT. ASH GROTTTO. DAY.

The soldiers, Adonis and Smyrna are in the cave.

UKAMAKA

And what exactly is your revenge?

CINYRA

To kill the Grand Master of the Order of Numbers, to cut his body into pieces and put them in the places where the pieces of the Hidden Slave's body were put.

UKAMAKA

And what is my role?

CINYRA

(kneeling before Ukamaka,
next to Adonis and
Smyrna)

Queen, we don't have that power,
but Your Majesty can.

UKAMAKA

And why should I do that?

CINYRA

To bring the power of the Image
into the Blue Fortress, to replace
the Numbers and the supremacy of
the Order of Numbers.

UKAMAKA

Your plan is dangerous, Cinyra.
Bringing the power, truth and
beauty of the image to the Blue
Fortress is a plan I like and have
thought about. And eliminating the
Order of Numbers is also something
I like. But you Numerologists will
not be allowed to use the Numbers,
because only the Image will rule in
the Blue Fortress and the 1000
villages around it.

Adonis and Smyrna say in unison.

ADONIS AND SMYRNA

We swear.

There is silence in the Ash Grotto. The 3 numerologists kneel
before the Ukamaka, their heads pressed to the ground. The
soldiers look at them. And Ukamaka looks at the 3
numerologists and says nothing.

INT. THE STABLE OF THE HOUSE OF NUMBERS. DAY.

A horse is brought into the stable by Amos.

In one corner of the stable, the Brook is working, collecting
scraps of hay.

Amos stops in the middle of the stable and looks around.
After a moment he calls out:

AMOS

Brook!

Brook hears it being called, drops the thing and runs towards Amos.

The two meet.

AMOS (CONT'D)
I brought you Lady.

BROOK
Was the Grand Master pleased with her?

AMOS
He said nothing, I think he was pleased. Weave her and feed her well.

BROOK
She's a big eater.

Brook takes the head from Amos and leads the mare to stand.

AMOS
I'll be back in two hours. Okay?

BROOK
OK, OK.

And Amos comes out of the stable. Brook puts the mare in a stall and takes off her saddle and halter. From a corner, Brook takes a bucket of water and carries it to the mare, who begins to drink.

Brook puts the bucket down, takes a handful of hay, soaks it in water, places a wooden stool beside the mare, climbs on it and begins to wash her back. Satisfied, the horse begins to groom itself and turns its head towards Brook.

BROOK (CONT'D)
Yeah, girl, I love you too, girl.
And I love you.

Through an open window in the stable you can see the moon in the sky, which is half full. It's dark in the stable, with only 3 lanterns throwing light into the room. The horses are quiet, sitting in their boxes. The floor is clean.

In the corner sits Brook, holding a piece of paper with strings of numbers written on it. Someone has entered the stable and footsteps can be heard. Brook lifts his head and waits to see who it is. The footsteps get closer and Amos appears.

BROOK (CONTINUES) (CONT'D)
You said two hours.

AMOS
I know it's been about three, but
the Grand Master set me to work.
I've been very busy. To you'll
forgive me, I brought you some hot
pretzels.

And Amos pulls a folder with 5 hot pretzels out of his brown coat. Steam comes out of the pretzels. Brook is delighted and breaks off a piece of pretzel, which he quickly pops into his mouth, but it fries, so he quickly takes it out, holds it in his hand and blows on it.

AMOS (CONT'D)
Easy, boy, can't you see they're
burning?

BROOK
Yes, but they're so good.

And Brook continues to blow on the piece of bagel he's holding in the palm of his hand. Amos sits down next to Brook and picks up the paper with the strings of Numbers from the bottom.

AMOS
(looking at the string of
Numbers)
What do you think?

BROOK
(speaking while eating
with difficulty because
the bagel is hot)
They look interesting. But what can
you do with the Numbers?

AMOS
Basically, you can do many things.
Memorise what the mind would have a
hard time remembering. Describe
events, add, subtract, in short, a
lot of things. Do you like numbers?

BROOK
I don't know. It's the first time
I've seen them.

AMOS
Didn't the baker you worked for use
numbers to count?

BROOK

I think so. I'm sure he used it for money and stuff. But he never showed them to me. But I knew they were there.

AMOS

Have you seen them before?

BROOK

I looked a few times to see what Old Chickpea was doing, just out of curiosity. I saw something, but not very clearly. Do you like them? You're going to be a Scribe, aren't you?

AMOS

I don't know what to say. That's the way I should be, to become a Scribe, but I'm far from it.

BROOK

How long have you been an Apprentice?

AMOS

For 5 years.

BROOK

And have you had time to learn the Numbers?

AMOS

When I entered the House of Numbers, I was your age or even younger. I started in the stable, just like you. Then, after 5 years, I became an Apprentice, even to Grand Master Ayaju, who was only a Master then.

BROOK

And how did you get in here?

AMOS

I was convicted by Master Ayaju.

BROOK

How?

AMOS

We are 8 brothers, 4 boys and 4 girls.

(MORE)

AMOS (CONT'D)

Since we were little we worked on a nobleman's land. It was just me and my mother and one brother or sister who could. My father didn't like to work very much. He liked drinking and fighting.

BROOK

Did he beat you badly?

AMOS

(smiles)

He never beat us. He liked to fight in the underground.

BROOK

What kind of fights?

AMOS

Illegal, forbidden. He drinks a lot and gets into fights. Sometimes he would win and bring home the money, sometimes he would lose. But every time he came home badly beaten, almost disfigured, and it took my mother many days to get him back on his feet.

BROOK

And when he came to, what did he do?

AMOS

Everything was beautiful. He was the best father in the world. He stayed with us for two days, working in the field during the day and playing with us in the house at night. On the third day he was a different man. As soon as he woke up, he was depressed, he didn't eat, he didn't go to the field and at lunchtime... he disappeared.

BROOK

Where?

AMOS

I don't know, off to drink and fight with all the money.

BROOK

And how did you end up in court?

AMOS

One day, when my father left, I followed him and we went to an inn at a crossroads. I don't think you know it, but it has a stuffed blue stork above the front door. Everyone calls it the "Blue Stork".
(and Amos looks at the Brook)

BROOK

(mouth full)
I don't know any inn.

AMOS

Very good, it's a cursed place. My father drank there for three days, sleeping only a few hours, on chairs or the floor, wherever he could. After a few days, in the middle of the night, disaster struck.

EXT. ON A FIELD. NIGHT.

Behind the Blue Stork Inn, in a field, a crowd had gathered, mostly men, but also a few women. They were all excited, some with torches in their hands, shouting and laughing. In the middle of the crowd are two bare-chested men.

Amos' voice can be heard in the background.

AMOS

(off)
The owner of this inn, a hairless bastard, organises illegal fights. My father fought in them until he almost died.
(the two men turn and begin to punch each other; crowd jeers)
In the beginning, my dad punched well. The other one got a lot of punches in the face.
(One of the men punches the other in the face, smashing his lips and teeth; the crowd roars with satisfaction)
I got very close and ended up in the front row. I wanted to see everything. I wanted to see my dad.

(MORE)

AMOS (CONT'D)
 (a boy in the front row
 watches the battle)

BROOK
 (also from off)
 You wanted to see him win?

AMOS
 (off)
 Not necessarily. I want to be with
 him, no matter what has happened to
 him. And I was with him because at
 some point, somehow, our eyes met.
 (Amos, from the audience,
 looks into the eyes of
 one of the fighters; the
 two look at each other
 for two, three moments,
 when a punch from the
 opponent changes the face
 of Amos' father, who
 falls to the ground)
 Dad wasn't paying attention and it
 hit him hard. But Dad got up from
 the floor and was hit immediately.
 I looked into Dad's eyes as he got
 hit in the face. I don't know what
 came over me, but I sucked in all
 the air in my lungs and screamed
 really loud.

AMOS (CONT'D)
 (the one in the crowd
 watching the fight)
 Kill him!!!!

Amos's father's face is swollen from the blows. The arches are broken and bleeding, the eyes are bruised, the eyelids are swollen, the lower lip is broken. The father looks at Amos, smiles, then stands up, dodges one punch, parries the second and punches his opponent hard in the chest with his right hand. This one does not have any reaction. Again, left, right, left and right, Amos's father hits him. Crowd roars with delight. The opponent does not defend himself at all. He stands up straight and takes punch after punch from Amos' father, who gets tired and stops. Amos's dad looks at his opponent. They stand straight in front of each other, doing nothing. Amos's father then kicks his opponent in the chest with his right foot, causing him to fall backwards like a tree uprooted.

The crowd is screaming, the men and women are delirious. Amos looks up at his father, who is standing.

Suddenly, the crowd starts to run and soldiers appear on the field. It began to rain heavily. The soldiers are trying to catch the men and women who witnessed the illegal fight. It rained heavily everywhere.

Amos stands still and looks at his father, who also stands still. They look at each other, and all around them it is raining heavily, and the ground has become a mud in which the soldiers are fighting to catch the men and women who have witnessed the illegal fighting.

BROOK
(from off)
Is that man dead?

INT. THE STABLE OF THE HOUSE OF NUMBERS. NIGHT.

Amos and Brook sit on the straw and talk.

AMOS
No. He didn't die.

BROOK
And what did you do?

AMOS
My father and I were caught by soldiers and taken to prison. It was very cold and I think my father got lung disease there. After 4 days we were tried and the judge was Master Ayjau. He sentenced my father and his opponent to 10 years in prison, and the other men and women who witnessed the beating to various jobs in the Blue Fortress. He sent me here to the stables.

BROOK
And the innkeeper of the Blue Stork?

AMOS
He escaped, the soldiers didn't catch him. He ran away before the soldiers came.

BROOK
And your father?

AMOS
He died after 3 weeks in the salt mine.

(MORE)

AMOS (CONT'D)

My mother found another man, 3 sisters got married and 3 other brothers left to apprentice with various craftsmen. I stayed here, in the stables of the House of Numbers.

BROOK

And how did you become Master Ayaju's Apprentice?

AMOS

I'll tell you another time. It's late now and we have a lot of work to do tomorrow. Good night.

BROOK

Good night.

And Amos gets up and walks away. Brook extinguishes the lantern beside him. The stable falls into darkness. Brook folds up the sheet of Numbers and places it somewhere beside him, then lies down on the straw and wraps a sack around himself.

Through an open stable window you can see the moon half in the sky. The sky is full of stars.

INT. ALCHEMY LABORATORY OF THE GRAND DUKE. NIGHT.

The Grand Duke is working in his laboratory. The room is dimly lit by the fire of a large wood-burning stove and three large candles that stand beside the Grand Duke. He is pouring all sorts of solutions, some on top of each other, into various glass jars. The liquid turns black and gradually loses its colour and becomes transparent. The Grand Duke carefully examined the liquid he had obtained, placed it in the light of a flame and carefully smelled it. The liquid is completely colourless.

GRAND DUKE

(for him)

The liquid has become colourless and odourless.

The Grand Duke is very unhappy. You can see the weariness on his face.

The lab door opens and Stone enters, closing the door behind him. Stone approaches the Grand Duke.

STONE

It's just before midnight.

GRAND DUKE

Throw the water from this vessel.
Put out the candles and the fire on
the stove. And then go to bed.

STONE

I understand, Grand Duke.

The Grand Duke approaches a laboratory window and looks at the moon in the sky. The moon is half full and surrounded by many stars. The Grand Duke looks at the moon while Stone puts out the fire in the stove with water.

You can hear the coals sizzling. The Grand Duke turns and leaves the laboratory, leaving the door open. Stone blows out the thick candles. Darkness falls over the laboratory.

INT. GRAND DUKE'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

The Grand Duke lies down on the bed and wraps himself in a thick blanket. A candle is burning, lighting the room very dimly. Stone is by the bed and, seeing that the Grand Duke is getting ready to go to sleep, wishes him well:

STONE

Good night, Grand Duke.

GRAND DUKE

Good night, Stone.

Stone bows to the Grand Duke, then goes to the candle and blows it out, darkness falls in the bedroom and Stone's footsteps are heard on the wooden floor, a door opens, Stone's footsteps are heard leaving the room, and the door closes quietly.

The Grand Duke lies on the bed, eyes closed, and begins to breathe heavily.

THE GRAND DUKE'S DREAM

In the Throne Room of the Royal Blue Palace, the entire court is assembled, nobles, men and women, King Okot and Queen Ukamaka, Queen Mother Halima. Servants walk among them with trays of food and drink, wine and fruit. In a corner, five musicians were playing on a small platform. The King and Queen are on their thrones.

But something strange is going on. Everyone, the nobles, the King and Queen, the servants, the musicians, the Queen Mother, is OLD. Their faces were wrinkled, they moved slowly and with great difficulty.

Their arms are in a state of trembling. The Queen Mother is so old that she is hardly recognisable.

The doors of the hall are opened, slowly, slowly, by two very old soldiers. Through the door comes a woman, bent over, her face furrowed with deep wrinkles, a large hairy mole on the tip of her nose, dressed in rags and barely able to walk with the help of a thick branch covered in green leaves.

The woman walks slowly, slowly, and approaches the thrones of the King and Queen. The courtiers look at her with curiosity. Slowly, slowly, leaning on the wooden branch, the old woman reaches the platform on which the two thrones stand.

Okot looks at the old woman, studies her for a moment, two, three, then raises his hand and the musicians stop playing. The old woman takes a deep breath and speaks in a high-pitched voice, but stutters because she has no teeth in her mouth.

OLD WOMAN

Your Majesty, I know how to rejuvenate you.

OKOT

(says nothing, falls silent and looks at the old woman, a moment, two, three, then speaks in a hushed voice)

How? Do you have some magic potion?

OLD WOMAN

No, Your Majesty, I do not.

OKOT

Then how?

OLD WOMAN

I will take you to a small place where a lady is asleep. Your Majesty need only bring her here.

OKOT

And here, what shall I do with her?
I'm no longer able.

Okot laughs at his bad joke, but chokes and coughs loudly. Queen Ukamaka comments inaudibly.

UKAMAKA

You old fool.

OLD WOMAN

This is the cure, Your Majesty. You will see that my remedy is very good.

The courtyard of the royal palace is full as nobles, servants and soldiers prepare to leave. Okot and Ukamaka are on their horses. And the animals are old. The Old Woman is also on a horse, being pulled by a soldier. Okot gives the signal to leave and heads for the palace gate, followed by the others.

In the forest near the Blue Fortress, on a road, the whole convoy is walking, with the Old Woman in front, followed by Okot and Ukamaka, nobles and soldiers.

A clearing in the middle of the forest. The Old Woman emerges from the forest, followed by Okot and Ukamaka and the rest of the nobles and soldiers. The Old Woman points to a white rectangular stone, identical to the one in the Tomb of the Great Masters in the Cemetery of the House of Numbers. Two soldiers approach the stone. The Old Woman is helped off her horse and approaches the stone.

OLD WOMAN (CONTINUED) (CONT'D)

More soldiers to come.

Five other soldiers approach the stone, which is shaped like a coffin. The old woman starts pushing on the lid of the stone. The soldiers start pushing as well. The lid moves slowly until it falls sideways without breaking. Inside is a young blonde. She is wearing a white dress with long, flowing sleeves, revealing her neck, shoulders and a bit of chest. The girl's skin is white and velvety. The Old Woman takes the hand of the young girl, who opens her eyes and half rises. The girl looks around. Two soldiers help her out of the white stone coffin. The girl is barefoot, looks very much like Ema, is happy and smiles at everyone. The soldiers put her on the horse the Old Woman had come on, the girl smiles and thanks them, laughing in the sunlight. Her bare soles are playful, with tiny toes and soft ankles. The Old Woman approaches the girl and ties a bracelet of flowers around her ankles. The girl looks at her ankles, likes them and laughs beautifully.

Leaving the Old Woman by the stone coffin, the convoy sets off and leaves the clearing.

Okot and Ukamaka enter the Throne Room, holding hands with the young girl. The rest of the nobles enter behind them. The King raises his hand and gives the signal for the musicians to begin playing.

When she hears the first notes, the young girl stands still for a moment, two, then she smiles, her body goes limp, she throws her head back and begins to dance.

She laughs and dances. She laughs and dances, alone, among courtiers and servants, next to Okot and Ukamaka and Halima. Seeing her, the instrumentalists sing louder and the tempo of the song increases. The girl laughs, dances, the white dress whirls with her. The girl is everywhere in the Throne Room. The nobles look younger and start dancing too. The instrumentalists, a little younger, play with more fire. Okot and Ukamaka dance, visibly rejuvenated. The servants move sprightly among the dancing nobles, having rejuvenated themselves.

Everyone in the Throne Room, nobles, soldiers, Okot and Ukamaka, the servants, the instrumentalists are young, laughing and dancing, in while Young Girl dances and laughs with them.

Suddenly, a nobleman makes a wrong move and you can hear his bones breaking. The nobleman falls to the ground, screaming in pain.

The music stops. Everyone stops. The Young Girl also stops.

The lady next to the nobleman, who continues to scream in pain, raises her hand accusingly at the Young Girl.

LADY 1

It's her fault. If she hadn't
rejuvenated us, my husband wouldn't
have died.

On the floor, the nobleman is no longer screaming. He is dead.

The Throne Room is empty. The Young Girl runs into the arms of another lady, with long white hair, fine, elegant and noble features, wearing an expensive dress sewn with gold thread. The lady embraces the girl protectively. Suddenly the lady turned her head and looked at us.

LADY2

Find the girl with the mark under
her left breast. Raise her like our
daughter.

INT. GRAND DUKE'S BEDROOM. DAY.

The Grand Duke suddenly wakes up in his bed.

It is daytime, and the bedroom is well lit by the rays of the sun outside.

The Grand Duke is lying on his bed, looking around. There is a very large painting on the wall, with the Grand Duke on the right and the lady from the dream on the left, dressed exactly as in the dream.

The Grand Duke is pulling a string beside him. The sound of the bell is heard. After a moment, the bedroom door opens and the Stone enters.

EXT. TERRACE IN FRONT OF THE GRAND DUKE'S CASTLE. DAY.

The Grand Duke is sitting at an iron table eating breakfast. He is well dressed and has a blanket on his feet. Stone approaches the Grand Duke.

GRAND DUKE

Sit down, please.

(Stone sits on a chair)

I dreamt of Maria last night.

STONE

The Grand Duchess?

GRAND DUKE

Yes, my wife, the Grand Duchess.
It's the first time I've dreamt of her since she died. You've been dreaming about her.

STONE

Yes, that's right, Grand Duke. I often dream about the Grand Duchess.

GRAND DUKE

She gave us a task.

(Stone pays more attention to what the Grand Duke is saying)

You must find the girl with the mark under her left breast.

STONE

Where?

GRAND DUKE

I don't know.

STONE

What did the Grand Duchess say?

GRAND DUKE

That we must find the girl with the
mark under her left breast and
raise her as our own.

STONE

Our daughter?

GRAND DUKE

Mine... our daughter... I don't
know and I don't know where to find
her or how to do it. I don't know
anything.

And the Grand Duke rises from the table, leaves the blanket
on the chair and looks at the Stone.

GRAND DUKE (CONTINUED) (CONT'D)

I have much work to do. Do what you
can.

And the Grand Duke leaves, enters his castle through the door
and leaves the front door open. Stone remains alone at the
table, takes the bell and rings it. A servant comes out of
the house and starts to clear the plates from the table.
Meanwhile, Stone looks towards the iron gate of the castle
courtyard and thinks far away.

INT. BLUE STORK INN. NIGHT.

The main room is full of men and women. People are eating and
drinking. The innkeeper is busy between the tables, in the
kitchen, filling jugs with the wine ordered. The room is
thick with smoke from all the smoking.

Ema and other girls and boys serve at speed. Some of the men,
drunk as they are, pick on the girls, and if one of them is
too naughty, she slaps him. There's a lot of noise.

Ema brings food, mugs of beer and jugs of wine to the tables,
from which she takes more empty mugs and jugs. She takes them
to the Innkeeper, who fills them.

The girl takes the jugs and leaves, passing a short, fat man
who is very drunk. The man looks at the girl for a long time,
then approaches the Innkeeper. They talk into each other's
ears. The man takes a small bag from his pocket, takes out
some coins, and gives them to the Innkeeper.

A fight breaks out between two drunks. The innkeeper watches,
rushes over, punches them both and sits them down, much to
the amusement of the other diners.

The fat, scaly man trudges up the wooden stairs to the upper floor.

In the dining room, the innkeeper catches up with Ema and says something to her ear, pointing at the fat man climbing the stairs. The girl also looks in that direction.

INT. A ROOM OF THE "BLUE STORK" INN. NIGHT.

In the room, lying half-naked on the bed, without trousers or boots, but wearing a white shirt, is the fat, short man who spoke to the Innkeeper. The room is lit only by two candles.

The door to the room opens and Ema enters, carrying a jug of wine. The girl closes the door behind her.

When he sees her, the fat man gasps something unintelligible and struggles out of bed. Ema looks at him in disgust.

EMA

What do you want, you big lug?

The man, trembling badly, approaches Ema and grabs her. The girl gives him the wine. The man takes it, drinks half of it, then looks haughtily at Ema and rushes to her. He kisses her on the neck and his hand reaches under her blouse to her breasts. Ema endures this violence in disgust, but the man's strangling hurts her, she screams and pushes him away. The man becomes unbalanced, takes a few unsteady steps backwards and clings to the bed. He twitches, again something unintelligible, and gets off the bed. Ema bends down and picks up the wine jug. The man comes towards her, Ema picks up the jug and smashes it hard on his head. The carafe shatters into dozens of pieces, the man stops, a moment, two, he wonders, takes another step and falls face down like a log. And he stays like that on the floor, wearing a white shirt and bare bottom and legs.

EMA (CONT'D)

Man is an animal when he is drunk.

Ema starts picking up the broken pieces.

INT. ROYAL BLUE PALACE DINING ROOM. DAY.

Sitting at a long table at either end are Okot and Ukamaka. On the table are bowls of food and fruit, cups of wine and water, and glass cups. They are eating and talking.

OKOT

What are you doing today?

UKAMAKA

I want to go for a walk in the forest. Maybe hunt something.

OKOT

Hunt what?

UKAMAKA

Just kidding, I don't want to hunt, I just want to walk, I like the cold and the sky is clear and the sun is shining.

OKOT

Don't go too far and take your watch with you.

UKAMAKA

I will.

OKOT

I'm not joking, wolves run in packs and wild boars are very dangerous.

UKAMAKA

But you, my king, what are you going to do today?

OKOT

Don't remind me.

UKAMAKA

What is it?

OKOT

I have the Crown Council that I'm very tired of.

UKAMAKA

Why is that?

OKOT

I hate these Crown Councils. Here come the bastards who got rich on Daddy's charity, and they come at me with all sorts of demands. Who knows what they want now.

UKAMAKA

If you don't like them, poison them.

OKOT

I thought you wanted to go for a walk.

UKAMAKA

(laughing)

I am going, my king, I am going.

Ukamaka finishes the wine in his glass, gets up from the table, goes and kisses Okot, then leaves the room.

EXT. FOREST NEAR THE BLUE FORTRESS. DAY.

On a path in the forest, 6 riders are running. They are Ukamaka and her soldiers. The group is galloping, with Ash in the lead, followed by Ukamaka and the rest of the soldiers.

A clearing with a wooden barrel house in the middle. The house has only a ground floor and an attic, the roof is covered with hay and branches, and smoke comes out of the chimney. There is a small window in each of the two walls.

Ukamaka and the soldiers come out of the forest and stop near the house. Ukamaka dismounts and looks at the house. Cinyra comes out of the house. He approaches Ukamaka and bows to her.

CINYRA

Your servant, my Mistress.

UKAMAKA

A fine house you have built, Cinyra.

CINYRA

Thanks to Your Majesty's kindness and with the help of Your Highness's mighty soldiers.

UKAMAKA

Forget modesty, it's not the cloak that suits you.

CINYRA

Come into the house, my Mistress. It's warm and cosy and I've prepared something delicious to eat and drink.

UKAMAKA

I hope you're not trying to poison me.

CINYRA

Not at all, my Mistress. We'll eat first.

Ukamaka enters the house, followed by Ash, Cinyra and her soldiers. Two soldiers remain outside with the horses.

INT. HOUSE OF NUMEROLOGISTS. DAY.

Inside, everything is chic. 3 fur-covered beds. In the middle, a round table with food and cups of drink. A fire is burning in the stove, which is leaning against the wall, and there are cut logs next to it. Next to the table are several wooden chairs, one with a high back. This chair is Cinyra's invitation to Ukamaka.

CINYRA

Your Majesty, this is your chair.
No one will ever sit in it.

Ukamaka walks over to the chair, with Adonis and Smyrna leaning in front of her. Ukamaka sits in the chair.

UKAMAKA

Come on, sit down. Cinyra, Adonis here, next to me. And you, the rest of you, on the other chairs.

Cinyra sits to Ukamaka's right and Adonis to her left. Then they all sit at the table, Smyrna, Ash and the other soldiers.

CINYRA

(presents the food on the table)

We have two rabbits, two pheasants, a couple of quails and a drink specially made by Smyrna.

SMYRNA

It's a tea made from various herbs, warm, pleasant, and gives you energy.

And Smyrna took the cup and poured into her own cup, Adonis' and Cinyra's.

CINYRA

To Her Majesty Queen Ukamaka.

CINYRA, ADONIS, SMYRNA

(chanting)

Hail!

And the three of them drink all the liquid in their glasses. Then Cinyra asks.

CINYRA

Shall we put you in the glass,
mistress?

UKAMAKA

No, thank you. But for you, my
soldiers, I think you will find it
appetising. Eat and drink.

The soldiers bow their heads in glee and feast on the food and drink on the table. Adonis, Smyrna and Cinyra also begin to eat and drink. After a while, Ukamaka asks Cinyra.

UKAMAKA (CONTINUED) (CONT'D)

I understand that under the floor
is the pit.

CINYRA

(who stops eating)

Yes, Mistress. Would you like to
see?

UKAMAKA

Yes.

And Cinyra stands up from the table. Adonis and Smyrna do the same. The soldiers get up and all grab the round wooden table and move it next to the door, blocking the entrance. A trapdoor is visible on the floor, Cinyra lifts it up to reveal a hole with a wooden ladder in it. Adonis brings two lit torches, one for Cinyra and one for Ash. Ukamaka sits on the high backed chair, watching all the action.

CINYRA

(to the Queen)

Shall we go down?

UKAMAKA

Yes.

And she gets up from her chair. Ash comes down first, then Cinyra, followed by Ukamaka.

INT. EARTH PIT. DAY.

Some of the walls of the pit are lined with wooden poles. In the light of the torches, some logs can still be seen on the floor. On one wall of the pit is the door to the White World.

CINYRA

We still need to work on reinforcing the earth walls. We'll put so that the ground doesn't cave in. And we'll put wood on the floor.

UKAMAKA

Yes, very good.
(The Queen sees the door to the White World)
I see you've also cleaned the wooden door.

CINYRA

Yes, I cleaned the door too. Do you want to go to the White World?

UKAMAKA

No, not today.
(and the Queen looks around)

CINYRA

Mistress, forgive my bluntness, but do we have another plan?

UKAMAKA

(turns to Cinyra)
We? You mean you and I have a plan?

CINYRA

(freaking out)
No, no, a thousand pardons, Mistress, no, no. I have a request.

UKAMAKA

What is it?

CINYRA

About the Grand Master.

UKAMAKA

I haven't forgotten, Cinyra, obviously I know what this is about. In fact...
(and Ukamaka pauses for a moment or two)
I also want this order to disappear, especially since it's completely useless. I, in particular, find it utterly useless. But I don't have a plan yet.

CINYRA
 Mistress...
 (and stops)

UKAMAKA
 (looks at Cinyra
 authoritatively for a
 second, two, three, then
 smiles slightly)
 I believe you already have a plan.

CINYRA
 With humility I tell you, mistress,
 that's saying a lot, plan. I have
 an idea, or rather, I know someone.

UKAMAKA
 Who is it?

CINYRA
 Noble M.

UKAMAKA
 (thinks for a moment)
 I've never heard of him.

CINYRA
 He's the richest shipowner in the
 Blue Fortress and a very skilful
 merchant.

UKAMAKA
 And?

CINYRA
 He has many connections,
 everywhere. And in the Order of
 Numbers. He knew how to make
 himself useful to some of the
 Masters there. Especially those who
 don't love the Grand Master.

Ukamaka says nothing. She looks, again, at the walls of the
 pit.

UKAMAKA
 I like what you've done so far.
 Keep it up and maybe you'll get
 what you want.

CINYRA
 Mistress.
 (and bows to the Queen)

EXT. CLEARING WHERE THE HOUSE OF NUMEROLOGISTS IS. DAY.

The Queen and her soldiers mount their horses. Cinyra, Adonis and Smyrna stand beside them. From his horse, Ukamaka speaks to Cinyra.

UKAMAKA

Finish the job you started. I'll
come back to see what you've done.

Cinyra, Adonis and Smyrna bow to the Queen as she leaves, followed by her soldiers. The party enters the forest.

INT. KING'S CABINET. DAY.

At the large table, King Okot sits in a high-backed chair. He has several papers in front of him, which he is studying. Standing next to him is the Master with the Gloves, explaining what is written on the papers.

MASTER WITH GLOVES

Here is the amount of wheat you
must approve to be taken from the
Royal Reserve and sent to the Green
Fortress as family aid.

OKOT

How many crates?

MASTER WITH GLOVES

200 thousand crates.

OKOT

(gets angry)

Is this family allowance?

MASTER WITH GLOVES

Neither do I, but the Queen
recently asked if you could send
some of the wheat from the last
harvest to the Green Fortress.

OKOT

I seem to have sent it before.

MASTER WITH GLOVES

Corn and rye, all 200 thousand
crates of each.

OKOT

Cut 200 and hand over 50 thousand
crates.

The Master with Gloves takes the paper from the King's face, walks over to the wooden desk where he keeps his writing utensils, and begins to write.

The door to the King's Cabinet opens and Lord Down enters.

DOWN

(bows to the King)

Your Majesty, everyone is waiting for you.

OKOT

(bored and nervous)

What a pleasure to go to the guillotine.

He rose from his chair, walked past the Master with Gloves to the open office door.

MASTER WITH GLOVES

Your Majesty, to sign the decrees.

OKOT

(without looking at the Master with Gloves)

Tomorrow.

And Okot leaves the Royal Cabinet, followed by Lord Down.

INT. ROYAL BLUE COUNCIL CHAMBER. DAY.

The room is spacious, with paintings on the walls of King Okot, Queen Ukamaka and other kings and queens who belonged to the Royal Blue House, as evidenced by the Royal Blue House crest painted on their clothes. The crest is also painted on the ceiling and light from outside comes through the large windows. The windows have stained glass depicting battle scenes.

In the hall there is also a beautifully carved long wooden table with beautifully carved wooden chairs on which the members of the Royal Blue Council sit, namely Queen Mother Halima, Counts Gamma and Delta, Marquises Epsilon and Ypsilon and General Psi. The Council consists of 8 members, including King Okot and Queen Ukamaka.

Counts Gamma and Delta are young, between 30 and 35. Marquises Epsilon and Ypsilon are very old, over 80, and General Psi is 53.

The General is dark-haired, not very tall, with brown eyes and a strong build, with a broad back and full of muscles. He wears a military uniform.

The two Counts are very well-groomed and flirtatious, wear earrings and many rings on their hands, have very expensive and fancy clothes, speak affectedly and have chirpy voices. From time to time, they take out their powder boxes and have their lips painted, their eyebrows plucked and their fingernails painted black. The two marquises are very sober, white-faced, dressed in simple black clothes, with a long blue-gold chain on their chests, bearing the coat of arms of their families: an E in the claws of a double-headed eagle and a Y with a lion on top. Both have a simple stick carved from a piece of lacquered wood next to the chairs on which they sit.

Queen Ukamaka is missing from this meeting, it's just the Queen Mother, Halima.

The members of the Royal Blue Council are waiting for the King. The two Counts are giggling amongst themselves, the Marquises are silent and waiting, and the General is standing next to the chair where Halima is sitting, talking to the Queen Mother.

The door opens and Lord Down enters.

DOWN

His Majesty, King Okot.

Everyone stands up and General Psi runs to take his place. The King enters the room. Everyone greets him in unison.

ALL

Your Majesty, welcome.

OKOT

Hello to you too.
(addressing Halima
specifically)
Queen Mother.

HALIMA

King.

Lord Down comes out and closes the door behind him. Okot sits down on a chair and invites the others to sit down.

OKOT

It's been a long time since we had
a Blue Royal Council. Even now I
don't understand the urgency, but
I'm listening.
(and looks at Halima)
Queen Mother.

HALIMA

Thank you, King. In my opinion and in the opinion of the honourable members of this council, the Blue Fortress and its surroundings are facing a very serious problem. A problem that affects us and our relations with other fortresses.

(Halima pauses, looks at Okot and continues in a sly tone)

Well, that's not the case with the Green Fortress, where I understand that the relationship is... familial.

(Okot is clearly annoyed by his mother's remark, he wants to say something, but Halima continues to speak)

But let me tell you what it's all about: the blue gold coin has lost its historic weight.

OKOT

(quickly interrupts Halima)

I know.

HALIMA

Do you know?

OKOT

Yes, I authorised it.

HALIMA

Why did you do it?

OKOT

It doesn't matter why. I authorised the halving of the historic weight of the blue gold coin.

The two Counts whisper to each other in annoyance. Halima looks at them and sets them straight.

HALIMA

Silence.

(the two Counts are as silent as two naughty children)

I ask the King to give the floor to Marquis Ypsilon.

OKOT

Yes, of course, please, Marquis.

The Marquis, supported by his stick, slowly rose to his feet, bowed to the King, who greeted him, and said:

YPSILON

Your Majesty, Marquis Epsilon and I have been studying the problem that has arisen in the Blue Fortress.

(Ypsilon pauses, speaks clearly, doesn't stutter and his voice doesn't sound like an 80-year-old)

Our research has led us to the conclusion that the blue gold coin has lost two thirds of its historic weight, and not half of it as Your Majesty says.

OKOT

One moment, Marquis. The blue gold coin has been halved. That is, it has lost half of its historical weight.

Marquis Ypsilon is silent and bows to the King. Then Marquis Epsilon speaks.

EPSILON

Allow me to speak, Your Majesty.

OKOT

Yes, please, Marquis.

Epsilon rose to his feet, leaned towards the king, who answered his greeting, still speaking in a clear, beautiful voice, unusually robust for his age.

EPSILON

We have done our research, Your Majesty, and have come to the same conclusion for months. Specifically, since the Noble M. has been Treasurer of the Royal Treasury, the blue gold coin has lost 2/3 of its historical weight. Furthermore, a third of it ends up in the Royal Treasury as unprocessed blue gold, a third is found on the market as the new blue gold coin and a third disappears to an unknown destination.

The thin voices of the Counts suddenly chuckled.

COUNTS

Yes, Your Majesty, that's right.

Okot has a look at them.

OKOT

I'm listening.

The two of them stand up, strut and bow to the King, but Okot makes no gesture and continues to stare at them. Finally, Gamma begins to speak.

GAMMA

So did I, with...

DELTA

We have seen...

GAMMA

So, Your Majesty...

DELTA

We both weighed in, I actually, he didn't...

GAMMA

I did too.

DELTA

Good, you too. A third is not...

GAMMA

You mean only a third is...

OKOT

(shouting, angered by the
two's bragging)

I don't understand anything!

Suddenly the Counts stops. Gamma speaks clearly and quickly.

GAMMA

GAMMA

They are stolen, Your Majesty, by Noble M. He takes one third, puts the other third in the Royal Treasury and makes a new blue gold coin from the remaining third, which he puts on the market.

Everyone is silent. The counts huddle together in fear of the King's nervous reaction.

Okot looks at the two Marquises standing there. Both say nothing, just nod their heads in agreement with Count Gamma.

Okot looks at General Psi. He stands, bows to the King and says:

PSI

We ask you, Your Majesty, to remove the Noble M. from his position as head of the Royal Treasury and to allow me to arrest and detain him in order to bring him to justice. I will bring all the evidence we've all gathered over the last few months against the Noble M.

Okot is stunned. He says nothing, one second, two, three; then he looks at the Queen Mother. Halima stands up.

HALIMA

King, the members of the Royal Blue Council ask you to dismiss Noble M. and charge him with theft. We have the necessary evidence to present to the court.

Okot is stunned. He looks at the two Counts who nod their heads in agreement with Halima's words. The king looks at General Psi, who kicks up his heels and takes the right position. Okot also looks at the two Marquises.

EPSILON

We all support the request of the Queen Mother, Your Majesty.

Still stunned, Okot looks at Halima, who gestures to the bell on the table. Okot looks at the bell, picks it up and rings it. After a moment, the door to the room opens and Lord Down enters, closing the door behind him. The Lord approaches the King.

OKOT

Lord Down asks Grand Master Ayaju to issue a royal decree removing Noble M from his position as head of the Royal Treasury. General Psi will arrest him. Noble M. will be tried for stealing the King's wealth.

Down is stunned, but says nothing. Okot slowly turns and looks at the Lord. The king's face takes on a menacing expression.

OKOT (CONT'D)
And you and I, we'll talk soon.

Okot looks menacingly at Down, who has dropped his gaze.

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INT. BLUE TOWER PRISON. NIGHT.

In a prison cell there is a wooden bed against the wall, a bucket in one corner, a small window with bars high up and heavy chains fixed to the wall. Thick bars form the wall to the corridor. At the end of the corridor, sitting at a wooden table, is a sleeping soldier.

Noble M. is not chained, he is glued to the wall, facing the window. Snowflakes coming through the window fall on his face.

There are noises in the prison corridor. Noble M. pays attention to what he hears. The sounds approach his cell. They are the footsteps of a man wearing boots and the voices of men. The voice of the soldier is heard.

SOLDIER1
No one comes in and no one goes out. I don't let anyone talk to him. But you knew how to solve the problem.

The soldier appears at the barred door and opens it. Ash and a figure in a black cloak enter the cell. The soldier leaves the door open and retreats, not before saying:

SOLDIER1 (CONTINUED) (CONT'D)
Give me a shout if you need me.

And the soldier disappears. Ash looks at Noble M. who looks at the two of them in amazement. After a moment or two of studying each other, Ash says to Noble M.:

ASH
Someone wants to talk to you,
Noble M.
(M. says nothing)
You better stay where you are and
don't move.
(A soft clink is heard as
Ash pulls the sword a few
centimetres from its
scabbard)
You'd better not tell anyone about
this, or I'll have no choice.

Noble M. does not reply immediately. He glances briefly at the cloaked silhouette behind Ash. After a moment, he drops to his knees and looks down.

M.

I am Your Majesty's servant.

A moment, two, three, nobody makes a move. Then Ukamaka takes two steps forward and removes the hood from his head. The Queen's face is very faintly illuminated by the light from a torch attached to the wall in front of the cell.

UKAMAKA

Did you recognize me or Ash?

M.

A faithful slave recognises his Mistress immediately so that he can serve her as she wishes.

UKAMAKA

You talk nice, but from prison I don't know how you can serve... your master.

(and Ukamaka emphasises
the last word)

M.

(who understands Ukamaka's point, falls on his face)
I was wrong, Mistress, Queen strong and right. I am a poor man, tormented by the evils of simple pleasures. I come from a family of poor but honest people.

UKAMAKA

(ironic)
Especially honest.

M.

The lash of Your Majesty's speech tears at my soul. It's true, I was wrong. But my parents were honest and hardworking people, that's why they were poor and slaves all their lives. I loved them very, very, very much, but I couldn't be poor like them.

UKAMAKA

And then you stole your Master.

M.

I know, I know I was wrong,
Mistress.

(And M. pulls her hair
from her head in penance.
But suddenly he stops,
gets up on all fours like
a dog)

But, my Mistress, I will never
betray you.

UKAMAKA

Really, why?

M.

My Lady, ask your captain to draw
his sword and prepare to cut off my
head if you think I am lying to
you.

(And M. gets on her knees
and takes off her thick
fur coat. Ash starts to
draw her sword from its
scabbard, but Ukamaka
signals him to stop)

It's simple, Mistress. Queen
Ukamaka is a born leader, coupled
with superior intelligence.

(and M. looks up from the
floor and stares at
Ukamaka. The two look at
each other for a second
or two, three)

UKAMAKA

(bends down and approaches
the Nobleman's M. Ash
removes his sword and
prepares to strike)

Listen to me, Noble M. I will get
you out of here, but if I have the
slightest inkling that you are
betraying me and not serving me
well, I will not throw you in any
dungeon.

(The blade of Ash's sword
slowly approaches their
faces; it slowly, slowly
descends, stopping with
its edge at M's neck)

And lest you forget.

(MORE)

UKAMAKA (CONT'D)

(Ash presses the blade of the sword gently against Noble M's neck, making a small cut from which a thin trickle of blood begins to flow. Noble M startles, stares into Ukamaka's eyes, but doesn't move. They look at each other for a second, two, three, then the Queen straightens up and Ash raises his sword)

I'll call you when I've got you out of here.

Ukamaka pulls his hood over his head, turns and walks out of the cell. Ash sheathes his sword and follows the Queen.

INT. ROYAL BEDROOM. NIGHT.

The bedroom is well lit by the many candles. Okot chases Ukamaka around the room. She laughs and doesn't get caught. Eventually the king catches her and rips off her nightgown, Ukamaka trips Okot, who falls and the Queen breaks free from his arms.

OKOT

(on the ground, angry)

Ukamaka, this is stupid what you're doing.

UKAMAKA

(breathing heavily and sitting in standing on the bed)

I mean, what am I doing?

OKOT

(stands up nervously)

What's got into you?

UKAMAKA

(gets off the bed and gets covers herself with the nightgown)

What am I doing?

OKOT

Stop it.

UKAMAKA

But what are you doing?

OKOT
What am I doing?

UKAMAKA
(approaches Okot and
pinches him spitefully)
Yes, what are you doing? Are you a
king or what? A clown?

OKOT
(disturbed by the
pinching, but mostly by
Ukamaka's words)
Stop this nonsense.

UKAMAKA
You are a clown, that's what you
are. You are not a King, the
sovereign is strong, he rules, he
imposes his law. He makes the
rules.

(Ukamaka strikes Okot)
He will not be trampled on by a few
fools, a few cripples, a few losers
and one with pumped-up muscles. The
King is a lion, the King rules.

(Ukamaka knees Okot
between the legs)

The king moans in pain.

OKOT
(shouting at Ukamaka)
You have driven this woman mad.
You've been acting like a madman
for three days and you won't even
let me touch you.

UKAMAKA
(screaming even louder)
I want you to be a man!!! To be
King and to command!

The two are silent for a moment, two. The King is sitting on
the bed.

OKOT
I don't know what's got into you.

UKAMAKA
What did you do to Noble M?

OKOT

Do what? He stole from the Royal Treasury.

UKAMAKA

Correct. And what did you do with him?

OKOT

I locked him in the Blue Tower.

UKAMAKA

No.

OKOT

Well, yes.

UKAMAKA

Nay.

OKOT

(screaming)

What do you want?

UKAMAKA

I want to say that you did what two beardless, two retarded and one with swollen muscles told you to do. You did not do what you decided as a king with balls.

OKOT

It should be closed.

UKAMAKA

Why should it be closed?

OKOT

Because he was stealing.

UKAMAKA

That's right. You have confiscated all his gold and half or all his wealth. But you let him go free. I mean, you made the decision you wanted to make. You didn't say yes to what your servants wanted. When you are king, tell your stinking servants to know their place.

OKOT

The bastard must be judged.

UKAMAKA

Very good, that is correct. But let him go.

OKOT

Now he must be judged.

UKAMAKA

Sleep alone tonight too.

OKOT

Ukmaka, no!

UKAMAKA

Oh yes. And when are you going to release Noble M.

(Ukamaka lets you see part
of her bulging and sexy
ass)

Maybe I'll let you penetrate that dry and velvety place you've only licked so far.

OKOT

(heated)

Ukamaka!!!

UKAMAKA

Stay there. Only Kings can have it all.

Ukamaka takes off her nightgown to show her bare bottom and walks out of the bedroom, slamming the door shut behind her.

INT. KING'S CABINET. DAY.

Lord Down stands and receives a pile of papers thrown by Okot.

OKOT

(yells at Down)

You fool, you idiot, I believed you and look, this asshole stole me. I don't know what you're doing or how you're doing it, but at the trial, get Noble M out of here unharmed. Alive and beautiful like a princess to get this one out of jail. Did you hear that?

And with a stack of papers that he has taken from the table, Okot begins to beat Lord Down.

INT. BLUE TOWER PRISON. NIGHT.

Noble M. is lying on the bed. There are noises in the hall again. After a moment or two, Lord Down appears at the grille. Noble M. gets up from the bed and approaches Down.

DOWN

We must prepare your defence. The trial is in 3 days.

M.

I know someone.

DOWN

Is he a Master of the Order of Numbers?

M.

Yes, he is.

DOWN

Who is he?

M.

Master Ijere.

DOWN

I'll talk to him.

M.

Quickly.

Lord Down is about to leave, but when he hears M, he stops and looks at him. Lord Down starts to say something to M, but changes his mind and leaves.

INT. LORD DOWN'S CABINET IN THE ROYAL PALACE. DAY.

Lord Down is at his desk, looking at some papers. The door opens and Secretary Brown, his assistant, enters.

BROWN

Master Ijere is waiting to be met.

DOWN

Come in.

Secretary Brown comes out and leaves the door open. After a moment or two, Master Ijere enters and Brown closes the door behind him.

IJERE

(bows to Lord Down)

I am your servant, Lord Down.

DOWN

It is a pleasure to meet you,
Master Ijere. I have a request to
make of you on behalf of a mutual
friend.

IJERE

I am listening.

DOWN

Noble M. has appointed you as his
lawyer for the trial to be held in
two days' time.

IJERE

I am deeply honoured, Lord Down.

DOWN

You must mount a strong defence to
prove his obvious innocence.

IJERE

I'll do my best.

DOWN

I want everyone to see that Noble
M. is innocent.

IJERE

I understand.

Ijere bows, turns and leaves. He opens the door, walks out of
the room and closes it behind him.

Lord Down remains alone in his cabinet, watching the closed
door.

INT. IJERE' CELL. NIGHT.

Master Ijere's cell in the House of Numbers is simple. Ijere
is sitting on a wooden chair at a simple wooden table,
writing on a piece of paper. There are many strings of
Numbers. Next to him is a simple wooden bed leaning against
the wall.

Someone is knocking.

IJERE
 (without stopping to
 write)
 Enter.

The cell door opens and Chimananda, Ijere's Apprentice, enters. He closes the door behind him.

IJERE (CONTINUES) (CONT'D)
 (continues writing)
 Stay on the bed until I finish.

Chimananda sits on the bed and waits. A moment passes, two, three, Ijere finishes writing, looks at the lines he has written, folds the paper and puts it in the pocket of his long robe. He gets up from his chair, walks to a corner of the room, pulls a scanner from the floor, takes out a bag of money, puts the scanner back and throws the bag to Chimananda, then stands up.

IJERE (CONT'D)
 Listen to me, Chimananda. Take this bag of blue gold coins and go to the Beggars' Quarter. Ask to speak to the Reptile King. Tell him I sent you.

CHIMANANDA
 What am I doing there?

IJERE
 You give the bag of money to the Reptile King and ask him to buy a very old, very sick, mentally retarded beggar. Then you wash him and put these clothes on him.
 (Ijere picks up Chimananda from the bed, then the Master picks up the mattress and takes out a sack which he gives to the Apprentice)
 Then you bring him back here to the cell.

Chimananda takes the sack, Ijere puts the mattress back and the Apprentice leaves the cell, closing the door behind him.

EXT. BEGGARS QUARTER. NIGHT.

A filthy street full of beggars, louts and other hideous human creatures. Two lamps cast a pale light. Prostitutes also make their rounds on this street, waiting for customers.

Chimananda appears in the street. He walks quickly down the street, paying no attention to anyone. A beggar tries to grab his coat, but the Apprentice quickly passes. A prostitute tries to approach him, but Chimananda ignores her.

The Apprentice turns left into a dark corridor, crosses it and ends up in what looks like the courtyard of a building. Chimananda knocks loudly on a wooden door.

Nothing happens. The Apprentice taps again. Still nothing happens. The Apprentice knocks a third time and leaves the doorway, walking to a window that opens slightly. Bright light shines through the crack, revealing a blue/green eye, a white forehead and some red hair.

CHIMANANDA

(to the other side)

I am Master Ijere's Apprentice. I wish to buy something from the Reptile King.

And Chimananda shows the bag of blue gold. The window closes. Then Chimananda takes two steps to the side and waits. A moment passes, two, three, four, five. You can hear the sound of a door opening in the cellar and light coming through. A slender, red-haired young woman appears, wearing a bra, panties, stockings and shoes with very thick soles, all red. Chimananda walks quickly down the stairs, past the girl and through the door. The girl follows and closes the door behind her.

INT. BEDROOM OF THE REPTILE KING. NIGHT.

It is a very large room with a huge bed with white sheets and a canopy. There is also a large white bathtub filled with water and a white wooden throne on a podium with 3 steps. The walls and ceiling are covered with green wallpaper. On the throne sits the Reptile King. He is a man between 35 and 40 years old, with tattoos all over his body that look like reptile skin. He has tattoos on his face and on his shaved skull. He wears only white underwear. His eyes are slanting and green. Next to him are 6 young women in green, yellow, black, blue, white and purple bras, panties, stockings and shoes with very thick soles. Their hair is dyed in the colour of the clothes they are wearing.

The bedroom door opens and the red girl with Chimananda enters. The Apprentice approaches the Reptile King.

CHIMANANDA

Good evening, Reptile King.

REPTILE

(does not answer immediately. He looks at Chimananda for a second or two and blinks his eyes like a reptile, then says)

Good evening, Apprentice.

(and the Reptile King opens his mouth and sticks out his tongue which is split at the tip)

What do you want from me?

(and the Reptile moves his body like a snake on the big throne)

CHIMANANDA

Master Ijere sent me to buy an old, dirty, sick, insane beggar from you. I have money.

And Chimananda shows the purse. The Reptile King gestures for him to throw the bag, and the Apprentice throws it to him. The Reptile King catches it in mid-flight, opens it and begins to count the blue gold coins, while he smears himself on his throne like a snake and sticks out his forked tongue at the top. The Reptile King seems satisfied with the amount of money and looks at the Apprentice.

REPTILE

But why does your Master need such a retard?

CHIMANANDA

As you know, Reptile King, Master Ijere has a soul of gold, he works hard, he raises money to help those with mental problems.

REPTILE

Yes? I didn't know he had that habit.

CHIMANANDA

He does, Reptile King.

REPTILE

(waving and sticking out his forked tongue)

Well, if he has that habit, let's help him in any way we can.

And the Reptile King waves to the Red Girl. She approaches the Apprentice, takes him by the hand and pulls him along with her. They both leave the room.

INT. THE STABLE OF THE HOUSE OF NUMBERS. NIGHT.

Chimananda enters the stable with a withered, shriveled old man, barefoot and in torn and dirty clothes.

The old man has long, white, dirty hair. His beard is long, white and dirty. Chimananda is holding the sack that Master Ijere gave him. The Apprentice puts down the bag, takes out a razor and scissors and starts to shave the old man. The old man sits quietly on his knees and says nothing.

Brook hears movement in his corner, wakes from his sleep and gets up to see what it is. Brook finds a hidden spot and follows them. Chimananda has finished shaving his beard and begins to cut the old man's hair. The old man says nothing and kneels down in front of the Apprentice. Tufts of hair fall around them.

In its place, a horse teases and kicks the ground with its hoof. Another responds by shaking its head. From his hiding place, Brook follows them.

Chimananda has shaved the old man's head. He lifts him to his feet and begins to undress him. The old man is ribbed, all skin and bone, his ribs and spine sticking out. The old man does not resist. Chimananda spills the contents of the bag, spilling clothes and a pair of boots. The Apprentice takes a bucket, fills it with water from the horse trough and throws it on the old man. He then fills the bucket with water again and throws it at the old man. Chimananda takes a handful of hay from underneath him and starts rubbing the old man's skin to remove the dirt. The old man begins to shiver and beg, slurring his words because he has no teeth in his mouth.

THE OLD MAN

Mercy, mercy. I was wrong. Mercy,
mercy.

Chimananda stops and looks at the old man, who repeats that he wants to be forgiven.

Hiding in his seat, Brook carefully watches what they do.

INT. IJERE'S CELL. NIGHT.

Master Ijere sits at his cell table, waiting.

A plate of food, a cup of wine and a glass are on the table. Next to them is a loaf of bread. The old man and Chimananda enter the cell.

IJERE
(to the old man)
Here, sit down at the table.

The old man is well dressed, wearing leather trousers, a white shirt and a tunic, also made of leather. The clothes are large and baggy. He has boots on his feet. The old man sits down on a chair and begins to eat. Ijere sits on the bed while his apprentice stands. The old man eats hungrily. Chimananda pours wine into the glass and the old man drinks greedily, then starts eating again.

Ijere gets up from the bed, picks up the sheet he was writing on, takes a small inkwell and puts it on the table next to the old man. He stops chewing when he sees Ijere.

IJERE (CONT'D)
(to the old man)
Eat, don't stop, eat.

The old man begins to eat again. Ijere fills the glass with wine and the old man drinks it quickly, then continues to eat. Ijere takes a piece of cloth from his pocket, pours two or three drops of ink on it and takes the old man's right hand with his left. The old man suddenly stops eating and looks at what Ijere is doing. The Master smears the old man's thumb navel with the ink on the canvas, then puts the old man's handprint on the bottom right-hand corner of the sheet he wrote on earlier, which has many strings of Numbers on it. Ijere does the same with the old man's index finger, slowly and leisurely. The old man doesn't object and lets Ijere do what he wants. When he is finished, Ijere puts the cloth in his pocket.

IJERE (CONT'D)
(to the old man)
Eat, eat.

The old man starts to eat again, quickly and in big gulps. Chimananda fills the glass with wine again and the old man drinks it with a full mouth, pouring some more wine over it.

Ijere sits back down on the bed, folds up the paper and puts it in his pocket.

The old man eats while the Master and his Apprentice watch.

EXT. A STREET IN THE BLUE FORTRESS. NIGHT.

Ijere, Chimananda and the old man walk down a narrow street. The street is poorly lit. The three stop at the wooden door of a tall tower. Ijere knocks on the door. It opens and a soldier appears.

IJERE

Lord Down sent us.
 (Soldier nods his head to indicate he knows what this is about)
 We have brought the prisoner.
 (Ijere steps aside and Chimananda pushes the old man towards the soldier)
 You know what to do with him.
 (The soldier says nothing, reaches out and pulls the old man inside, then closes the door. Ijere and Chimananda stand outside the closed door)

INT. THRONE ROOM OF THE ROYAL PALACE. DAY.

The throne room is prepared for the judgement of Noble M. On the podium are the two thrones and down in front of the podium on the left is General Psi and on the right is Master Ijere with Chimananda behind him. On the table in front of the General are 3 scales and some blue gold coins. There is nothing on the table in front of Master Ijere. Grand Master Ayaju is standing on the second step of the podium with Amos behind him. All are standing.

A speaker announces.

THE SPEAKER

Their Majesties, King Okot and Queen Ukamaka.

The doors to the throne room open and Okot enters with his right hand outstretched, the palm of Ukamaka's left hand resting on it. The two walk across the blue carpet to their thrones.

Everyone in the room bows in respect. Okot and Ukamaka climb the steps of the podium and sit on their thrones.

OKOT

Greetings to you all. Let's begin the process.

Ayaju picks up the Rod Ebony and hits the ground with it.

AYAJU

In the name of the Royal Blue House, and with the power of Supreme Judge possessed by King Okot, I declare open the trial in which the Blue Fortress, represented by General Psi, accuses the Noble M., former head of the Royal Treasury, who is defended here and now by Master Ijere, of stealing the King's wealth.

Ayaju raises the Ebony Rod into the air. Psi and Ijere leave their seats and walk towards the King.

AYAJU (CONT'D)

Your Majesty, do you accept both parts?

OKOT

(bored)

I accept.

Ayaju hits the ground with the Ebony Rod.

AYAJU

The trial can begin.
(General Psi and Ijere bow to the king. Okot boredly salutes them)
First floor is General Psi.

PSI

Your Majesty, I bow to your wisdom and trust in your judgement. I will prove that Noble M. abused Your Majesty's trust and stole from the Royal Treasury. Specifically, he has reduced the weight of a blue gold coin by two-thirds. One third of the gold he used to make coins which he put into circulation, another third of the gold he deposited in the Royal Treasury and the third in his own Treasury. Thank you.

AYAJU

Master Ijere has the floor.

IJERE

Your Majesty, I will prove a simple fact: that the Noble M. is not guilty. Thank you.

OKOT

(astonished)
Is that all?

IJERE

That's enough, Your Majesty.

OKOT

(returns to his boredom)
All right, carry on.

Ijere and Psi return to their seats.

AYAJU

Continued Psi Gen.

PSI

Your Majesty, I have here 3 scales and 4 old blue gold coins and 4 new ones minted at the behest of Noble M. when he was in charge of the Royal Treasury. The 4 old coins I have from the treasuries of the Counts Gamma and Delta and the Marquises Epsilon and Ypsilon. I have here their written testimonies that they had these coins in their vaults before the Noble M. was appointed head of the Royal Treasury. They were written by the Master Without a Left Eye.

Psi gives Amos statements to take to the Grand Master Ayaju. He reads them and gives them to the King.

OKOT

(refuses to take it)
What does it say?

AYAJU

The two counts and the two marquises declare that the coins...

OKOT

(interrupts Ayaju)
OK, OK, I understand.
(motions for General Psi to continue. The General bows and continues)

PSI

Here are 4 more coins that I personally picked up from the Great Square this morning. I have here the testimonies of a beekeeper, a baker, a carpenter and a greengrocer that I picked up these coins today. And these statements were also written by the Master Without a Left Eye.

Amos takes the statements and hands them to Ayaju, who reads them.

OKOT

(is very bored)
OK, OK.
(and gestures for Psi to continue)

PSI

(bows and continues)
I'm going to sing these coins. On the right bead, an old coin, on the left, a new coin.

The General places an old coin on the right heel of the scales and a new coin on the left heel. The scales become unbalanced on the right side where the old coin is. Psi then places two new coins on the left side, where the new coin is, and the scales balance.

PSI (CONT'D)

Your Majesty, here is clear proof that 3 new blue gold coins weigh as much as one old one. I will now use the second scale.

OKOT

(interrupts, bored)
No need, I got it with the first balance. Conclusion, please.

General Psi is dismayed by the reaction of the King, but he looks past it and continues on.

PSI

In addition to this very conclusive evidence, I would like to add that after the arrest of Noble M., during the search of his home, which we had authorised, we found 200 chests of raw blue gold without documents of origin, which...

OKOT

(interrupts General Psi)
I understand. Grand Master Ayaju
will record any evidence that
General Psi brings. Move on.

(Okot looks at Ijere
again, but this time with
interest)

And Ukamaka looks at Ijere with
interest.

Ijere feels that he is in the spotlight and that this is his
moment to shine. So he waits a while for the attention and
anticipation to build. He adjusts his outfit, although it's
not syrupy, and in a moment, two, three, he says.

IJERE

Your Majesty, paradoxically, the
defence of the Noble M. will begin
with a very honest confession.
Unfortunately, and I say this
sincerely, unfortunately, General
Psi's accusation is true.

Ijere pronounced the last word with passion. The effect was
powerful. Okot and Ukamaka, Ayaju and Psi flinched visibly.

OKOT

How true?

IJERE

Just true.

OKOT

You mean Noble M. stole?

IJERE

Yes and no.

OKOT

(bangs fist on throne
handle)

Are you mocking me?

IJERE

(feigns concern)

No, Your Majesty, no, no. Listen to
me.

OKOT

(howling)

Say it once.

Ijere takes a paper from his coat pocket and shows it to the King.

IJERE

Your Majesty, I have here the statement of Noble M.'s personal accountant, in which he admits that he himself set up all the financial engineering to enrich himself. First, he proposed to Noble M. to halve the weight of the blue gold coin, which Your Majesty approved.

OKOT

(interrupts Ijere)

I have not agreed to anything, but go ahead.

IJERE

But in fact, without Noble M.'s knowledge, the accountant reduced the weight of a blue gold coin by two thirds. One third he made into coins and put them on the market, the second third he put in the Royal Treasury and the third in the house of Noble M.

PSI

(interrupts Ijere)

That's what I said, Your Majesty, we found 200 chests of blue gold with no provenance documents.

IJERE

It's true, General, the accountant took them there with the intention of taking them later, but he didn't get the chance because he was surprised by Noble M's arrest.

OKOT

(approving Ijere)

That's about right, General.

PSI

Your Majesty, but which accountant are we talking about? We didn't find an accountant when we searched Noble M.'s house.

Okot turns his head in Ijere's direction. He gives a self-possessed answer.

IJERE

I just said he ran away, General. I repeat, the accountant did not have time to take the gold with him because he was surprised by the news of Noble M's arrest and the search of the house. So he fled, leaving the gold in Noble M's house.

OKOT

Give the accountant's statement to the Grand Master.

Amos goes to Ijere and takes the statement. He takes it to Ayaju. The Grand Master begins to read it. Okot turns and smiles at Ukamaka, who is also pleased and winks at the King.

Ayaju hands the declaration to the King.

OKOT (CONT'D)

Is it true what Master Ijere says?

AYAJU

Is it true that this accountant wrote in this statement that he had tricked Noble M. and that he had stolen a third of the weight of a coin of blue gold for himself?

(Okot looks at Ukamaka proudly)

I have only one worry.

OKOT

Is there a spelling mistake here?

AYJAU

It's all very well written, but I don't understand why this accountant who is used to Numbers didn't sign with his own string of Numbers, but with his right hand prints.

Okot and Ukamaka have a look at Ijere, who remains calm.

IJERE

Your Majesty, please allow me to bring before you the accountant himself, whom I have captured and delivered to Lord Down, in order to dispel all these suspicions, as there was no accountant in the house of the noble M.

(MORE)

IJERE (CONT'D)
 who could have signed with his own
 string of Numbers.

OKOT
 Is the accountant here?

IJERE
 The soldiers are waiting for Your
 Majesty's command.

OKOT
 Bring him here.

Chimananda runs out of the Throne Room, leaving the door open. After a moment, two, three, the doors open wide and two soldiers enter the Throne Room holding the arms of the retarded old man that Chimananda bought from the Reptile King. Chimananda enters from the back.

The old man is mutilated from the beating. He has no fingernails on his hands. His face is swollen and there are large stains of blood on his white shirt. The soldiers are dragging him because the old man can no longer walk. The soldiers and the old man stop in front of the King and Queen between Psi and Ijere.

OKOT (CONT'D)
 This is...

IJERE
 Nobel M's accountant, who deceived
 you, Your Majesty.

OKOT
 But why is he like this?

IJERE
 Because he only told the truth
 under torture. So this is the
 accountant in the flesh, and he
 couldn't sign, so we took his
 fingerprints, as required by law.
 But, Your Majesty, let us hear his
 testimony.

And Ijere gestures to the soldiers. One of them nudges the old man, who suddenly lifts his head and speaks slowly and slurred because he has no teeth in his mouth.

THE OLD MAN
 Pity, I was wrong, pity, I was
 wrong, pity.

And the old man passes out from the effort.

PSI
Your Majesty.

OKOT
Yes, General.

PSI
I have another request.

OKOT
What is it, General?

PSI
I want Nobill M. to be brought in
and told that this is his
accountant.

IJERE
(in an insinuating tone)
And do you think, General, that he
will not say that?

And Ijere looks at Psi. The general has nothing to say in his
favour.

PSI
That's right, he'll probably
recognise it.

IJERE
(to Okot in a very
confident tone)
Your Majesty, I am sure Noble M
will recognise his accountant.

OKOT
(wants to end the process)
OK, that's clear, that's it, we're
clear and I have to make the final
decision.

AYAJU
(picks up the Ebony Rod)
Everything has been said.
(bangs the Rod on the
ground)
Nothing more will be said, ever
again.
(Strikes the floor again
with the Rod)
The King announces the final
decision.

OKOT

(stands up)

I, the King of the Blue Fortress and its environs, the ruler of the Royal Blue House, decide that Noble M. did not steal from the Royal Treasury because he was tricked by his accountant who wanted to steal for his own benefit. Therefore, I sentence the accountant to death and absolve Noble M. of all guilt. I said.

And Ayaju bangs the Ebony Rod three times on the ground.

AYAJU

This is where the process ends.

And he slams the Ebony Rod into the ground once more.

INT. SALT MINE. ARTIFICIAL LIGHT.

On the terrace the prisoners work, breaking pieces of salt from the wall with pickaxes. Side by side, Tasso, the White Fisherman and Old Argument are working. Each has a basket beside him in which to place the pieces of salt. Tasso has filled a basket and carries it to the edge of the terrace, looks down, stands for a moment and whistles.

TASSO

Hey, you?

Tasso whistles again. Another prisoner below looks up at Tasso. He waves his hand and begins to lift a thick rope over a cog. An iron hook reaches Tasso, to which the young man hooks the basket of lumps of salt. Then the man below brings the basket to him, unloads it and lifts the empty basket to the terrace where Tasso is.

The White Fisherman throws a piece of salt into the Old Argument's basket because he has the fewest pieces, while the White Fisherman's basket is almost full. The White Fisherman throws two more pieces into the basket of the Old Argument, who notices the move and stops working.

ARGUMENT

Thank you, Old Fisherman. I'll repay your kindness in a day.

WHITE FISHERMAN

(unbeliever)

I'm waiting.

And he throws some salt into his basket.

Tasso arrives beside them.

TASSO

Two more spots to make my norm for
these hours. I go to bed, I'm
tired. I don't think we'll get
anything to eat today.

ARGUMENT

Go to sleep and we'll wake you up
if we have to.

Tasso takes the pickaxe from the ground, lifts it and bangs it hard into the wall. The terrace shakes a little. The three are taken by surprise. Tasso picks up the pickaxe and bangs it into the salt wall again. This time the terrace shakes even more. The three don't understand. The terrace moves harder again. Then again and again. A voice can be heard.

VOICE

Earthquake, run.

Panic grips the moving salt mine. The three of them hold on to each other so they don't fall off the terrace. Some of the prisoners lose their balance and fall into the void. The terraces continue to move. The 3 hold on to each other and the mine wall.

The wall cracks in one place. It cracks in another place. Cracks appear in the walls of the cave. Suddenly flames come out of one crack. And flames came out of other cracks.

The prisoners got scared and jumped off their terraces, not caring whether they lived or not.

And next to Tasso, the White Fisherman and the Old Argument is a crack from which flames are coming out. A loud noise can be heard coming from the crack next to them. Suddenly the whole area begins to shake even more. Old Argument shouts at Tasso and the White Fisherman.

ARGUMENT

The time has come.
(the two can't hear well)
This is our time, this is our way.
(and Argument points to
the crack where the fire
comes out)
I'm going down the open road there.
Are you coming?

TASSO
Into the fire?

ARGUMENT
There is no fire. It's a road, it's
the gate shown to us in the series
of Numbers. I'm going while the
gate is open. It's also your only
chance to get out of here.

And Argument gets up, tries to pick up the pickaxe from the ground, but can't. He leaves it and walks towards the crack where the fire is coming from. Everything is moving fast, and Argument doesn't have the strength to reach the crack, and is about to fall off the terrace.

But the Old Argument is caught by the White Fisherman, who takes him in his arms, takes two steps and they both dive into the crack from which fire emerges.

Tasso looks at them. Pieces of the ceiling fall down around him. Tasso gets up, picks up his pickaxe, everything moves violently, pieces of salt fall from the ceiling. Tasso runs and throws himself into the crack from which the fire comes out. At that moment, the terrace on which he was standing collapses onto the one below him, and all the terraces collapse. Large chunks of the ceiling fall on the prisoners and guards, who are buried alive.

INT. DIAMOND CAVE. DAY.

The White Fisherman and the Old Argument fall into a cave. Their clothes are burned and their skin is scorched all over. They fall to the floor of the cave, breathing heavily, exhausted.

ARGUMENT
Are you all right, White Fisherman?

WHITE FISHERMAN
Yeah. How are you, Old Argument?

ARGUMENT
There have been better days.

At this point, Tasso enters the cave and collapses on the floor, throwing the pickaxe to the ground. Tasso also has burnt clothes and burns all over his body.

TASSO
Are you alive?

ARGUMENT

We are. Are you?

TASSO

Me too.

And Tasso looks up to where they came from. There's a corridor in the ceiling of this cave with no end in sight.

TASSO (CONT'D)

What is this place?

ARGUMENT

I don't know. But it sure doesn't look like a salt mine anymore.

TASSO

That's what I see.

The White Fisherman stands near the entrance to the cave. Its walls are like diamonds.

WHITE FISHERMAN

Everything outside is white.

Tasso gets up and starts walking towards the White Fisherman.

ARGUMENT

I'll wait for you here.

TASSO

We'll be back soon, Old Argument.

And the two emerge from the cave.

EXT. WHITE WORLD DAY.

Tasso and the White Fisherman look around and examine their position. Everything is white, the ground, the trees, their leaves and branches, the cave, everything. The slope on which the cliff sits is steep and they can see that they are on a mountain.

After exploring the place, they turn around and enter the cave.

INT. DIAMOND CAVE. DAY.

Old Argument has his back to the cave wall, sitting down.

TASSO

Are you all right, Old Argument?

ARGUMENT

Look, Tasso, I've put my hand on this wall and it's not so burnt anymore.

THE WHITE FISHERMAN

And the burns on your back?

The White Fisherman lifts Old Argument to his feet and holds him in his arms. Tasso looks on in amazement.

TASSO

Fantastic, the wounds are starting to heal.

And Tasso puts his burnt arm on the wall of the cave. He feels that he's all right.

TASSO (CONT'D)

Fantastic, White Fisherman, you should try it.

The White Fisherman sticks Old Argument with his back to the cave wall. He then puts his back against the wall and immediately feels better.

WHITE FISH

Ah, I can feel them absorbing energy.

Tasso takes down the pickaxe and breaks some pieces off the wall. He cuts them into small pieces and applies them to the wounds on Old Argument's legs.

ARGUMENT

How refreshing and good they are.

The White Fisherman and Tasso begin tearing pieces from the cave wall and applying them to Old Argument's wounds.

EXT. WHITE WORLD. NIGHT.

There are two moons, both perfectly round and casting a clear light over the White Forest, in the sky of the White World.

A white stag appears near the entrance to Diamond Cave. He walks without fear. When it reaches the entrance to the cave, Tasso hurries out with his pickaxe raised above his head. The stag is taken by surprise, frowns, and Tasso drives the pickaxe hard into its forehead. The stag stares into Tasso's eyes and remains motionless.

The White Fisherman comes out of the cave and stops in front of the stag. The animal continues to look at Tasso, but its eyes seem lifeless. The White Fisherman pushes the body of the deer, which falls to the side with its legs stretched out. The White Fisherman pulls out a piece he has taken from the cave wall, shaped like a knife blade, and begins to cut the deer's throat.

INT. DIAMOND CAVE. NIGHT.

Old Argument lies on his back, covered with small pieces of cave wall that have been applied to the burns on his body. The deer's hide is stretched out beside him and the White Fisherman cleans it with pieces in the shape of a knife blade. Tasso is carving a weapon from a deer antler. Next to him is a pile of small pieces torn from the cave wall.

WHITE FISHERMAN

We will wrap ourselves in furs like this at night and put pieces of stone on our burns.

TASSO

And we still don't know where we are.

ARGUMENT

Is everything white outside?

TASSO

Yes, it is. Absolutely white, and there are two moons in the sky.

ARGUMENT

Let's go to bed. Take me out tomorrow too. I hope I will understand when I see with my own eyes.

TASSO

Good thing I got out of the salt mine. I think we're the only ones who went through the fire hole.

ARGUMENT

Only we knew it was a door to freedom.

TASSO

Maybe someone saw us.

ARGUMENT

I don't think so. We'll see tomorrow. Let's go to bed.

EXT. WHITE WORLD. NIGHT.

The sky is overcast. Tasso and the White Fisherman emerge from the cave, both carrying the Old Argument. He looks around at the white earth and the White Forest.

The burns on Tasso's and the White Fisherman's bodies are almost healed. Only the Old Argument still has them on his chest, right in the middle, a bleeding wound that has not closed.

ARGUMENT

Could it be true?

TASSO

Could what be true?

ARGUMENT

The White World. Does the White World really exist? Is the legend of the Hidden Slave true?

THE WHITE FISHERMAN

What else does the legend say?

ARGUMENT

It also says that the place where he hid the Slave and where he taught his relatives the Numbers was a complete white place. The land, the trees, the animals, like the deer you killed last night. Everything was white, and everything here is white.

WHITE FISHERMAN

Could this be the White World of the Hidden Slave?

ARGUMENT

I never thought I'd see something like this again. I know the power of energy transfer that the Hidden Slave still has, but the White World I never thought existed.

WHITE FISHERMAN

Well, if you know the power of the Hidden Slave, why did you doubt the White World?

ARGUMENT

I don't know. I don't know.

EXT. THE CLEARING WHERE THE HOUSE OF NUMEROLOGISTS IS. DAY.

In the clearing, a soldier of the Ukamaka Guard is guarding two horses next to the House of Numerologists, built by Cinyra, Adonis and Smyrna.

Next to the house is a wood storage area. There are piles of neatly cut wood.

The snow is 10-15 cm deep on the ground. And the trees are full of snow, with branches hanging down. The large, centuries-old tree next to the pit through which Ukamaka passed in the White World is also full of snow, with branches hanging down.

INT. HOUSE OF NUMEROLOGISTS. DAY.

The interior of the house is richer this time. There are more furs on the floor. There are drawings of Numerological matrices on the walls. Ukamaka is sitting in the high-backed wooden chair, talking to Cinyra. He sits on a wooden chair too. Pieces of wood creak in the fireplace.

UKAMAKA

I am not against the practice of Numerology in this house. But I still don't understand, is Numerology forbidden or not?

CINYRA

Numerology is completely forbidden within the Blue Fortress and is tolerated by the Royal Blue House in the 1,000 villages that belong to it.

UKAMAKA

And Black Numerology?

CINYRA

It's forbidden everywhere.

UKAMAKA

Do you practice it?

CINYRA

It's complicated to say. I juggle between White Numerology and Black Numerology. It depends on what I'm asked.

UKAMAKA

And when you are asked about the black?

CINYRA

Even though I am only asked for the Black one, I have to defend myself and my two, Adonis and Smyrna, so without my client's knowledge I also introduce White Numerology.

UKAMAKA

Tell me the truth about your family.

CINYRA

Smyrna is my daughter, with whom I made Adonis.

UKAMAKA

And who is Smyrna's mother?

CINYRA

My elder sister.

UKAMAKA

I see that you are all healthy. You don't transmit diseases in the family.

CINYRA

No, because it protects us from the energies that come from the Hidden Slave.

UKAMAKA

Tell me more about Hidden Slave.

CINYRA

We are the direct descendants of the Hidden Slave. For this reason

we keep the blood in the family and inherit the vow to destroy the Order of Numbers.

UKAMAKA

Why?

CINYRA

The Hidden Slave retreated to the White World and lived in the Grey Grotto. There he taught his family about the Numbers. He also died there of natural causes.

UKAMAKA

(interrupts Cinyra)

I understand the Order of Numbers killed the family guarding her lifeless body. But apparently not all of them.

CINYRA

That's right. A brother and sister survived, thanks to the energy protection of the Hidden Slave.

UKAMAKA

(change subject)

How do you know Noble M?

CINYRA

He has challenged my knowledge several times.

UKAMAKA

The Black ones or the White ones?

CINYRA

I told you, mistress, one cannot practise only one or the other.

UKAMAKA

Can't one do only White Numerology?

CINYRA

Paradoxically, no, Mistress.

EXT. THE CLEARING WHERE THE HOUSE OF NUMEROLOGISTS IS. DAY.

Three riders emerge from the forest, shaking the snow from the branches. They are Ash, Noble M. and Master Ijere. The three approach the soldier standing by the horses and stop. They dismount, the soldier takes care of the horses, and the 3 enter the wooden house.

INT. HOUSE OF NUMEROLOGISTS. DAY.

Ukamaka and Cinyra turn their heads towards the three entering.

Cinyra stands up, bows in front of them and steps back a little. Noble M. and Master Ijere bow to the Queen, while Ash remains further back.

M.
Your Majesty.

IJERE
Your Majesty.

UKAMAKA
(to Ijere)
It is good to see you again,
Master. We have met recently.

IJERE
(bowing again)
Your Majesty, the honour is mine.

UKAMAKA
I was pleasantly surprised to see
someone of your skill.

IJERE
(bowing again)
You overwhelm me, Your Majesty.

UKAMAKA
Master, you have earned it. And I
truly wish that a man of your
abilities would continue to serve
me.

IJERE
With the greatest honour and love,
Your Majesty. Just tell me what you
want me to do.

UKAMAKA
Let's see how clever you are. What
could a Queen want from a Master of
the Order of Numbers who is
particularly talented, hardworking,
has an amazing ability to write
strings and serves her as
beautifully as you do?

Ijere says nothing. He doesn't understand what the Queen wants.

M.
(bowing to the Queen)
Your Majesty, if I may.

UKAMAKA

(to Noble M.)

Noble M. is also at liberty here.

M.

Your Majesty, I shall never forget what you have done for me.

UKAMAKA

I am very curious to see how short this "never" is.

M.

Until death and beyond, Your Majesty.

(and Noble M. bows to Ukamaka)

UKAMAKA

You were about to say something.

M.

I was going to tell Master Ijere...

UKAMAKA

(interrupts the Noble M.)

You two know each other?

M.

(surprised, admits)

Yes, Your Majesty, we have worked well together in the past.

UKAMAKA

So, what did you want to tell Master Ijere?

M.

I wanted to tell Master Ijere that the Royal Blue House, the Order of Numbers and especially Your Majesty need a person of Master Ijere's ability not to waste his talent in a lowly position.

Ijere now understands the meaning of their words, but he feigns ignorance.

IJERE

If I may, Your Majesty. Grand Master Ayaju is the right person to lead the Order of Numbers, so my place...

M.

(interrupts Ijere)
Your role, Master, if Your Majesty
allows me...

(Ukamaka nods yes)
...is especially for the future.

(Ukamaka stares at Ijere)
If the present is so secure, and no
one disputes that, the future of
the Order of Numbers seems less
clear.

Ukamaka stares into Ijere's eyes, and Ijere meets his gaze.
After a moment or two, he smiles and lowers his eyes.

IJERE

Your Majesty, your intuition cannot
fail. I believe in it and in your
power to defend and hold together
the Royal Blue House. For this
reason, as a dedicated and grateful
servant, I promise Your Majesty
that I will watch carefully and
with great vigilance against any
unfortunate and misguided attempt
by any member, regardless of their
position in the Order, to undermine
the relationship between the Royal
Blue House and the Order of
Numbers.

And Ijere bows to the queen. Ukamaka gets up and takes two
steps towards them, pausing before Ijere.

UKAMAKA

Master Ijere, I rely on your
already proven acumen to bring me
concrete evidence of your
servitude.

The two bow and make way for the queen to pass. Ukamaka heads
for the door and when he reaches Cinyra's side, he pulls a
bag of money out of his cloak and throws it to him. Cinyra
catches the bag and bows deeply. Ash opens the door and
Ukamaka steps out, followed by the Captain.

EXT. COURTYARD OF THE "BLUE STORK" INN. DAY.

The courtyard is full of people, guests and servants running
in all directions. On the ground there is only mud from the
snow that has been kicked up by those who have walked through
the courtyard. On the roofs you can see the snow. The big
gate is wide open and the Stone enters.

He is dressed in black, with high boots and a fur coat, also black. His horse is also black, with long hair, braided in several pigtails. Stone sits on a large, wide saddle, also black. Next to him, in his sheath, Stone has a rifle.

Stone stops in the middle of the yard, dismounts and picks up his rifle. A boy from the inn takes his horse and heads for the stable. Stone looks around at the people in the courtyard.

INT. BLUE STORK INN. DAY.

The door opens and Stone enters, rifle sheathed over his shoulder.

There are lots of people inside. People are drinking, eating and smoking. Servants move between the tables, bringing food and drink.

Stone sees an empty table by the window and heads in that direction. Ema passes in front of him with 4 mugs of beer, ready to hit him. Stone dodges and the girl moves on.

Stone sits down at the table by the window, placing the shotgun beside him. After a moment or two, Ema approaches him.

EMA

Hello there. What can I get you?

STONE

Hi. I'd like something to eat.

EMA

We have chicken, duck and pork. And venison.

STONE

Do you have fish?

EMA

Yes. A very good carp. Today we had roe.

STONE

A big piece of carp and a salad with roe. And I want three more lemons.

EMA

Yes.

(She starts to leave, but Stone stops her.)

STONE
What's your name?

EMA
Ema.

STONE
How old are you?

EMA
20.

STONE
I want to speak to the innkeeper.

EMA
(looks Stone in the eye,
knowing what he wants
from the Innkeeper)
I can't right now.

STONE
It's nothing. I want to speak to
the Innkeeper.

EMA
(not liking what Stone has
said)
Yes.

And Ema leaves. Stone remains alone at the table, looking around, then out the window. A coach enters the courtyard and stops just outside the door of the inn.

The Innkeeper appears from nearby and opens the door to the coach. From the trapdoor comes Count Gamma, followed by a young woman, then Count Delta, followed by another young woman. The Innkeeper greets them solemnly and bows low to them. The four of them are dressed in expensive clothes. The young women pick up their dresses so they don't get dirty, the innkeeper opens the door and the four go in. The two Counts are laughing and giggling, as usual, and holding hands. Behind them, the two young women do the same, holding each other tightly. They all run up the stairs. The innkeeper follows them with his eyes, but stays at the bottom of the stairs.

Ema approaches the Innkeeper, says something to him and points in the direction of the Stone. Then Ema says something else to the Innkeeper, who nods in understanding, and the girl leaves.

The Innkeeper approaches the table where Stone is sitting.

INNKEEPER

Hello, traveller.

STONE

Hello, Innkeeper.

INNKEEPER

The carp was caught today, it's the best choice. But I also had a couple of rabbit hunts today. And they're very fresh.

STONE

Thank you, I'll remember that for tomorrow morning.

INNKEEPER

Stay overnight with us?

STONE

Yes, just for tonight.

INNKEEPER

Perfect.

STONE

And I want a really good room.

INNKEEPER

I've got one to 5 blue gold coins. That's the best.

STONE

The young counts with their wives, in which room do they live?

INNKEEPER

For the 8 blue gold coins. But I don't have any more for tonight.

STONE

OK. How many girls have you got here?

INNKEEPER

To serve and...

STONE

Yes, how many do you have?

INNKEEPER

4.

STONE

I want them all. One after the other. The last to come is the one who serves me. At 12 o'clock at night, let the first come.

INNKEEPER

And you want the whole?

STONE

No. I want it normal and just once.

INNKEEPER

About Ema, the last one, I have to tell you that she has the problem of the month.

STONE

It's nothing. How much is a one-off?

INNKEEPER

10 gold coins.

STONE

OK. Tell Emma to bring me a cup of fresh water. Thank you.

INNKEEPER

Thank you too, traveller.

The Innkeeper salutes and leaves. Stone looks out the window.

Outside, in the courtyard, he sees Ema running with a tray of food to the wooden stairs leading up to the rooms with doors to the courtyard. She goes upstairs, knocks on a door which opens, a man takes her tray of food and closes the door. Ema turns and goes down the wooden stairs, runs across the courtyard and enters the inn, closing the door behind her. The girl's body shivers with cold. Ema turns her head to meet Stone's gaze. They look at each other for a moment, two, three.

INT. STONE'S ROOM IN THE BLUE STORK INN. NIGHT.

The room is small, clean and has a large bed with white sheets in the middle. A fire is burning in the hearth and other dry logs lie beside it. There is a wooden cupboard in the room, a washbasin, a bucket for personal needs and a large clay pot for water in the corner.

Stone is lying on the bed with no boots on, just trousers and a black shirt. There is knocking at the door.

STONE

Enter.

The door opens and Ema enters.

EMA

Good evening.

STONE

Good evening.

Ema closes the door behind her and takes a step towards the Stone.

EMA

I told you earlier. I can't tonight.

STONE

I just want you to take your shirt off, that's all.

EMA

Just the shirt?

STONE

Yeah.

Ema takes off her shirt and throws it to the ground.

STONE (CONT'D)

Come closer, please.

(Ema takes a step towards Stone)

Closer.

(Ema takes another step)

Raise your arms, please.

(Ema raises her hands)

Hold them.

Stone gets out of bed, takes a lit candle from the table and approaches Ema's body. The girl has a red mark under her left breast. Stone touches the spot gently. It tickles the girl.

STONE (CONT'D)

Wait.

Stone touches the stain better.

STONE (CONT'D)

Does it hurt?

EMA

No.

STONE
Did you get burnt here?

EMA
No.

STONE
You have a red spot.

EMA
I've had it since I can remember.

Stone rubs the red stain and tries to wipe it off, but can't.

STONE
Get dressed, please.

Ema dresses and Stone puts the candle on the table and sits back on the bed. Ema remains standing.

STONE (CONT'D)
How long have you been here?

EMA
A few months.

STONE
And you like it here?

EMA
No.

STONE
How did you get here?

EMA
I was sold by Lieutenant Beginner
after he and all his soldiers raped
me.

PAGE
How did you end up with Lieutenant
Beginner?

EMA
He took me from the barricade on
Merchants Street. I fought on the
barricade and lost. Good thing I
stayed alive.

STONE
Were you working on that street?

EMA
I apprenticed to Cristina, a
seamstress.

STONE
Do you want to leave here?

EMA
That depends.

STONE
What do you mean?

EMA
I don't want to be sold as a
prostitute again. To leave here
free, yes, I do.

STONE
What if we combine the two?

EMA
How?

STONE
I bought you so you could walk out
of here free.

Ema doesn't answer immediately. She looks into Stone's eyes
for a moment, two, three.

EMA
What's in it for you?

STONE
I will carry out my master's
orders.

EMA
Who is your master?

STONE
I can't tell you now, I'll tell you
tomorrow, after I've bought you.
(Stone takes a bag from
beside him, counts out 10
blue gold coins and gives
them to the girl)
That's all for now, good night.

Ema goes to the door, opens it, walks out and closes the door
behind her.

Stone gets off the bed, goes to the candles on the table and blows them out. He then locks the door with the key, turns and lies down on the bed with the shotgun beside him.

INT. BLUE STORK INN. NIGHT.

The main room of the inn is almost empty, except for a few very drunk customers.

The innkeeper is at the bar. Ema approaches him. The girl gives him the money.

INNKEEPER

He didn't touch you either?

EMA

No, he did not touch me.

INNKEEPER

Did he make you take your shirt off?

EMA

EMA: Yes.

INNKEEPER

Go on.

EMA

I have nothing more to say.

INNKEEPER

This one's got a lot of money on him. Since he paid so much without doing anything, that means...

(But the Innkeeper stops and looks at Emma)

All right, go to bed, at 5 you start cleaning here.

Ema says nothing, turns and leaves.

The Innkeeper remains alone, thinking aloud.

INNKEEPER (CONTINUED) (CONT'D)

This one is looking for someone. More like a woman. Maybe a young one. He looked here and didn't find what he was looking for. This one leaves in the morning. There is a lot of money involved in this search.

(MORE)

INNKEEPER (CONTINUED) (CONT'D)

This one's got a lot of money on him. It's a shame to let him go with all the money.

EXT. COURTYARD OF THE "BLUE STORK" INN. NIGHT.

It is snowing in the courtyard. A few flashes of lightning cast a pale light. The iron gates are closed. A few small lanterns dimly lit the doors of the rooms facing the courtyard.

INT. A HALLWAY AT THE BLUE STORK INN. NIGHT.

The Innkeeper is walking barefoot, slowly, so as not to be heard, down a corridor. He arrives at a door, pulls some door-opening tools from his pocket and bends down in front of a door lock. He starts chewing on the latch with the tools, slowly, quietly, like a professional. There is a soft clink, the Innkeeper presses the handle and the door opens.

INT. STONE'S ROOM IN THE BLUE STORK INN. NIGHT.

Inside the room, the door opens slowly and quietly, and the Innkeeper enters. His bare feet on the floor make no sound. The Innkeeper takes two steps into the room. The fire in the hearth is almost out. The Innkeeper stands in the room looking at the bed.

The bed is empty.

The innkeeper is puzzled and stops in the middle of the room. Behind him, slowly, slowly, Stone approaches, placing the muzzle of the rifle in the back of the Hangi's hairless head. He shudders as he feels the barrel.

STONE

Do you know what this is, Innkeeper?

INNKEEP

A rifle, traveller.

STONE

And what does it do, Innkeeper?

INNKEEPER

Nothing, Traveller, for we're talking.

STONE

That's right, Innkeeper.

And Stone, with speed, hits the Innkeeper in the back of the head with the butt of his rifle.

The picture goes completely dark.

INT. STONE'S ROOM IN THE BLUE STORK INN. NIGHT.

The Innkeeper is lying on the floor, tied very tightly with the sheets on the bed. A fire is burning in the hearth and candles are lit on the table. The stone is sitting on the bed, waiting for the innkeeper to wake up.

The Innkeeper opens his eyes, looks around and stops looking at the stone. The Stone notices him and speaks to him.

STONE

Thank you for coming, but you could have waited until morning.

INNKEEPER

That's me, impatient.

Stone pulls a knife from his belt, leans over the Innkeeper and holds the sharp point to his throat.

PIATRA

If you're bad, we won't get along.

(Stone is silent and the two look at each other for a second or two)

I'll tell you what I want and you'll agree with me, otherwise I'll come with the army and the judges to check your deal. And when they see what a wonderful man you are, the two counts will drop you immediately if you rely on their protection in any way.

INNKEEPER

What do you want?

STONE

To buy Ema.

INNKEEPER

It's not...

(but doesn't get to finish the sentence because Stone presses the tip of the knife to his throat)

STONE

Take it easy. Take your time. Let's start at the beginning. How much did you pay for Ema?

INNKEEPER

(Stone presses the tip of the knife deeper into the innkeeper's throat)
blue gold coins.

STONE

Let's halve the amount and make it 750 blue gold coins. So I'll take 500 blue gold coins.

INNKEEPER

It's a bit...
(But he can't continue because Stone picks up the knife and drives the point into the floor. The blade gently cuts the skin on the innkeeper's neck)

STONE

That's right, I only have 300 blue gold coins left.

A thin trickle of blood emerges from the small wound on Hangi's neck. The two look into each other's eyes for a moment or two.

INT. MAID'S ROOM AT THE "BLUE STORK" INN. NIGHT.

It is a room next to the stable, separated by a wooden wall. The girls sleep on the top bunks and the boys on the bottom. Ema is asleep in her bed.

Stone approaches Ema's bed, dressed for the journey. Stone bends down and shakes the girl. She suddenly wakes up.

STONE

(whispering)
Come on, let's go. You're free.

Ema looks at the Stone and does not move. The two look at each other for a moment, then whisper.

EMA

Not coming.

STONE

Why not?

EMA

I don't want to be your master's
whore.

STONE

My master is a nobleman who doesn't
have one. He never has and never
will.

EMA

Who is your master?

STONE

(Does not answer
immediately, but looks at
the sleepers to make sure
no one is watching. Then
he turns to Ema)
I'll tell you on the way.

EMMA

Now. Otherwise I won't come.

STONE

(he does not answer
immediately, looks at the
girl for a moment, two,
approaches the girl's ear
and says)
Grand Duke.

EXT. COURTYARD OF THE "BLUE STORK" INN. NIGHT.

Stone raises his rifle to his eye and shoots at the thick
padlock that locks the gates to the inn courtyard. The lock
is destroyed. Stone removes the padlock, opens a gate and
straddles his horse. Next to him is another horse, with Ema
on it. The two of them ride out of the inn.

EXT. A STREET IN FRONT OF THE ROYAL BLUE PALACE. DAY.

The street is busy. The gates of the Royal Blue Palace are
closed and guarded by two soldiers.

Master Ijere approaches them. When he reaches them, Ijere
speaks to one of the soldiers.

IJERE

Hello, soldier.

SOLDIER 1
Good afternoon, Master.

IJERE
Captain Ash has summoned me.

SOLDIER 1
And you came alone?

IJERE
Three days ago he told me to come
today.

SOLDIER 1
And what is your name, Master?

IJERE
Ijere. I am Master Ijere.

SOLDIER 1
Wait here.

And soldier1 opens a door in the gate, enters the courtyard of the Blue Palace and closes the door behind him.

Ijere remains outside with the other soldier.

It is snowing in the street and there is a layer of snow several centimetres thick on the ground. Several people are walking in the street. A horse-drawn sleigh passes Ijere and the soldier at the gate.

Ijere waits for Soldier1 to return.

The gate opens and Soldier1 walks out, closing the door behind him and speaking to Ijere.

SOLDIER1 (CONTINUED)
You must come back when the moon is
up.

IJERE
Tonight?

SOLDIER 1
Captain Ash told me.

IJERE
Good.

And Ijere turns and walks away.

Soldier1 resumes his sentry post in front of the gate. Ijere is walking away from the gate.

INT. THRONE HALL. NIGHT.

The Throne Room is deserted and dark. The light comes from outside, through the very high windows, from the round moon in the clear sky. But the light is very, very dim and the Throne Room is in darkness. A large wooden door opens and Ash enters, lantern in hand, followed by Ijere, who closes the door behind him.

The two of them walk down the carpet to the podium with the two thrones. When they reach the podium, they walk around it to the right and get behind the thrones.

ASH
 (to Ijere)
 Stay here.
 (Ijere stops)
 Ijere and Ash sit motionless next to each other. The lantern in Ash's hand casts a faint light, casting a little light around them. They do not speak. The rest of the room is dark.

Out of the darkness comes Ukamaka. Ijere stutters and bows to the Queen.

IJERE
 (whispering)
 Your Majesty.

UKAMAKA
 (also whispering)
 Master, I understand this is serious.

IJERE
 It is, Your Majesty, or I would not have the courage to ask you to receive me.

UKAMAKA
 In matters of importance to the Royal Blue House, no hour is too late.

IJERE
 I followed Your Majesty's intuition and searched the archives of our Order in the places where it travels, especially...
 (and Ijere stops)

UKAMAKA
(encouraging Ijere to
continue)
I'm listening.

IJERE
Where he goes, especially Grand
Master Ayaju.

UKAMAKA
And all is well, I hope.

IJERE
Not everything, Your Majesty.

UKAMAKA
What do you mean, master?

IJERE
(takes a parchment from
his cloak and hands it to
the Queen. Ukamaka takes
it and opens it)
It's this document I found hidden
in the secret archives of the
Order, and it's signed by the
current Grand Master.

UKAMAKA
(on the parchment in the
Queen's hand are many
strings of Numbers)
What does it say?

IJERE
This is a detailed report from
Grand Master Ayaju to an unknown
new group calling themselves 'Sages
of the Order'.

UKAMAKA
What is this group?

IJERE
I don't know. This is the first
time I've heard of it. I'm afraid
this group is secretly running the
Order of Numbers.

UKAMAKA
And what does the report say?

IJERE

Grand Master Ayaju describes in detail how the "Sages of the Order" can destroy the Royal Blue House and seize control of the Blue Fortress and the 1,000 villages of the Blue Region.

UKAMAKA

(wondering)

Destroy the Royal Blue House?

IJERE

Yes, by killing the king, the queen, the queen mother and all the nobles who belong to the Royal Blue House.

UKAMAKA

To rule the Blue Fortress?

IJERE

Yes, Your Majesty. The reason why the "Sages of the Order" want this is also mentioned in the document.

UKAMAKA

And what is that reason?

IJERE

This secret group believes that the Blue Fortress must be returned to the Order of Numbers, because the Forgotten Blue Father wanted it. He brought the Numbers to the Fortress and, once with them, civilised the Blue Fortress, which became superior to the others.

UKAMAKA

(disturbed by the claim that the Blue Fortress is superior to other fortresses)

Not really all fortresses.

IJERE

That's right, Your Majesty, but that's what this secret group thinks.

UKAMAKA

Who ruled the Blue Fortress in the beginning?

IJERE

The Blue Fortress was founded and ruled by the Order of Numbers, created by the Forgotten Blue Father for his eldest son, the first Grand Master. But as they had no royal blood, the Order of Numbers searched for a royal house. Once this was found and became the ruler of the fortress, the Royal House was also given the title of Blue.

UKAMAKA

And now this secret group...

IJERE

This secret group wants to destroy the Royal Blue House in order to retake the Blue Fortress.

UKAMAKA

And all this is written here?

IJERE

Yes, Your Majesty, everything I told you is written here, with these strings of Numbers.

UKAMAKA

And it has the signature of Grand Master Ayaju?

IJERE

Yes, Your Majesty, down there on the right is the string of Numbers bearing the signature of Grand Master Ayaju.

Ukamaka looks to the lower right, where Ijere has pointed, and sees a series of Numbers, then looks up at the Master.

UKAMAKA

Well done Master, your care for the Royal Blue House and the Order of Numbers will take you to the top of your brotherhood, I promise you that.

And Ukamaka disappears into the darkness as suddenly as she appeared. Ijere's face is illuminated by the lantern in Ash's hand. Ijere beams with happiness.

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END OF EPISODE 5