

Abeba's betrayal

written by

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EXT. CLIFF OVER THE OCEAN—DAWN

Abeba follows Ishani to a cliff overlooking the ocean. Her head is bowed, and she hasn't spoken in an hour, avoiding Ishani's gaze.

ISHANI

You're awfully calm today, Abeba.

ABEBA

I'm just nauseous, sorry.

Abeba forces a smile and Ishani attempts to reciprocate, but it's strained. Abeba approaches the cliff's edge while Ishani scans her surroundings, feeling an unsettling sense of being watched. She instinctively touches the dagger at her belt.

ISHANI

Why did you bring me here?

ABEBA

We have been friends for how long?
Fifteen years?

ISHANI

For as long as I can remember.

Abeba turns to face Ishani, her expression cold. She clasps her hands behind her back and takes a deep breath.

ABEBA

And through all those years, you never stopped being stubborn—regardless of the consequences. Regardless of the people you've hurt.

ISHANI

What is going on here, Abeba?

ABEBA

Do you ever have regrets? Do you ever think about all the people you killed?

Ishani body stiffens, her hand gripping her weapon highly. Something in her break as she bites the inside of her cheeks.

2.

ISHANI

What are you talking about?
Everything I did was for us. To protect us. I had to—I had to— 2.

ABEBA

You didn't have to! I had a plan to save us, but you didn't care. You wanted to go on with your stupid idea, steal the Spirit's magic and kill one of them. I told you I had a plan!

Abeba moves closer, her face heavy with disgust. Behind Ishani a group of Spirits—humanoid figures draped in cloaks, face obscured by veils of jewelry—emerge from the forest's shadows. Ishani turns, raising her dagger, looking right and left, trying to control her panic.

ABEBA (CONT'D)

I have regrets—lots of them. I see villages burning in my dreams, hear their screams as the Spirits take their revenge. And I see you, standing over a pile of bodies. Was gaining a new spell worth all the human souls?

ISHANI

What did you do Abeba?

ABEBA

I'm doing what must be done to save humanity.

Before Ishani can move a muscle, a Spirit appears in front of her, grabbing her face with a skeletal hand, fingers cutting into her skin. Ishani raises her dagger to strike, but the Spirit seizes her wrist with its other hand.

SPIRIT

The thief, the traitor, Ishani.

ISHANI

I'm no traitor! Abeba, please! You understood back then, you have to—!

Ishani's panic grows, her eyes searching desperately for Abeba. When their gazes meet, Abeba's eyes are filled with resentment. The warmth Ishani once cherished is gone. Ishani's strength wanes as the Spirit drags her to the ground, face first into the mud. The Spirit pulls her by the hair, dragging her back toward the forest.

3.

ISHANI

Abeba, please! Abeba, don't do this to me! Abeba!

3.

Ishani's cries grow more frantic, echoing with each step the Spirit takes. There's one will save her now.

ISHANI

You will regret this Abeba! I swear
to Death, you will pay for this!

Abeba stands alone at the cliff's edge, her hands clasped behind her back. As the last Spirit vanishes into the forest and Ishani's screams fade to whispers, Abeba's composure breaks. She collapses into tears.