

The Waters of Lagi

By

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FADE IN:

INT. CALIFORNIA MANSION - BEDROOM. NIGHT

White carpet, a plush king-size bed, down pillows.

A scream. JASMINE (25) - petite with brown eyes and plain brown hair - writhes in pain in the bed, cries out.

A massive grandfather clock ticks opposite the bed. Otherwise, the room is silent between screams and sobs.

Jasmine cries, holds herself in the bed. The blankets muffle her moans.

She arches her back, screams in agony.

INTERCUT: A BRIEF GLIMPSE OF A TEAL OCEAN UNDER A BLUE SKY. WAVES LAP AGAINST THE BEACH.

Jasmine paces the room in a sweat, pulls against machine cords. A wire catches on her IV and she wails, slumps to the floor.

INTERCUT: THE GLIMPSE PULLS BACK TO THE BEACH - PALM TREES, WHITE SAND, A TALL MOUNTAIN IN THE DISTANCE. PALM LEAVES CLAP TOGETHER IN THE BREEZE. A BIRD CHIRPS.

Jasmine curls up on the carpet. Hair sticks to the sweat on her forehead. She pulls her knees up and cries herself to sleep.

INTERCUT: THE GLIMPSE PULLS BACK FURTHER TO A WEARY JASMINE. SHE BITES HER NAILS, LOOKS OFF TO THE HORIZON AS:

JASMINE (VO)

What do you do when you reach the end? Most people will put up a fight. Give one last solid effort hoping it'll be the one that sticks. But not me. I run away. All the while praying to find some peace with the end that I can't avoid. I am a quitter.

INT. RESORT - HOTEL ROOM. DAY

A suitcase rests on the bed, only half-full.

Jasmine sits beside the suitcase, holds a photo in a clear glass frame.

In the photo her PARENTS (40, polo shirts, khaki trousers) smile and hug her younger self, soft ball and glove in hand.

Jasmine flips the frame over - her fingers cover someone else, the photo folded back; a red lipstick kiss; a scrawled note: "We will always be here for you. Love, Momma and Dad."

She delicately sets the photo in the suitcase.

A hotel maid, MIRI (40), shuffles around, collects Jasmine's things as:

MIRI

Now, Jasmine, the boat will be waiting to take you to the mainland in one hour. That'll give you time for lunch, but that's it.

Silence.

MIRI

You hear me? That's it.

Jasmine smiles up at her.

JASMINE

Thanks, Miri.

Jasmine rubs her hands on her dress, takes a deep breath, unfolds and refolds a pile clothes on the bed.

MIRI

Don't forget your jewelry.

She holds out a bowl of sparkling gems set in gold and platinum. A loose pendant sits on top - a family of three in an eternal embrace.

Jasmine looks in the bowl, touches the jewelry lightly.

She takes the pendant, holds it close as:

JASMINE

You keep the rest.

Miri shoves the bowl forward, waves a hand toward her.

MIRI

No, no, no. I won't do that. These are beautiful things, Jasmine. Beautiful things just for you.

Jasmine shoves the bowl back.

JASMINE

They won't be mine for long. Take them.

Jasmine widens her glistening eyes, pleads. Miri struggles.

MIRI

I won't take them. I'll hold them for you. For when you come back to us.

She touches Jasmine's cheek, smiles.

MIRI

You will come back to us.

Jasmine turns away.

MIRI

So, what, you're giving up? Just like that?

JASMINE

There's nothing else, Miri.

Jasmine sobs and Miri holds her. Miri's jaw clenches, her eyes narrow.

MIRI

Years I've known you. Years. And you quit now. Don't you do that.
(her voice breaks)
Please.

JASMINE

Two months and I can sign the papers.

A tear falls down Miri's cheek.

She pulls back from Jasmine, wipes the tear away and storms off.

She reaches the door, turns to face Jasmine with fury in her eyes.

MIRI

You keep your two months. You've just got to have faith, Tama. Go home. Get better. And then, you come back to us.

Miri reaches toward Jasmine, pulls her hand back and leaves Jasmine alone in the room.

Jasmine looks down at the pendant in her hand, kisses it, tucks it into a pocket in her suitcase.

EXT. RESORT - PRIVATE BEACH. DAY

Jasmine looks off into the distance. Her skin is pale with dark circles under her eyes.

The vivid green forest looms behind her. She sits alone at a table under a canvas shade, her meal untouched.

The wind hits Jasmine's face and she closes her eyes, breathes it in with a slight smile.

A waiter, PULE (45), approaches and clears away the dishes as:

PULE

Time to get back now, Ms Blake.
The boat will be here soon. Don't
want to miss your flight.

Jasmine smiles up at him, touches his arm.

JASMINE

Thank you, Pule. For everything.
I hope you know how much -

Pule shakes his head, waves his free hand between them.

PULE

Don't say goodbye, Jasmine.

Jasmine looks away, back up at the ocean.

JASMINE

No goodbye, then.

PULE

You'll be back. You'll see.

Pule checks his watch.

PULE

But for now you've got to get
back. That plane will leave
without you.

JASMINE

I'm coming. I think I'll take one
last walk first.

PULE

But hurry. No goodbyes, Tama.

He shuffles through the sand toward the resort. Jasmine watches after him.

EXT. RESORT - PRIVATE BEACH. DAY

Jasmine ambles along the beach, hands in her pockets, watching her feet dig into the sand.

A wind whips against her face and blows her hair back behind her. She looks up into the ocean breeze.

JASMINE (VO)

You can love people - friends,
family, lovers. But can you love
a place the same way? I never
would've thought so until I found
Lagi. This place is my love
affair.

Jasmine spots a boat speeding toward the resort, its engine ROARS. Anxiety sets in her eyes.

JASMINE (VO)

And this is the goodbye I can't
say.

She walks faster down the beach. Her arms swing by her sides, she moves quicker, struggles to run in the sand.

In the distance, the boat's engine cuts off. Jasmine looks toward the resort, eyes wide.

Her eyes dart around, search for her next escape.

Jasmine eyes the forest along the beach.

She moves into the shade of the trees, determined.

EXT. LAGI JUNGLE. DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Jasmine bats away leaves, jumps over tall roots.

She rushes deeper into the refuge of the trees and smiles for the first time, beams.

Jasmine turns back to the beach, sees only a small dot of light in the emerald forest.

She smiles brighter and heads deeper into the jungle.

LATER

Jasmine walks slower, but still has that almost-crazy smile.

She stops, takes in all the sights and sounds around her - beautiful flowers, exotic insects, birds the colour of rainbows.

Jasmine watches the birds, hears them SING, sees them soar high into the sky.

She looks back toward the beach, sees only green vegetation, surrounded by it.

Jasmine smiles as though being caressed by her lover.

She walks on and her hands trail along trees, wide leaves, spikes of ferns. Her feet move softly over the ground.

She pushes herself over thick limbs, monstrous roots.

Thorns dig into her skin, but she moves farther still.

She works her way between tight spaces in the trees, cries out in pain.

Jasmine jerks to a stop at a wall of trees, a heavy log at the ground with the slightest hollow beneath.

She digs away dirt and leaves, wriggles into the space.

Jasmine pushes and pulls herself along, screams out.

She wrenches free and gasps, looks down to see a long, deep gash in her thigh. Blood drips, SMACKS on the ground.

She looks ahead - more walls of trees - and hesitates.

JASMINE (VO)

Pain is a funny thing. You'll run right into it just to escape it.

INTERCUT: THE PLUSH BEDROOM, JASMINE SHRIEKS IN AGONY.

JASMINE (VO)

Pain can make you do crazy things.

She steadies herself and pushes on, fights through the trees.

EXT. LAGI JUNGLE. EVENING

Jasmine slogs through the jungle.

She jerks through a curtain of vines and falls to the ground. She lays her cheek against the ground and struggles to breathe.

Jasmine examines her hand, sees scratches and fresh bruises.

She giggles. She laughs harder and pushes herself over onto her back.

She laughs up at the star-lit sky between the leaves of the canopy, hysterical.

Jasmine's laughter morphs into frantic cries. She moans and sobs.

Moans become sighs until she has no cries left.

Jasmine pushes herself up on her elbows, looks around. Darkness sets.

She stands and looks back behind her at the curtain of vines. She looks forward toward her unknown destination and waits, immobile with indecision.

A deep PURR rises behind her, beyond the vines.

Jasmine holds her breath, listens as the PURR gets louder, comes closer. The jungle quiets and Jasmine is frozen in place.

She turns slowly to the vines. The PURRING grows, only a few feet away. Jasmine is a statue.

She sees the slightest movement of a leaf and bolts deeper into the jungle--

Jasmine runs fast - up, over, under, between--

The quick PADDING of the animal's feet sounds so close--

She wrenches through trees, between vines--

The PADDING fades, but Jasmine runs faster, harder--

She breaks through one final tangle of vines and falls - screams, falls and blacks out.

EXT. PARK. DAY (DREAM)

Jasmine stands in the sunlight of an idyllic park.

Everything around her moves in slow motion - a young couple jogs, birds fly, weeping willows sway.

A MAN (25) - tall with lean muscles, black hair, blue eyes and animal skin clothes - watches from the shadows, worried. Jasmine ogles.

She turns to the sound of a child's delighted squeal.

Jasmine approaches a FATHER (35) playing with his DAUGHTER (5), plain brown hair in ringlets.

She moves closer, recognises the man.

JASMINE

Daddy?

He doesn't hear her.

Jasmine looks at the girl. The ringlets bounce on the girl's shoulders, a small pendant hangs from her neck - the same one in her suitcase.

She watches her father throw her younger self high into the air, let her fall back into his arms.

Jasmine closes her eyes and a sharp wind hits her face. She opens her eyes and gasps as she falls toward her smiling father.

He throws her into the sky, catches her again.

Her father throws her into the air once more and is gone. Green vines speed closer--

She falls, falls, screams herself awake.

INT. JASMINE'S TREE. NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Jasmine jerks upright in darkness and closes her eyes, breathes hard.

Her breath slows, realisation hits - Where is she?

Her fingers touch the rough bedding. She looks around in the dark space.

It's a small space, just enough room for the bed.

A narrow opening is just opposite her, a deep emerald darkness.

Jasmine stands, moves carefully to the opening.

She touches the wall, looks closer at the rough texture of wood grains.

She looks up and sees the inside of a tall, hollow tree.

She turns back to the opening and steps out, pushes aside a large leaf.

Jasmine gapes at a wide, open expanse under the canopy of the trees speckled with moonlight; a world teeming with life. Ferns, creeks, boulders, rivers.

Off in the distance, opposite where she stands and just visible in the moonlight, is a huge waterfall.

She steps out.

EXT. JASMINE'S TREE. NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Moonlight filters down through the leaves, lights Jasmine's face.

She reaches out to brace herself against another tree and a HISS sounds. Jasmine jerks her hand back.

Jasmine looks at the tree, searches for the source of the sound.

She steps closer and the HISSING sounds again, louder with each step.

She stands only centimeters from the broad trunk, notices that the tree is moving. Pulsating.

The HISSING grows louder as she reaches up to touch the strange, smooth bark.

Jasmine touches the tree, the HISSING stops and two white eyes flash open directly in front of Jasmine's face.

She blacks out again.

INT. JASMINE'S TREE. DAY

Jasmine wakes to the sound of the leaf door FLAPPING against the tree.

She opens her eyes and starts.

A WOMAN (30) - smooth black hair, olive skin, lean body, animal skin clothes - sits on the floor, watches her.

Jasmine pushes up on her elbows and they eye each other.

WOMAN

You collapse often.

(off her look)

Two times you have fainted.

JASMINE

I guess so.

Silence.

WOMAN

You are a strange one.

Jasmine laughs.

JASMINE

I'm strange?

WOMAN

No others have ever come this far. You do, but cannot keep awake. Strange.

JASMINE

Where exactly am I? How far inland did I come?

WOMAN

The Falls are the center of the island.

Jasmine's eyes widen, her chin drops.

JASMINE

But the island is 20 kilometers wide! And the jungle is hard as hell to get through.

WOMAN

None of you has come this far.

Jasmine sits on the edge of the bed, wraps her arms around her torso.

JASMINE

Who are you? What are you doing here?

WOMAN

I am Mazreeth. We have been here longer than any of you.

Jasmine's eyes narrow in confusion.

JASMINE

You speak English.

MAZREETH

For you.

JASMINE

So exactly how long have you been here?

Mazreeth tilts her head, stares again.

MAZREETH

Why did you come here?

Jasmine averts her gaze.

JASMINE

I just wanted to get away.

MAZREETH

Away?

JASMINE

From everything.

Mazreeth smiles.

MAZREETH

Perhaps he should not have saved you then.

JASMINE

He?

MAZREETH

Shay. He caught you when you fell.

Jasmine glances away, embarrassed.

JASMINE

Wonderful.

MAZREETH

Yes. He is your protector now.

A faint smile touches Jasmine's lips.

JASMINE

For now.

MAZREETH

For as long as it takes.

JASMINE

How long do you expect me to be here?

MAZREETH

At least until you are healed.

Jasmine opens her mouth to object, reconsiders, smiles faintly.

MAZREETH

And then, I do not know.

Jasmine nods, bites her nails.

EXT. TRIBAL VILLAGE. DAY

Jasmine follows Mazreeth into the village with a hesitant look in her eyes.

She ducks her head, hugs her body as more and more villagers turn to watch her.

They stop whatever they were doing to focus on Jasmine.

Slowly, each of them stands to greet Mazreeth and her guest.

Mazreeth reaches the center of the group and stops.

MAZREETH
 (to the villagers)
 Her name is Jasmine. She is
 Shayha's.

Jasmine looks up to Mazreeth, panicked.

The people nod in recognition.

MAZREETH
 (off Jasmine's look)
 To protect.

The chief, VINTAH (80) - a small, frail man with a large woven breastplate - approaches. A hush falls on the crowd.

VINTAH
 Jasmine.

He smiles, touches her shoulder, turns to the group.

VINTAH
 Keep her safe. Welcome her.

The villagers step forward, one by one, touch Jasmine - her arm, a shoulder, one of her cheeks - and smile at her.

As the procession continues Jasmine notices a man - the same man from her dream - beside a tree.

Jasmine focuses on him and he averts his gaze. She looks to Mazreeth, also watching him.

JASMINE
 Is that -

Mazreeth nods.

MAZREETH
 Shay.

Jasmine turns back. Shay looks at her with a puzzled expression.

EXT/INT. HUT. DAY

Jasmine and Mazreeth approach a small hut with no walls.

MAZREETH

This is where we eat. You know
where we sleep. The bathing pools
are down the path.

Mazreeth indicates a well-worn trail between two towering trees.

Jasmine nods and Mazreeth leads her into the hut, full of villagers.

Mazreeth and Jasmine sit in front of a fire, a skinned animal SIZZLING on a spit.

Shay walks up, grabs a large chunk of meat, sits in the corner behind them.

Mazreeth pulls off a section of meat, offers it to Jasmine on a large leaf. Jasmine inches away and shakes her head.

Mazreeth thrusts the meat toward her.

MAZREETH

Everyone eats.

JASMINE

It's okay. I'm a vegetarian.

A bark of a laugh behind them. Jasmine turns - Shay feigns disinterest.

He points at the meat on her leaf as:

SHAY

He wasn't.

Shay smirks. Jasmine glares, arches an eyebrow.

She takes her leaf of meat, holds it up to Shay - Cheers! - and dumps it in his lap. Jasmine raises her leaf, eats it instead.

Mazreeth howls with the other villagers.

MAZREETH

The vegetarian!

Mazreeth leans forward, kisses Jasmine's forehead, laughs again.

Jasmine blushes, takes another bite of her leaf.

A woman, PISHNU (25), tall and thin, approaches Mazreeth, glances at Shay.

MAZREETH

Pishnu. Here is Jasmine.

Pishnu nods, looks down at the bite marks on Jasmine's leaf in confusion.

SHAY

She does not eat animals.

Pishnu laughs, sighs down to her. Condescending.

PISHNU

Oh, silly girl.

Jasmine's eyes narrow. A tense silence.

MAZREETH

What have you seen, Pishnu?

PISHNU

They followed her path until the border. They believe she is with us.

Pishnu looks back at Jasmine.

PISHNU

They love you. They want you back.

Jasmine's cheeks flush red. She looks down at her leaf.

MAZREETH

Until she is well, she is safer here.

A heavy look.

Pishnu glances at Shay again.

PISHNU

Wonderful.

INT. JASMINE'S TREE. DAY

Jasmine lies in bed. Mazreeth hovers over her, works at her wounds by the sunlight streaming into the tree. A bowl of water almost glows beside her.

JASMINE

You never answered my question before. About how long you've been here?

Silence.

JASMINE

Is that something I'm not allowed
to know?

Mazreeth laughs.

MAZREETH

You are allowed to know.

She gives a shake of her head, returns to her work.

Jasmine looks on, unsure.

JASMINE

Will you tell me?

Mazreeth glances at her, massages a black salve into one
of Jasmine's injuries.

MAZREETH

What do you know of the history
of man?

Jasmine considers, confused.

JASMINE

I guess it depends on which
history you mean. Science or
religion?

Mazreeth smiles again, focuses on the deep gash on
Jasmine's thigh.

MAZREETH

It is interesting that you
believe they are two separate
things.

Mazreeth glances up to Jasmine, grins.

MAZREETH

Behold the fall of man
accomplished.

Jasmine tilts her head.

MAZREETH

Charles Tennant.

Mazreeth looks back to her work.

MAZREETH

We are very observant.

She helps Jasmine turn onto her stomach.

Jasmine gingerly rests her head on her arms, looks through the entryway at the jungle outside, the leaf door pulled aside, listens.

MAZREETH

Whatever you believe, and
whatever our differences, you and
I share a part of our history.
The first part. Your first
parents were ours as well.

JASMINE

What happened, then? That made us
so different?

Mazreeth washes the cuts on Jasmine's back as:

MAZREETH

Our first mother - you call her
Eve - had many children. Do you
know them?

JASMINE

I know Cain and Abel. I didn't
know there were more.

MAZREETH

Yes, there were more. But what
you know is enough. You know that
Cain took Abel's life.

Jasmine nods.

MAZREETH

Have you ever lost someone,
Jasmine?

A twinge.

JASMINE

Yes.

MAZREETH

Then I'm sure you can imagine it
- the emptiness, the ache for
them?

Jasmine stares off as tears fill her eyes.

She stealthily wipes them away as:

JASMINE

Eve?

Mazreeth registers Jasmine's tears, but continues.

MAZREETH

The children. The young brother and sister, witnesses to the first murder, of one loved one by another. They saw every moment, felt every fear. And so, they ran. They did not turn back. They ran over stretches of land and swam through the sea. The brother and sister kept moving until they reached the Falls and knew that they were home.

Jasmine glances over her shoulder at Mazreeth, a dubious look.

MAZREETH

Faith is always enough, Jasmine.

Mazreeth sets back to work.

Jasmine stares out the opening toward the distant Falls.

EXT. JASMINE'S TREE. DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Shay sits unseen at the base of the tree, a look of contemplation on his face.

EXT. RESORT. DAY

The resort is busy, but relaxed. Guests lounge on the beach. Pool water LAPS against azure tiles.

The trees are still, one in particular - the odd, smooth bark, the faint outline of two closed eyes, the black lashes.

The eyes open, look down at something.

Miri and Pule talk in hushed voices.

MIRI

Did you find her?

Pule gives a slight shake of his head, shuffles the glasses on his tray, appears busy.

PULE

They have her, Miri. You know that.

MIRI

I know she's dying. That's what I know. Dying in the middle of the jungle. She should be in a hospital right now.

Pule touches her arm lightly.

PULE

They can help her. They will.

Miri's eyes glisten with worry.

MIRI

She doesn't have time.

Pule grins but closes his eyes, wills his words to be true.

PULE

They will help her.

He pats her arm, goes back to his tray.

MIRI

Her uncle called again. Nothing but a monkey, that man.

PULE

Don't let the monkeys hear that. Is he still making threats?

MIRI

He may as well be. Said he's ready to come here himself to clean up our mess. Our mess! I could hit that man in the eyes, Pule.

PULE

He's worried about her.

MIRI

Ha! Richmond Blake worries about himself and that's it. You watch, Pule. He'll come here, make a fuss about Jasmine and find a way to take over the whole island.

PULE

Not the whole island, Miri.

Miri shakes her head.

MIRI

They're not ready for him.

The manager, TANE (35), dressed in a crisp black suit, approaches.

TANE

Okay, Pule. The ice is melting.

Miri gives Pule a nervous glance. They walk away in different directions.

Tane heaves a sigh, looks deep into the jungle, shakes his head toward the ground. He rubs the back of his neck and walks away, weary.

The white eyes watch from the jungle. The outline of a body retreats into the brush.

EXT. VILLAGE. DAY

Jasmine walks around the village, in the line of the trees.

Villagers point at her, smirk and whisper to one another.

She tries to ignore them, walks behind the trees.

Jasmine jerks one hand to her mouth, one to her stomach, collapses behind a tree and vomits on the ground, tries to be silent.

She looks around to check that she hasn't been seen, wipes a hand over her mouth.

She stands and takes one step, clenches her stomach. Her body hunches over in pain.

She lets out a quiet gasp, bolts through the trees toward the bathing pools.

EXT. BATHING POOLS. DAY

The pools are set under a tall cliff. Long vines stretch from the top of the cliff into the water - jade curtains.

The clear water ripples behind the curtain. Jasmine comes to the surface, breathes deeply.

She sits on a ledge in the water, her back to the vines. Behind the leaves, Jasmine wrings water from her hair.

Shay sits on a boulder opposite Jasmine, his back to the pools but his ear turned toward her.

Jasmine's body hunches over. She shudders with quiet sobs.

Shay's jaw clenches. Pain is clear on his face, but his voice is cool, smooth.

SHAY

Tell me.

Jasmine jerks around, sees Shay's form, the profile of his face.

She dips back into the pools, approaches the edge, her clothes folded in a neat pile as:

JASMINE
Pardon me?

Shay speaks over his shoulder.

SHAY
Your pain. Is Mazreeth unhelpful to you?

Jasmine dresses quickly and silently.

JASMINE
She is. Helpful, I mean. She's wonderful.

SHAY
But you hurt.

Jasmine rubs her hands on her dress.

JASMINE
No.

SHAY
You were ill before.

Her head snaps up, her eyes accuse.

JASMINE
You saw me?

He turns to face her.

SHAY
I need to know what is wrong.

JASMINE
And now you're here too?

SHAY
You must tell me.

JASMINE
Are you always watching me?

SHAY
What is your pain, Jasmine?

She fights against a sob, shouts at him.

JASMINE
Why won't you just forget about it and leave me alone?

Shay jumps to his feet.

SHAY
Because I can't!

Jasmine recoils.

Shay leans toward her - how to explain? He struggles with himself, turns away.

Jasmine watches him.

She looks away, hugs her arms close, walks up the path.

Shay falls into step behind her - no choice.

INT. JASMINE'S TREE. NIGHT

Jasmine tosses in her sleep. A grimace plays on her lips.

JASMINE
Shay.

She awakes, leans up on her elbows. Her eyes dart around, rest on something off-screen.

Jasmine lies down, eyes wide.

Shay sleeps on the ground outside. One hand reaches into the tree.

Jasmine watches him rest.

EXT. LAGI JUNGLE. DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS:

Jasmine ventures to the Falls. Shay follows at a distance.

Jasmine lets him see and hear her cry. Shay follows closer.

She sobs and Shay's eyes widen, his hands tremble.

EXT. BOTTOM OF THE FALLS. DAY

Shay leads Jasmine through the dense brush.

He jerks to a stop, faces her. His eyes are hopeful - something to say.

JASMINE
(harshly)
What?

Shay's expression falls.

He steps aside, pulls back the foliage that blocks their path.

Jasmine looks past him. Her mouth gapes as she watches.

The Falls ROAR just beyond. The water glows. Magnificent.

Jasmine is stunned.

JASMINE

Oh, Shay.

A slight smile pulls at Shay's lips.

She steps past him, walks along the river's bank toward the Falls. Shay follows, just barely holds out his hands, ready to catch her fall.

Jasmine stops, Shay lowers his hands and watches her watch the Falls. She is entranced. Radiant.

They nearly shout to be heard over the Falls:

SHAY

I'm sorry.

Jasmine looks down, her back to him.

JASMINE

Why?

He hesitates.

SHAY

I couldn't let you die.

Jasmine turns, gazes at him.

SHAY

I can't.

JASMINE

You can't save me either. Not forever.

His jaw clenches.

SHAY

Do you want me to leave you alone, then? Go away and never speak to you again?

Jasmine looks away, cringes. She considers. Grins.

JASMINE

I guess you could keep trying. For a little longer.

Shay smiles, sighs.

SHAY

It's not a hard thing, Jasmine.
To save a life. One small action
can change everything that
follows.

He watches her with an intense fire in his eyes. Jasmine smiles weakly, rubs her hands on her dress.

JASMINE

Not hard.

Shay reaches up, straightens the collar of her dress. He strokes the hem of it, his hand rests lightly on her shoulder.

He smirks.

SHAY

Not when it's worth it.

Jasmine grins, takes a slow, deliberate step toward him.

Shay lowers his hand to his side.

Jasmine reaches out to hold it, looks at it. His body stiffens at her touch, her closeness.

They stand this way - Jasmine watches his hand, Shay watches her.

He gently pulls his hand free, steps around her.

SHAY

The best place to see the Falls
is on the other side.

Jasmine looks after him, crestfallen. Follows.

EXT. THE FALLS. DAY

Jasmine and Shay swim across the river.

He leads her around the trees that line the bank.

The trees clear and he stops, looks up at the Falls with an unsatisfied expression.

Shay glances back at Jasmine, back up to the Falls.

SHAY

Come on.

They continue to walk, close in on the Falls.

The ground slopes sharply. Shay keeps moving.

EXT. THE FALLS - SLOPE. DAY (CONTINUOUS)

JASMINE

Shay, I can't -

He doesn't look back.

SHAY

Yes, you can.

He looks back to her where she hesitates beside a boulder.

SHAY

It will be worth the effort.

She steadies her foothold, pushes herself up onto the boulder.

JASMINE

Better be.

Her grimace turns to a smirk and Shay smiles brightly, turns back toward the sharp incline.

They climb. He helps her up once, lets her climb the rest of the way on her own.

Jasmine tackles the hike, leaps and pulls her body along.

The movement takes its toll - pain shows in her eyes. Jasmine ignores it, focuses on Shay.

Jasmine - exhausted and in agony - looks up to see Shay disappear over the crest of the cliff, behind an impossible obstacle of rocks.

She lets her body fall gently to the ground, cries silently.

She rocks, wraps her arms around herself in pain.

Jasmine falls over onto her side and weeps.

Shay lifts her, carries her. Holds her close and makes the final climb for her.

EXT. THE FALLS - CLIFF. DUSK (CONTINUOUS)

Shay kisses her forehead, releases her a few feet from the cliff's edge.

Jasmine stands facing him, arms folded across her chest, tears drying on her red cheeks. She looks up, ogle.

Shay is bathed in the sun's light - amber and gold against his bronze and black. Beautiful. Strong and beautiful.

She starts to speak, but he puts his fingers to her lips to silence her.

He rests his hands on her shoulders, slowly turns her away from him, toward the sun.

Jasmine gasps - the curve of the horizon, a brilliant sunset, the navy ocean, white ribbons of beach and jade treetops.

Shay leans in, speaks in her ear.

SHAY
Is it worth it?

She smiles. He watches, raptured.

SHAY
I will save you, Jasmine. From everything.

Jasmine's cheeks flush crimson, her smile brightens.

The sun settles over the water.

EXT. CLIFF - EXTRAVAGANT MANSION. DUSK

RICHMOND BLAKE (55) - dinner jacket, cravat, slicked hair, tumbler of alcohol - stands on the balcony, looks out at the same sunset.

He sips his drink and his tight frown loosens. He smiles a slight grin.

EXT. THE FALLS - CLIFF. NIGHT

Jasmine lies on her back looking up to the sky - black and speckled through with brilliant stars and a pearl moon.

Shay lies near the narrow bank of the river only slightly farther from the drop than Jasmine.

Jasmine sighs in content.

JASMINE
We can go if you want.

SHAY
No!

She recoils, looks at him.

SHAY

No. We do not wander in the dark.
We'll leave in the morning.

Jasmine looks back up to the sky, wipes a tear away.
Somewhere in the jungle, a limb CRACKS, an animal SNARLS--
Birds erupt into the air, CAW--
Shay jerks upright, looks back toward the trees--
He hears the GROWL of a large cat, runs for the cliff--
Jasmine jumps to her feet, looks toward the sound--
Shay grabs Jasmine's arm as he passes her--

SHAY

We have to move!

JASMINE

What was that?

SHAY

Just run!

EXT. THE FALLS - SLOPE. NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

They slide down over boulders, down the rough, steep slope, rush to the gentler slope below--
The animal SNARLS again, just behind them--
Another, louder SHRIEK echoes from below--
They look down past the trees, see a pair of panthers watching them. Waiting.
A twig SNAPS, Shay spins to the sound behind him--
The panther that steps through the brush is twice as large as the two below, his SNARL more menacing.
Shay backs Jasmine to the edge of the slope, the water rushes past them.

SHAY

(to himself)
What do we do? What do we do?

JASMINE

Shay. We jump.

He shakes his head once.

SHAY
You can't jump.

Jasmine pulls her shoulders back and eyes him, indignant and oblivious to the predator that approaches.

Shay glances at her. She turns slowly, steps to the ledge, leaps.

Jasmine falls, quiet, and splashes into the water.

She swims quickly beneath the surface, past the two unseeing animals below.

Shay's panther SNARLS, readies to pounce--

Shay backs away, eyes on the beast, smiles and jumps off the ledge.

The water POUNDS. The current pushes and pulls, Shay pushes back.

He swims deep, further and further.

Shay fights against the lack of air. He rushes up to the surface, breaks free and gasps.

Shay swims toward the opposite bank and pants. He looks back upstream.

A heavy silence, even this close to the Falls.

Shay strains his eyes, scans the trees, the banks.

SHAY
(whispering)
Jasmine? Jasmine!

A ripple on the water behind him, Shay jumps. Jasmine pops to the surface, crouches in the water beside him, smiles.

Shay catches his breath as Jasmine stifles a laugh.

Shay glances at her, smiles and splashes water in her face.

He runs his hands through his hair, pulls the loose strands back from his face. Jasmine ogles.

SHAY
That was not an option.

JASMINE
I'm not be jungle food, Shay.

He smirks.

SHAY
Mazreeth would be proud of her
vegetarian.

Jasmine's cheeks flush and she drops lower in the water.

SHAY
You could have died.

JASMINE
We would have died if we'd stayed
there.

Shay gives a heavy look.

SHAY
One small action, Jasmine.

She smiles.

JASMINE
I'm your protector now, too.

SHAY
If you want to be.

A heavy moment. They stay there, watch each other.

Shay's eyes fall and he moves away.

SHAY
We should go. Carefully.

He climbs out of the river. Jasmine frowns, but follows.

THE SUN MOVES OVERHEAD TO SHOW A DAY HAS PASSED.

EXT. FIRE CIRCLE. NIGHT

Jasmine sits against a tree, away from the fire circle and the villagers - some talk and laugh, others dance to the music of several drums.

Mazreeth approaches, sits beside her.

MAZREETH
How are you?

Jasmine scowls.

JASMINE
Fine.

Mazreeth delicately takes one of her arms and examines a wound there.

MAZREETH

These are not healing as quickly
as they should. More time.

Jasmine stares off toward the group, doesn't seem to have heard her.

MAZREETH

You are sad.

Mazreeth looks around.

MAZREETH

And alone. Where is Shayha?

Jasmine points to the opposite side of the circle.

Shay talks animatedly to a beautiful WOMAN (45) and two young children (5) - a boy and a girl that look strikingly similar to him.

Mazreeth fights a grin.

MAZREETH

I see.

Jasmine nods slightly, turns to Mazreeth, her eyes alarmed.

Mazreeth indicates the woman at Shay's side.

MAZREETH

She is very beautiful.

JASMINE

(sullen)

I guess.

Mazreeth nudges her shoulder into Jasmine's arm.

MAZREETH

She is his mother.

Jasmine's eyes brighten. She smiles to Mazreeth, then turns away, feigns nonchalance.

JASMINE

Really?

MAZREETH

And the children are his brother
and sister.

Jasmine tries to hide her smile.

JASMINE

Oh.

Mazreeth laughs, tousles Jasmine's hair.

MAZREETH

Come and join us.

JASMINE

No, thanks. I like to watch.

MAZREETH

Are we strange to you?

JASMINE

There's so much I don't understand.

Jasmine is silent.

MAZREETH

We are not hiding anything from you, Jasmine. If there is something you want to understand, you only have to ask the question.

JASMINE

I know.

Mazreeth waits.

MAZREETH

Then ask.

Jasmine takes a deep breath.

JASMINE

All right.

She scans the scene before her, points to a group of teenage girls, their eyes closed with a look of extreme effort on their faces.

JASMINE

What are they doing?

Mazreeth looks at the girls, chuckles.

MAZREETH

They are trying to find him.

JASMINE

Him.

MAZREETH

Him. The him. Their mates.

Jasmine considers, shakes her head.

JASMINE

Okay, what?

Mazreeth settles in closer to Jasmine, speaks softly.

MAZREETH

When our time comes to join our mate, this is when we know it - at the fire, with sound of the drums pounding in our chest. No one can predict it or make it happen.

She nods toward the girls, grinning.

MAZREETH

Although, the young ones always refuse to believe that. They close their eyes because it is the only way to hear his heartbeat above the noise. When that happens, he hears yours as well. No one else recognises it, but suddenly you are dancing together. And alone. For yourself but for each other. When the dance ends and the two of you find your unique embrace, you are joined. Married, as you would say.

A heavy silence.

JASMINE

Wow.

MAZREETH

It is an intense experience. Intimate and intense.

Mazreeth smiles lovingly to her PARTNER (30) on the other side of the clearing.

Jasmine watches the girls, their eyes clamped tightly closed, lets her own eyes fall closed.

EXT. PATH TO BATHING POOLS. DAY

Jasmine walks back toward the village from the bathing pools. Her hair drips water down her back. Shay follows.

Shay's brother and sister run up to him, giggle and play.

Jasmine watches, laughs at them. She claps a hand to her mouth.

Shay holds his brother down for his sister's tickles.

Jasmine escapes silently into the trees.

EXT. LAGI JUNGLE. DAY (CONTINUOUS)

She runs through the trees. A tear escapes the corner of her eye.

She reaches the silence of the jungle and vomits at the base of a tree.

Jasmine kneels there, holds herself. Silent tears fall down her cheeks.

She pushes up from the ground and looks around - green everywhere. She looks right - leaves and trees. Left - more of the same.

Jasmine breathes quickly, mild panic sets in. She massages a strip of animal skin bandage between her fingers.

She closes her eyes, waits for the panic to subside.

Jasmine opens her eyes, sets off - a random path.

She walks, her jaw set firm.

The forest thins and she sees a hollow tree, a leaf door - sweet relief.

She approaches the tree, opens her mouth to speak, stops when she hears Mazreeth inside the tree.

MAZREETH (OS)

(furious, no subtitles)

[She is not well, Pishnu. And we are the only ones who can save her. No, he will not get to her. I will not let it happen. The name] Richmond Blake [might mean something somewhere, but not here].

Jasmine takes a timid step as:

MAZREETH (OS)

[Let him come. He will never
touch her. I will put a -]

A twig CRACKS under Jasmine's foot. Mazreeth's voice
cuts off.

Mazreeth pulls the leaf aside, peers out of the tree. She
smiles brightly when she sees Jasmine.

MAZREETH

Oh, Jasmine. How are you? Do you
need me?

JASMINE

No, no. I'm fine. I just got
lost.

Mazreeth lets out a shaky laugh.

MAZREETH

You are a strange one. Just
follow this path and you will
come to -

JASMINE

What were you saying, Maz? About
Richmond Blake?

MAZREETH

What? Nothing. I -

JASMINE

You said you weren't hiding
anything from me. You said all I
have to do is ask. This is me
asking.

Mazreeth watches her, considers.

MAZREETH

Your uncle is coming for you.

Jasmine's eyes widen, she draws in a shallow breath.

INT/EXT. JASMINE'S TREE. NIGHT

Shay lies on his back at the mouth of the tree, looks up
toward the canopy.

Jasmine lies awake on the bed.

The jungle is quiet and still. Shay does not look away
from the canopy as:

SHAY
You need to rest.

Silence.

JASMINE
You don't know him, Shay. You
don't know the kind of man he is.

SHAY
Then tell me.

She hesitates.

JASMINE
They think he's coming for me.
Mazreeth and Pishnu. They think
you are all going to have to
protect me from him until I'm
healed.

SHAY
Is that not so?

She wipes a tear from her eye.

JASMINE
No. He's not coming for me.

SHAY
What is he coming for?

JASMINE
Finding me doesn't matter to him.
Not at all.

SHAY
Jasmine.

Jasmine turns her face into the bedding. She cries as:

JASMINE
He's coming for you. All of you.
Lagi and everything on it. And
it's my fault.

The muscles in Shay's jaw clench, his eyes narrow in fury.

He jumps to his feet, bolts through the jungle.

Jasmine turns, sees him gone, sobs into her hands.

EXT. LAGI JUNGLE. NIGHT

Shay runs hard, fast, through the trees. He punches away loose tree limbs that hang in his way.

As he approaches the beach at the resort, the colour of his skin blends with the trees. Only the whites of his eyes, his outline and the occasional sheen of sweat are visible.

Shay moves cautiously, silently.

He nears the outer wall, looks to Pishnu's perch - she leans back against the tree, watching and waiting.

Shay moves away from her toward the cottages around a bend in the island.

He slows as he reaches one of the smaller buildings close to the tree line.

EXT. COTTAGE. NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

He leans against the wall, his skin fades to the pale colour of the paint.

Shay tilts his face toward the open window, makes a faint bird's call.

There is a SHUFFLING inside, Miri's face appears in the window, her skin illuminated by the moonlight.

MIRI

Shayha? Is that you?

SHAY

I am here.

Miri looks toward his voice, sees only the wall until his eyes blink once.

MIRI

Oh, Shayha. Is Jasmine okay? Tell me she's okay.

SHAY

She is fine, Miri. She is wounded, but our healer is caring for her.

Miri sighs in relief, lets her head fall to her hands, whispers a thankful prayer.

SHAY

Who is he, Miri? Why is he coming here?

Miri looks to Shay with sadness in her eyes.

MIRI

You know Jasmine? Her uncle is nothing like her. Richmond Blake is a selfish man, Shayha. Selfish and terrible.

She shakes her head in defeat.

MIRI

He is a man who gets what he wants. Every time.

SHAY

But he doesn't want to hurt Jasmine?

Miri laughs.

MIRI

He will if it'll get him the island. He's vicious, that man. He'll kill every one of us if it comes to it.

She looks to him pointedly.

MIRI

Even the babies.

Shay's white eyes close slowly and the glimmer of a tear races down his face.

His voice is pained as:

SHAY

Thank you, Miri. We will be ready.

MIRI

Then you'd better hurry. He'll be here soon.

SHAY

Thank you.

He doesn't move to leave.

MIRI

(whispering)

Help her, Shayha. Do whatever you have to, but please help her.

He hesitates.

SHAY
Why is she in pain?

MIRI
Hasn't she told you?

SHAY
No. She refuses.

MIRI
Doesn't surprise me. Stubborn
when she wants to be, that girl.

SHAY
Miri.

Miri struggles to keep her voice steady.

MIRI
Don't make me say it, Shayha.

Shay's eyes turn away from the window and close. His voice cracks on his words:

SHAY
It's why she isn't healing, isn't
it?

MIRI
You said she was fine!

SHAY
She is. Right now.

They are silent.

SHAY
I have to get back.

His skin returns to its normal shade of bronze. Shay faces Miri in the window.

SHAY
I will help her.

Miri sees the tears that glisten in his eyes, takes in a sharp breath.

MIRI
Shayha! You - you love her!

He looks down to the ground.

SHAY
I don't know. But I can't explain
this.

MIRI
 I wish I could kiss that girl.
 About time she got a good man.

Shay is silent - not that simple.

Miri watches him wrestle with his emotions, reaches out and delicately touches his shoulder.

MIRI
 Ah, don't worry about that now,
 Tama. Just take care of her. He
 may be her uncle, but he will
 kill her if he thinks he has to.
 Don't let him get that chance.

His voice breaks:

SHAY
 Goodbye, Miri.

He runs into the trees.

Miri looks after him, raises her fingers to her lips in worry.

INT. JASMINE'S TREE. NIGHT

Mazreeth washes Jasmine wounds as Jasmine coughs wildly.

Mazreeth glances at her face, worried.

JASMINE
 (hoarse)
 Don't look at me like that. I'm
 fine.

MAZREETH
 At some times, that is true. But
 not now.

Mazreeth wipes Jasmine's hair out of her face.

JASMINE
 I'm fine.

Silence.

SHAY (OS)
 You are not fine.

They look up - Shay stands just inside the tree.

Mazreeth looks at Jasmine, gathers her supplies.

MAZREETH

I will be back in the morning.

Mazreeth leaves.

He eyes Jasmine - a tense moment.

SHAY

You are scared.

JASMINE

Does it matter? Everybody's scared about something.

SHAY

Everyone has something to fear, yes. But not everyone lives in their fear the way you do.

He hesitates, gives in and sits beside her, checks her wounds.

Jasmine grins. Bites her lip.

JASMINE

I used to ride horses. I was good. Cocky. One day I tried to ride a new horse for the first time. I was alone, but how hard could it be? He bucked me the second I got in the saddle. I remember lying in the dirt and watching him walk away with his tail swishing behind him. I waited for three hours before my dad found me. Two broken bones and eleven stitches. I thought that was the most terrifying thing I'd ever have to live through.

SHAY

And now?

JASMINE

Now, I realise that terror is always wondering which day is going to be the one that kills you.

Shay meets her gaze.

He smiles, caresses her arm.

SHAY

Not this one.

Jasmine smiles.

INT. RESORT - TANE'S OFFICE. DAY

Miri's eye peeks into a slightly open door as Richmond Blake yells:

RICHMOND (OS)
This is unacceptable.
Unacceptable, Tane.

He paces the room, fumes behind Tane's desk as:

TANE
And just what would you have me do, sir? Put even more lives at risk? The jungle holds dangers that you simply cannot appreciate. The island -

Richmond slams a fist on the desk.

RICHMOND
Is my island!

He glares.

Tane steps forward, leans over the desk.

TANE
Not yet.

An impasse.

TANE
But in any case, I'll have someone gather supplies for you. You'll want to spend some time getting to know Lagi. To decide how best to save Jasmine, of course.

Tane walks away, head high.

Richmond looks after him, dumbstruck.

INT. RESORT - HALLWAY. DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Tane steps out of his office, pulls the door closed. He pats a worried Miri on the shoulder.

MIRI
You didn't tell him. About them.
That she's safe.

TANE
He'll have to figure it out on his own.

He winks, walks away.

EXT. VILLAGE. DAY

Jasmine walks toward the hut, carries an armful of fire wood.

She sees Pishnu and Shay across the village where they teach children how to use their native slingshots [(spoon-like rods with a length of vine run through the bowl)].

Pishnu takes aim, demonstrates the right posture.

As he talks to the children, Shay points to Pishnu's body, touches the small of her back, runs a hand along her arm, across her shoulders.

Jasmine blushes.

Shay looks up, sees her. Jasmine looks away and hurries off.

She almost reaches the hut, is blocked by Shay, his eyes enraged.

SHAY

Jasmine.

JASMINE

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to stare. And I understand. Really, I -

He takes the load of fire wood, levels a glare at her.

SHAY

I need you to heal.

Jasmine glances at Pishnu. Pishnu smirks.

JASMINE

Anything to get me out of the way, right?

He flinches. A painful silence.

Shay's eyes harden.

SHAY

Yes.

He turns away, throws the wood into the hut. It CRASHES, knocks over the pile, villagers scream--

They turn, watch him storm off into the jungle.

They turn to look at Jasmine.

Pishnu's jaw drops, she stares.

Jasmine struggles to breathe. Tears fall and sobs break.

INT. JASMINE'S TREE. DAY

Jasmine sits on the ground against the tree, knees close, face red and wet.

Mazreeth steps in. She sees Jasmine, moves forward. Back. Stops - what to do?

MAZREETH

I didn't bring meat.

She holds out a few large leaves.

MAZREETH

I think you were coming to eat.

Jasmine doesn't move, only her eyes turn up to Mazreeth.

A sob breaks in Jasmine's chest.

Mazreeth sets the leaves on the ground beside her, perches on the bed, awkward.

MAZREETH

Pi... I was told... your uncle is close.

Jasmine closes her eyes - not now.

MAZREETH

I am sorry.

Mazreeth settles onto the bed, breathes deeply.

MAZREETH

It does not matter. He will turn back soon. Still, when he comes back he will likely -

JASMINE

Can you please stop talking, Mazreeth?

Mazreeth looks down. Rebuked.

MAZREETH

I will go.

JASMINE

No!

Another sob breaks. Mazreeth watches, eyes wide, sits motionless.

MAZREETH

All right.

A tense silence.

JASMINE

I have to go home.

She looks at Mazreeth.

JASMINE

Now.

MAZREETH

You are not well, Jasmine.

Jasmine closes her eyes.

JASMINE

We have hospitals. They save people every day.

MAZREETH

I do not care. They cannot heal you, so you stay.

Jasmine sobs.

JASMINE

I'm hurting everyone by being here, Maz. Please, please, let me go.

Mazreeth wipes away a tear, stands and walks to the opening, looks out to the jungle.

MAZREETH

I can't.

She leaves. Jasmine cries.

EXT. RESORT - BEACH. DAY

Richmond packs the last few supplies into a backpack. Employees look on, smirk.

Miri approaches Tane, whispers:

MIRI

Are you just going to let him go?
Alone?

TANE

Well I'm not going with him. He's
an imbecile. A man like that will
get you killed in an hour.

Miri looks at Richmond. He struggles with a clasp on the
pack, gets angrier by the second.

MIRI

I'll go.

TANE

What? No, Miri. You can't -

Miri levels a glare at Tane.

MIRI

I can't what, little brother? You
gonna tell me what to do?

Tane hesitates.

TANE

Go get changed. I'll tell the
imbecile.

EXT. RESORT - BEACH. DAY

Tane talks to Miri in a rush, a harsh whisper:

TANE

No fires. Don't stay in one place
too long. Even when you stop, you
keep moving. If you hear anything
out of place, or even think you
hear anything, don't check, just
run. Always watch your back, but
keep an eye out in front, too.
And Miri?

Miri looks up at him.

TANE

No matter what happens, don't try
to save him.

Tane jerks his head toward Richmond.

She looks at Tane with soft, loving eyes.

MIRI

What, you think I'm an idiot?

He smiles, pulls her into a hug - his crisp suit pulls taut. He holds his sister.

TANE

Let me go. You stay here.

Miri pushes against him, bats at his suit.

MIRI

You hush all that. I'm ready and I'm going and I'll be back soon.

Richmond stumbles over a root at the edge of the jungle, shouts at it.

MIRI

Maybe alone, but I'll be back.

Miri leads Richmond and his scowl into the jungle.

Tane watches, anxious.

INT. JASMINE'S TREE. NIGHT

Jasmine and Shay lie in their normal positions, she in the bed, he just outside the opening. Awake.

JASMINE

Can I ask you something?

SHAY

Yes.

She considers.

JASMINE

Pishnu hates me.

Silence.

JASMINE

And she's not the only one.

He turns, looks at her.

JASMINE

It seems like you hate me, too.

Shay rolls his eyes, looks away.

Jasmine's chin quivers.

JASMINE

Is it something I did?

Shay is still, quiet.

SHAY

Yes.

He looks at her. Tears well in her eyes.

SHAY

I don't hate you.

He sits up in the opening.

SHAY

Things have changed because of you. But it's not your fault.

They watch each other, silent.

Shay looks back into the jungle.

SHAY

You don't understand.

JASMINE

I don't.

SHAY

Then you do not pay attention.

He turns to face her again.

SHAY

What do you see, Jasmine, when you see us?

She considers - what does he want to hear?

JASMINE

I see kindness. And love. And -

SHAY

No, no. When you go into the village with Mazreeth and you look at us, what do you actually see?

JASMINE

I see all of you. Men and women and children. Helping each other. You're like one big family.

SHAY

And yet, we are not.

He drops his head to his hands.

SHAY

There is so much expectation. Of what should be. It's unbearable.

JASMINE

And that's because of me?

SHAY

It is because of you that I see it.

Shay looks away into the jungle. Defeated.

EXT. LAGI JUNGLE. DAY

Miri and Richmond walk along as Miri looks far up ahead, expects to see Jasmine after every turn.

Richmond looks behind and around, fear in his eyes, but still appraises his property.

RICHMOND

Pretty good island, I'd say. So much potential.

She stops to face him.

MIRI

Let me guess. More resorts? Apartment buildings? Parking lots?

RICHMOND

No, no. (scoffs) Parking lots. Parking garages, honey. But so much more. Skyscrapers. Penthouses with ten million dollar views. The ultimate luxury in the ultimate paradise.

Miri barks a laugh. She continues on her path as:

MIRI

You've got big dreams, mister. Too big for this island.

RICHMOND

Lady, I didn't get where I am by believing in that kind of pessimism.

MIRI

And just where is that exactly?
Look around, Mr Blake. There's
nobody to take your money here.

His face turns red, almost purple.

RICHMOND

I am Richmond Blake.

Miri ignores him, keeps walking. He grabs her shoulder,
spins her to face him - no one ignores him.

RICHMOND

I am Richmond Blake!

But no one pushes Miri around either.

MIRI

Yes, you are! You think anybody
cares? You think you can -

A fist flies around, backhands her in the face--

She falls unconscious to the ground, hidden beneath reeds
and brush--

He glares down at her, breathes hard and fast.

His fury subsides, silence takes its place.

He looks around at the jungle. WHISPERS sound from the
trees. Stealthy movements in the shadows, in the canopy
above.

RICHMOND

Who's there?

A black shadow darts past our view, behind Richmond's
back. He turns quickly, fear lights his eyes.

A low RUMBLE comes from the trees.

Richmond turns in the direction of the sound, stops
breathing.

He slowly bends to shake Miri awake.

RICHMOND

(frantic whisper)
Miri? Miri!

Miri doesn't move, doesn't open her eyes as:

MIRI

(whispering)
Leave me alone, you idiot!

The RUMBLING grows louder.

RICHMOND
(whispering)
What do I do?

An animal SNARLS in the vegetation.

MIRI
(whispering)
Play dead, stupid.

A twig SNAPS. Richmond turns and runs--

The black shadow bounds over Miri, chases Richmond into the jungle--

Miri sits up, looks after it, worried.

EXT. LAGI JUNGLE. DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Richmond's eyes are wide, terrified, as he runs--

The black shadow flashes through the jungle--

Richmond looks back over his shoulder, falls to the ground. His arms fly over his head--

Silence.

He opens his eyes, lowers his arms, sees only green.

A RUSTLING in the trees. Richmond scampers back to the base of a tree.

The RUSTLING comes closer, closer--

Miri breaks through the trees, looks down on him in shock.

Richmond breathes, gasps - relief.

She smiles and approaches him, picks up a small limb - the size of a club - without breaking her stride.

He raises his hands up to her, defensive.

RICHMOND
Now hold on a second.

MIRI
Nobody hits me.

She takes the last step toward him, swings the club up over her head--

RICHMOND
I won't do it!

Miri hesitates.

RICHMOND
I won't clear the island. I'll
develop the beaches, but I'll
leave the rest of the jungle
alone.

She considers.

MIRI
You leave as soon as you're done.
And you never come back.

Richmond nods, frantic.

Miri lowers her club, but doesn't release it. Gets a good
hold on it.

MIRI
You walk in front from now on.

INT. HUT. NIGHT

A new skinned animal roasts over the fire.

Pishnu sits to the side, scowls, while others await the
feast.

Jasmine stands off behind her, watches her. Jasmine bites
her nails, eyes Pishnu.

SHAY
Leave her.

Jasmine turns, rolls her eyes at him - no problem. Shay
looks at Pishnu, worried, but he doesn't move.

JASMINE
What's wrong with her?

SHAY
She is struggling.

JASMINE
With... ?

He rubs his face in his hands.

SHAY
She saved your uncle.

Jasmine looks back at Pishnu, looks at the panther
roasting, the people smiling on.

The slightest hint of fear and panic plays on Pishnu's face.

EXT. VILLAGE. DAY

Pishnu and two other WOMEN (20) stand in front of a group of children. She fades in and out of sight - a lesson.

Jasmine carries fire wood past them, doesn't notice the children.

Pishnu sees her, glares. She speaks to a child near Jasmine (subtitled).

PISHNU
Wokreen, let us see your fade.

The child fades perfectly. Invisible.

Pishnu grins deviously.

PISHNU
Excellent. You are the best today.

The child whoops. Jasmine starts at the sound, is knocked over. Fire wood tumbles over her legs--

She screams, clutches her ankle.

PISHNU
(indifferent, English)
Ah, Wokreen. Careful.

Jasmine looks up at her, Pishnu stares back.

Shay rushes out of nowhere to Jasmine, fusses over her leg.

SHAY
What happened?

Everyone watches, listens.

JASMINE
She did.

Shay's hands stop.

SHAY
Pishnu did not do this.

Jasmine whips her head around to Shay.

JASMINE
So I'm lying?

SHAY
Jasmine, Pishnu does not hurt
others without cause.

A heavy glare.

JASMINE
Without cause.

She moves to stand, Shay reaches out to help her. Jasmine jerks her arm away.

JASMINE
Do not.

Jasmine pushes up, sways, keels over in pain.

SHAY
Come. You need to rest.

JASMINE
No, Shayha!

She limps away. Shay watches after her.

SHAY
(to Pishnu, subtitled)
Sorry for the interruption.

He walks away.

PISHNU
(to the child, subtitled)
Excellent fade, Wokreen.

Pishnu smirks toward Shay.

INT. JASMINE'S TREE. NIGHT

Jasmine lies awake in bed, eyes red and swollen, cheeks wet.

She watches something - the empty patch of ground where Shay should be.

EXT. BATHING POOLS. DAY

Jasmine walks through the trees. Alone.

PISHNU (OS)
(giggling)
No, Shayha. Stop.

Jasmine freezes.

More giggles.

Jasmine peers around the trees to Pishnu, keeled over, laughing.

Pishnu bends to hold her ankle. Five other WOMEN (20) laugh and watch.

PISHNU
(mocking)
No, Shayha.

Pishnu stumbles and rolls - hysterical, eyes closed - across the ground, stops in front of Jasmine.

The other women quiet.

Pishnu opens her eyes, glares up at Jasmine.

She stands, rolls her eyes.

PISHNU
It was amusing.

Tears well in Jasmine's eyes. She looks ready to run.

Pishnu smirks, raises one eyebrow.

Jasmine swings a hand up, backhands Pishnu in the face--

The women gasp.

Pishnu's jaw drops. Stunned.

Pishnu turns to the women, tries to sound unaffected.

PISHNU
(not subtitled)
[I'll meet you in the village.]

She turns back to Jasmine and a tear falls. She walks away, head high.

Jasmine watches after her.

INT. JASMINE'S TREE. NIGHT

Jasmine lies on the bed, hair wet. Mazreeth works on her bandages.

MAZREETH
She is just not ready.

Jasmine rolls over to face her.

MAZREETH

For you.

JASMINE

I'm nothing to be ready for, Maz.

Mazreeth scoffs.

JASMINE

No, it's true. Pishnu doesn't need to worry about me.

Mazreeth throws her hands up, rolls her eyes, looks at Jasmine.

MAZREETH

Pishnu needs to realise that all she has expected for twenty years may not happen after all, that she might actually have to fight for him. And you need to see that, too.

JASMINE

No. Shay's made it quite clear who he wants.

Mazreeth smiles.

JASMINE

He has.

MAZREETH

If that were true, Pishnu would not have given you a reason to hit her. It was a good hit, too. And deserved. Do not let yourself believe that you don't have a chance with him. (off Jasmine's look) You are not pointless.

EXT. LAGI JUNGLE. DAY

Miri walks ahead, quietly ducks around the foliage.

She angles her body just so to avoid disturbing the jungle.

RICHMOND (OS)

Damn it!

Miri looks back. Richmond has a machete out, hacks away at the vines that have entangled him.

MIRI
Be careful.

She turns and continues to walk, mumbles to herself.

MIRI
Wouldn't want to chop off a leg.

Richmond stomps, kicks his way out of the vines with a grunt. He sneers down to the tangled mess and walks away, a superior look in his eyes.

EXT. LAGI JUNGLE. DAY

Miri and Richmond struggle through a cluster of tall reeds. Miri is determined. Richmond hides his fear.

RICHMOND
(flustered)
I don't know why you people
haven't cleared this place.

MIRI
Don't want to. The jungle doesn't
want intruders. (she faces him,
looks him over) We're smart
enough to stay away.

He hears the accusation, narrows his eyes.

His expression changes - sadness.

RICHMOND
Even at my Jasmine's expense.

Miri leans forward, her fist tight, ready to attack. She clenches her jaw, steels herself.

MIRI
Jasmine is safe here. From
everyone.

She turns, heads further in, lets a tall reed slap Richmond in the face.

Blood oozes from a line on his cheek. He fumes, follows her.

EXT. VILLAGE. DAY

Jasmine sits, morose, almost delirious, against the corner of the hut.

Villagers stare, walk past in whispers.

She doesn't see them, watches Shay and Pishnu across the village with the children.

Shay smiles at the children, looks up at Jasmine and frowns.

Jasmine glooms.

Shay hesitates, leaves the group, marches toward Jasmine. Everyone watches.

He stands over her, glares. He jerks his head - come on. Shay turns, walks away.

Jasmine closes her eyes, lets her head fall, defeated.

A hand grips hers, Jasmine looks up at Shay.

SHAY

Come with me.

She lets him pull her up, across the village, past wide eyes and gaping mouths, into...

EXT. LAGI JUNGLE. DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Shay releases her hand, ducks between the trees. Jasmine traces his steps.

She rushes to keep up - he disappears.

More trees, deeper into the jungle.

Jasmine stumbles into a clearing, alone.

She looks around, breathes hard.

JASMINE

Shay?

Silence.

SHAY (OS)

Go.

Jasmine spins around to him.

Shay points past her.

SHAY

That way.

Her eyes widen. Jasmine rubs her hands on her dress. She hesitates and nods.

She turns, walks slowly away. Alone.

Jasmine climbs over limbs, ducks under vines. The motions look easy, familiar.

She pushes aside a fern's leaf and stops cold at what she sees.

Shay walks up behind her, eyes hard.

His face breaks.

SHAY
For smiling.

Jasmine smiles, a tear escapes.

It's an altar of sorts, made up of beautiful flowers. In the center rests the framed photo of Jasmine and her parents.

EXT. JASMINE'S TREE. NIGHT

Shay lies asleep on the ground, moonlight bleaches his face. He breathes deeply.

A shadow passes over him and he stirs.

Jasmine looks down at him, waits.

She inches away into the dark jungle.

Shay stirs.

EXT. LAGI JUNGLE. NIGHT

The Falls glimmer in the distance, incandescent.

Jasmine takes them in, almost smiles.

A slight breeze blows against the back of her hair.

She looks back. No one there.

Jasmine turns back to the Falls, takes one determined step and--

SHAY (OS)
(commanding)
Stop.

Jasmine gasps, spins around, stumbles to the ground--

Shay towers over her.

He offers his hand. She hesitates, accepts.

SHAY

The jungle is too dangerous. You know what happened last time. Only Pishnu wanders at night.

JASMINE

Pishnu. Right.

She looks down. He raises her chin.

SHAY

She infuriates me. You can tell her that.

Jasmine smirks, looks back to the Falls.

JASMINE

We can go together.

SHAY

No, Jasmine.

He pulls her arm to leave. She whips it free, stomps her foot as:

JASMINE

I want to go.

SHAY

(laughing)

It's too dangerous. We will go back tomorrow.

JASMINE

Don't laugh at me, Shay.

He tries not to laugh. Giggles anyway.

Jasmine slaps him--

And Shay is livid.

SHAY

You want to go? Then go! I'll come and look for your bones in the morning.

He takes two steps in the other direction and stops.

A tense silence.

JASMINE

I'm sorry.

Shay looks back at her.

He moves to Jasmine, pulls her up. Almost kisses her--

Hugs her, holds her tight.

Shay releases Jasmine, looks into her eyes.

SHAY

Jasmine.

Jasmine turns to the sound of animals SNARLING in the jungle.

He takes her hand, pleads.

SHAY

Come with me.

Jasmine glances back at the Falls. They almost glow.

SHAY (OS)

The water always falls.

She looks at him, grins and follows his lead.

EXT. LAGI JUNGLE. NIGHT

Blackness. Flickers of moonlit skin move through the trees - Shay.

His shoulders. His back. His hand holding Jasmine's.

His eyes glimmer back at her, his bright smile flashes.

Jasmine runs to keep up with him, her dress flutters.

Shay slows and pulls her in front of him, lets her lead.

A glow up ahead floats - a firefly.

Jasmine looks back at Shay and he smiles.

She runs further. Another firefly. A few more.

Jasmine rushes past a cluster of ferns into...

EXT. LAGOON. NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

A black mirror of a pool. Hundreds of fireflies float, millions of stars reflect back to the sky. Crickets CHIRP, Egrets creep.

Jasmine walks in, breathes in the breeze.

Shay walks up behind her. He pulls her hair back from her face, whispers in her hair.

SHAY

This is your Lagi.

The lagoon - beautiful blue darkness. Shay - so close.

EXT. LAGOON. NIGHT

Shay sits against a boulder, watches Jasmine.

She creeps to a firefly, stretches out her arms, cups it in her hands.

She spreads her fingers just enough to let the light shine through. Smiles.

Jasmine raises her hands, releases the firefly and watches it float away.

She creeps to another, repeats the motions as:

SHAY

You are enjoying this.

JASMINE

It's beautiful.

She raises her hands to her face, peeks inside.

JASMINE

I used to do this when I was little. During the summer when they would all come out. But never this many.

Jasmine's skin glows in the light.

SHAY

Beautiful.

She looks at Shay, his eyes on her.

He walks over to her as:

SHAY

Tell me, why do you do it? To trap them?

JASMINE

Trap them? No, it's not that at all.

Shay's head tilts toward her.

JASMINE

It's like they shine brighter in small places.

She peeks into her hands. Light and shadows play on her face.

JASMINE

And then (she lets it go) how
happy they must be when they're
free.

Jasmine watches the firefly. Wistful.

Shay reaches one hand out, closes it around a firefly,
holds his fist up for her to see.

Jasmine watches.

The firefly wriggles out of his grip, crawls over his
knuckles, drifts away.

Shay reaches out and caresses Jasmine's cheek.

He pulls her close and her eyes widen at the intimacy.

A precious moment.

SHAY

We talk about hope. From birth,
we memorise the words and say
that we feel them. We think we
do.

He traces a finger across her lips - a feather's touch.

SHAY

But the day you came here, I
realised. I never knew a thing of
hope until the moment I saw you
smile.

Jasmine beams.

Shay looks ready to crumble at the sight.

SHAY

And now, this... this is
everything I hope for. Every day.

Jasmine's smile brightens, her eyes sparkle. Crystal tears
fall.

Shay stifles a moan.

He leans in, pulls at her body and kisses her. He wraps
his arms around her and Jasmine's fingers pull him closer.

They are enveloped in each other, in this kiss.

The fireflies drift around them.

The lagoon is lit by the stars beyond.

MAZREETH (VO)

Shayha.

INT/EXT. JASMINE'S TREE. DAY

Mazreeth stands over Shay.

He sits up from sleep, rubs his eyes.

He looks back into the tree - Jasmine sleeps.

SHAY

What is it?

Mazreeth glances at Jasmine, back to Shay.

MAZREETH

He is dying.

Jasmine's eyes pop open. She listens.

Shay's head drops. He nods, pushes up and walks away.

Mazreeth looks into the tree at Jasmine.

Jasmine watches Mazreeth, worried.

EXT. VINTAH'S TREE. NIGHT

Shay stands at the opening. Pain without tears.

Jasmine sneaks through the trees behind him, ducks behind a fern when he looks her way.

People file out of the tree, cry together. They touch Shay's shoulder - greeting, condolence, plea.

Pishnu walks out, looks at him - is he ready?

She leaves. He stares into the tree.

VINTAH (OS)

(weak)

Shayha.

Jasmine watches, eyes wide.

Shay walks into...

INT. VINTAH'S TREE. NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Shay enters, kneels beside Vintah's bed. Waits.

(Subtitles)

VINTAH

I can tolerate many things. And I have. But I cannot accept all of this sadness. Especially yours.

SHAY

This is not a time for smiles.

VINTAH

Ha! It is exactly a time for smiles. New life for each of us. How can you not smile for that?

SHAY

I see death. Everywhere. And more to come.

VINTAH

Then you are blind.

Shay watches him.

SHAY

Tell me what to do, Vintah.

Vintah smiles, beckons Shay closer.

VINTAH

You want me to tell you how to solve your problems. The secret, then?

Shay waits.

VINTAH

Forget about your problems. Every one of them. Appreciate the bad, but live for the good. Whatever that is for you. When you can do that, you'll be ready for everything. Not just anything. Everything.

A tear races down Shay's cheek.

SHAY

Not yet.

Vintah barks a laugh. Sighs.

VINTAH
I am ready for my new life. Would
you deny me that?

Shay's jaw clenches, tears flow.

SHAY
No. Of course not.

Vintah pats Shay's hand.

VINTAH
You are so close, Shayha. So very
close.

SHAY
And her?

VINTAH
(wryly)
Which one?

Shay chuckles.

SHAY
The one that I am meant for.

Vintah eyes him, considers.

VINTAH
She will let go of her past for
the sake of her future. Your
future. And, she will not
tolerate your indecision.

Shay watches him.

VINTAH
Goodbye, Shayha.

Shay cries into his hands.

He pushes himself up, away from the bed, walks toward the
opening.

VINTAH
Shayha?

Shay turns to him.

VINTAH
Don't let them cry. It's really a
dreadful sound.

Shay smiles.

SHAY
Goodbye, Vintah.

He turns and leaves.

EXT. VINTAH'S TREE. NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Shay walks past Jasmine's fern.

She inches out onto the path, watches him go - what just happened?

Jasmine leans toward him, ready to follow.

VINTAH (OS)
Jasmine. Come.

She glances over, looks back after Shay, walks into...

INT. VINTAH'S TREE. NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Vintah watches her. Jasmine sits beside his bed.

Silence.

JASMINE
I know what you're going to say.

He raises his eyebrows - Do you, now?

JASMINE
That I need to leave him alone?

She waits.

VINTAH
Yes.

Jasmine looks away.

JASMINE
I don't want to.

VINTAH
You each have your own choices to make. Alone.

JASMINE
I know what you're saying. But the idea of doing that - of being here without him - terrifies me.

VINTAH
The future is not yours to
understand.

She eyes him.

JASMINE
Is that what you told him?

VINTAH
(laughing)
To leave you alone? No. I cannot
tell him that.

JASMINE
Then why me?

He hesitates.

VINTAH
Because you need to consider the
possibility that he will not
choose you.

JASMINE
(surprised)
Choose me?

VINTAH
You. And all that he may have to
sacrifice for you.

Tears well in her eyes. Bittersweet.

She wipes them away.

JASMINE
He shouldn't choose me. I want
him to. But he shouldn't.

He waits.

JASMINE
There's no point in choosing
someone who'll be dead in a few
months.

Silence.

He smiles.

VINTAH
I think you will be happily
surprised.

He reaches out, pats her cheek, rolls over in his bed.

Jasmine looks on, torn.

EXT. LAGI JUNGLE. DAY

Richmond hacks through the jungle. Miri follows.

He bends a tree limb away, lets it whip back toward Miri--

She ducks just in time, comes up glaring.

Richmond barely looks over his shoulder as:

RICHMOND
(nonchalant)
Sorry.

He stops, hesitates. Turns back.

RICHMOND
(serious)
Sorry.

Miri's mouth gapes.

He turns and walks on, hacks away.

Richmond swings the machete down hard, pulls back on it.
It doesn't come. Stuck.

He wiggles it free, swings again. Same thing happens.

He tries to step back, his foot gets tangled in vines.

Richmond squirms, machete flying.

Miri backs away.

MIRI
You got to stop, Mr. Blake. You
kill yourself like that.

He keeps fighting--

RICHMOND
No I won't.

Vines, machete, man.

Miri looks around - vines everywhere.

MIRI
I already told you, we have to go
back.

RICHMOND
And I said no!

He struggles.

She watches, helpless.

The more he fights, the more tangled he gets. A vine pulls tight across his face and he roars--

Richmond stops and pants in his knot of vines.

Miri waits.

He closes his eyes, slumps toward the ground, suspended mid-way.

Miri steps forward, works the machete loose, slices through the vines above Richmond. He drops to the ground, grunts.

Richmond stands and looks at the wall of vegetation.

MIRI

We have to go back. No getting through that.

Silence.

Miri steps aside, indicates the path behind her.

MIRI

After you.

He eyes the vines, walks past Miri, defiant.

She falls in step behind, disappointed, too.

Richmond is enraged. An evil grin spreads wide.

EXT. LAGI JUNGLE - CLEARING. NIGHT

A wooden altar. Pishnu hovers over Vintah's body, washes it. Her eyes are distant. A fire burns behind her.

The villagers sit around the altar, watch. Everyone is silent.

Shay sits in the inner circle, Mazreeth and her partner by his side.

Mazreeth looks around, looks at Shay with an unspoken question. Where is Jasmine?

Shay's shoulders rise - I don't know.

Pishnu washes Vintah's chest, washes his neck. She reaches his face and her hands stop.

Her eyes are red, her chin quivers.

She shouts and turns away, looks up, waits for her eyes to dry.

The villagers watch. Some of them mirror her actions - no crying.

Shay stands, walks to her. He touches her shoulder.

She doesn't move.

SHAY
(to Pishnu, subtitles)
I'll finish.

She doesn't look at him, but nods and walks away.

Shay looks at the body, braces himself, approaches.

He holds Vintah's face in his hands.

Shay washes the cheeks, chin, nose, forehead, scalp.

He hesitates.

Shay steps back, reaches for an animal skin to cover the body.

JASMINE (OS)
Wait!

Shay and the villagers turn to face her where she stands by the trees. She pants, tries to catch her breath.

Jasmine approaches the altar, stands beside Shay.

JASMINE
(quietly to Shay)
I didn't know when I'd get to do this. Or even if I would. And I know this is probably not something that you would do. Can I... ?

Shay considers, sees the folded picture in her hand, the red kiss by her thumb.

SHAY
(whispering)
Jasmine.

JASMINE
Please?

He looks around at the villagers, at Mazreeth.

Mazreeth nods slightly. Shay looks back at Jasmine.

He walks away, sits with Mazreeth.

Jasmine turns back to the body and kneels beside it. Waits for words.

JASMINE
(to the body)
I've only ever been to one other
funeral. My parents. They died
when I was eleven.

She smiles.

JASMINE
I never cried.

Jasmine opens the picture, looks at her smiling parents.

JASMINE
I miss them so much.

She looks over at Shay. His eyes are wide and concerned.

Jasmine looks back at the picture, kisses it.

She folds it again, tucks it into Vintah's hands.

Her hand rests on Vintah's - how to let go?

Jasmine looks at the people watching her.

Shay approaches and her face falls - she's not ready.
Jasmine inches back from him.

He wraps his arms around her, holds her.

Pishnu gapes - her expression is one of betrayal. She
looks away.

Shay holds Jasmine. One hand slides down her arm, pushes
against her hand on Vintah's.

SHAY
They are yours. That will never
change.

A tear falls down her cheek. Shay pulls back, looks into
her eyes.

SHAY
No tears.

He wipes the tear away, kisses her forehead and backs
away.

Jasmine watches him.

She lets her hand fall, her eyes locked on Shay.

A villager calls from the crowd:

VILLAGER

Ayee!

Others echo the sound:

VILLAGERS

Ayee! Ayee! Ayee!

Shay and Jasmine watch each other.

Pishnu's eyes are wide - what is happening between them? Pishnu looks up at Shay and he smiles at Jasmine. Proud.

Villagers clap and call.

VILLAGERS

Ayee! Ayee!

Pishnu snaps to. She picks up a torch, approaches the altar.

She stands shoulder to shoulder with Jasmine - Pishnu faces the altar, Jasmine faces Shay - and lights the pile.

Jasmine is oblivious to everything but Shay as the CLAPPING ROARS and the fire grows behind her.

EXT. RESORT - BEACH. DAY

A COUPLE (35) lounges in the sun with two cocktails, only one cocktail umbrella.

Near the trees, a BOY (6) builds a sandcastle. He packs together the tower walls, reaches a cocktail umbrella up to the top, balances on his knees--

A RUSTLING in the trees, the boy is knocked over into the sandcastle.

Richmond bounds two steps, stops and returns to the boy.

He towers over the boy, a giant in the sun.

The giant reaches out a hand.

The boy hesitates, takes the hand, stands.

Richmond turns and walks away.

BOY

(calling)

Thank you.

Richmond ignores him, keeps walking.

Miri stumbles onto the beach, hurries after Richmond.

MIRI
Mr Blake, wait! You stop this
right now.

The boy looks after them.

INT. RESORT - TANE'S OFFICE. DAY

Tane sits at his desk, writes on a notepad.

A dirty machete CRASHES onto the desk.

Tane jerks back, gasps--

RICHMOND
(indicating the machete)
That's no way to solve anything
in this place.

TANE
Mr Blake! Did you find her? How
is -

Richmond stabs a finger toward the door as:

RICHMOND
Out!

A tense moment.

Tane stands, steps toward the door, stops and eyes
Richmond, leaves.

Richmond leans on Tane's desk, exhausted.

He picks up a paperweight, swings back to throw it through
the window, stops and drops it back onto the desk. It
spins.

He slumps into Tane's chair, picks up the phone, dials a
number. Waits.

RICHMOND
(into the phone)
The trip takes seven hours. I
expect to see you in eight.

He hangs up. Richmond stands, walks around the desk,
tosses the paperweight in his hand.

He eyes the floor-to-ceiling plate glass window, smirks.
Drops the paperweight to the desk.

EXT. LAGI JUNGLE - CLEARING. NIGHT

Shay sits alone beside the altar's smoking remains.

The jungle is quiet.

Jasmine watches him from beside a tree.

He looks vulnerable, helpless.

She looks away, collects herself, watches him again.

She pulls her shoulders back, turns and leaves.

Shay continues to watch the ashes smolder.

EXT. VILLAGE. NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Jasmine walks through the village, past fires and hollow trees.

She reaches the tree line, sees the Falls beyond.

The dark jungle towers over her.

Jasmine breathes deeply, walks into the trees.

EXT. LAGI JUNGLE - CLEARING. NIGHT

Shay sits beside the ashes, his back to us.

Pishnu walks up beside him, looks down at him.

His expression is pained.

(Subtitles)

PISHNU

Is she your choice for us, then?

Pishnu sits silently beside him.

PISHNU

Do you really think she will ever
be enough for our people?

SHAY

Not now, Pishnu.

She looks at the ashes.

PISHNU

Yes, Shayha. We deserve to be
heard. I deserve to be heard.

Shay tears his eyes away, looks at Pishnu.

SHAY

Do you think I want to hurt you?

PISHNU

No. But I think you will. You
will always want her.

Shay looks back at the ashes.

SHAY

What do I do, Pishnu?

She watches him.

PISHNU

You make your choice.

He puts his head in his hands - that doesn't help.

SHAY

And everyone else?

PISHNU

They will adjust.

Shay looks at Pishnu, smiles softly.

PISHNU

(tenderly)

Choose me, Shay.

Silence.

EXT. LAGI JUNGLE. NIGHT

Jasmine moves slowly. Her eyes dart around.

She hurries from the base of one tree to the next, keeps
moving.

Branches RUSTLE above. Jasmine looks up--

Nothing.

She keeps going.

Something SNAPS behind her and Jasmine whips around--

Again, nothing.

She keeps moving.

A WHOOSH blows past her. Jasmine looks up, feels for the
next tree, crouches beside it--

An animal CALLS, like laughing--

Jasmine breathes fast, then holds her breath, closes her eyes.

The edges of her face fade to the colour of the tree. The fade stretches inward.

The laughing CALL. Jasmine's eyes pop open, her skin returns to its natural shade.

She looks to her right, barely sees the Falls glowing just beyond the trees.

The laughing CALLS closer and Jasmine bolts--

[An animal] bursts through the trees, chases her--

Jasmine rushes for the Falls, dodges trees and boulders--

She ducks under a log, grabs two rocks, comes up and whips around, throws one of the rocks--

It hits the [animal] in the eye. He whimpers and recoils.

Jasmine keeps running--

[The animal] hears her FOOTSTEPS, charges again--

Jasmine scales the ravine beside the Falls--

Rocks break free, knock the [animal] back--

Jasmine pulls herself up over the cliff, jumps across boulders in the river, stops on the largest, right in the middle, at the precipice of the Falls--

Her eyes lock on something on the other side.

More [animals] wait, teeth bared.

She looks back as the first [animal] bounds onto the cliff, toys the rock in her hand--

The water ROARS past her on both sides--

Jasmine looks down the Falls - looks like a cloud below.

She looks around her - no time - then looks slightly heavenward, not quite away from the [animals].

JASMINE

(shouting)

I needed you, Momma. I needed
both of you.

The [animals] inch closer.

JASMINE
 When you died. When they told me
 that I would die.

The [animal] that chased her PURRS menacingly.

JASMINE
 I need you now.

The [animal] hops onto the closest boulder.

JASMINE
 To let you go. To say goodbye. To
 tell you I'll always love you.

The [animal] beside her SNARLS. Jasmine glares at him.

JASMINE
 (to the [animal])
 I will not die today.

She spins around, leaps into the Falls--

The [animal] SHRIEKS, leaps in after her--

EXT. LAGI JUNGLE - CLEARING. NIGHT

Shay sleeps beside the ashes.

A breeze blows past and Shay mumbles.

SHAY
 Jasmine?

Crickets CHIRP. Shay settles deeper into sleep.

Somewhere in the distance [an animal] SHRIEKS.

EXT. LAGI JUNGLE. DAY

The emerald forest is still and utterly silent.

Something flashes past, into a fern.

Silence.

Another flash. Another. Burning flashes rain into the
 jungle as--

Two legs run, tear through the foliage--

Pishnu. Flashes shoot past her.

The jungle blurs. Orange embers dart into green--

The first hollow tree comes into view.

PISHNU
 (subtitled)
 Run! Shayha, run!

EXT. LAGI JUNGLE - CLEARING. DAY

Shay sleeps. The same silence.

A faint squeal.

Two distant screams.

PISHNU (OS)
 (distant)
 Shay!

His eyes snap open and he bolts--

EXT. VILLAGE. DAY (CONTINUOUS)

[subtitles]

Shay runs into the village, barely dodges a burning flash.

Villagers scream and scramble.

Pishnu carries two toddlers, yells at the others--

PISHNU
 Hurry, run. Go to the Falls!

SHAY
 No, Pishnu, into the trees. The
 trees will protect us.

Pishnu runs in his direction, stops at him.

PISHNU
 This is not the worst that is
 coming.

Embers fall, villagers watch.

Shay nods.

PISHNU
 (to the villagers)
 Hurry!

More flashes burn through the leaves above--

Shay races to his family, scoops up his sister and
 brother, pulls at his mother's arm--

SHAY

Move!

They run away from the fiery flashes, from the fires already burning--

EXT. JASMINE'S TREE. DAY (CONTINUOUS)

They reach Jasmine's tree, Shay glances inside the empty tree as they pass--

SHAY

Jasmine!

PISHNU

She's not there. She'll be with Mazreeth. Keep going!

EXT. LAGI JUNGLE. DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Shay runs, looks back - a mass of terrified villagers--

Pishnu runs beside him, terrified too--

Fire rains. An ember burns past Shay's arm, he winces--

SHAY

Faster!

The ROAR of the Falls blends with the screams--

SHAY

Almost there!

They run faster, through the brush--

EXT. THE FALLS - BASE. DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Shay and Pishnu reach the shore first. Shay throws his brother and sister into the water--

Pishnu throws the toddlers--

Shay and Pishnu watch the water, share a worried glance.

PISHNU

They will make it.

Shay notices a dead [animal] on the opposite bank. Odd.

Screams sound behind them and they run back toward the village as others - men, women, children - pass them, leap into the water.

EXT. LAGI JUNGLE. DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Shay and Pishnu hurry toward the village--

The last of the fleeing villagers pass them.

PISHNU
(to Shay)
Where are the rest?

They run harder as the flashes slow.

They run into...

EXT. VILLAGE. DAY (CONTINUOUS)

SHAY
Watch out!

Another rain of embers falls. Shay pushes Pishnu into...

INT. LARGE TREE. DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Shay and Pishnu collapse on the ground, pant as flashes rain outside.

An ELDERLY WOMAN (70) clasps her hands together as:

ELDERLY WOMAN
(subtitled)
Shayha is alive.

Shay and Pishnu look up, see about twenty villagers huddled together in the tree.

MAZREETH (OS)
Shay? Jasmine?

Mazreeth pushes forward, breaks free of the group, sees Shay and Pishnu.

MAZREETH
Where is Jasmine?

Shay jerks his head up.

PISHNU
(subtitled)
We thought she was with you.

Shay stands. Towers.

SHAY
No. You did.

Pishnu glares as tears well.

PISHNU
We could die, Shay.

She looks around, seems to realise she said something wrong.

PISHNU
We all could.

SHAY
(shouting)
I could have -

MAZREETH
Stop. Now. We will find her.

Shay rubs his face, turns away from everyone.

A tense silence.

SHAY
What else is coming?

Pishnu hesitates.

PISHNU
Fire. He is destroying everything
in his way. And he is calling for
her.

Shay whips around to face her.

PISHNU
She is in his way.

A heavy moment.

SHAY
(to the villagers)
Get to the Falls. (snide to
Pishnu) All of you.

Pishnu looks away, abashed.

ELDERLY WOMAN
(pointing out the tree)
Shayha, there. Your love.

An eery stillness outside. Shay looks, sees only green,
walks out into...

EXT. VILLAGE. DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Shay stands, freezes.

He gapes at what he sees.

EXT. FALLS. NIGHT (NIGHT BEFORE)

Jasmine falls, slow motion, into the water. The [animal] follows.

The Falls stretch deep below the cliff, the mist a luminous spray.

The rapids at the bottom rush away to smoother waters.

Two air bubbles pop on the surface.

The trees tower on the banks, beside the Falls, atop the cliff.

The trees give way to the stars, the stars give way to a bright, full moon.

The mist from the Falls floats in the sky. The river's water barely glows.

The glow extends back down, down to the water below.

The rapids pass, the smooth waters. Jasmine.

A hand, an arm. Jasmine's body floats face up. Dead.

The glow drifts from the Falls, surrounds her body.

It lights on her skin, moves along her.

The ends of her hair lighten, the roots, the forehead, the eyelids.

The glow consumes her body, moves toward her core.

Jasmine's face is as white as porcelain.

Silence.

Her eyes slowly open and she breathes in.

Jasmine smiles. Beams.

EXT. VILLAGE. DAY (BACK TO PRESENT)

Shay stands there, shocked.

Jasmine glares past him and walks, glides through the village. She is radiant. And terrifying.

She walks to the center of the village, stops, looks in the direction of the flashes.

Shay watches her in awe, inches toward her.

SHAY
Jasmine?

She turns to him, beams again.

SHAY
What... what is this?

A wall of fire mushrooms in the distance, frames her.

Jasmine's smile fades and she turns. She nearly growls:

JASMINE
Richmond!

Another, bigger burst of flames.

SHAY
Jasmine, the Falls -

Jasmine smiles, closes her eyes.

JASMINE
The Falls gave me another option.

SHAY
No, the Falls can protect us.

The fire ROARS, collapses a tree.

SHAY
But we have to go. We are not too proud to run when we need to.

Jasmine looks at him, love in her eyes.

JASMINE
I'm finished running, Shay. I'm not going anywhere.

A heavy moment.

The CRUNCH of footsteps. They turn as...

Richmond steps out from the right, watches Jasmine. He holds a flame thrower. A pistol sits at his hip.

RICHMOND

Jasmine?

He looks her over - healed.

JASMINE

Uncle Richmond, please. Stop.

He laughs.

RICHMOND

(to the trees behind him)

Do you hear that? I'm 'uncle'
now.

Laughs sound around the village.

Jasmine and Shay look out - about twenty MERCENARIES
surround them.

Richmond grins.

RICHMOND

Just in case.

He watches her face for fear, sees only fury.

Villagers file out from each of the hollow trees as one of
them calls:

VILLAGER

Ayee!

Richmond barks a laugh.

RICHMOND

Ayee is right! Looks like we'll
have some fun now.

The men whoop, some POP rounds into the sky.

JASMINE

This has nothing to do with them.
Any of them. Only you and me.
Just the two of us.

Richmond's smile fades.

RICHMOND

You let 'us' go a long time ago,
sweetheart.

JASMINE

You left me. You left me to die
alone. In their bed.

Shay inches toward her.

SHAY
 (whispering)
 Jasmine.

RICHMOND
 And yet you didn't. You're nobody
 to me, girl. Not dead or alive.
 Just nobody.

Shay inches closer and Richmond shoots a wall of fire
 between them.

RICHMOND
 (to Shay)
 Now, now. That's not to say I
 don't have some business to clear
 up with her. So you stay put.

Pishnu backs around a tree, right into the muzzle of a
 rifle in her face.

A MERCENARY (30) laughs.

She smirks, blends with the tree and disappears.

MERCENARY
 What the hell? Hey Blake, you
 didn't say they were freaks.

Richmond turns.

RICHMOND
 What? What are you talking ab-

Most of the villagers disappear as:

VILLAGERS
 Ayee! Ayee!

Pishnu's mercenary is knocked to the ground, his gun flies
 from his hands, out over the treetops--

He scrambles back.

MERCENARY
 Blake! Blake! What'd you get us
 into?

Mercenaries scream around the village--

Shay runs along the wall of fire, disappears at Richmond--

Richmond's gas pack jerks back, jerks again as if trying
 to be pulled off--

RICHMOND

Let go of me!

Fire sprays up, back, around--

Shay screams, his colour returns. He slumps on the ground beside Richmond.

RICHMOND

I told you to stay put.

Richmond kicks a boot into Shay's stomach.

He raises the flame thrower, aims it at Shay.

Jasmine drops an unconscious mercenary to the ground, races toward Richmond as:

JASMINE

No!

Richmond looks up, rolls his eyes, pulls out his gun and takes aim at Jasmine.

RICHMOND

Business, sweetheart.

He pulls the trigger as:

VILLAGER

Ayee!

A villager wraps her arms around Jasmine, grunts when the bullet hits her back. Slumps to the ground.

Shay's mother.

Shay's eyes lock on his mother's body and he pushes himself up.

Jasmine looks down to her as unseen villagers shout at Richmond--

He shoots bullets, throws flames--

Villagers drop to the ground out of nowhere--

Richmond sprays fire at the trees, moves toward Jasmine as:

RICHMOND

(laughing)

Keep 'em coming, people.

Jasmine pulls her eyes up, looks at him, betrayed. A tear falls.

Betrayal turns to fury. Jasmine steps around the body, walks to her uncle, still spraying fire.

He sees her and stops.

RICHMOND

You got something to say?

Jasmine's resolve seems to waver slightly.

Shay stands behind Richmond, rips the flame thrower from his hands, pulls it loose of the pack, tosses it aside--

Fuel drenches Richmond's legs.

Shay kicks him in the back, into Jasmine--

Jasmine catches Richmond, sees him reach for his gun--

She picks him up - a feather - swings him around and into the burning jungle.

Screams, SHOTS as the few remaining mercenaries flee, some drag unconscious bodies.

Jasmine watches, horrified.

One last SHOT and the screams stop.

Jasmine's eyes set - it's finished.

She looks at Shay. He hesitates, looks at Jasmine. Vacant.

He turns away, trudges to his mother's body, stands over her.

Shay picks her up, holds her, kisses her forehead tenderly.

He turns, walks past Jasmine toward the funeral clearing, tears streaming and sobs breaking.

Jasmine makes to follow him but a hand catches her arm. She looks back.

Mazreeth pulls her into a hug. Mazreeth's arm is covered in blood, her hair caked with dirt.

MAZREETH

She got to you before I could.

Jasmine smiles, pulls free, looks in Shay's direction.

MAZREETH

Leave him. He is giving her a proper farewell.

Jasmine looks back at Mazreeth.

MAZREETH

Everyone says goodbye.

Jasmine looks around at the villagers. Some hug. Some cry over bodies.

Mazreeth pulls her hand.

MAZREETH

We need to go to the Falls. For the others.

PISHNU (OS)

I will come with you.

They look at Pishnu. She smiles.

PISHNU

(to Jasmine)

The Falls have given us a monster.

Jasmine smiles, overwhelmed.

INT/EXT. LOCATIONS - VARIOUS. DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS:

Mazreeth and Pishnu run, Jasmine flies past them.

The three of them jump into the water.

They swim deep beneath the Falls.

They come up in a cavern where others greet them.

Hugs, cheers, smiles at the new Jasmine.

Shay arrives, the cavern quiets. He doesn't acknowledge Jasmine.

EXT. FIRE CIRCLE. NIGHT

Jasmine sits, radiant, in her spot away from the circle, watches the others dance and laugh.

Mazreeth approaches her from behind.

MAZREETH

Come, Jasmine. Come and dance with me.

She tugs at Jasmine's arm.

JASMINE
 (smiling)
 No, thank you.

Mazreeth looks at the group, anxious. She looks back at Jasmine and hesitates.

MAZREETH
 Please, Jasmine? Please come?

Jasmine considers. Smiles a playful grin.

JASMINE
 Okay.

Within the circle, Mazreeth begins her primal dance. Jasmine watches, confident but not dancing herself.

MAZREETH
 Dance, Jasmine.

Jasmine looks around at the others, smiles.

JASMINE
 I'm okay.

MAZREETH
 You will enjoy it. Dance.

Mazreeth continues to move to the BEATING of the drums. Everyone around them dances.

Through the swaying bodies, Jasmine catches a glimpse of Shay. He watches her with a hard expression. She looks away, abashed.

Mazreeth dances, eyes closed, into the throng of pulsating bodies. Jasmine looks after her, nervous.

SHAY
 (speaking in her ear)
 You're still afraid. That's your problem.

Jasmine faces him, startled, but doesn't speak. She looks around with that same anxious expression.

SHAY
 They are not thinking of you. So don't think of them.

Jasmine frowns up at him.

JASMINE
 (defensively)
 I'm not.

Shay's jaw clenches. Jasmine looks around again and he raises his hands to her face, turns her gaze to him.

His expression softens.

SHAY
(softly)
Don't think of them.

Shay touches his thumbs to Jasmine's eyes, pulls her eyelids closed. He runs his hands through her hair, pulls it back behind her shoulders.

Jasmine stands motionless, Shay's hands on her cheeks. He lowers his hands, lets one fall to her chest at her heart.

Firelight plays on Jasmine's face, across her collarbone.

SHAY (OS)
Feel the drums.

He softly beats against her skin twice in time with two loud BEATS.

SHAY (OS)
The dance is different for
everyone, Jasmine. Show me what
it is for you.

Jasmine's cheeks flush, she breathes in. The drums POUND again.

Shay pulls his hands away as Jasmine settles into the music. Two more BEATS and she thrills, laughs.

Jasmine nods her head with the next two BEATS.

She smiles, waits.

The music plays hard, loud, and Jasmine dances. Neither primal nor graceful, just... her.

The music plays harder and Jasmine dances harder. Sweat glistens on her skin.

There is only Jasmine and the music.

Jasmine opens her eyes, sees Shay dancing - the strongest dance of all. She watches him, entranced.

Jasmine lets her eyes close, dances again. Harder than before. A blissful smile.

Others move between them, separate them.

Shay opens his eyes, sees glimpses of Jasmine past the others. He is mesmerised.

He moves closer to her, through the crowd, watches her dance.

Jasmine looks up again, sees Shay. They stop, stand there, statues as the group dances in slow motion around them. They step closer.

Shay raises his hands to Jasmine's face. He caresses her skin, almost kisses her, breathes hard as he watches her.

Uncertainty flashes in his eyes, a slight fear, and he stops, backs away. Runs off through the crowd.

Jasmine looks after him, crushed. Then, furious - Enough.

She pushes her way through the throng in his direction, shoves away those who stand in her way.

She breaks through the last of the group and into...

EXT. LAGI JUNGLE. NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

She runs and searches, a determined look on her face.

INTERCUT: FLASHES OF THE VILLAGERS AS THEY DANCE IN THE FIRE'S LIGHT.

Jasmine runs, frantic, through the trees. Her eyes dart up and around. Everywhere--

The BEATING grows, like it's catching up with her. Louder. Louder--

Jasmine stops, lets her eyes close as the BEATING soars.

The drums POUND. Jasmine raises her chest, faces the sky, seems to expect her heart to burst free--

She dances. Long, hard. Erratic.

Jasmine spins wide, stretches out her arms as the drums BEAT even louder--

Her hand reaches out, grasps for something as the beats ROAR--

A hand slides across her arm. Shay's fingers clasp hers.

The beating ROARS louder as Shay holds her tight from behind, lets her nearly collapse into him. He breathes into her hair, pure desire lights his eyes--

The drums POUND and Jasmine leans forward, holds his hands for support.

Two more BEATS and they dance. The same rhythm, the same motions.

They dance, see and touch each other's arms, backs, hands.
Alone, but together.

The music PLAYS hard, Jasmine looks on the verge of tears.
She grips Shay's arm, pulls him to her. His body aligns
perfectly with hers. The BEATS are ferocious.

Jasmine pulls his face to hers, kisses him hard, clutches
him to her.

They pull back, watch each other's wild eyes, breathe
heavily against each other as the drums BEAT slower,
louder.

One BEAT - Shay smiles down to her--

Another BEAT - Jasmine smiles back - Ready--

The last BEAT - Shay's arms wrap around her body just so,
Jasmine's mirror the action in their Embrace.

A euphoric laugh from Shay and we...

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END